BUILDING DESIGN +CONSTRUCTION

SPECIAL REPORT 2026



2026 MULTIFAMILY ANNUAL REPORT

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Welcome to *Building Design+Construction*'s fourth Multifamily Annual Report. Every year since 2023, the editors of *BD+C* have consulted with dozens of leading multifamily design and construction firms, industry economists, developers, and other market experts to publish this comprehensive report on emerging trends, innovations, opportunities, and obstacles in the $115 billion U.S. multifamily construction market. The 2026 Multifamily Annual Report includes four sections (six reports in all) that cover the top 10 trends in office-to-residential developments, luxury rental housing, and market-rate rental housing; the 2027 outlook for multifamily construction; exclusive research on trending and emerging multifamily amenities; and 19 innovations from multifamily design and construction firms.

DAVID BARISTA, Editorial Director
QUINN PURCELL, Managing Editor
ROBERT CASSIDY, Contributing Editor
NOVID PARSI, Contributing Editor



ON THE COVER:
Pearl House, New York City, designed by Gensler. Photo by Garrett Rowland

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COMPILED BY DAVID BARISTA, Editorial Director

MEET OUR CONTRIBUTING EXPERTS + SPONSORS

The BD+C editorial team connected with 47 multifamily market experts for this special report. Big thanks to the following professionals.

Sara Beardsley, FAIA, LEED AP, CPHC, Associate Principal, Director of Technical Design, SCB

Robin Bellerby, Chief Architectural Officer, Humphreys & Partners

Charles Bloszies, FAIA, SE, LEED AP, of the Office of Charles Bloszies

Jack Boarman, Senior Design Leader, Development Managing Partner, BKV Group

Chris Boone, Vice President, Lessard Design

Christopher Bruen, Senior Director of Research, Chief Economist, National Multifamily Housing Council

Brett Bunke, Vice President of Architecture, Ryan Companies

Robert Dietz, Chief Economist, National Association of Home Builders

Brad Dillman, Principal, Florey Street Advisors

Jared Donnamiller, Senior Vice President, Plumbing Engineering, WSP

Joseph Elhabr, Vice President, IMT Residential

JP Emery, AIA, NCARB, Lifestyle Studio Director, Gensler

Courtney Field, Project Executive, Swinerton

Eugene Flotteron, AIA, Director of Architecture, CetraRuddy

Nikolas Fowler, Director of Division Operations, Hoar Construction

Martin Aaron Goldstein, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP, Managing Principal, Venture Architecture

Lee Golub, Managing Principal, Golub & Co.

Rebecca Gromet, Principal, KPF

Mike Hockett, Executive Vice President of Client & Project Development, W.E. O'Neil Construction

Nathaniel Hollister, Design Director, KTGY

David Hovey, Jr., AIA, President, Principal Architect, Optima

Steve Hubbard, AIA, Associate Principal, Senior Designer, SCB

Bryan Lamb, Executive Vice President, Multifamily, Ryan Companies

Pete Lochner, National Director of Construction, Multifamily, Ryan Companies

Stephen Lohr, Principal, Multifamily Sector Leader, Corgan

Scott Maenpaa, Project Manager, The Architectural Team

Thom Mahler, MCIP, Director of Downtown Strategy, Vice Chair, Calgary Planning Commission, City of Calgary

Steven Paynter, OAA, ARB, Regional Growth Director, Principal, Gensler

Chris Porter, Senior Vice President, Research, John Burns Research and Consulting

Jennifer Ramsey, Adaptive Reuse Senior Project Development Manager, City and County of Denver

George Ratiu, Vice President, Research, National Apartment Association

Doug Ressler, Manager, Business Intelligence, Yardi Matrix

Josh Rigali, Project Designer, SCB

Cindy Chan Roubik, LEED AP, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Planning and Development, City of Chicago

Darin J. Schoolmeester, Principal, Director, High Density Multifamily Design Studio, KTGY

Robert M. Seldin, CEO, Highland Square Holdings

Philip Sima, CHPC, Co-founder, Balance Architects

Terry Simon, Division President, Clark Construction

Jan Steingahs, ARB, RIBA, Principal, Practice Group Manager–Living, Arcadis

Douglas Stockman, AIA, Director of Architecture, Helix Architecture + Design

William Stocks, Senior Preconstruction Director, Brasfield & Gorrie

Matt Strobel, Vice President, Bright Power

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Stephanie Turner, Broker, Jameson Sotheby's International Realty

Roya Vermillion, Director of Preconstruction, Swinerton

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2027 MULTIFAMILY FORECAST: AS SUPPLY NORMALIZES, THE NEXT UPCYCLE BEGINS



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Top construction economists and multifamily experts share their take on the current and future states of the U.S. multifamily construction market.

BY NOVID PARSI, Contributing Editor

The U.S. multifamily housing market could be entering reset mode. Since the supply peaks of recent years, multifamily starts and under-construction units have fallen, while rent growth has slowed. But the current shrinking pipeline likely will set the stage for the next construction cycle.

"The industry is still absorbing the record wave of deliveries that followed the 2021-23 development cycle," says Doug Ressler, Manager, Business Intelligence, Yardi Matrix. He describes 2026 as "the last year of the supply shock" and "a digestion year," but says 2027-28 increasingly looks like the beginning of the next multifamily upcycle, with supply normalizing.

Oversupply is an issue now, but probably won't be in the near future, given the chronic housing shortage. Millennials, the largest generation in the U.S. workforce, are remaining renters for longer—and for plenty of reasons. High home prices, mortgage rates above 6.5%, limited for-sale inventory, rising property taxes and insurance premiums, sizable student debt burdens, limited income growth, and delayed marriage and family formation all provide long-term grist for the multifamily mill. Gen Z and baby boomers also will drive apartment demand.

"The U.S. multifamily construction sector is working through a cyclical oversupply period, but its structural drivers remain favorable," Ressler says.

THE METRICS OF THE MULTIFAMILY MARKET

In 2024, 608,000 multifamily units were completed, the largest number in a single year since 1986, according to *The State of the Nation's Housing 2026* report by the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies (JCHS). In 2025, however, completions declined sharply, down 20% to 483,700 units.

According to Yardi Matrix data, which includes both multifamily and single-family rental units, completions reached 696,033 in 2024, fell to 648,482 in 2025, and are expected to total just 490,362 in 2026. FMI similarly projects multifamily completions falling about 25% in 2026. From 2027 to 2031, annual completions are projected to hover between roughly 440,000 and 460,000 units, per Yardi Matrix.

The number of multifamily units under construction slumped 11% in 2025 to 693,500—about 30% below the 2023 peak of 995,800, the JCHS report says. In the first quarter of 2026, the under-construction units fell further to 579,000—a 50% drop from the peak in early 2023, according to CoStar.

Starts have been declining as well. Construction starts in buildings with at least two units rose 17% to 416,100 in 2025, but that was 24% below the 2022 peak of 547,000 units, according to the JCHS report. The starts for buildings with at least five units totaled 421,000 in July 2026 at a seasonally adjusted annual rate (SAAR)—a 7% drop from a year earlier, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

"Construction activity is slowing even as demand continues to hold up," says George Ratiu, VP, Research, National Apartment Association (NAA).

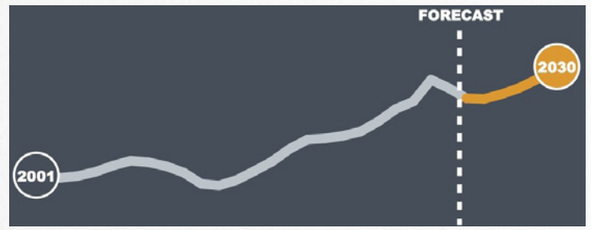
While the near-term development pipeline has been narrowing, multifamily spending has held steady. The value of construction put in place for private new multifamily housing was $114.8 billion SAAR in mid-2026, a decrease of about 1% from a year earlier, according to the Census Bureau. Despite elevated material and other input costs, multifamily spending did not increase—which reflects fewer projects under construction.

Despite the story the numbers tell, industry sentiment is mixed. In the National Multifamily Housing Council's (NMHC) June 2026 survey of builders and developers, 55% reported that multifamily starts

FMI'S 2026 MULTIFAMILY SECTOR FORECAST

-1%
$127 BILLION
2026/2025 COMPARISON

DRIVERS:
- » UNEMPLOYMENT RATES
- » CORE CPI
- » INCOME
- » MORTGAGE RATES
- » HOME PRICES
- » HOUSING STARTS
- » HOUSING PERMITS



2027	2028	2029	2030
4%	5%	7%	8%
$132B	$140B	$150B	$161B
STABLE	UP	UP	UP

HOW THE ROAD ACT MIGHT BOLSTER MULTIFAMILY

The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act, which became law in July 2026, could have a considerable impact on the multifamily sector.

The ROAD Act raises the maximum loan limits for FHA multifamily mortgages, simplifies the environmental review for some projects, and allows use of a federal funding program for affordable housing construction. It also includes an innovation fund for local governments that increase housing supply, and expands options for manufactured and modular construction.

The law is "a win for housing and multifamily development," says Robert Dietz, Chief Economist for the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), but it won't deliver instant change. "It will take years to implement some of the new provisions that help on the supply side of the market," he says. While the new law could help future development, "tangible effects are expected to emerge gradually," says George Ratiu, Vice President, Research, National Apartment Association (NAA).

There's also a limit to the ROAD Act's reach: State and local policy have more of an impact than federal policy on housing affordability. Up to 40% of the cost of land and building development in the multifamily sector comes from regulatory costs, red-tape delays, and other inefficient rules and policies.

did not change from three months earlier. But more than one-half of developers surveyed by John Burns Research and Consulting (JBREC) in the second quarter of 2026 expected a slowdown in apartment starts over the next 12 months. And in its second-quarter 2026 survey of multifamily developers, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) found market sentiment to be "slightly negative overall," says Robert Dietz, Senior Vice President and Chief Economist, NAHB.

MONEY MATTERS: ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

The near-term challenges for multifamily construction are mostly economic and financial, industry experts agree. Tighter construction lending, higher interest rates and loan costs, elevated construction costs, slower rent growth, and rent declines in oversupplied markets are all impeding new development.

The costs of land, labor, and materials are on the rise. Aggregate material costs rose 7% in mid-2026 from a year earlier, according to NAHB analysis of data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. With the ongoing skilled labor shortage, residential construction wages are rising faster than inflation, Dietz says. Other costs stem from insurance, permitting, and environmental review, and tariffs have contributed to the cost burden. "Tariffs on imported construction inputs have added further pressure to project budgets," says the NAA's Ratiu.

Amid the industry's many financial worries, experts point to financing costs as the main challenge. It's harder now for multifamily rental projects to make financial sense, despite strong demand. "Financing is currently the most significant obstacle to new development," Ressler says. "Many projects that would have been feasible in 2021 simply do not pencil today."

More than two-thirds of developers surveyed by JBREC in 2026 said that equity for apartment development financing was more difficult to secure than six months earlier. This represents "the most difficult access to equity since 2023," says Chris Porter, Senior Vice President, Research, JBREC. In NMHC's July 2026 survey of executives at apartment-related firms, 26% said it was a worse time to borrow than three months earlier, while 17% said it was a better time to borrow.

"Financing conditions remain one of the biggest constraints on new multifamily development as interest rates continue to run well above pre-pandemic levels," Ratiu says.

On the flip side, Ressler notes, the financial constraints that have been suppressing new development should reduce future supply growth, creating a more favorable operating environment for multifamily owners and developers beginning in 2027-28.

For now, however, broad economic uncertainty is making lenders and investors more cautious. Persistent inflation, strained household finances, a cooling labor market, and stalled real wage growth all suggest modest economic growth. Geopolitical and headline risks, such as rising energy costs due to the U.S.-Iran war, also fuel the uncertainty.

HOW POPULATION SHIFTS AFFECT MULTIFAMILY

Demographic changes might cloud the multifamily sector's forecast. "The long-term forecast for housing is dependent on two factors: productivity growth and demographic change. All other variables will be footnotes," says NAHB's Dietz. Technology investment will help create new jobs and spur productivity growth, he says. But demographic realities—such as declining births, deaths exceeding births starting in 2030, more people ages 25 to 34 living with a parent, and a slowdown in immigration—could slow household formation in the 2030s and dampen demand for housing.

Immigration also plays a critical role in U.S. multifamily demand, experts say. Population growth slowed significantly between 2024 and 2025, largely due to a historic drop in net international migration from 2.7 million to 1.3 million, according to the Census Bureau. From 2025 to 2026, all 56 of the nation's major metro areas saw declines in new immigrants, resulting in slower population growth in all but one major metro area, according to the Brookings Institution.

"A significant pullback in foreign immigration impacts rental housing demand, as recent immigrants are much more likely to rent than own," says JBREC's Porter. However, Brad Dillman, Principal, Florey Street Advisors, expects large-scale immigration will resume after 2028.

Another demographic reality: Americans are getting older. From 2001 to 2025, the U.S. median age rose from 35.6 to 39.4, according to the Census Bureau. And from 2004 to 2024, the share of Americans ages 65 and older increased from about 12% to 18%. An aging population will drive demand for senior housing, including active adult communities, Ressler notes.

Demographic shifts also will affect student housing, where construction starts have been slowing. "Student housing demand remains healthy, but not all campuses are equal," Ressler says. The strongest student housing markets are large flagship universities with enrollment growth and little new supply, while the weakest have had recent deliveries and slower rent growth.

Plus, both young and old are moving less. The percentage of Americans that moved within the past year has tumbled from 16.8% in 2006 to 11.8% in 2024, per the Census Bureau. "Multifamily demand should continue to benefit from Gen Z entering prime renter years, older households choosing to rent, and affordability barriers keeping would-be buyers in apartments longer," Ratiu says. "But lower immigration, weaker household formation, and reduced mobility will temper growth."

MULTIFAMILY COMPLETIONS FORECAST BY SUBSECTOR: YARDI MATRIX DATA

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026(F)	2027(F)	2028(F)
MARKET RATE	265,440	276,553	310,395	262,076	331,577	432,215	395,532	261,878	249,561	256,006
PARTIALLY AFFORDABLE	50,440	56,015	67,663	69,764	80,335	105,497	96,581	86,351	72,187	97,708
FULLY AFFORDABLE	42,957	46,726	48,355	58,262	68,399	100,011	94,254	85,692	83,877	73,848
SENIOR HOUSING	10,066	12,288	9,835	10,262	12,396	13,444	10,398	10,400	13,200	15,788
SINGLE-FAMILY RENTAL	7,617	8,059	12,098	19,698	37,872	45,932	53,323	46,041	25,518	12,092
TOTAL	**376,520**	**399,641**	**448,346**	**420,062**	**530,579**	**697,099**	**650,088**	**490,362**	**444,343**	**455,442**

Following peak-level completions in 2024, most multifamily subsectors are experiencing a sizable drop-off in units completed in 2026, with even fewer expected in 2027, according to Yardi Matrix. Total completions are expected to hover in the mid-400,000 range through 2028.

'Financing is currently the most significant obstacle to new development. Many projects that would have been feasible in 2021 simply do not pencil today.'

DOUG RESSLER, YARDI MATRIX CETRARUDDY

REGIONAL ACCENTS: MULTIFAMILY VARIES ACROSS THE MAP

The U.S. multifamily market doesn't paint a uniform picture, but instead varies by region and state.

Larger metro areas and markets served by larger builders have seen the biggest drops in activity in recent years, according to NAHB. For smaller metros and rural areas, the multifamily permit share rose from 29% to 34% from 2021 to 2026. "This shift in market activity has benefited smaller apartment builders in relatively smaller markets," Dietz says.

Regionally, the Sun Belt, with strong if slowing economic growth and domestic migration, has been among the fastest-growing supply markets, which has led to weak occupancy and rent growth, Porter says. Rents have been declining the fastest in oversupplied markets such as Austin, Texas, Denver, and Fort Myers, Fla. In the first quarter of 2026, the Sun Belt markets saw the biggest rent declines, according to Ressler.

"Housing providers in the South continue to lower rents in order to lease up historic levels of multifamily homes delivered over the past few years,

while lower population growth and job growth are also contributing to weaker apartment demand and lower rent growth in many markets," says Christopher Bruen, Senior Director of Research and Chief Economist, NMHC.

There's a predictable cycle at work, Dillman notes. As growth attracts more capital and investment, "supply waves temporarily overwhelm even robust demand," he says. This is the case in some of the fastest-growing metros such as Austin and Nashville.

The Sun Belt markets that will thrive, Dillman notes, are the ones less reliant on international migration and more insulated from the immigration slowdown. These include Charlotte and Raleigh, N.C., and San Antonio.

'The long-term forecast for housing is dependent on two factors: productivity growth and demographic change. All other variables will be footnotes.'

ROBERT DIETZ, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS

In the near term, the best rental markets include Midwestern cities such as Chicago, Columbus, Ohio, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Mo., and the Twin Cities, according to Ressler. With limited new construction, stable employment, better affordability, and less concession pressure, "the Midwest has quietly become the strongest rent-growth region in the country," he says. Porter agrees that many Midwestern markets will show strong rent growth over the next several years.

Gateway markets such as New York and San Francisco, and supply-constrained Northeast markets, also look to fare well. Strong rent growth in San Francisco and New York follows lower construction volumes and high barriers to development. Given demand from the tech sector, Northern California could be a future boom market, Porter says. "Gateway markets have transitioned from laggards to leaders," Ressler says.

Emerging secondary markets—such as Boise, Idaho, Huntsville, Ala., and Savannah, Ga.—are experiencing population growth and relatively affordable rent-to-income ratios that sustain renter demand, according to Dillman. Future boom markets—such as Indianapolis, Oakland, Calif., and Phoenix—have compelling demographic and economic fundamentals but also have a supply overhang muting near-term rent growth, Dillman says.

"For many markets around the country, the next several years will be a normalization period as they dig out from the massive amount of supply in recent years," Porter says. "Effective rent growth will return, but slowly."

LUXURY, MARKET-RATE, AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Most of the new multifamily supply has been in the luxury subsector. For these buildings, "the outlook is mixed," Ressler says.

On the upside, luxury developments typically see longer-term renter demand driven by high homeownership costs. On the downside, with so much new construction concentrated in Class A, especially in the Sun Belt, this subsector is more exposed to oversupply risks. Some luxury buildings have been offering significant concessions, such as two months of free rent.

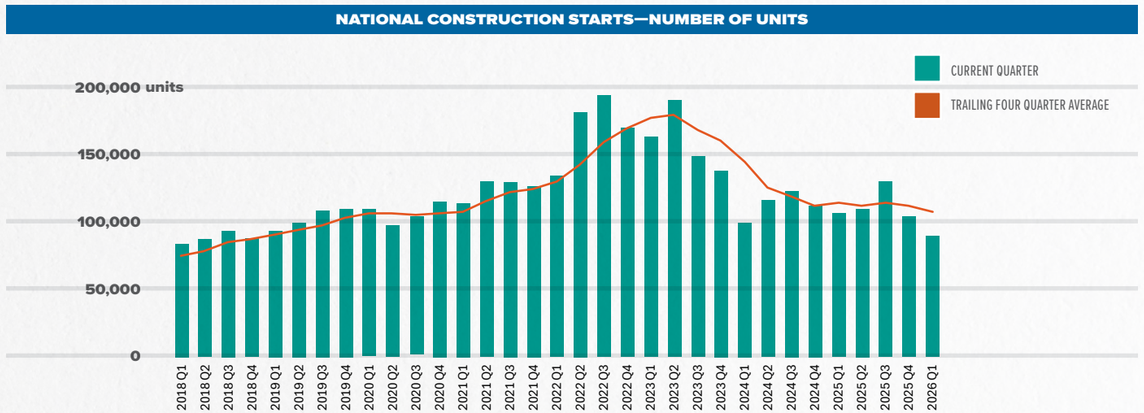
By contrast, market-rate (Class B and C) buildings have seen a substantial pullback. Market-rate rental completions fell by one-third from 2025 to 2026—from 395,532 to 261,878 units, according to Yardi Matrix, which predicts this subsector will drop to 249,561 in 2027 and 256,006 in 2028.

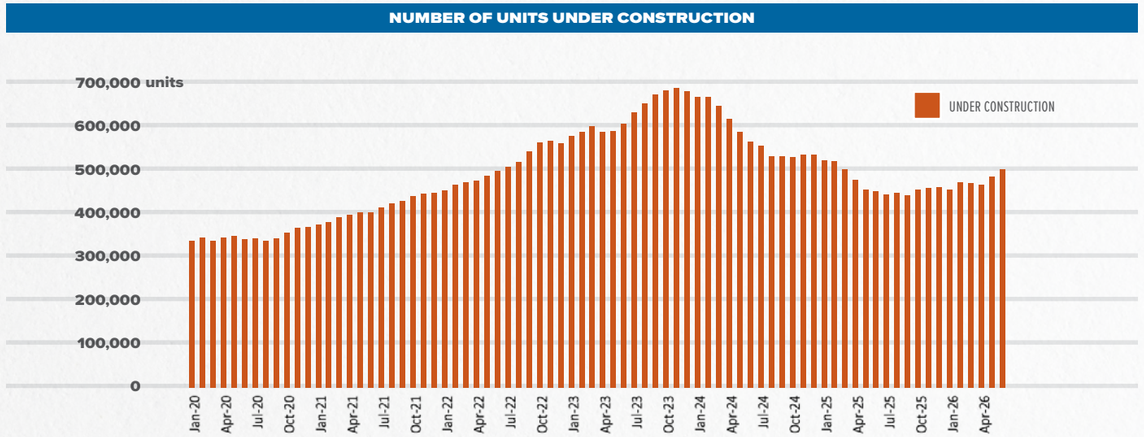
The concessions offered by luxury developments have had a chain reaction: As some market-rate renters move into luxury buildings, they leave market-rate properties with higher vacancies. So these properties, in turn, have had to offer concessions and cut rents to attract or keep their residents, particularly in the Sun Belt. As Porter says, "Market-rate housing has been challenged by some of the secondary effects of the new supply at the high end."

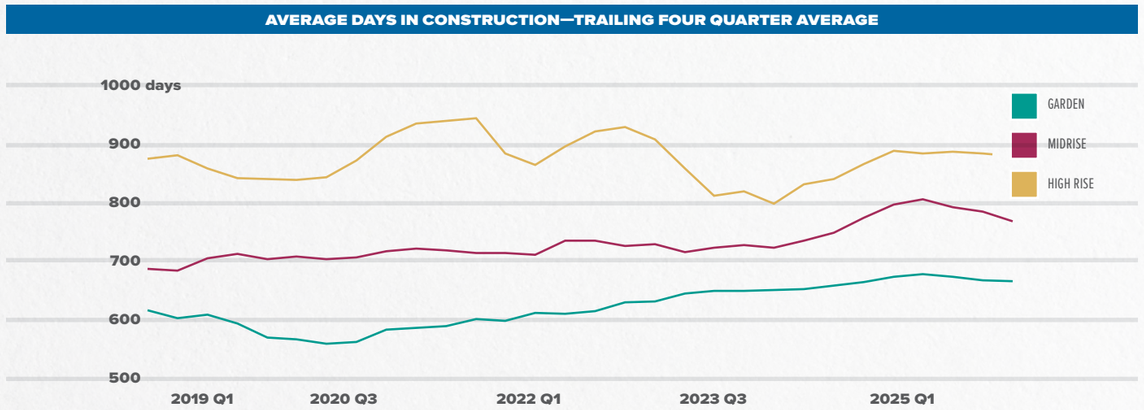
Affordable housing represents an outlier: Unlike much of the multifamily sector, affordable units remain undersupplied. Between 2014 and 2024, units renting for less than $1,000 per month in inflation-adjusted terms decreased by over 30%, while higher-rent units increased by 46%, according to JCHS. Following 94,254 units in 2025, fully affordable completions are forecasted to fall, and keep falling, over the next few years: from 85,692 in 2026 to 73,848 in 2028, per Yardi Matrix.

The issue for affordable housing isn't a lack of demand, but financing and policy complexity as well as reduced budgets for federal programs such as public housing. But the subsector has seen a legislative bright spot: The 2025 federal budget reconciliation law made changes to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit that could produce about 1.2 million additional affordable rental units by 2035, according to Novogradac.

Still, units for affordable to low- and moderate-income households represent "the most serious and intractable housing shortage," according JCHS. +







According to Yardi Matrix data, the number of multifamily starts hit an eight-year low in the first quarter of 2026, at about 90,000 units for the quarter. However, the most recent four-quarter average provided by Yardi shows a healthier market, above 100,000 units per quarter.

TOP 50 METRO MARKETS FOR MULTIFAMILY COMPLETIONS: YARDI MATRIX DATA

MARKET	2026		2027		2028		2029		2030		2031	
	Units	% Stock	Units	% Stock	Units	% Stock	Units	% Stock	Units	% Stock	Units	% Stock
NATIONAL	**490,362**	**2.7%**	**444,343**	**2.39%**	**455,442**	**2.39%**	**455,821**	**2.34%**	**460,278**	**2.3%**	**460,381**	**2.25%**
PHOENIX	21,500	5.21%	15,348	3.54%	11,123	2.47%	7,632	1.66%	9,609	2.05%	10,873	2.28%
BROOKLYN	13,972	7.88%	4,969	2.60%	10,095	5.14%	6,431	3.12%	6,212	2.92%	5,608	2.56%
ORLANDO	13,717	4.56%	9,749	3.10%	10,343	3.19%	9,043	2.70%	10,189	2.96%	10,669	3.01%
CHARLOTTE	13,716	5.39%	12,873	4.80%	11,464	4.08%	12,108	4.14%	10,338	3.39%	10,407	3.30%
AUSTIN	13,343	3.78%	11,582	3.16%	11,372	3.01%	11,287	2.90%	10,239	2.56%	10,857	2.64%
DENVER	10,907	2.96%	10,254	2.70%	11,474	2.95%	11,437	2.85%	12,427	3.01%	9,962	2.35%
NEW JERSEY—NORTHERN	10,447	3.62%	12,553	4.20%	13,186	4.23%	11,017	3.39%	11,426	3.40%	13,397	3.86%
DALLAS—NORTH	10,255	2.22%	13,478	2.86%	10,830	2.23%	9,943	2.01%	9,978	1.97%	11,166	2.16%
TAMPA—ST PETERSBURG—CLEARWATER	9,789	3.47%	11,602	3.97%	7,032	2.32%	12,188	3.92%	7,983	2.47%	8,200	2.48%
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA COAST	9,666	8.48%	11,105	8.98%	6,228	4.62%	8,001	5.67%	3,248	2.18%	3,674	2.41%
NASHVILLE	9,380	4.47%	8,892	4.06%	9,116	4.00%	6,633	2.80%	6,999	2.87%	7,974	3.18%
BOSTON	9,330	3.16%	4,871	1.60%	6,375	2.06%	10,228	3.24%	9,178	2.82%	9,010	2.69%
SEATTLE	9,055	2.71%	6,088	1.78%	7,737	2.22%	9,459	2.65%	9,011	2.46%	5,215	1.39%
ATLANTA—SUBURBAN	9,011	3.01%	8,141	2.64%	4,591	1.45%	7,381	2.30%	8,559	2.61%	5,944	1.77%
FORT WORTH	8,493	3.35%	7,302	2.79%	6,270	2.33%	6,705	2.43%	6,733	2.38%	7,488	2.59%
COLUMBUS	8,260	3.66%	8,582	3.67%	5,139	2.12%	5,410	2.18%	6,060	2.39%	6,277	2.42%
HOUSTON—WEST	8,091	1.46%	13,272	2.35%	10,514	1.82%	8,603	1.46%	8,496	1.43%	8,198	1.36%
SAN ANTONIO	8,061	3.21%	6,392	2.47%	5,900	2.22%	3,847	1.42%	3,959	1.44%	4,029	1.44%
LOS ANGELES—METRO	7,849	3.47%	4,157	1.77%	6,759	2.84%	6,193	2.53%	5,862	2.33%	6,455	2.51%
NEW JERSEY—CENTRAL	7,796	5.20%	2,630	1.67%	3,406	2.12%	4,305	2.63%	3,916	2.33%	6,212	3.61%
SAN DIEGO	7,305	3.36%	4,807	2.14%	5,416	2.36%	5,149	2.19%	5,951	2.48%	5,131	2.09%
MIAMI	7,216	3.85%	6,304	3.24%	13,478	6.71%	11,304	5.28%	10,490	4.65%	10,248	4.34%
SALT LAKE CITY	7,199	4.80%	5,239	3.34%	7,059	4.35%	7,179	4.24%	4,960	2.81%	3,751	2.07%
ATLANTA—URBAN	7,156	2.50%	4,593	1.57%	4,687	1.58%	5,877	1.95%	6,550	2.13%	7,759	2.47%
WASHINGTON DC—SUBURBAN MARYLAND	6,846	1.87%	3,961	1.06%	6,799	1.81%	5,480	1.43%	7,757	1.99%	7,881	1.99%
RALEIGH—DURHAM	6,561	3.07%	5,017	2.28%	8,905	3.95%	8,246	3.52%	8,321	3.43%	9,347	3.73%
DALLAS—SUBURBAN	6,230	2.42%	11,505	4.36%	5,632	2.04%	8,216	2.92%	7,586	2.62%	8,449	2.84%
BRIDGEPORT—NEW HAVEN	6,059	3.88%	4,075	2.51%	4,955	2.98%	7,365	4.30%	6,529	3.65%	6,910	3.73%
PHILADELPHIA—URBAN	6,016	4.42%	1,863	1.31%	3,030	2.10%	3,756	2.55%	3,628	2.41%	3,707	2.40%
NORTHERN VIRGINIA	5,326	1.92%	3,356	1.18%	8,651	3.02%	6,284	2.13%	6,555	2.17%	6,455	2.09%
HOUSTON—EAST	5,258	2.31%	4,375	1.88%	5,427	2.28%	5,614	2.31%	5,494	2.21%	4,574	1.80%
RICHMOND—TIDEWATER	5,185	1.93%	3,890	1.42%	5,486	1.98%	6,297	2.22%	6,422	2.22%	4,638	1.57%
KANSAS CITY	4,781	2.54%	5,320	2.76%	4,202	2.12%	5,935	2.93%	6,879	3.30%	6,797	3.16%
FORT LAUDERDALE	4,679	3.63%	3,990	2.99%	4,451	3.23%	4,906	3.45%	4,796	3.26%	5,793	3.82%
QUEENS	4,072	3.32%	2,146	1.70%	4,532	3.52%	2,990	2.24%	1,337	0.98%	3,719	2.70%
INLAND EMPIRE	4,063	2.35%	4,439	2.51%	1,933	1.07%	4,443	2.42%	4,000	2.13%	2,263	1.18%
SAVANNAH—HILTON HEAD	4,061	7.39%	2,817	4.78%	2,161	3.50%	2,575	4.03%	2,814	4.23%	2,945	4.25%
SAN FERNANDO VALLEY—VENTURA COUNTY	4,021	2.40%	3,102	1.81%	3,200	1.83%	3,676	2.07%	4,037	2.23%	3,989	2.15%
LAS VEGAS	3,954	1.95%	3,497	1.69%	4,152	1.97%	3,074	1.43%	3,463	1.59%	3,937	1.78%
MANHATTAN	3,944	1.17%	4,300	1.26%	10,342	2.98%	7,618	2.13%	6,399	1.76%	5,894	1.59%
SAN FRANCISCO—PENINSULA	3,817	2.61%	2,301	1.53%	5,382	3.53%	4,778	3.03%	5,021	3.09%	5,297	3.16%
PHILADELPHIA—SUBURBAN	3,698	1.51%	3,903	1.57%	4,404	1.74%	4,165	1.62%	4,141	1.58%	4,572	1.72%
CHARLESTON	3,676	3.50%	3,807	3.50%	4,624	4.11%	4,301	3.67%	4,430	3.65%	4,606	3.66%
ASHEVILLE	3,519	14.33%	1,679	5.98%	1,334	4.48%	2,356	7.58%	1,837	5.49%	1,951	5.53%
NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA	3,424	4.97%	2,934	4.06%	1,706	2.27%	1,620	2.11%	1,639	2.09%	4,133	5.15%
ST LOUIS	3,304	2.36%	1,287	0.90%	1,960	1.36%	2,763	1.89%	2,235	1.50%	1,326	0.88%
INDIANAPOLIS	3,179	1.50%	4,684	2.17%	3,852	1.75%	4,881	2.18%	4,645	2.03%	4,782	2.05%
SACRAMENTO	3,144	2.13%	2,861	1.90%	3,717	2.42%	3,777	2.40%	3,781	2.35%	2,980	1.81%
MILWAUKEE	3,117	3.03%	3,285	3.10%	1,375	1.26%	2,275	2.05%	2,428	2.15%	1,759	1.52%
CHICAGO—SUBURBAN	3,100	1.47%	4,206	1.97%	3,103	1.42%	3,415	1.55%	3,698	1.65%	3,106	1.36%



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TOP 10 TRENDS
IN OFFICE-TO-RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS



PHOTO: ROBERT DEITCHLER, COURTESY GENSLER

Office-to-Residential Conversions Are Here to Stay

Vacant office space is being transformed into more than 90,000 apartment units in cities across the country.

BY ROBERT CASSIDY, Contributing Editor

Converting office buildings to rental units is no longer a quirky idea prompted by the soaring office vacancy rates of the Covid pandemic era. Architecture giant Gensler estimates that 10% of gross office space in America's downtowns will be converted to residences, accounting for 20-50% of all new housing in U.S. cities.

RentCafe says 90,300 office-to-residential (O2R) units are in the pipeline, a 28% year-over-year bump. New York City leads with 16,348 O2R apartments in the works, followed by Washington, D.C. (8,479), Chicago (4,360), Los Angeles (4,340), and Dallas (3,966), according to the property management platform.

Investors are jumping on the bandwagon. TF Cornerstone and Dune Realty Estate Partners have formed a $1 billion joint venture devoted exclusively to O2R conversions. Their first effort (with Alterra Property Group): converting the long-vacant office floors of Philadelphia's historic Wanamaker Building into 622 luxury lofts. (Don't worry, the famed 287-ton Wanamaker Organ won't be touched.)

AEC firms are answering the call. Gensler, which reportedly has 10,000 O2R apartments in design around the world, led the conversion of Pearl House, a 1970s office tower at 160 Water Street, in Manhattan's Financial District, into 588 studio and one- and two-bedroom apartments.

CetraRuddy's Director of Architecture, Eugene Flotteron, AIA, says, "Our office has more than doubled the amount of conversions work over the past several years." The New York City-based firm has O2R projects in Manhattan, Charlotte, N.C., and Jersey City, N.J., and are scouting properties in Texas. Their latest: 61 Broadway, the $475 million transformation of the 1914 landmark Adams Express Building into 796 units for developers RXR and One Investment Management.

1. O2R CONVERSIONS ARE GETTING BIGGER, FASTER, AND CHEAPER.

As vacancy rates soared during the pandemic, pioneering developers took a chance on smaller, often century-old office buildings that yielded 50-100 units, at best.

Today, developers and their AEC teams are routinely converting modern high-rise office buildings into a thousand or more apartments. CetraRuddy

LEFT: The penthouse at Pearl House, Vanbarton Group's 588-unit O2R conversion in Manhattan. Gensler (architect), Gilsanz Murray Steficek (SE), FMC Associates (MEP), and Collaborative Construction Management (CM) repurposed remnant FAR near the elevator core to tack six additional floors onto the original 24-story structure.

TOP 10 TRENDS IN OFFICE-TO-RESIDENTIAL (O2R) CONVERSIONS

1. O2R conversions are getting bigger, faster, cheaper.
2. Projects are going hybrid—and niched.
3. O2Rs are benefiting from government incentives.
4. Cities are streamlining O2R entitlements and permits.
5. O2Rs are generating affordable housing.
6. AEC teams are solving O2Rs' "deep core" problem.
7. Neighborhood vitality is crucial for O2Rs.
8. O2Rs are tackling environmental and health concerns.
9. Developments need a coalition of interests to succeed.
10. O2R conversions are on track for a healthy run.





Ware Malcomb (architect, interior architect and designer, CE), Thornton Tomasetti (SE), RTM (MEP), Walker Consultants (exterior façade), GGLD (lighting), McKay Landscape Architects, Ramsey Historic Consultants, Leopardo Construction (construction engineering), and GMA Construction Group (GC/CM) converted 79 West Monroe, Chicago, into 117 apartments on the top seven floors of Jarvis Hunt's 1905 beaux-art Rector Building. PHOTO: JAMES JOHN JATEL STUDIO



Lobby at SoMA, a 1,320-unit O2R conversion at 25 Water Street near the tip of Manhattan. It was developed by GFP Real Estate, MetroLoft, and Rockwood Capital at a cost of $781 million. PHOTO: IVANE KATAMASHVILI, COURTESY CETRARUDDY

(architect, interior designer), Gilsanz Murray Steficek (SE), FMC Engineering (MEP), and Pavarini McGovern (GC) turned 25 Water Street (now known as SoMA), a 1.1 million-sf Manhattan office tower from the late 1960s, into 1,320 residences.

Gensler is redesigning the former Pfizer World Headquarters in Midtown Manhattan—an early 1900s 10-story structure at 219 East 42nd Street and a 1960s-era 33-story tower at 235 East 42nd—into 1,602 apartments. MetroLoft and David Werner Real Estate Investments received a $720 million construction loan for the enterprise. (A structural problem in the 235 East 42nd tower that was detected in July has been resolved, and work is proceeding.)

Office-to-rental conversions offer developers fast construction schedules. “We’re delivering like-new in half the time of wood frame and one-third of the time of a comparable new high-rise,” says Robert M. Seldin, CEO, Highland Square Holdings, who has converted five office buildings in Northern Virginia.

“We can be renting within 12 months of the first schematic design on smaller projects, maybe two years for a bigger project like SoMA,” says CetraRuddy’s Flotteron. “We’re bidding jobs way ahead of finishing CDs, and they’re coming in at $250-400/sf compared to $800/sf for new construction.”

2. O2Rs ARE GOING HYBRID—AND NICHED.

O2Rs don’t always have to be 100% residential. As part of Chicago’s LaSalle Street Reimagined initiative, Capri Interests’ $179.2 million conversion of 111 West Monroe Street will have a new hotel in addition to 345 apartments. The Prime Group will retain the two hotels and create 168 studio and one- and two-bedroom apartments in its $100 million reworking of the landmark 208 South LaSalle building.

The $130 million conversion of 161 West Washington Street, Chicago, will have 349 apartments on floors 3-18; the upper 24 will be retained for offices. Residential and office occupants will each have their own entrances. “We’ve found that the residents want to feel more private, and office occupants don’t want apartment tenants going through their lobby to dump their trash on move-in day,” says Project Designer Josh Rigali of SCB, the project’s design firm.

One of the more intriguing hybrids is the “flexidential” concept popularized by Highland Square Holdings’ Seldin. These properties, such as the 675-unit, $46 million Three Collective in Falls Church, Va. (in partnership with the Wolff Company), offer renters three options: 100% residential, 100% office (with no living space), and a live/work mix.

The flexidential scheme gives three groups of renters the opportunity to lease space in “well-constructed office buildings in good locations, with big windows, tall ceilings, more elevators, open floor plans, and ample parking,” says Seldin.

O2R teams are starting to target specific demographic niches. Urban Atlantic (developer), Lessard Design (architect), and Grunley Construction (GC) are converting two six-story office buildings in Fair Lakes,







PHOTO: DAN O'CONNOR, COURTESY LESSARD DESIGN

The Wolff Company, in partnership with Highland Square Holdings, was the developer and builder for Three Collective, the conversion of three 16-story towers in Falls Church, Va., into 675 "flexidential" units. Lessard Design (architect) and Private Label International (interiors) were the designers. A mini-bowling alley and an indoor dog park are among the 45,000 sf of amenities in the waste space around the elevator cores of the towers.

Va., 20 miles west of Washington, D.C., into 180 units for 55+ empty nesters. "They're used to having lots of space, so we're making the units larger than usual and providing a lot of storage room," says Chris Boone, Vice President at Lessard Design.

3. O2Rs ARE BENEFITING FROM A VARIETY OF GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES.

Cities are supporting O2Rs to help revitalize their not-so-toddlin' downtowns.

Boston grants O2R conversions a 75% reduction off the commercial property tax rate for up to 29 years. "The tax abatement is what gets these projects to the finish line," says John Weil, Head of O2R Conversions in the city's planning department.

Boston Pinnacle Properties completed the $5.1 million conversion of the historic Henry G. Dorr Building at 281 Franklin Street into 15 residences last September. Five more O2Rs are under construction; 10 others have been approved.

Property tax abatement is the sweetener in New York. The state's 467-m program grants up to a 90% tax abatement for 35 years to 02Rs from the Battery to 96th Street in Manhattan, provided they had secured permits by June 30 of this year; the abatement period was lowered to 30 years on July 1. "There was a rush to get projects that are even just 'thinking about it' to get their filing application in before the June 30 deadline," says CetraRuddy's Flotteron.

Tax increment financing is the tool of choice in Chicago. The city set aside $302 million in TIFs for six conversions in its LaSalle Street Reimagined initiative. Golub & Co. and American General Life Insurance Co. were awarded $57 million in TIFs for 161 West Washington/30 North LaSalle.

The first LaSalle Reimagined project to be completed, the Bellwether Residences (79 West Monroe), opened in September. Developer R2 Companies and Lagfin S.C.A. (owner) received $28 million in TIFs (plus $7.8 million in federal tax credits) on the $64.2 million conversion of the historic 14-story Rector Building.

The Bellwether offers 56 studios ($1,664/month market-rate rent), 54 one-bedroom ($2,384), and seven two-bedroom apartments ($4,887); 41 units (30%) were set aside for affordable rentals.

Riverside Investment and Development, AmTrust, and DL3 Realty were awarded $98 million in TIFs for 386 residences at 135 South LaSalle, which also qualified for $32 million in historic tax credit equity, plus a property tax reduction for landmark buildings from Cook County.

"No way these projects could be done without the TIFs and historic preservation tax breaks," says Golub & Co. Managing Principal Lee Golub. His firm applied for landmark designation for its property (completed in 1974) as soon as it passed the 50-year mark to be eligible for the historic tax credits and property tax reduction.

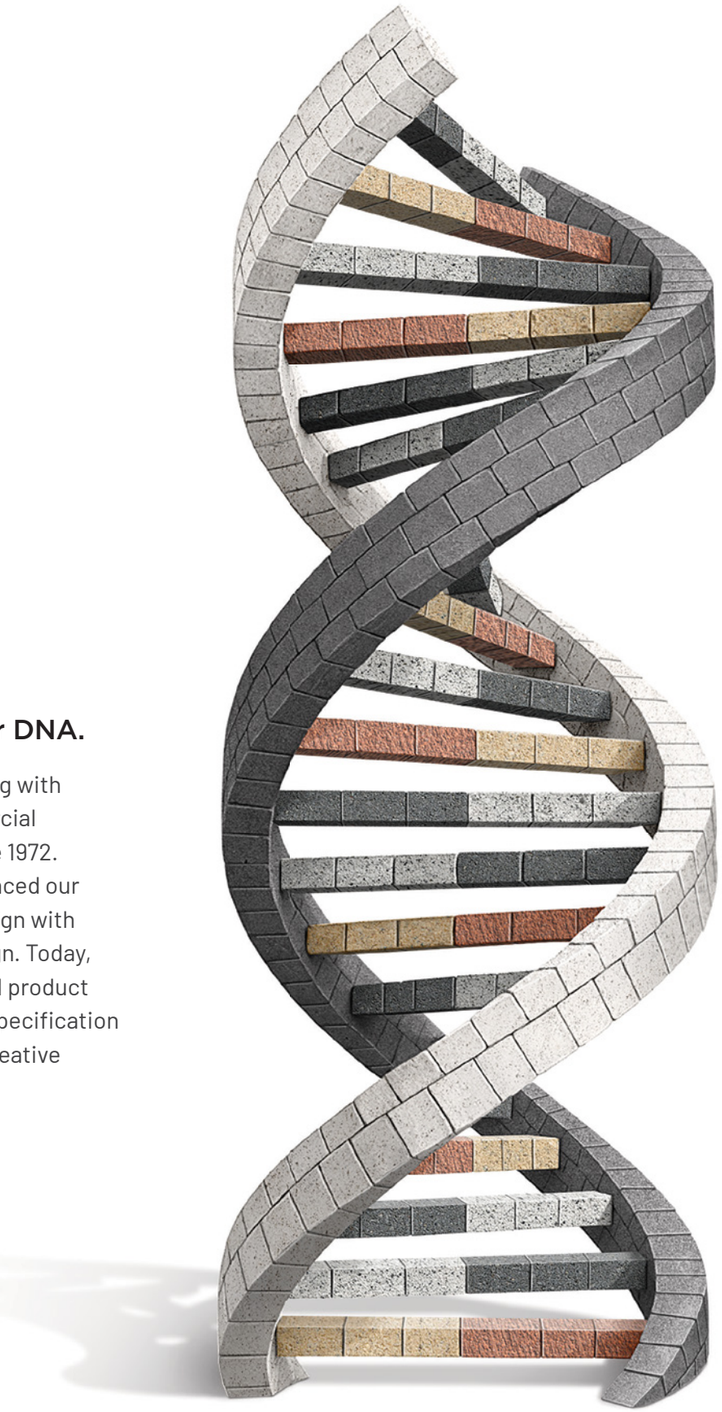
Not all subsidies work, however. San Francisco offers a waiver of its 5.5%-6% real property transfer

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tax for the first sale of an O2R, but "that hasn't been enough of an incentive so far," says Charles Bloszies, FAIA, SE, LEED AP, of the Office of Charles Bloszies. A new TIF program could spur O2Rs in downtown, he says.

Granting special treatment to O2R conversions is good public policy, argues Douglas Stockman, AIA, Director of Architecture, Helix Architecture + Design. "They restore vacant properties and require almost no additional investment by the city for utilities and infrastructure improvements," he says.

4. CITIES ARE STREAMLINING O2R ENTITLEMENTS AND PERMITS.

O2R approvals can be completed in six to nine months in Boston versus 18-24 months for new construction, says the planning department's Weil. "Expedited permitting and review is what developers told us they needed to make office conversions work," he says.

"With the city's streamlining service, we can get our permits in less than a year," says Philip Sima, CHPC, Co-founder of Balance Architects, which designed 281 Franklin Street and has three other O2Rs in Boston's pilot program.

Seattle exempts qualifying O2Rs from design review as part of its Downtown Activation Plan. "You submit a building permit and that's it," says JP Emery, AIA, NCARB, Lifestyle Studio Director in Gensler's Seattle office, which has four O2Rs in design. "That can save you a year on permitting." Seismic upgrades on O2R conversions can also be negotiated, he says.

Denver's Adaptive Reuse Pilot Program is targeting as much as three million sf of vacant office space, primarily in the Upper Downtown. O2R developers get streamlined permitting, building code and zoning flexibility, and access to dedicated project coordinators to convert buildings older than 30 years and 50% or more vacant.

"We do site review concurrently with building review, which compresses the schedule," says Jennifer Ramsey, Adaptive Reuse Senior Development Project Manager in Denver's Planning Department. Her office provides O2R teams with a project roadmap, a list of all the requirements for each application, and a Gantt chart of all government authorities having jurisdiction over their project.

"We also provide advice about how to deal with late-stage regulatory or procedural barriers, and we can help them get carbon credits to fulfill the city's energy code," she says.

Residential entrance at 135 South LaSalle, part of Chicago's LaSalle Street Reimagined initiative. SCB (architect) heads the team of TGRWA (SE), McGuire Engineers (MEP), and W. E. O'Neil Construction (GC) on the $242 million conversion of the 1934 Field Building, which was designed by Graham, Anderson, Probst & White. RENDERING: COURTESY SCB



PHOTO: KELLY CALLEWAERT, COURTESY HELIX ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN



Operable windows were installed in the reglazing of Mac Development's 62-unit ARC on Armour, in Kansas City, Mo. Helix Architecture + Design led the AEC team: Bob D. Campbell & Co. (SE), Taliaferro & Browne (CE), Lankford | Fendler & Associates (MEP), Confluence (landscape architect), Jeff Boyle (codes), and Centric Construction Group (GC).

In Calgary, Alb., the building department helps property owners and their AEC teams expedite O2Rs. "Developers tell us this hands-on service is almost as important as any financial incentives the city could offer," says Thom Mahler, MCIP, Director of Downtown Strategy. "Offering concierge service is one of the most cost-effective things cities can do to encourage office conversions."

5. O2Rs ARE GENERATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

Most cities that provide subsidies to O2R developers require a percentage of the new apartments to be set aside for lower-income renters. In New York, projects getting 467-m abatements must devote 25% of units to affordable rentals. Denver requires owners to keep 10% of units for renters at 60% of AMI or 15% of units for those at 70% of AMI.

Boston mandates 17% of units to be devoted to renters at 60% of AMI, plus 3% at fair market rent for holders of housing vouchers. That could eventually produce 284 affordable rentals out of 1,517 total O2R units. Chicago's six LaSalle Street Reimagined projects will yield 538 affordable apartments—more than 30% of the 1,765 total.

In Alexandria, Va., all 377 apartments, including 235 two- and three-bedroom units, at 5001 Eisenhower Avenue, an abandoned U.S. Army Materiel Command building, will be leased at affordable rates. Developer Stonebridge is partnering with the city and Amazon Housing Equity Fund, which contributed $33.9 million in a subordinate loan (of $105 million in construction costs) to guarantee the apartments will remain affordable for 99 years. Lessard Design is the architect; Clark Construction Group, the GC.

'We're bidding jobs way ahead of finishing CDs, and they're coming in at $250-400/sf compared to $800/sf for new construction.'

EUGENE FLOTTERON, AIA, CETRARUDDY

6. AEC TEAMS ARE SOLVING O2R'S "DEEP CORE" PROBLEM.

Modern office buildings have floor plates that can run as much as 200 feet from the façade to the elevator core, but "you don't want anything deeper than 70 feet in one direction" to get natural light into the apartments, says Helix's Stockman.

AEC teams are putting the vacant space near the core to good use. The $94 million conversion of the 10-story landmark Slater Building at 390 Main Street, Worcester, Mass., will have small TV/reading lounges and storage rooms in the remnant space on each residence floor.

"Tenants tell us they appreciate having a communal space just for their floor," says Scott Maenpaa, Project Manager, The Architectural Team, whose firm is heading the work for WinnDevelopment.

At its two LaSalle Street conversions in Chicago, "We're clawing back the dead space for elevators and restrooms for tenant storage or work-from-home



Ground-floor lounge at Midland Lofts, a historic 1927 building that at various times served as the headquarters of the NCAA and AMC Theatres. Helix Architecture + Design (architect) anchored the team of RD Jones + Associates (interior design), Leigh + O'Kane (SE), Taliaferro & Browne (CE), FSC Inc. (MEP/codes), Avant Acoustics, Heritage Consulting Group (historic tax credits), MKEC (landscape architect), and Crossland Construction (GC) on the $37 million conversion. PHOTO: NATE SHEETS, COURTESY HELIX ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN



A kitchen at award-winning 281 Franklin Street, the first to be completed under Boston's O2R pilot program. Balance Architects (architect), Forest Structural Engineering (SE), Zade Engineering (MEP), R.W. Sullivan Engineering (codes), Epsilon Associates (historic tax credits), and Drack Construction Management (GC) teamed up on the 15-unit project. PHOTO: MICHAEL MUCCIACCIO, COURTESY BALANCE ARCHITECTS

'You don't need as many elevators in residential, so we decommission them or use them for trash removal.'

STEVE HUBBARD, AIA, SCB

space," says SCB's Steve Hubbard, AIA, Associate Principal and Senior Designer. "You don't need as many elevators in residential, so we decommission them or use them for trash removal."

CetraRuddy turned the dead space at SoMA into 100,000 sf of additional residential floor space. "At first we thought we could only do a six-story overbuild, but further study showed that the zoning would allow additional FAR for a 10-story braced overbuild, making it 32 stories," says Flotteron. "That allowed us to reach our goal of 800,000 net sf."

7. NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY IS CRUCIAL FOR O2Rs.

One problem for traditional 9-to-5 office districts like Chicago's LaSalle Street is the scarcity of neighborhood amenities. "There's nothing down there, no quality of life for the very people they want to attract," says Stephanie Turner, a broker with Jameson Sotheby's International Realty. The nearest grocery store is an 18-minute walk.

The city has awarded $2.1 million in grants (from a $5 million fund) as part of its LaSalle Street Reimagined initiative, primarily to help restaurants and small businesses make capital improvements to stay in operation. Cindy Chan Roubik, LEED AP, Deputy Commissioner in the Department of Planning and Development, notes that both 135 South LaSalle and 105 West Adams plan to have small-format grocery stores.

"It's a chicken-and-egg thing," says Chan Roubik. "When you bring residential units downtown, you're going to have more vitality on weekends and after 5pm, and that will shore up retail and the whole economy of downtown."

Boston requires O2Rs to retain existing ground-floor retail. "That's why we still have David's Instant Shoe Repair and the Mediterranean Grill in the 281 Franklin building," says the planning department's Weil.

Some O2R projects have capitalized on having built-in neighborhood life. In Kansas City, Mo., the Cordish Cos.' 135-unit Midland Lofts lies on Baltimore Avenue, "a beautiful tree-lined street right on the streetcar line" in the city's popular Power & Light District, says Helix's Stockman. "There's a family-owned

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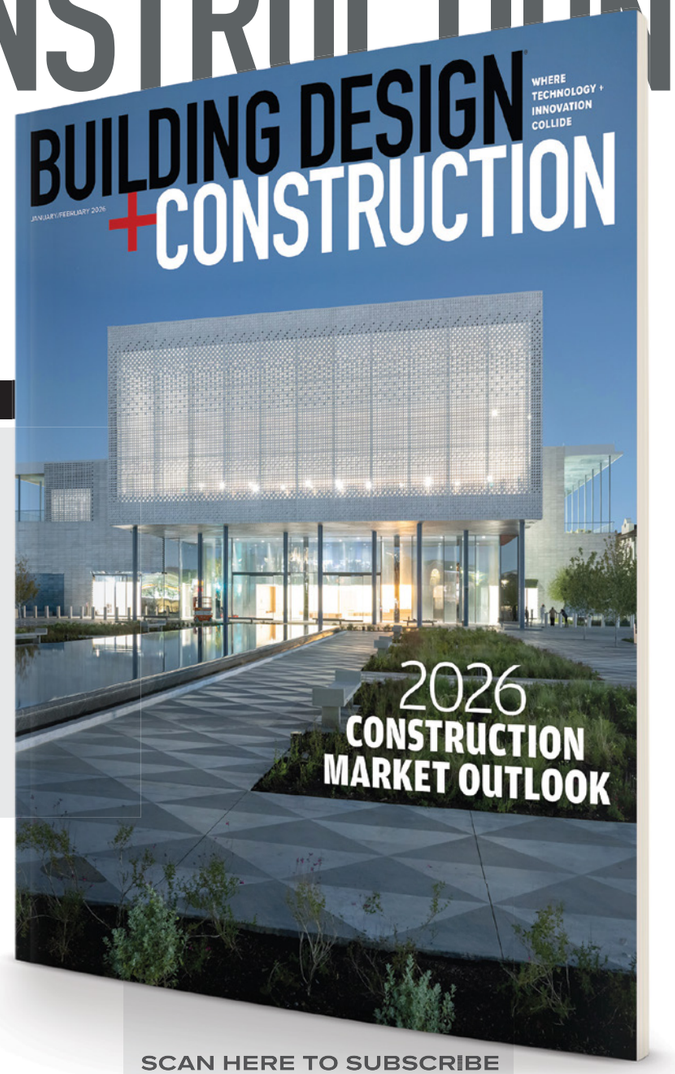
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PHOTO: ED WONSEK, COURTESY THE ARCHITECTURAL TEAM

One of four courtrooms that were preserved in the conversion of the historic Worcester (Mass.) County Courthouse into Courthouse Lofts. The Architectural Team (architect, interior designer) headed the $70 million, 118-unit project for owner Trinity Financial, along with DM Berg Consultants (SE), Petersen Engineering (MEP/FP), The Public Archaeology Laboratory (historic consultant), DMLA (landscape architect), and Tocci Building Corp. (GC).

grocery store, restaurants, health clubs, and retail."

The MGM Casino and 251-key hotel served as anchors for ThirtyOne Elm, a 74-unit conversion of a historic 1892 office building in Springfield, Mass. "The casino brought vibrancy to the neighborhood, and the residences sold out like lightning," says Maenpaa, whose firm designed the $51 million venture.

8. O2Rs ARE TACKLING ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH CONCERNS.

SCB, the design firm for 161 West Washington, is adding insulated glass and heat pumps for the residences. "The energy savings will be huge," says Sara Beardsley, FAIA, LEED AP, CPHC, Associate Principal and Director of Technical Design.

SCB was the architect for the conversion of Chicago's monumental Tribune Building to 162 condominiums five years ago. "We were able to save the equivalent of an entire new residential building's worth of embodied carbon"—nearly 30 million kg of CO_2e—and lowered operational carbon emissions by 40%, says Beardsley.

Vanbarton Group (developer) says it saved about 20,000 metric tons of embodied carbon versus new construction for Pearl House, which now exceeds the city's 2030 energy guidelines thanks in part to the use of decentralized heat pumps.

Boston allows O2R projects to skip the city's Passive House requirements but "we do ask them to meet the state's stretch code for green energy—and to put in bike storage rooms," says Weil. O2Rs over 100,000 sf don't have to be LEED certified but must submit a LEED scorecard. "Most of them would reach LEED Silver or Gold fairly easily," he says.

A key health concern for O2Rs has to do with providing fresh air into living spaces in office buildings with conventional glazing, says Martin Aaron Goldstein, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP, Managing Principal, Venture Architecture. Until recently, Denver's building code required operable windows in residences, but thanks to a code change, "you can use a ventilation system for makeup air in office conversions, so you don't have to reglaze the building with operable windows," he says.

For the 62-unit ARC on Armour, the $11.7 million conversion of a late-1940s American Red Cross building in Kansas City, Mo., "We had arched columns with beautiful floor-to-ceiling glass on the north and south sides, and we installed operable windows in the new glazing system to get light and air into the living spaces," says Helix's Stockman.

9. O2R CONVERSIONS NEED A COALITION OF INTERESTS TO SUCCEED.

"In Denver, we have strong advocates, both public and private, for adaptive reuse," says the city's Jennifer Ramsey. A business group, The Downtown Denver Partnership, worked with the planning department, the downtown development authority, and the downtown urban renewal authority to set the guidelines for the city's adaptive reuse pilot program. "That kind of coalition gets all the players aligned," says Ramsey.

When the city of Calgary, Alb., got hit with the oil bust of 2014 and faced a 32% downtown vacancy rate, the city council set up a committee of property owners, brokers, AEC firms, and the city's assessment department to identify the best ways to encourage cautious building owners to convert their properties to residential use. "At the time, nobody believed office conversions could be done, especially in Canada," says Downtown Strategy Director Mahler.

The city's Economic Development Agency brought in a team led by Steven Paynter, OAA, Gensler's Regional Program Director, to identify potentially viable properties. Building owners get CA$75/sf from a CA$205 million adaptive reuse fund to convert downtown office space to residential.

Seven projects totaling 598 units have been completed; another 14 in development could bring the total to 2,628 apartments. The biggest is Timbercreek Alternatives and Aspen Properties' CA$160 million conversion of the 27-story Palliser One edifices into 424 apartments.

The key to the program's success: "We have a supportive city council, and we used the best intelligence of our real estate and development sector to develop it," says Mahler.

10. O2R CONVERSIONS ARE ON TRACK FOR A HEALTHY RUN.

The immediate prospects for O2R conversions look good, in part because $213 billion in low-interest loans on office buildings will come due at the end of this year, according to Doug Ressler, Yardi Systems' Manager of Business Intelligence. As a result, he says, owners of distressed office properties who are holding that paper may turn to O2R conversions to settle their debts.

They will benefit from the expertise of developers, AEC teams, and municipalities across the country who have proven that office-to-residential conversion can be a feasible new path toward meeting the demand for rental apartments of all types—luxury, market-rate, and affordable—in America's downtowns. +



PHOTO: ED WONSEK, COURTESY THE ARCHITECTURAL TEAM

WinnDevelopment converted ThirtyOne Elm, Springfield, Mass., into 74 residences. The Architectural Team (architect, interior designer) worked with Odeh Engineers (SE), R Levesque Associates (CE), Peterson Engineering (MEP/FP), The Public Archaeology Laboratory (historic consultant), Code Red Consultants (codes), and Fontaine Brothers (GC) on the project.

TOP 10 TRENDS
IN MARKET-RATE MULTIFAMILY RENTAL HOUSING



RENDERINGS COURTESY CORGAN

To compete in the current climate, multifamily developments are finding ways to distinguish themselves from the pack.

BY NOVID PARSI, Contributing Editor

After a historic supply surge, new market-rate multifamily developments have sharply declined. From 2025 to 2026, market-rate rental completions plummeted 33% from 395,532 to 261,878 units, according to Yardi Matrix, which forecasts a further drop to 249,561 in 2027 and 256,006 in 2028. "The massive wave of new supply completions from the 2022-24 construction boom is currently still being absorbed," says Nikolas Fowler, Director of Division Operations at Hoar Construction.

The picture varies widely across the country. Markets that saw a lot of growth in recent years, such as the Sun Belt, have since had "meager growth and persistent concessions," says Bryan Lamb, Executive Vice President, Multifamily at construction firm Ryan Companies. By contrast, markets with little new development in the past few years, such as established metros like Chicago, New York, and San Francisco, "are on fire with rent growth exceeding 5%," Lamb says.

While oversupply in some markets has led to falling starts, the pendulum likely will start to swing back as renter demand again spurs new development and rent growth, industry experts say. Amid persistently high homeownership costs, demand for market-rate apartments will endure.

"After a historic development cycle, several geographies are working through a wave of new supply," says Courtney Field, Project Executive at construction company Swinerton. "That has created near-term pressure on rents, occupancy, and concessions, but we view it largely as a supply-cycle issue rather than a fundamental lack of housing demand."

But for now, multifamily developers are facing higher financing and construction costs, slower rent growth, and residents with more choices. "In that context, simply delivering another apartment building is no longer enough," says Jan Steingahs, Principal and Practice Group Manager, Living at engineering and design firm Arcadis.

To compete in the current climate, multifamily developments are finding ways to distinguish themselves from the pack. Here are 10 top trends in market-rate multifamily rental housing.

LEFT: In Dallas, The Juniper, a seven-story, 233-unit development designed by Corgan and built by OHT Partners, will offer a third-floor amenity deck with lounge seating, as well as a half-acre private park and direct access to the Santa Fe Trail.

TOP 10 TRENDS IN THE MARKET-RATE MULTIFAMILY RENTAL HOUSING MARKET

1. Amenities that actually get used
2. The building-neighborhood relationship
3. Work-from-home 2.0
4. A fitness room is no longer enough
5. Outdoor spaces as connectors to both nature and people
6. Ever-growing tech demands
7. Sustainability: from nice-to-have to must-have
8. An elevated look without the elevated price tag
9. Combating costs with efficient design and construction
10. Adaptive reuse expands





The amenity deck (above) and a different view of the half-acre public park (top) at The Juniper, in Dallas. The project is an example of how outdoor spaces can help residents feel connected to nature and to each other, delivering impact without adding to the capital cost of a building.





Renderings depict the lobby and interior public spaces at The Juniper in Dallas.
COURTESY CORGAN

1. AMENITIES THAT ACTUALLY GET USED

In recent years, many market-rate multifamily developers have tried to differentiate their projects by adding more luxury-style amenities, experts say. But with rising financial and supply pressures, the focus now is on high-use amenities that justify their investment. A big clubroom isn't of much value if it sits empty.

"Today, every square foot must demonstrate its contribution to resident value, operating performance, or long-term asset resilience," Steingahs says. Amenity quantity is giving way to experience quality, he adds. "Ultimately, utilization matters more than spectacle."

The "amenity arms race," as more than one source puts it, is entering a different phase. It's shifting "from large, generic amenity spaces to more intentional, flexible, and frequently used environments," says Stephen Lohr, Principal and Multifamily Sector Leader at architecture firm Corgan.

On the way out: undifferentiated clubrooms, oversized lounges, massive conference facilities, and single-purpose rooms. On the way in: flexible spaces and work lounges, smaller social zones, maker or hobby spaces, and reservable focus rooms that can support various uses.

Highly utilized amenities include, for example, package and delivery rooms, bike storage, and pet facilities such as dog washes, dog parks, and small amenities that serve the needs of both animals and their humans—such as with pet spas and washing stations adjacent to spaces where pet owners can socialize. "This is becoming less of a trend and more of a standard," Brandon Townsend, Senior Principal at architecture and engineering firm Stantec, says of pet amenities.

To ensure their use and value, amenities should reflect the needs and wants of the local market. For San Francisco's 16-story Quincy, designed by SCB Architects and built by Swinerton, the hospitality-focused amenities were tailored to the local tech workforce, Field says. Renters can access coworking spaces, below-grade parking for 225 bicycles, and a pet washing station. Within two months of its May 2025 opening, 50% of Quincy's 501 apartments were leased.

"Different markets call for different solutions, but the goal is the same: invest in features residents will use and value," Field says.

2. THE BUILDING-NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONSHIP

Increasingly, both renters and developers are thinking not just about a standalone apartment building but also about everything around it.

Especially as tenants rent for longer, they're considering the development's surrounding ecosystem—including transit, employment, restaurants, groceries, parks, childcare, healthcare, and public spaces. These elements "can create more enduring value than another private amenity room," Arcadis' Steingahs says. "You cannot solve a weak relationship to the neighborhood by adding another lounge."

In an economic environment where developers cannot keep adding more high-end amenities, they're assessing the amenities already offered beyond their building borders. "If the surrounding neighborhood already offers excellent restaurants, parks, fitness facilities, coworking environments, and cultural venues, recreating those uses inside the building may simply add cost without creating meaningful differentiation," Steingahs says.

In downtown Oceanside, Calif., the planned 801 Mission, a seven-story, 230-unit building designed by KTGY, will be located just blocks from the beach. The location will appeal especially to young renters seeking an active lifestyle, according to Darin J. Schoolmeester, Principal and Director of KTGY's High Density Multifamily Design Studio. And in San Francisco, the planned 10 South Van Ness, a 67-story, 950-unit tower designed by Arcadis, will overlook a rapid bus line and an underground light-rail station, providing renters with easily accessible commuting options.

Along with the focus on a development's environs, there's a growing emphasis on walkability and street presence. Buildings are being placed closer to the street; some are offering ground-floor units with small private yards. Materials such as brick, stone, and expansive glazing create a warm residential character and an engaging architectural streetscape. "Developers are increasingly emphasizing pedestrian-oriented design," says Robin Bellerby, Chief Architectural Officer at Humphreys & Partners Architects.

'Today, every square foot must demonstrate its contribution to resident value, operating performance, or long-term asset resilience.'

JAN STEINGAHS, Arcadis

Projects anchored by walkable retail, public green spaces, and vibrant neighborhoods are leasing up faster and keeping renters longer, according to Terry Simon, Division President, Clark Construction. "The assets outperforming market averages in both urban and suburban locations are those integrated into developments with an established sense of place," Simon says.

3. WORK-FROM-HOME 2.0

In 2025, 35% of employed people did some or all of their work remotely, up from 33% the year before,



In downtown Oceanside, Calif., the planned 801 Mission, a seven-story, 230-unit building designed by KTGY, will be located just blocks from the beach. The location will appeal especially to young renters seeking an active lifestyle. COURTESY KTGY





To ensure their use and value, amenities should reflect the needs and wants of the local market. For San Francisco's 16-story Quincy development, designed by SCB and built by Swinerton, the hospitality-focused amenities were tailored to the local tech workforce. COURTESY SWINERTON

according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Hybrid work, it seems, is here to stay.

With work-from-home now an integral part of life, residents want more workspace options than their dining tables or a single, shared coworking space. "One of the biggest trends is the continued influence of remote and hybrid work on unit planning and amenity design," says Corgan's Lohr. "Renters want homes that can accommodate a workday without making the entire unit feel like an office."

Inside units, successful designs offer built-in work niches and flexible spaces that can shift easily between living and working. And after years of shrinking footprints, work-from-home is "pushing unit sizes back up," says Ryan's Lamb.

In communal areas, various work-supporting environments include private and semi-private spaces such as micro coworking nooks, quiet rooms, reservable meeting rooms, library-style lounges, phone booths, and outdoor work areas—all outfitted with abundant power outlets and charging stations, as well as adequate acoustic separation. "At the community level, the old model of one large coworking room is being replaced by a more varied mix of smaller, higher-performing spaces, so residents can choose the level of privacy and focus they need," Lohr says.

In Fort Worth, Texas, Westside Village, a Corgan-designed building that broke ground in 2026, will enable residents to work from home in two-story live-work units. In addition to traditional ground-floor retail, these perimeter-wrapping units will provide retail space on the first level and living space above.

4. A FITNESS ROOM IS NO LONGER ENOUGH

As renters spend more time at home, their apartment buildings must satisfy more of their needs, including their wellness. A fitness room with a rack of weights and a few pieces of cardio equipment no longer suffices. "Wellness spaces now tend to be designed to support everyday routines rather than making an impact on a one-time leasing tour," says Stantec's Townsend.

Multifamily's trending wellness-related amenities include rooftop pools, indoor pools, cold and hot plunge pools, steam rooms, massage rooms, saunas, pickleball courts, golf simulators, and bowling alleys. "There is a larger focus on hospitality-level services as standard," says Jared Donnamiller, Senior Vice President, Plumbing Engineering at engineering and design firm WSP.

In Fort Myers, Fla., Trailside at Dia Crossing, an eight-building, 350-unit community being built by Ryan Companies, will offer a spa adjacent to the fitness center with a cold plunge pool and sauna. In Houston, Starling, a planned 344-unit community designed by Stantec, will include "a gym that's good enough to cancel your current membership," Townsend says. In addition to weights and cardio equipment, Starling will provide infrared saunas, a cold plunge pool, and a landscaped pool deck. And in San Antonio, the 300-unit 300 Main, designed by Stantec and built by Rogers-O'Brien Construction, has a resort-style pool deck along with indoor and outdoor fitness areas.

Wellness now encompasses a more holistic approach to both physical and mental well-being. Buildings boast biophilic design such as green walls, as well as abundant natural light, acoustic comfort, indoor air quality, and meditation or quiet rooms.

"Residents are spending more time at home and placing greater value on environments that help them recharge and support healthy routines without leaving the property," Corgan's Lohr says.

5. OUTDOOR SPACES AS CONNECTORS TO BOTH NATURE AND PEOPLE

Outdoor spaces help residents feel connected to nature and to each other, delivering impact without the capital cost of a building. "Residents continue to place significant value on well-designed outdoor amenities," says Humphreys's Bellerby.

Multifamily developments are creating courtyards, terraces, walking paths, trails that link to natural areas, and dog parks. Outdoor gathering areas are being designed for both fitness and dining, with grills and firepits. And rooftop decks and lounges are providing stunning views while also enabling communal experiences.

In Dallas, The Juniper, a seven-story, 233-unit development designed by Corgan and built by OHT Partners, will offer a third-floor amenity deck with lounge seating, as well as a half-acre private park and direct access to the Santa Fe Trail. The Ryan-built Trailside at Dia Crossing, located beside a 30-acre nature preserve, will feature a central park and a kayak launch to Florida's Estero Bay.

'One of the biggest trends is the continued influence of remote and hybrid work on unit planning and amenity design. Renters want homes that can accommodate a workday without making the entire unit feel like an office.'

STEPHEN LOHR, Corgan

Outdoor areas needn't be large to be effective. Even pocket parks can help create a strong sense of community. "Outdoor micro-amenities continue to deliver high resident engagement at relatively low cost," says KTGY's Schoolmeester.

Multifamily design is also blurring the inside-outside divide. Folding or sliding glass walls merge indoor and outdoor spaces. And flexible indoor-outdoor loggias offer covered outdoor patios with commercial-grade ceiling fans and grilling stations, says Hoar's Fowler.

6. EVER-GROWING TECH DEMANDS

Renters' expectations for their buildings' tech offerings are only getting higher. They're looking for tech that provides greater convenience, efficiency,

COURTESY KTGY



A market hall and restaurant anchor the retail plaza at The Orchard, Santa Barbara, Calif. Designed by KTGY (architect), Stantec (civil engineer), and CJM-LA (landscape) for developer The Oak Creek Company, the mixed-used development includes a mix of housing types, such as senior housing, affordable multifamily, and for sale townhomes.



For the 287-unit Cordo in Charlotte, N.C., scheduled for a 2027 completion, Swinerton used mass timber, cross-laminated timber (CLT) decking, and prefabricated wall systems to take advantage of repetition, offsite fabrication, and efficient field sequencing.
COURTESY SWINERTON

and security. "Technology has become a baseline expectation rather than a premium differentiator," says Corgan's Lohr.

"Property-wide high-speed internet is essential," says Brett Bunke, Vice President of Architecture at Ryan. It's also just the starting point. Renters want smart thermostats and other smart home features, keyless entry systems, mobile app-based access control, package-management systems, USB wall outlets, and resident communication platforms. "These technologies improve both convenience and operational efficiency," says Humphreys' Bellerby.

With some multifamily buildings receiving hundreds of deliveries a day, parcel storage is now a necessity. There's been an uptick in smart package rooms that notify residents when their deliveries arrive, reducing the time that management teams have to spend dealing with these items, Townsend observes. In addition to smart lockers, some package rooms now include refrigerators to store delivered groceries, Bunke notes.

Smart-access systems, AI-enabled package management, and EV-ready parking infrastructure all fall into "baseline expectations rather than luxury features," says KTGY's Schoolmeester.

7. SUSTAINABILITY: FROM NICE-TO-HAVE TO MUST-HAVE

Most multifamily projects now incorporate some sustainable design and construction strategies, says Humphreys' Bellerby. "Sustainability measures have moved from optional to expected."

Evolving building materials support this trend. Manufacturers are making more green building products that do not compromise quality or design, notes Stantec's Townsend. Materials with low VOC content and a high recycled-material percentage, as well as extremely energy-efficient lighting and mechanical equipment, are all now available and affordable to developers.

High-efficiency HVAC systems, LED lighting, and high energy-rated constructed assemblies are all trending, says Hoar's Fowler. On its multifamily projects, Ryan Companies integrates efficient materials such as high-performance windows and enhanced insulation. Ryan also is expanding its EV charging stations while roughing in capacity for future demand.

'Outdoor micro-amenities [like pocket parks] continue to deliver high resident engagement at relatively low cost.'

DARIN J. SCHOOLMEESTER, KTGY

Sustainable building practices aren't just a talking point. They "create assets that lease up faster, maintain lower long-term operating costs, and remain competitive," says Ryan's Lamb.

8. AN ELEVATED LOOK WITHOUT THE ELEVATED PRICE TAG

In the market-rate multifamily sector, there's a strong push to achieve high-end design without the high-ticket costs.

"Engineered materials that can mimic the look and feel of high-end finishes," says Ryan's Bunke, include luxury vinyl plank (LVP) flooring that looks like hardwood, as well as engineered countertop quartz that looks like expensive natural stones and has similar durability.

Embellishments such as bold colors, murals, and textured finishes like fluted wood panels on single accent walls can all add character without high costs, Bunke says. Even a different bathroom fixture finish, such as matte black or brushed gold instead of the standard polished chrome, can instantly elevate a space, he adds.

"Inside units, demand continues to grow for elevated, standardized finishes, delivering a high-end feel at scale," says Clark's Simon. This might be achieved with full-height backsplash tiling or textured dual-tone cabinets. Thoughtful design, with good lighting, attractive fixtures, and thoughtfully placed windows, "can create an elevated experience without putting luxury-level cost into every finish," says Swinerton's Field.

9. COMBATING COSTS WITH EFFICIENT DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Amid stubbornly high costs, developers are looking for ways to cut expenses and timelines—and are embracing innovative design and construction methods.

Offsite and modular fabrication, factory construction, and panelized systems can drive efficiency while also addressing labor challenges. "Modular construction and panelized systems are gaining traction as developers look for ways to control costs and shorten schedules," says KTGY's Schoolmeester.

When possible, Ryan Companies uses panelized wall systems to "save time, improve quality control, and enhance safety on our jobsites," says Pete Lochner, National Director of Construction, Multifamily at Ryan. Onsite drones also assist quality control: "Drones have become commonplace on jobsites," he says.

For the 287-unit Cordo in Charlotte, N.C., scheduled for a 2027 completion, Swinerton used mass timber, cross-laminated timber (CLT) decking, and prefabricated wall systems to take advantage of repetition, offsite fabrication, and efficient field sequencing. As a result, the project is forecasted to reach substantial completion about 102 days ahead of its contractual milestone. Plus, the shallow mass timber and CLT floor system enabled the development to add a residential floor within local building-height limits, boosting long-term revenue.

Project teams are also finding they can build more efficiently through earlier and stronger collaboration among the design and construction teams. Designers are working with construction teams earlier in the process "while there is still time to influence the project," says Roya Vermillion, Director of Preconstruction at Swinerton. "One of the biggest shifts is toward designing to budget instead of relying on late-stage value engineering."

RENDERING COURTESY SWINERTON



"One of the biggest shifts is toward designing to budget instead of relying on late-stage value engineering," says Roya Vermillion, Director of Preconstruction at Swinerton. Designers are working with construction teams earlier in the process "while there is still time to influence the project," she adds. Pictured: One of Swinerton's multifamily projects under construction, Embassy Row in Sandy Springs, Ga.

10. ADAPTIVE REUSE EXPANDS

A pivot toward adaptive reuse is "the biggest trend we are seeing," says Clark Construction's Simon. The benefits of adaptive reuse are clear, he adds: "Upgrading existing inventory allows developers to deliver modernized units on faster timelines."

In Washington, D.C., several of Clark Construction's recent projects are office-to-residential conversions, including The Accolade, a 243-unit project designed by WDG Architecture and completed in 2025, and Aviator House, a 157-unit project designed by Eric Colbert & Associates and completed in 2026.

"We're seeing increased interest in adaptive-reuse opportunities where zoning and building conditions allow," says KTGY's Schoolmeester. Regulatory changes have been helping to create such conditions. In California, whose office market has seen a significant post-pandemic drop in demand, policymakers have been removing barriers to office-to-housing conversions. In Los Angeles, for example, the city council this year established zoning incentives and streamlined conversion procedures. +

TOP 10 TRENDS
IN LUXURY MULTIFAMILY HOUSING FOR 2026-2027



PHOTO: KEN ZIMMERMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Luxury properties are moving toward an experience-based model, designed to provide 'invisible' comforts and a full live-work-play lifestyle.

BY QUINN PURCELL, Managing Editor

Luxury properties are shifting. What some describe as a move toward intentional living, or an absence of friction, others are putting it plainly: Luxury is moving away from an amenity model to an experience model.

Hospitality-like living, a full live-work-play destination, and health and wellness baked into the infrastructure of the building make it clear that experience is key. That isn't to say that amenities aren't important, but large, show-stopping amenity rooms such as golfing simulators and bowling alleys have taken a backseat. Residents aren't looking to live in places with amenities they'll only use twice—they want features that blend into their lifestyle from the get-go.

Many AEC firms agree that luxury developments in 2026 and beyond must deliver a one-of-a-kind experience for residents. We've had the large floor plans, imported finishes, and extensive amenities; "these are now the norm, not the differentiator," says Joseph Elhabr, Vice President, IMT Residential.

The real focus is on brand identity. From selecting mixed-use retail partners to placing interior amenities, the goal is to reinforce the development's desired identity, including the kind of tenants they're trying to attract. And when it comes to attracting residents, the demographic has shifted.

"From empty nesters looking to keep the same level of luxury from their former residence without the upkeep, to young families looking to live in the bustling cities where they work and play, the makeup of residents has changed, and these people are expecting more in the developments where they live," says William Stocks, Senior Preconstruction Director, Brasfield & Gorrie.

Ultimately, the best Class A luxury properties in the coming years will inherit these traits of hospitality-like services, unique experiences, and tight branding. But there's a lot more to the story than that.

Of the amenities that remain, what are residents leaning toward? How has smart technology integration changed in the era of artificial intelligence? And exactly how are luxury developments maintaining their prestige to deliver a one-of-a-kind experience?

We sat down with several AEC firms to explore the biggest trends in the luxury multifamily housing market for 2026 and beyond. Here are the top 10 trends.

LEFT: At Portico, a luxury condo development designed by KTGY and developed by Belgravia in Scottsdale, Ariz., amenity spaces were positioned throughout the project site rather than grouping them in a single large space.

TOP 10 TRENDS IN LUXURY MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

1. A renewed focus on residences over amenity areas
2. Smart technology as a fundamental expectation
3. "Invisible" technology aims to reduce friction
4. Sustainability becomes standardized
5. Health and wellness goes beyond the gym
6. Hospitality-like services grow
7. Biophilic design remains a strong pull
8. Amenities tailored to a full live-work-play lifestyle
9. Sometimes operations are more important than the amenities themselves
10. The neighborhood as an amenity

1. A RENEWED FOCUS ON RESIDENCES OVER AMENITY AREAS

Amenity areas have been a major focus in luxury multifamily properties for the last 15 years. While they're still an essential part of luxury design, they're no longer the focus for many developments.

Instead, there has been a renewed focus on the living units themselves, and in some cases designers are making selections more commonly found in single-family homes. This could be in floor plan considerations like adding a foyer, small niches that could accommodate a pet bed, or a primary bath with a built-in linen cabinet.

'Things like wood flooring, quartz/stone countertops, high-end name-brand appliances, large kitchens, and tall ceilings are all requirements for a development to be considered luxury.'

WILLIAM STOCKS, Brasfield & Gorrie

"The level of finish inside the unit has a baseline that is the threshold for entry into this space," says Stocks. "Things like wood flooring, quartz/stone countertops, high-end name-brand appliances, large kitchens, and tall ceilings are all requirements for a development to be considered luxury."

People equate space with luxury. Utilizing volume and height is a tool designers can use to create a "theatrical effect" in residences, according to Jack Boarman, Senior Design Leader and Development Managing Partner, BKV Group. Dramatic, 10-foot-tall ceilings coupled with floor-to-ceiling windows create an innate sense of luxury.



The residences at Optima Lumina in Wilmette, Ill., showcase interiors defined by premium materials, spacious open-concept floor plans, and floor-to-ceiling glass.



RENDERINGS © DBOX FOR OPTIMA, INC.

Optima Lumina's architecture utilizes timeless terra cotta materials, creating a striking façade that steps back as the building rises and complements the surrounding community.

2. SMART TECHNOLOGY AS A FUNDAMENTAL EXPECTATION

Smart technology itself is "no longer considered a luxury amenity," says Elhabr. It is now a fundamental expectation for luxury properties.

Concierge mobile apps provide residents with ease for all aspects of living, from package pickup, car washing, pet grooming, and booking fitness appointments. Electric vehicle charging stations are also a must.

Some developments are even leveraging AI to optimize performance and minimize costs. According to Matt Strobel, Vice President, High Performance Buildings, Bright Power, AI-driven intelligence allows owners and operators to benchmark their performance against peer buildings and turn compliance requirements for building emissions into strategic investment opportunities by mapping the right building projects at optimal times to ensure ROI.

The key here is that in the past, some technological integrations were just for show—"effectively a bunch of gadgets left alone to never be turned on," says Stocks. In today's luxury world, technology should be a utility that is truly being used.

3. "INVISIBLE" TECHNOLOGY AIMS TO REDUCE FRICTION

Often, the smart technology that residents use daily are the ones that aren't even seen. "Invisible" technology is implemented in buildings to quietly reduce friction without causing headaches.

Seamless/keyless access, environmental controls, predictive maintenance, digital concierge services, and even responsive building operations are all intended to make life easier for tenants. In today's high-speed world, full-building fiber-based WiFi is becoming essential.

Some firms are finding advancements in technology that allows residents to regulate the comfort of their homes. Two-zone HVAC systems with separate controls allow residents to maintain different temperatures in the bedrooms and the living areas. Likewise, sophisticated lighting systems can allow luxury renters the opportunity to control both direct and indirect lighting in their units.

Invisibility also goes hand-in-hand with another trend: sustainability.

4. SUSTAINABILITY BECOMES STANDARDIZED

Some of the best sustainability strategies are the ones that go unseen, but not unnoticed. Sustainability can be felt in better air quality, quieter interiors, increased thermal comfort, energy-efficient systems, natural lighting, access to nature, restorative spaces, and sustainable materials.

The best materials are those that promote resident wellness. To name a few, Strobel lists: paints, adhesives, and sealants formulated without harsh chemical emissions; engineered wood products made without added formaldehyde; flooring chosen for its lower environmental footprint; and finishes free of common asthma-triggering compounds.

Some of the best materials are timeless—one that feels authentic and durable. At Optima Lumina in Wilmette, Ill., architectural terra cotta references the character of the surrounding Village Center while offering durability, performance, and a strong connection to place.

5. HEALTH AND WELLNESS GOES BEYOND THE GYM

While health and wellness remain essential in spaces like fitness centers and recovery rooms, the trend goes beyond the gym. From amenities to infrastructure, health and wellness are imbued into the fabric of the building.

"Residents increasingly value programming that helps them engage with both the amenities and their neighbors," says David Hovey, Jr., AIA, President and Principal Architect, Optima.

This is seen in activities like pickleball leagues, wellness classes, book clubs, wine tastings, and resident lunches that help turn shared spaces into places where people can build relationships and feel connected to their community.

Matt Wister, Associate Principal and Project Director, AC Martin, also sees a rise in saunas and cold plunges, pet spas, multi-floor gyms, co-working spaces, and podcast/video rooms.

'Residents increasingly value programming that helps them engage with both the amenities and their neighbors.'

DAVID HOVEY, JR., AIA, Optima

6. HOSPITALITY-LIKE SERVICES GROW

Many health and wellness features in luxury properties act akin to high-end hospitality amenities. Mike Hockett, Executive Vice President of Client & Project Development, W.E. O'Neil Construction, finds a rise in concierge services, doormen, valet parking, private garages, and enhanced package management.

There's even a niche set of properties that have co-branded with hotels.

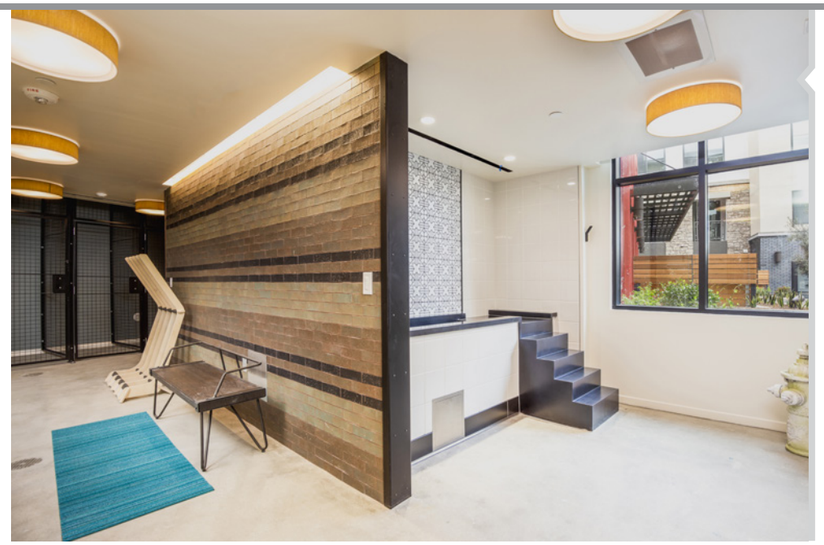
"Hotel-branded residences are gaining traction across key markets in the country as developers and hotel brands increasingly pair private ownership with operational expertise, creating a model that benefits both sides," writes Corina Stef for *Multi-Housing News*.

Florida has been a testing ground for this type of



At Belmont Village Senior Living in San Ramon, Calif., residents of the luxury property are offered a salon as a wellness amenity.

PHOTO © ZACK BENSON



Prado West in Dana Point, Calif., provides resident amenities like dog washing stations, surfboard wash and lockers, and bike storage. PHOTO © FRANKLIN LOPEZ PHOTOGRAPHY

development, with Nashville and Boston emerging as key growth markets as well.

"The natural pairing between hotel and residences gives the prestige of an established brand to your residence," says Rebecca Gromet, Principal, KPF. "This, combined with a level of service and access to greater amenities, has made branded residences a preferred product over standalone condominiums."

Beyond prestige, the concept resonates with renters seeking a fully serviced living experience that combines privacy with amenities such as concierge services, wellness facilities, fine dining, and social programming—features designed to support everyday life as seamlessly as a luxury hotel stay.

7. BIOPHILIC DESIGN REMAINS A STRONG PULL

Renters continue to prioritize environments that support access to natural light, fresh air, and outdoor living. They place greater importance on connections to nature through outdoor space, natural materials, greenery, and opportunities for both active and restorative lifestyles.

Even fake foliage can emit the same psychological benefits as the real thing. Properties can include green walls or foliage panels in fitness rooms, statement trees in the lobby, or moss walls for acoustic softening.

Mass timber as a building material is continuing to gain popularity. California codes now permit mass timber structures up to 18 stories, with cities like Santa Monica launching dedicated mass timber accelerator programs. Architecture firm AC Martin is currently working on two towers fully designed with mass timber, and sees the desire for more CLT usage across the development spectrum.

8. AMENITIES TAILORED TO A FULL LIVE-WORK-PLAY LIFESTYLE

When you're living in a luxury apartment, you want to feel the benefits of your high-end investment beyond the four walls of your unit. Amenities tailored to a full live-work-play lifestyle set a property apart.

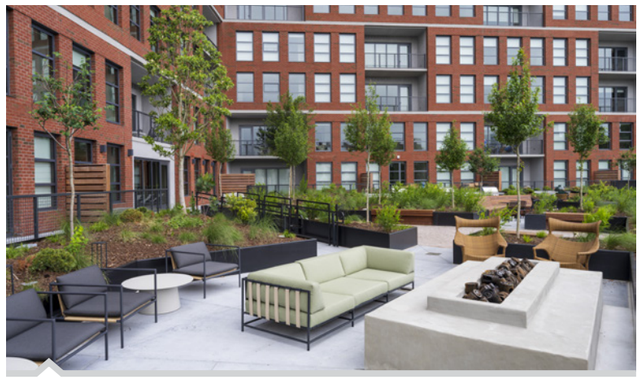
"Coworking space is vital, and it must come with other amenities like a pantry or café for the residents to be able to work a full day consistently in the same place," says Stocks. Dog park elements are becoming more of an expectation rather than an amenity as well.

Designed by BKV Group, in collaboration with the developer Post Brothers, One Thousand One is a three-phase mixed-use development spanning a full city block in Philadelphia's Hawthorne neighborhood. As the largest residential project in the city's history, One Thousand One offers residents access to over 140,000 sf of indoor and outdoor amenities, including The Canopy Club, which features multiple pools, hanging gardens and al fresco dining areas, as well as numerous spaces dedicated to exercise, wellness, work, and socialization.

9. SOMETIMES OPERATIONS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE AMENITIES THEMSELVES

With all this talk of amenities, it's important to consider the operational side of things as well. A fitness center or rooftop lounge means little if it's poorly programmed, difficult to use, or feels generic.

"The next competitive advantage is service, curation, and operations, borrowing much more from hospitality than traditional multifamily," says Jan Steingahs, ARB, RIBA, Principal and Practice Group Manager–Living, USA, Mexico & Caribbean, Arcadis.



Overline Residences at 760 Ralph McGill in Atlanta features expansive outside seating alongside its 18-story residential tower. PHOTO © RICK HOLLIDAY PHOTOGRAPHY

'The next competitive advantage is service, curation, and operations, borrowing much more from hospitality than traditional multifamily.'

—**JAN STEINGAHS,** ARB, RIBA, Arcadis



Via Avanti, set to open in Sherman Oaks, Calif., was designed around a public square that serves as a shared gathering space for residents, shoppers, and visitors. RENDERING COURTESY IMT RESIDENTIAL

At 12th & Juniper in Atlanta, an outdoor balcony opens up to allow residents to connect to the outdoors. PHOTO © MALI AZIMA



The level of service is the differentiator. Things like a 24/7 concierge service, fully protected package management, qualified maintenance staff, and staff who personally know their residents, are highly desired among residents.

10. THE NEIGHBORHOOD AS AN AMENITY

If there was one thing that most firms agreed on, it's that the neighborhood is key.

"The traditional mixed-use model, which simply combines apartments with ground-floor retail, is rapidly evolving," says Elhabr. Today's luxury communities are creating complete lifestyle ecosystems where housing, dining, retail, entertainment, fitness, and social experiences are intentionally integrated into a cohesive environment.

Walkable access to restaurants, transit, culture, and everyday services "can create far more value than another residents' lounge," says Steingahs.

Developers are becoming more selective when choosing retail partners, favoring businesses that align with the community's identity and enhance the resident experience.

Nathaniel Hollister, Design Director at KTGY, notes that in one planned luxury rental development north of Chicago, developers began the process by approaching specific restaurant brands that would complement their product and anticipated clientele—creating a partnership to help craft a one-of-a-kind luxury development. +



CREDIT: RALF HAHN 1464327127 ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS

STADIUM POOLS, AIRBNB UNITS, ROBOT PACKAGE DELIVERY:

EXPLORE WHAT'S NEXT IN THE MULTIFAMILY AMENITIES WAR

In-unit washer/dryers and entertainment spaces like pools and lounges are the most in-demand amenities in multifamily developments, but emerging offerings like package delivery centers, co-working spaces, and stadium pools are growing in importance, according to our 2026 Multifamily Amenities Survey.

BY DAVID BARISTA, Editorial Director

The multifamily construction market may have cooled in recent years, but the amenities war remains hot among developers and builders in the most competitive markets. This is especially true in the luxury rental sector, where high-end amenities, impeccable design, and service excellence are must-haves to command premium rental rates among discerning luxury consumers.

For more than a decade, the *Building Design+Construction* and *MultifamilyPro+* editorial team has been tracking amenity trends in the U.S. multifamily housing sector with our Multifamily Amenities Survey. Now in the fourth edition (see past surveys at **BDCnetwork.com/MultifamilyAmenities**), the 2026 Multifamily Amenities Survey tracks the popularity of more than 125 amenities in today's developments across nine categories:

- Children's services
- Convenience amenities
- Indoor amenities
- Outdoor amenities
- Quality of life amenities
- Recreation amenities
- Security services
- Services for pets
- Technology services.

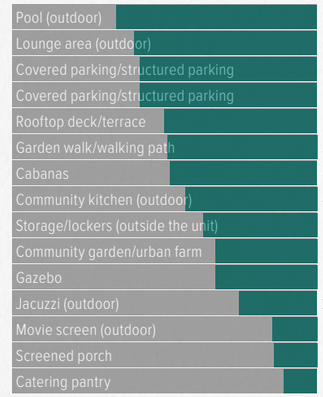
The survey also explores emerging amenities (those provided for the first time in the past 12-24 months) and the most significant multifamily market innovations respondents have introduced during the past two years.

METHODOLOGY

An invitation to participate in the 13-question survey was distributed in September and October 2026 to a list of 10,000 multifamily professionals in *Building Design+Construction* and *MultifamilyPro+'s* audience database. A total of 160 professionals completed the survey. Survey respondent breakdown: architect (54.1%), construction professional (14.7%), interior designer (8.3%), developer/property owner (6.4%), consultant (5.1%), engineer (1.9%), landscape architect (0.6%), property manager (0.6%), other (8.3%). Nearly a quarter (24.0%) of respondents work for firms that design, construct, or develop 1,000+ multifamily units annually. About 15% work for firms that produce 500 to 1,000 units a year; 10%: 250 to 499 units; 11%: 100 to 249 units; and 31%: less than 100 units.

TABLE 1: **OUTDOOR AMENITIES**

Which of the following outdoor amenities have you or your firm included in a multifamily project in the last 24 months? (check all that apply.)

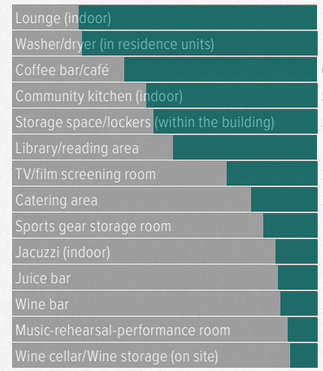


Social, open-air gathering spaces dominate outdoor amenity offerings. Fire pits and grills lead at 66.7%, followed very closely by outdoor pools (63.6%) and outdoor lounge areas (60.6%). Practical features remain important, with covered or structured parking cited by 59.1%. Roughly half of respondents included rooftop decks (51.5%), walking paths (50.0%), and cabanas (49.2%). Niche, higher-cost features trail significantly: outdoor movie screens (15.2%), screened porches (14.4%), and catering pantries (10.6%) appear in relatively few recent multifamily projects.

SOURCE: BD+C 2026 MULTIFAMILY AMENITIES SURVEY.
BASE: 160. MULTIPLE RESPONSES PERMITTED (TOTAL = 836)

TABLE 2: **INDOOR AMENITIES**

Which of the following indoor amenities have you or your firm included in a multifamily project in the last 24 months? (check all that apply.)



Indoor amenities center on everyday comfort and socializing. Indoor lounges top the list at 78.4%, nearly matched by in-unit washers/dryers (76.8%), now a near-standard expectation. Coffee bars/cafés (63.2%) and indoor community kitchens (56.0%) reflect demand for shared hospitality-style spaces, while in-building storage appears in just over half of projects (53.6%). Libraries reach 47.2%. Specialty lifestyle offerings remain rare: juice bars (12.8%), wine bars (12.0%), music rooms (9.6%), and wine cellars (8.8%) each fall below 13%.

SOURCE: BD+C 2026 MULTIFAMILY AMENITIES SURVEY.
BASE: 160. MULTIPLE RESPONSES PERMITTED (TOTAL = 647)

MOST IN-DEMAND AMENITIES

Across all categories, everyday comfort and social spaces lead the way: indoor lounges are the most widely included amenity at 78.4%, followed closely by in-unit washers/dryers (76.8%) and dog parks (70.3%). Fire pits/grills and playgrounds (66.7% each), meeting/party rooms (66.3%), EV charging stations (65.7%), and secured bicycle storage (64.7%) also appear in roughly two-thirds of recent projects. Work-from-home support remains strong, with conference rooms (55.6%) and co-working spaces (54.6%) each included by more than half of respondents, while keyless entry systems (53.7%) are the only security feature to reach a majority.

Here is a breakdown of the most popular amenities and features by category:

Outdoor Amenities.
Social gathering spaces lead the outdoor category, with fire pits/grills included by 66.7% of respondents, outdoor pools by 63.6%, and outdoor lounge areas by 60.6%. Covered or structured parking (59.1%) and rooftop decks/terraces (51.5%) round out the top five, each appearing in more than half of recent projects.

Indoor Amenities.
Indoor lounges are the single most popular amenity in the survey at 78.4%, closely followed by in-unit washers/dryers at 76.8%. Coffee bars/cafés (63.2%), indoor community kitchens (56.0%), and in-building storage/lockers (53.6%) also appear in a majority of projects.

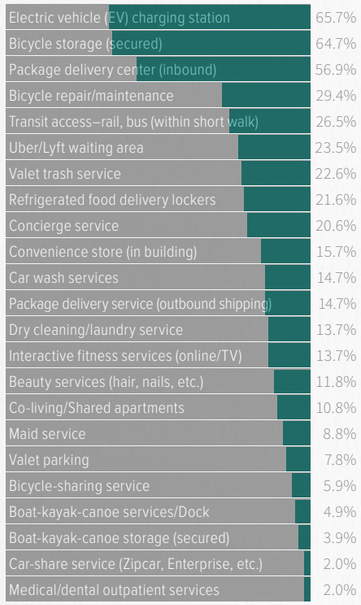
Convenience Services.
Electric vehicle charging stations top this category at 65.7%, narrowly ahead of secured bicycle storage at 64.7%. Inbound package delivery centers (56.9%) are the only other convenience service included by more than half of respondents, with adoption dropping sharply after the top three.

Quality of Life Amenities.
Meeting/party rooms lead this category at 66.3%, followed by fitness/pilates/yoga studios at 56.1%. Recycling services (36.7%) and water features such as fountains (34.7%) form a distant second tier.

Business + Technology Services.
Work-from-home support drives this category, with conference rooms (55.6%), co-working/workshare spaces (54.6%), and business centers (53.5%) each included in more than half of projects. Individually metered utilities (46.5%) and free Wi-Fi (43.4%) are the next most common offerings.

TABLE 3: CONVENIENCE SERVICES

Which of the following convenience services have you or your firm included in a multifamily project in the last 24 months? (check all that apply.)

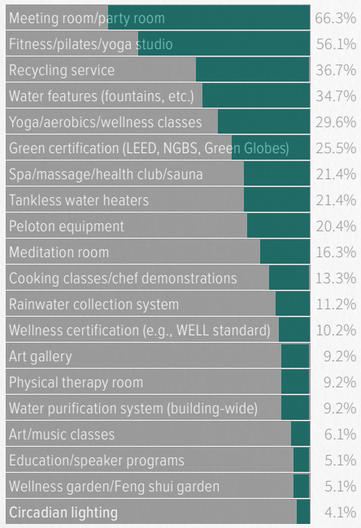


Sustainability and logistics drive convenience services. EV charging stations lead at 65.7%, edging out secured bicycle storage (64.7%), signaling investment in alternative transportation. Inbound package delivery centers (56.9%) address the e-commerce boom. Beyond these three, adoption drops sharply. No other service exceeds 30%, with bike repair (29.4%) and transit access (26.5%) next. Hotel-style services such as concierge (20.6%), maid service (8.8%), and valet parking (7.8%) are uncommon, and car-share and medical services barely register (2.0%).

SOURCE: BD+C 2026 MULTIFAMILY AMENITIES SURVEY. BASE: 160. MULTIPLE RESPONSES PERMITTED (TOTAL = 478)

TABLE 4: QUALITY OF LIFE AMENITIES

Which of the following quality of life amenities have you or your firm included in a multifamily project in the last 24 months? (check all that apply.)

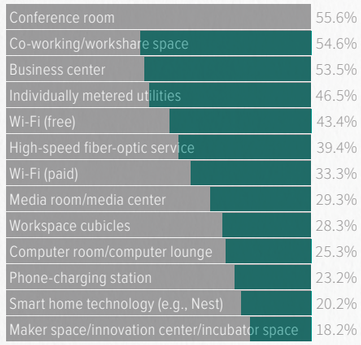


Shared social and fitness spaces are the leading quality-of-life amenities. Meeting/party rooms appear in two-thirds of projects (66.3%), and fitness/pilates/yoga studios in more than half (56.1%). Recycling (36.7%) and water features (34.7%) form a second tier. Sustainability commitments are modest: green certification reaches 25.5% and tankless water heaters 21.4%, while wellness certifications like WELL (10.2%) lag. Emerging wellness concepts such as meditation rooms (16.3%), wellness gardens (5.1%), and circadian lighting (4.1%) have yet to gain broad traction.

SOURCE: BD+C 2026 MULTIFAMILY AMENITIES SURVEY. BASE: 160. MULTIPLE RESPONSES PERMITTED (TOTAL = 409)

TABLE 5: BUSINESS + TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Which of the following business + technology services have you or your firm included in a multifamily project in the last 24 months? (check all that apply.)

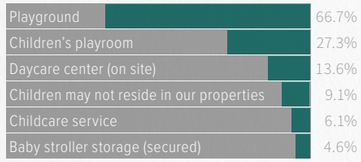


SOURCE: BD+C 2026 MULTIFAMILY AMENITIES SURVEY.
BASE: 160. MULTIPLE RESPONSES PERMITTED (TOTAL = 471)

Remote and hybrid work continue to shape multifamily design. Conference rooms (55.6%), co-working spaces (54.6%), and business centers (53.5%) each appear in more than half of recent projects, forming a tightly clustered top tier. Connectivity is a priority, though approaches vary: free Wi-Fi (43.4%) outpaces paid Wi-Fi (33.3%), and 39.4% offer high-speed fiber. Individually metered utilities are also fairly common (46.5%). Smart home technology (20.2%) and maker spaces (18.2%) remain the least widely adopted options.

TABLE 6: AMENITIES FOR CHILDREN

Which of the following amenities for children have you or your firm included in a multifamily project in the last 24 months? (check all that apply.)

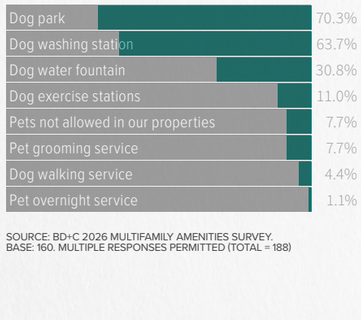


SOURCE: BD+C 2026 MULTIFAMILY AMENITIES SURVEY.
BASE: 160. MULTIPLE RESPONSES PERMITTED (TOTAL = 93)

Children's amenities are limited beyond the basics. Playgrounds are the standard, included by two-thirds of respondents (66.7%). Every other offering falls behind: children's playrooms appear in 27.3% of projects, and on-site daycare centers in just 13.6%. Childcare service (6.1%) and secured stroller storage (4.6%) are rare. Notably, 9.1% report that children may not reside in their properties, likely reflecting age-restricted or senior housing. The category drew just 93 total selections, the fewest in the survey.

TABLE 7: AMENITIES FOR PETS

Which of the following amenities for pets have you or your firm included in a multifamily project in the last 24 months? (check all that apply.)



SOURCE: BD+C 2026 MULTIFAMILY AMENITIES SURVEY.
BASE: 160. MULTIPLE RESPONSES PERMITTED (TOTAL = 188)

Pet amenities are well established, especially for dogs. Dog parks lead at 70.3%, a figure topped only by indoor lounges and in-unit laundry across the entire survey, followed closely by dog washing stations (63.7%). Dog water fountains (30.8%) form a distant third. Staffed pet services remain rare, including grooming (7.7%), dog walking (4.4%), and overnight care (1.1%). Only 7.7% prohibit pets, suggesting that pet-friendly design is now an expected part of multifamily development.

Amenities for Children.
Playgrounds are by far the most popular children's amenity, included by 66.7% of respondents. Children's playrooms (27.3%) and on-site daycare centers (13.6%) trail well behind, making this one of the least developed amenity categories overall.

Amenities for Pets.
Dog parks are the clear favorite at 70.3%, the third-highest figure of any amenity in the survey, followed closely by dog washing stations at 63.7%. Dog water fountains (30.8%) are a distant third, and only 7.7% of respondents prohibit pets entirely.

Security Services.
Keyless entry systems using cards, fobs, or QR codes lead this category at 53.7%, the only security feature included by a majority of respondents. CCTV video surveillance (32.6%) and electronic key management systems (17.9%) are the next most common, while all other security options fall below 10%.

EMERGING AMENITIES AND INNOVATIONS

One of the most-telling questions asks developers and AEC professionals about their "most significant innovation in the last 12-24 months" in multifamily amenities and features. This is where we discover emerging and trending amenities for the next generation of multifamily developments. Some highlights from the survey include:

Stadium pools. Inspired by experiential, party-style pool decks like Stadium Swim at Circa Resort & Casino in Las Vegas, one multifamily developer invested $125,000 on a jumbo LED display in the pool area at its luxury rental property for sporting events, concerts, and other gatherings.

Airbnb-style units. One developer offers its model apartments as rentable Airbnb-style units for use by tenants' families while visiting.

Branded residential, including a higher level of concierge services and programming. One multifamily property owner hired an activity director to help get tenants "talking, laughing, engaging, and enjoying time together—no devices."

Other takeaways related to emerging trends and design innovations cited by survey respondents:

Wellness and recovery are emerging as a defining amenity trend. Respondents introduced cold plunge tubs, steam saunas, massage rooms, and infrared light therapy for the first time, bringing spa-style recovery into the multifamily setting. One firm now offers residents complimentary membership to an on-site, full-service branded fitness center.

Together, these additions suggest wellness is shifting from a basic gym toward a more complete health and recovery experience.

Experiential recreation is turning amenity spaces into destinations. First-time additions include a bowling alley, golf and F1 simulators, an indoor pickleball court, lighting for evening pickleball, and a dedicated poker room with convertible gaming tables and lounge seating. Pool areas are getting more ambitious as well, from mega LED screens (like the one mentioned earlier) to splash pads and water features.

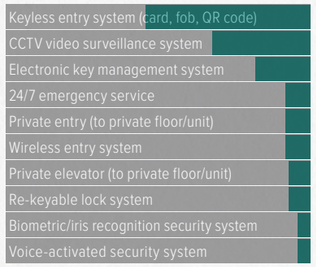
Hospitality and branded-living concepts are raising service expectations. Respondents cited growing demand for concierge-level service as branded residential becomes more prevalent. Innovations include an on-site food hall (Little Grand Market in Columbus, Ohio) paired with a leasing hub featuring a café and fitness center, restaurants supported by full commercial catering kitchens, and carefully programmed spaces such as a champagne-inspired lounge and a curated wine dispenser. Several properties now accommodate visiting family through guest suites or model apartments that double as rentable Airbnb-style units (mentioned earlier).

Convenience, technology, and sustainability are moving beyond the basics. EV infrastructure is expanding to charging stations at every underground parking space, and one property offers residents access to Tesla vehicles. Automated parking with concierge valet, automated parcel systems, and robot package delivery reflect growing interest in automation. On the sustainability front, respondents reported 100% on-site stormwater retention, solar arrays offsetting common-area electrical costs, individual heat pumps in place of central systems, and autoclaved aerated concrete demising walls for better fire resistance and acoustics.

Smarter unit design and cost control round out the top innovations. Kitchen refinements include induction cooktops on islands, 18-inch dishwashers in smaller units, counter-depth refrigerators, and islands with sinks and dishwashers in every unit, complemented by prefabricated closet systems, oversized closets, and entry gear walls. Some firms are adding penthouse units to market-rate developments and using more heavy timber to soften the look of concrete. One firm also shifted decorative lighting, carpet, and wallcovering into FF&E (furniture, fixtures, and equipment) specifications to reduce material costs for clients. +

TABLE 8: SECURITY SERVICES

Which of the following security services have you or your firm included in a multifamily project in the last 24 months? (check all that apply.)



SOURCE: BD+C 2026 MULTIFAMILY AMENITIES SURVEY. BASE: 160. MULTIPLE RESPONSES PERMITTED (TOTAL = 154)

Security investments focus primarily on access control and surveillance. Keyless entry systems using cards, fobs, or QR codes lead at 53.7%, the only security feature included by a majority. CCTV surveillance follows at 32.6%, and electronic key management at 17.9%. All other options fall below 10%, including 24/7 emergency service, private entry, and wireless entry (each 8.4%). Advanced technologies, including biometric/iris recognition and voice-activated security systems (4.2% each), have seen minimal adoption in multifamily so far.

TABLE 9: NEW AMENITIES FOR THE FIRST TIME

What new amenities have you provided for the first time in the last 12-24 months?

SECURITY, SAFETY, ACCESS CONTROL
- Armed guards in 12-hour shifts, 24/7
- Enhanced parking lighting as a security measure
- Keyless entry
- Smart home tech

RECREATION
- Bowling alley
- Cold plunge tub
- Community garden
- Dedicated poker room with convertible gaming tables and lounge seating
- Extra bike parking including covered parking
- F1 simulator
- Full commercial serving/ catering kitchen
- Golf simulator
- Indoor pickleball court
- Outdoor pool shower
- Pickleball court lighting
- Restaurant on property

CONVENIENCE
- Automated parking with concierge valet
- Charging stations at each underground parking space for EV or PHEV plug-in vehicles
- Guest suites for tenants' weekend guests
- Storage outside the units but on the same floor
- Tesla car usage for tenants

QUALITY OF LIFE
- Complimentary membership to on-site, full-service branded fitness center
- Infrared light therapy
- Maker spaces
- Massage room
- Podcast room
- Steam sauna

AMENITIES FOR PETS
- Dog park
- Dog park products and related amenities
- Interior dog lounge area
- Pet wash and pet relief area

Responses reveal a shift toward hospitality-grade wellness and entertainment. Cold plunges were the most frequently cited first-time amenity (four mentions), joined by saunas, massage rooms, and infrared light therapy. Experiential recreation is emerging, including pickleball courts, golf and F1 simulators, a bowling alley, and a poker room. Familiar categories also expanded: EV charging and parking upgrades, dog parks and pet lounges, catering kitchens, and storage outside units. Some firms added security measures, including armed guards.

TABLE 10: MOST SIGNIFICANT INNOVATIONS

What were the most significant innovations you introduced—not just amenities, but in all your multifamily work—in the last 12-24 months?

QUALITY OF LIFE
- Attached garages with direct entry
- Automated parcel system
- Book share/library
- Carefully programmed amenity spaces: champagne-inspired Bubbles Lounge, poker lounge, curated wine dispenser experience
- Food hall (Little Grand Market, Columbus, Ohio) within a development, along with a "leasing hub" with a cafe, leasing office, and fitness center
- Higher level of concierge services—"branded residential is becoming more prevalent"
- Model apartments that double as rentable Airbnb-style units for tenants' families to use while visiting
- Private garage for each unit and covered enclosed parking garages
- Robot package delivery
- Snack bar in the leasing office with a touch-screen beverage dispenser (think Coca-Cola Freestyle)

DESIGN
- All units with a kitchen island with a sink and dishwasher
- Entry gear wall/mini mudroom
- Penthouse units within market-rate developments
- Several kitchen and storage innovations:
  - Induction cooktops located on islands rather than sinks—provides a larger, more flexible work surface, simplifies plumbing by keeping sinks closer to vertical stacks, and reduces visual clutter at the island
  - 18-inch dishwashers for studios and small one-bed units to improve cabinet/storage efficiency
  - Counter-depth refrigerators for a cleaner, more integrated kitchen appearance
  - Prefabricated closet systems throughout to maximize storage efficiency and provide a consistent, finished appearance
- Utilization of more heavy timber and wood to soften the concrete jungle effect
- Moving procurement of items like decorative lighting, carpet, and wallcovering into the FF&E specifications instead of procuring them through the GC to help clients save on material cost

RECREATION
- Additional outdoor recreation features at pools, including splash pads and water features
- Hired an activity director: "We need to get back to basics of spending time with actual people—talking, laughing, engaging, enjoying time together—with no devices."
- Large-format LED display in the pool area ($125,000 investment), "like what they have at the hotels on The Strip" in Las Vegas (think Circa Stadium Swim at Circa Resort & Casino)

SUSTAINABILITY
- 100% onsite stormwater retention
- Autoclaved aerated concrete for townhouse demising walls—superior fire rating and acoustic attenuation
- Individual heat pumps instead of central system
- Solar array systems to offset the public space electrical costs

Innovations extend beyond amenities into unit design, construction, and sustainability. Many refined unit layouts: counter-depth refrigerators, induction-cooktop islands, larger closets, mudroom entries, and higher ceilings. Hospitality influences continue, from branded concierge and food halls to poker lounges and rentable guest suites. Sustainability efforts include solar arrays, stormwater retention, and individual heat pumps. Others emphasized cost control and affordability, favoring fewer but higher-quality amenities, while some cited aging-in-place accessibility, heavy timber construction, and robotic package delivery.



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19 Innovations & Ideas
in the multifamily market for 2026



We asked leading multifamily sector firms to report their single-biggest innovation from the past 12 months. Here is a collection of our favorite multifamily innovations for 2026.

Compiled by: **David Barista, Editorial Director**

COURTESY BENTLEY MOTORS AND DEZER DEVELOPMENT

Bentley Residences Miami will be the world's first Bentley-branded residential tower

BY BD+C EDITORS



British luxury car maker Bentley Motors and Dezer Development are partnering with Sieger Suarez Architects, Coastal Construction, and engineering firms MGE and CHM to build the world's first Bentley-branded residential tower, in Sunny Isles Beach, Miami. Bentley Residences will feature 216 private homes with in-home sky garages and interiors crafted in collaboration with Bentley Motors. The brand's iconic signature diamond pattern, craftsmanship, and precision engineering will be reflected throughout the project's architecture and interiors.

Features include the Dezervator car elevator, which will transport both residents and their vehicles directly to their private sky garages, as well as expansive terraces, private pools on every balcony, and private food and beverage dining concepts led by celebrity chef Todd English.

Spanning 5,256 sf to 6,333 sf, each residence will include expansive indoor-outdoor living spaces, private heated swimming pools, summer kitchens, and sweeping ocean and Intracoastal Waterway views. The lifestyle experience will be enhanced by a 20,000-sf suite of resort-style amenities and curated services, including a whiskey bar, cigar lounge, cinema, and spa.

HEXAGON HOUSE: 3D-PRINTED MODULAR MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

SUBMITTING FIRM: KTGY

Building on KTGY's modular construction expertise for multifamily residential design, KTGY's Research and Development Studio created Hexagon House, a 3D-printed modular multifamily concept, incorporating large-scale 3D printing technology as a solution for offsite modular construction to achieve efficiency and excellence in multifamily design. While most 3D-printed residential projects are constrained to single-story and detached building typologies, Hexagon House explores stacking 3D-printed modules to form on-grade, three- and four-story multifamily buildings.

The process of 3D printing to create three-dimensional objects from digital files is utilized at many differing scales, mediums, and industries. For example, manufacturing has long harnessed the advantages of 3D printing for use in the aviation, transportation, aerospace, fashion, and health industries.

A handful of companies have successfully constructed 3D-printed homes, and the potential for this type of construction to revolutionize the way we build suggests quicker timelines, reduction in carbon emissions, and lower construction waste. Current examples of 3D-printed homes demonstrate the biggest barrier of the technology thus far, as most are single-story, single-family dwellings.

The constraints point to inherent limitations of the most prevalent 3D-printed material: concrete. The properties of concrete make it difficult to transport, requires increased drying time, and limit its form. Beyond the material itself, the size of on-site 3D printers restricts the size of the building.

Limitations of on-site 3D-printed concrete structures drive negative impacts on print time, print sequencing, and environmental factors. Considering these issues, the benefits of offsite 3D printing point to a modular construction methodology.

Rapid advancements in material science and the potential use of light stone material, bioplastic, geopolymers, and recycled materials also support offsite modular construction. Since 3D-printed walls are printed monolithically, these innovative materials provide airtight performance, increased resiliency, durability, and reduced overall lifecycle material costs when compared with typical wood-frame construction.

Hexagon House explores stacking 3D-printed modules to form on-grade buildings.

When combining these two powerful advancements in construction, the result can be a pivotal moment for housing: The ability to produce large-scale multifamily developments with a shorter construction schedule and using sustainable materials.

Hexagon House proposes two building prototypes for replication on infill sites, master-planned communities, and in urban areas.

For more on Hexagon House, watch KTGY's video: Youtube.com/watch?v=bN0jNwx0j5s.



COURTESY: KGTY

Affordable housing complex prioritizes community, health, and rapid deployment

SUBMITTING FIRM: LPA


COURTESY LPA

Over the past eight years, we've been working with Family Health Centers of San Diego to develop a mixed-family, mixed-use supportive housing complex in El Cerrito, Calif. Designed for formerly unhoused residents, the project blends traditional and modular elements, using a concrete structure for a clinic and parking area, and prefabricated shipping containers for (so far) 41 housing units—which shaved six months off the construction schedule alone.

Crafted with a mindset of housing as healthcare, in addition to featuring a core trio of clinics (one for veterans, one for families, and one for substance-abuse issues), the design eschews the traditional center-courtyard model for an orientation benefiting from biophilic sea breezes and natural sunlight. Since those transitioning from homelessness often suffer from isolation, the building holistically fosters shared community spaces and encourages connection by design, from strategically placed staircases to a resident-managed community garden.

Its design benefits all people, regardless of whether they live on site or not. Public funding often mandates a higher level of sustainability for affordable housing. It's just another element seeded in from the very first moment. At El Cerrito, that resulted in a solar thermal system for hot water (meeting 100% of the building's needs) and relocating mechanical systems to the underground parking garage to make space for more PV panels on the roof.

NEW YORK CITY LAUNCHES PLATFORM TO HELP PROPERTY OWNERS NAVIGATE NEW ADU RULES

BY BD+C EDITORS

New York City recently launched ADU for You, a digital platform developed by WXY architecture + urban design to help homeowners navigate the city's new ancillary dwelling unit rules. The platform takes a mix of zoning, code, and feasibility questions and translates them into a legible, everyday tool. A key feature is the Pre-Approved Plan Library that includes agency-reviewed backyard cottage designs sourced through a nationwide call for submissions from architecture firms.

The platform also lets homeowners check eligibility, test how plans fit on their lot, estimate costs and rental income, and navigate permitting and construction.

The city will also reopen applications for the Plus One ADU program, which offers financial and technical assistance to qualified homeowners to add an ADU to their property.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION AND CONNECTIVITY WITH NATURE AT VIRGINIA TECH STUDENT HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

SUBMITTED BY CLARK NEXSEN

Virginia Tech is reimagining student housing by transforming the site of its new residence halls from a golf course to a thriving, 5.25-acre wildflower meadow. In a collaborative effort between Hill Studio and Clark Nexsen, the project prioritizes biodiversity by creating essential habitats for birds and insects while using native plants to significantly reduce outdoor water consumption.



COURTESY CLAERK NEXSON

VIRGINIA TECH NEW RESIDENCES HALLS
1 Green Links - Land Bridge
2 Wildflower Meadows
3 Outdoor Social Spaces

Beyond the environmental impact of habit restoration, the site is designed as a hub for student wellness. Complete with outdoor social spaces such as patios and fire pits, the site allows students to build community while reaping the stress reduction benefits of connecting with nature.

This commitment to a sustainable site is further cemented by the Green Links, a Virginia Tech initiative and site feature, which encourages a walkable, bike-friendly lifestyle while allowing water to move freely through the local floodplain.

PERKINS EASTMAN EMPLOYS 'EASE' EVIDENCE-BASED DESIGN TOOL ON MEMORY-CARE RENOVATION PROJECT

SUBMITTED BY PERKINS EASTMAN



The EASE tool, developed by Robert Wrublowsky and implemented through the IDEAS Institute and Kansas State University, analyzes space based on five categories of metrics.

IMAGE COURTESY ROBERT WRUBLOWSKY

Seeking to improve the normalcy and dignity of daily living for their residents with dementia, Westminster-Canturbury on Chesapeake Bay participated in an Environmental Audit Screening Evaluation (EASE) to review its Seaglass memory-care environment in Virginia Beach, Va. The research-based EASE checklist rates elements of a property's physical environment relative to how they support its residents. Its metrics include the distance from a resident's room to a living space and access to natural light along the way. The EASE results led the Seaglass owner to prioritize its memory-care floor during a planned renovation.

The Perkins Eastman team translated those results with a small-house design for 14 residents that centralizes the kitchen, dining room, and living room and brings natural light into the heart of the household. Thoughtful, coastal-themed interior design brings a rich palette of materials that assist in wayfinding. Activity portals from the corridor to the living, dining, and kitchen spaces give residents multiple opportunities to interact and engage their senses.

Once the renovation is complete, the original EASE review team will reevaluate the new environment to determine how much each metric score has improved.



SALTO WECOSYSTEM

A Smart Deadbolt Made for Outdoors

The Salto DBolt Touch Outdoor is a multifamily smart locking solution for both retrofits and new construction properties, extending smart access beyond interior unit doors.

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FLEXIBLE GAMING LOUNGES SUPPORT ESPORTS CULTURE

SUBMITTED BY KIRKSEY ARCHITECTURE



COURTESY KIRKSEY ARCHITECTURE

Esports participation is a growing trend among college students. Designing spaces for community gaming can reduce some of the isolation and loneliness that universities cite as drawbacks to gaming. The goal of creating an esports community space is to help introverted gamers engage with the broader community in shared spaces.

While many gamers prefer to play independently, designers need to be strategic about where the gaming lounge is located. A gaming space near a community kitchen, restrooms, and laundry rooms encourages more interaction points between games.

Our team has begun incorporating flexible gaming lounges within residence halls that support both casual gaming and broader student engagement. At Baylor University's Memorial and Alexander Halls, for example, a dedicated gaming lounge was designed as a multipurpose social space that can quickly transition between everyday lounge use and an active gaming environment.

The space includes multiple televisions, easy plug-and-play connectivity for gaming consoles, and flexible furniture that can be rearranged for groups of players or spectators. Students might gather there to watch television, relax between classes, or quickly transform the room into a lively gaming area for a round of Mario Kart or other multiplayer games.

By integrating gaming within a shared lounge environment rather than isolating it, the design encourages students who might otherwise game alone to interact with peers and participate in the larger residential community. This approach reflects the growing recognition that gaming spaces, when thoughtfully located near other shared amenities, can become important social hubs within student housing.

FINANCING COMPANIES AND INSURERS FIGURING OUT HOW TO VALUE RESILIENCE IN MULTIFAMILY SECTOR

BY BD+C EDITORS

The risk of damage from severe weather is prompting developers and builders to construct more resilient homes. As a result, lenders and insurance companies are working to accurately value properties that incorporate resilient construction features.

Multifamily owners are investing millions of dollars to boost resiliency, but those investments do not necessarily appear in property valuations, insurance underwriting, or lending decisions.

The financial industry is creating new tools and methodologies to acknowledge the value of protecting properties and investments from extreme weather. One financing firm, CPC Climate Capital, is evaluating financial resilience when projects are being capitalized or recapitalized, according to a Urban Land report.

The goal is to assess hazard risks as soon as possible and align resilience measures with planned improvements. The company is developing analytical tools to better evaluate the costs and benefits of incremental resilience upgrades.

Some developers are looking to FORTIFIED, a voluntary commercial and multifamily standard that goes beyond local codes. This standard addresses roof protection, building envelopes, structural continuity, and power readiness. Homes built to this standard in coastal Alabama had 73% fewer insurance claims and 72% lower total losses during Hurricane Sally compared to traditionally built homes.



COURTESY DLR GROUP

Tallest mass timber student housing development in U.S. tops out

SUBMITTING FIRM: DLR GROUP

The tallest mass timber student housing structure in the U.S. recently topped out in Columbus, Ohio. The 13-story, 186-unit off-campus development, located near the Ohio State University, stands at 158 feet. INTRO Columbus spans 242,000 sf and will accommodate 493 beds.

Mass timber construction using prefabricated glulam columns and beams, and cross-laminated timber (CLT) panels enabled an accelerated project delivery schedule. Construction proceeded at speeds of two and a half floors every two to three weeks. Topping out occurred roughly 10 weeks ahead of the original November target, a gain the building team attributes to prefabrication and tight field coordination.

CLT panels arrived pre-cut to spec, and crews averaged 44 panels installed per day. The compressed schedule has pulled the rest of the project forward. Exterior wall panels and windows are already going in on the lower floors, interior framing and MEP rough-in are under way, and concrete masonry work began while timber placement continued above.

"Every day we save on the superstructure is a



day the other trades get back, and that compounds," said Josh Dortzbach, Principal, Forefront Structural Engineers. "Pulling 10 weeks forward means enclosure, interior buildout, and commissioning all shift earlier."

When completed, the building will save 1,128 metric tons of carbon compared to an equivalent concrete and steel structure. The mass timber structure was manufactured by SmartLam in Alabama, cutting transport-related carbon emissions by about 55%.

On the team: Harbo Bay Ventures (owner/developer), DLR Group (architect, interior designer), Forefront Structural Engineers (structural engineer), and Elford Construction (GC).

WACO SURF, AN INLAND SURFING AND WATER SPORTS RESORT IN TEXAS, TO ADD 88 3D-PRINTED HOMES

BY BD+C EDITORS

Waco Surf, an inland surfing and water sports resort in Waco, Texas, is building a residential community called The Desperado on 450 acres adjacent to the resort. The development aims to blend surfing with luxury living.

Icon, an Austin-based builder of 3D-printed homes, will 3D print 88 homes for The Desperado, including 44 detached homes and 44 duplex townhomes. The detached homes come in three-, four-, and five-bedroom configurations ranging from about 2,000 to 3,000 sf. Each of these homes provides residents with a view or connection to the surf lagoon. The detached townhomes include two- and three-bedroom layouts ranging from about 1,600 to 1,800 sf.

Designed by Austin's FIRMAH Architecture, the curved, wave-inspired homes reflect an organizing principle of flow. The residences feature walls with gentle curves and rounded corners, forms that echo the movement of waves, and interiors that create a connection with the land and surrounding community.

"We designed The Desperado around this idea of living in flow," said Luke Schock, Waco Surf Owner and Co-president. "The architecture, the land, the surf, the trails through the old-growth forest—it all fits together to give you a life where you can move between these completely different experiences in the same day."

The community design adds a new surf lagoon to Waco Surf's existing surf lagoon and standing wave. Residents also will have access to a 25-acre lake and 100 acres of preserved Texas forest.

Additional amenities include a 13-hole golf course, pickleball courts, spa, pump track, playgrounds, climbing areas, RV camping, meeting spaces, clubhouses, and restaurants. With vehicles kept in garages, residents will move through the property by golf cart, by bike, or on foot across dirt paths and sealed gravel trails.

The project owners have set a goal of achieving water neutrality by 2027, accomplished through water-capture systems in the community's lakes and ponds. Construction is scheduled to begin this year, with the first homes ready for move-in and the new wave pool opening by summer 2027. Home prices start at $1.6 million.



COURTESY WACO SURF

MASTERING MIXED-USE: HOW PLACES BECOME PART OF THE COMMUNITY

SUBMITTED BY HANBURY



COURTESY HANBURY

In Virginia Beach, Va., Atlantic Park reimagines an underutilized yet noteworthy site by building on the city's identity of music history, surf culture, local food and art scene, and an outdoor way of life.

With a new surf park as a central attraction, the 11-acre district brings together homes, shops, restaurants, workplaces, and public gathering spaces across three city blocks, anchored by the return of The Dome music venue.

Atlantic Park reimagines an underutilized site by building on the city's identity of music history, surf culture, local food and art scene, and an outdoor way of life.

Rather than separating uses, the district encourages overlap. Streets prioritize pedestrians. Storefronts open outward. Public spaces shift easily between concerts, markets, and everyday use.

While the surf lagoon draws people in, the surrounding network of spaces keeps them there and moving between indoors and outdoors, public and private, planned and spontaneous activity.

The result feels less like a single destination and more like an extension of the city itself.

Washington, D.C., project is on track to become the largest zero-carbon-certified multifamily building in the world

SUBMITTED BY ZGF

Phase One of the Bridge District, the largest ILFI Zero Carbon-certified multifamily building in the world, recently opened in Washington, D.C. The mixed-use project, consisting of three towers, brings 750,000 sf of market-rate and affordable housing and 40,000 sf of retail to the Bridge District neighborhood. (Note: The project is on track to meet ILFI Zero Carbon certification; the team is awaiting initial performance data.)

The project is located at the foot of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, adjacent to Anacostia Park. The area connects the established Capitol Riverfront neighborhood with the communities south and east of the Anacostia River.

The all-electric building is fully powered by renewable energy generated by a rooftop solar array and offsite sources, a strategy that aligns with D.C.'s goal of electrifying all new homes and commercial buildings by 2032. The building is tracking a 30% reduction in energy over ASHRAE baseline, a 37% reduction in embodied carbon, and a 39% reduction in water use. In addition to ILFI Zero Carbon, the project is targeting LEED V4.0 Platinum status.

Through a focus on natural daylighting, views to nature, and indoor/outdoor connections, the project prioritizes residents' health and caters to the demands of the work-from-home era. To capitalize on the site's expansive views, the towers' form is sculpted to maximize the number of units with monument and river views and to optimize daylighting.

Seventy-eight of the building's 757 units are affordable and will be rented to those making no more than 60% of the area's median family income. In response to the community's desire for greater housing options for families, 29 of the units have three bedrooms. In addition to private balconies, which are included with more than 80% of units, residents can access programmed outdoor terraces, including landscaped courtyards, a yoga terrace, and a rooftop pool deck.

Additional amenities include a fitness center, a dog spa, bike lounge, event rooms, and a children's playroom.



COURTESY ZGF

NEW LUXURY RESIDENCE BRAND FEATURES PRIVATE WELLNESS SUITE IN EACH UNIT

BY BD+C EDITORS



COURTESY KA DEVELOPMENT

KA Residences, a new wellness-focused luxury residences brand, recently launched in Houston. Residences are designed around daily wellness rituals and advanced longevity modalities integrated directly into the home rather than just in shared amenity spaces, reflecting a broader cultural shift toward health optimization, self-directed wellbeing, and private luxury living.

The concept provides a "Merkaba" wellness suite including hot/cold plunge, hyperbaric chamber, and meditation pod in each private residence.

Each residence will be designed with bespoke interiors by designer Nina Magon and will be outfitted with a host of wellness-focused technologies and amenities, including lighting to optimize circadian rhythm, advanced oxygenation systems to enhance air quality, and generous outdoor space with a private pool, sauna, and culinary spaces.

Homes range from two-bedroom to four-bedrooms, spanning a quarter floor to two-floor penthouse residences. Each enjoys generously proportioned spaces, outfitted with soaring open-concept interiors, featuring chef's kitchens with Gaggenau appliances and high-end material finishes like Cosentino flooring and lighting specified by partner Studio M. Interior design draws from a palette of neutral textiles, rare stone, highly textural surfaces, and gentle lighting designed for holistic wellbeing.

Each KA Residences building offers an onsite medical concierge—an expert wellness facilitator whose role is to serve as a private health strategist, discretely coordinating personalized longevity, recovery, and preventative care services to optimize each resident's performance and wellbeing. Onsite resident-only amenities include a private Padel Club, a private performance center, and KA-Yan Fitness, offering yoga, breathwork, Pilates, and stretching, with a lap pool and a sound bath for immersive healing experiences.

KA is an invitation-only residential brand with nearly $1 billion in pipeline developments, beginning with the flagship KA Houston property, which will be the first standalone wellness-centered branded residence in Texas when it welcomes residents in 2028. The KA Residences pipeline also includes Dubai, Mexico City, Dallas, and Scottsdale.

KA Residences is being developed by KA Development and Eletell Development Company. The rest of the building team has not yet been announced.

REVERIE MULTIFAMILY PROTOTYPE DELIVERS BUILT-IN DESIGN EFFICIENCIES FOR DEVELOPERS

SUBMITTED BY CF EVANS CONSTRUCTION

Over the past 12 months, CF Evans Construction developed and launched Reverie, a fully engineered, permit-ready multifamily prototype built entirely on our own investment—not a client's budget, not a developer's risk.

Reverie is a complete, construction-ready multifamily prototype that is truly a "just add land" product. Value engineered floor plans, locked specifications, pre-negotiated material selections, and a pre-coordinated construction sequence were all refined through decades of field experience.

Reverie was designed from two simultaneous vantage points—the resident who will live in it and the contractor who will build it—with efficiency and livability treated the same.

Every multifamily developer faces the same early-project gauntlet: months of design coordination, costly revisions, unpredictable permit timelines, and no reliable basis for pro forma underwriting. That uncertainty is a deal-killer. GCs who arrive with a "we'll figure it out" mindset are a liability. Reverie eliminates that liability entirely.

The impact on preconstruction and business development has been immediate. Where a typical engagement begins with six to 12 months of design development, Reverie compresses that timeline to approximately 45 days to permit-ready documents, with design fees reduced by an estimated 50%. Our team enters owner conversations with answers: locked unit counts, realistic schedules, defensible cost data.

This changes the sales conversation. We are not competing on price or relationship alone. We arrive with a proven, production-ready system and offer something the market rarely provides: certainty at the beginning of a deal, when it matters most.

Reverie also scales: 200 or 400 units, the prototype adapts without restarting the design process. Each project built from the system feeds knowledge back into the model, so every future project benefits from every one that came before.

Reverie represents a strategic shift in how CF Evans positions itself in the Southeast multifamily market—not as a contractor waiting to be selected, but as a construction partner arriving with a solution already in hand. For a firm with over seven decades of multifamily expertise, it is the clearest expression yet of what that experience is worth.

DEVELOPMENT CO-LOCATES AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY-CENTRIC COMPONENTS

SUBMITTED BY KGD



COURTESY KGD

KGD is being tapped in the early stages of pre-planning with key developers and P3 partners with public and community agencies to bring forward an array of community-centric program solutions, such as community centers and other public-service assets, that are co-located within the context of new housing hubs.

The firm has pioneered a development approach that meets the requirements of low-income housing tax credits and tax-exempt private-activity bonds within a single building.

The Exchange at Spring Hill incorporates a multilevel community center, ensuring that residents have direct access to essential community services.

One example is The Exchange at Spring Hill, which is under construction for delivery anticipated next year. This project, undertaken for True Ground Housing Partners and Fairfax County, represents a $55 million commitment to developing new affordable homes in Northern Virginia. Notably, The Exchange at Spring Hill is the first 100% affordable housing multifamily development in Tysons, Va., providing more than 500 units accessible to households earning 60% of the area median income or less.

What further sets this project apart is a design that integrates co-located programs within a mixed-use development framework. By incorporating a new multilevel community center, we are ensuring that residents have direct access to essential community services for their health and well-being, thereby fostering a sense of community within the project and its surroundings.



COURTESY GHOST FACTORY

Ghost Factory converts shipping containers into cold-formed steel factories

BY BD+C EDITORS

By delivering mobile steel manufacturing factories directly to construction sites, Ghost Factory aims to relieve schedule, labor, and insurance pressures. The Austin-based company converts shipping containers into a fully operational cold-formed steel factory. The mobile factory manufactures steel walls, trusses, and integrated MEP systems and can begin producing within 24 hours after arriving onsite. Once the work is done, the factory can be relocated as quickly as it arrived.

By manufacturing onsite, Ghost Factory says it eliminates supply-chain delays, compresses schedules, reduces waste and rework, improves labor efficiency, and creates repeatable outcomes.

The factories provide predictable cost and schedule control for a wide variety of residential and commercial projects on practically any type of jobsite. The mobile factories can support residential, multifamily, hospitality, and federal projects in environments including urban, remote, and high-risk locations.

Ghost Factory uses 100% cold-formed steel made from recycled U.S. metals, as well as an almost-zero-waste fabrication process. The material's benefits include durability, predictable performance, and noncombustibility. Ghost Factory's structures can withstand fire, weather, and extreme climates. And unlike wood framing, the steel products do not burn, warp, rot, degrade, or attract pests.

In markets where insurance coverage has become difficult to secure, the steel helps qualify projects for builders' risk and permanent insurance through Ghost Factory's partnerships with insurance carriers.

As Ghost Factory's preferred build partner, Builders Workshop, a general contractor and construction firm, manages end-to-end projects from manufactured components to finished construction.

Ghost Factory recently completed its first fully steel-framed home in the Pacific Palisades, built for entrepreneur and Carol's Daughter founder Lisa Price.

Ghost Factory is powered by FactoryOX, a proprietary digital platform that combines design, production, and field installation. With the continuously improving system, each project supports the next, enabling higher accuracy, faster delivery, and more reliable performance.

Harry Potter-inspired dining hall builds sense of community at Sacred Heart University's 15-acre student housing development

SUBMITTED BY THE S/L/A/M COLLABORATIVE

In Fairfield, Conn., Pioneer Village, a 15-acre development at Sacred Heart University (SHU), features a dining hall that playfully adapts the Great Hall of Hogwarts from the *Harry Potter* book and film series.

Founded in 1963, SHU, formerly a commuter school, became a fully residential college in the early 1990s. The university's enrollment has grown from 4,000 students in 2014 to over 10,000 today, and incoming first-year numbers continue to increase yearly.

Six new residence halls and the dining facility flank the development's central quadrangle. In the Harry Potter-inspired dining hall, LED light fixtures, instead of Hogwarts' candles, appear to float above the tables. The dining hall also offers flexible seating and outdoor terraces.

In addition to providing housing, Pioneer Village "redefines how students live, learn, and connect at the University," according to a statement from the project's architect, The S/L/A/M Collaborative (SLAM). "This isn't just a collection of dorms. It is the new heart of the campus, and a village unto itself," said Rick Herzer, Managing Principal, Design at SLAM.

The development's design combines collegiate Gothic and modern influences. A material palette of brick, stone, and prefinished metal panels aims to echo the architectural language of the original campus core while also indicating a forward-looking identity. Amphitheater steps lead from the new development to the existing Chapel Quad. Tall gables, punched window openings, and carefully scaled façades create a residential quality for the site. The design also emphasizes natural light with strategic orientation and fenestration. "Every brick, every pane of glass had to contribute to a sense of home," Herzer said.

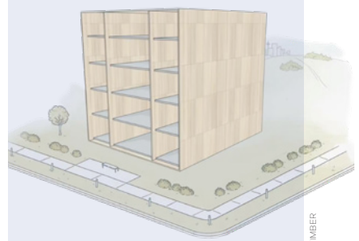
On the project team: The S/L/A/M Collaborative (design architect and architect of record), Consulting Engineering Services (CES) and H.F. Lenz (MEP engineer), OECIS, Inc. (structural engineer), Consigli Construction Company and Turner Construction (general contractor).



COURTESY THE S/L/A/M COLLABORATIVE

DESIGN TOOL AIMS TO ACCELERATE AFFORDABLE MID-RISE HOUSING WITH MASS TIMBER CONSTRUCTION

SUBMITTED BY: MERCER MASS TIMBER



COURTESY MERCER MASS TIMBER

Mass timber manufacturer Mercer Mass Timber released a free design tool aimed at accelerating affordable mid-rise housing. BuildSpec (MERCERMASSTIMBER.COM/BUILDSPEC) allows architects, engineers, and developers to explore hybrid cross-laminated timber (CLT) and cold-formed steel (CFS) hybrid buildings during early project planning. BuildSpec reduces design uncertainty, helping project teams identify viable mass timber solutions sooner, according to the company.

The tool enables:

- Teams to rapidly prototype structural schemes and generate high-level cost and embodied carbon comparisons in real time.
- Evaluation of conceptual structural layouts against key design parameters, helping project teams assess feasibility earlier in the design process.
- More efficient design decisions on prefabricated and lower-carbon building approaches for mid-rise housing.

Thriven Design creates 'whole lifecycle' model to better support multifamily developer clients

SUBMITTED BY THRIVEN DESIGN

In 2025, Thriven Design modified the structure of its affordable housing and housing preservation teams to create a wraparound, "whole lifecycle" model of design support for its multifamily clients. The new model, where both teams work together under shared leadership, emphasizes "following" a project past its point of new construction to support it as it ages—when its affordability controls come up for renewal and it may require updates to its units and building systems to continue to qualify as affordable.

The model emphasizes "following" a project past its point of new construction to support it as it ages—when its affordability controls come up for renewal.

The new model recognizes the essential role that multidisciplinary architecture firms can play in mitigating a nationwide affordable housing crisis by staying vigilant about the units that the studio has created over time and their continued viability as efficient, accessible homes. The model also creates natural efficiencies for developer clients, since the original designers of a building are frequently the most familiar with the building's documentation and most able to provide efficient analysis and updates.

In 2025, this model led to the successful affordable housing preservation of Maple Village, Philadelphia, which was originally planned and designed by Thriven Design in 2002. The 70-unit independent senior residence featured congregate dining, kitchen facilities, a library, computer lab, multipurpose activity room, and tenant space on the first floor. As the project neared the completion of its LIHTC affordability obligations, Thriven Design was contracted to provide asset preservation architecture, MEP/FP, and interior design services to ensure that the residence would continue to be able to provide accessible, affordable senior housing. Tax credit funding was utilized for the renovations, which included repairs to the façade, roof, front entry doors and windows; updates to building systems including HVAC; installation of energy efficient lighting, appliances, and plumbing fixtures in units and common areas; and handicap accessibility upgrades.

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