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## COVID-19 REPORT

# THE FUTURE OF MULTIFAMILY DESIGN

### MULTIFAMILY OUTLOOK

As a national leader in multifamily design, we understand how crucial it is to adapt to this ever-changing situation in 2020 and beyond. Due to the recent outbreak, we now have to rethink our design and shift to the new way people live, work, and play while in the confines of their home and community. Creating a comfortable and safe environment is a top priority as people seek the flexible lifestyle that renting brings.

According to market experts, like the National Multifamily Housing Council, there is still an overwhelming need for new multifamily units. Also, rent collection for multifamily, after an expected drop in April, have steadily increased, stabilized, and vastly outperformed other asset classes. As of June, the NMHC's Rent Payment Tracker found 94.2 percent of apartment households made a full or partial rent payment by June 27 in its survey of 11.1 million units of professionally managed apartment units across the country.\*

By talking with our design teams at [Humphreys & Partners](#) and [HPA Design Group](#) interiors, we've compiled a quick guide on what to consider as we carry on and continue to build new communities for the future of renting.

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\*"NMHC Rent Payment Tracker." NMHC, [www.nmhc.org/research-insight/nmhc-rent-payment-tracker/](http://www.nmhc.org/research-insight/nmhc-rent-payment-tracker/)

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## COMMUNITY DESIGN TRENDS

The way we live in our homes has been forever changed by the pandemic. It's far more likely that given the risk of future pandemic-like events, many renters will be seeking ways to balance work and play within the boundaries of their own units should the need arise again.

**Working From Anywhere** More people are working from home or starting their own gigs than ever before so it's no surprise that the need for co-working spaces have risen as well. Whether a work space is carved out within each unit or safe, on-site rooms are available for residents to use, providing an area dedicated to working from home is an essential asset.

**Micro-Markets** These on-site convenience stores provide a fast, frictionless digital shopping experience with minimal interaction with the staff. There's also the advantage of no-touch purchases by allowing customers to pay by scanning a market card, mobile app, or using a tap bank payment card.

**Health & Wellness** Multifamily communities will need to continue to prioritize the health and wellness of their residents. High-impact components that can minimize disruption to circadian rhythms, support healthy eating, improve air quality, and optimize cognitive and emotional health include:

- Water purification systems
- Sound buffering
- Ventilation systems that improve air quality
- Kayak launch
- Yoga/fitness rooms
- Nature trails
- Sky porches
- Green parks for fitness classes
- Community gardens

In addition to the components above, **incorporating interactions with nature** and **mixed-use green ways** are more standout amenities that provide the best opportunity to create a more authentic living experience that renters are seeking - one where they can explore and interact with their community.



**THE EDDY AT RIVERVIEW LANDING** in Smyrna, GA, is a mixed-use community located on the Chattahoochee River where residents can grab dinner or coffee, launch a kayak, enjoy a concert in an open amphitheater, race along connected bike paths, or wander down walking trails on site.

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## UNIT DESIGN TRENDS

While accounting for the health and well-being of the entire community as a whole, we can't overlook the individual dwelling units where tenants live most of their lives. Regardless of whether it's a market-rate high-rise or an affordable housing development, our designers can incorporate details that make it easier for tenants to live and work in their homes.

**Mudrooms.** The incorporation of a small and simple decontamination zone near the entryway allows residents to remove shoes, disrobe and decontaminate upon returning home. These spaces can also be outfitted with a bike rack or additional storage.

**Larger/More Windows.** Building codes across the country require that habitable spaces such as bedrooms and living rooms have access to natural light and air via operable windows. Exposure to natural light is known to help boost energy and moods, while at the same time regulating natural circadian rhythm, encouraging better sleeping at night. Studies have shown that views of the natural world have a profound positive effect on our health and well-being.

**Balconies and Outdoor Patios.** With a stay-at-home procedure in place, more residents are looking to the outdoors for escape. Therefore, a greater focus on balconies and outdoor patios have become prevalent. However, designing for both privacy and connectivity is a challenge that must be addressed to successfully attract residents.



**TOWN TRELAGO** in Maitland, FL, is a unique community consisting of e-Urban® and Big House® building plans designed in a Spanish-Mediterranean style.

## RETHINKING SUBURBAN DENSITY

With nearly one-third of Americans now considering a move to less populous areas due to the outbreak, certain aspects of current multifamily design come into question as to how residents will live among each other in a safe and secure manner.

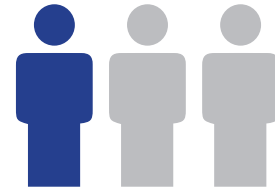
New construction means more developers will be looking for sites outside of the city, so it's becoming increasingly important to rethink building design that includes proper and safe design measures such as:

- Private entrances
- Direct access to one- or two-car garages
- Personal outdoor space, patios and balconies

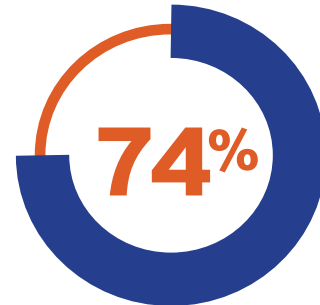
One of our most notable products, The [Big House®](#) maximizes this opportunity and will fulfill the growing demand of additional suburban housing. These highly-efficient and attractive multifamily dwellings offer the same advantages and appeal of single-family homes and are well-received within single-family communities.

Each two to three story building includes between six and ten units with one- or two-car garages for both first and second floor tenants. Enclosed private staircases lead to every upper unit with direct access to units from their respective garages with the advantage of no shared breezeways or open corridors. Units also include walk-out patios and balconies along with extra storage options.

The next page includes an example of how our Big House® design can successfully incorporate in-unit work spaces.



Nearly **one-third** of Americans are considering a move to less populous areas, and in some regions, they are already relocating.<sup>1</sup>



Between March 15 and April 28, moves from New York City to Connecticut, jumped 74% compared to the previous year due to the pandemic.<sup>2</sup>

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

**GREEN CERTIFICATIONS** According to the NAHB, using green, high-performance practices such as EnergyStar and NGSB can position multifamily developers and builders to meet the demand of raised consumer awareness regarding comfort, efficiency and health - a trend that has been on the rise for several years.<sup>3</sup>

**100+**

HPA projects built in the last five years are green certified.

1. NYTIMES, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/08/realestate/coronavirus-escape-city-to-suburbs.html>  
 2. AXIOS, <https://www.axios.com/coronavirus-migration-american-cities-survey-aba181ba-a4ce-45b2-931c-6c479889ad37.html>  
 3. NAHB NOW <https://nahbnow.com/2020/06/3-new-opportunities-for-multifamily-developers-to-use-the-2020-ngbs/>



# BIG HOUSE® FLOOR PLANS

WITH OFFICE NOOK OPTIONS



BUILDING -1st. FLOOR PLAN



BUILDING - 2nd FLOOR PLAN

# BIG HOUSE® UNIT PLANS



NET AREA	719 SQ. FT.
BALCONY AREA	128 SQ. FT.
TOTAL GROSS	847 SQ. FT.



NET AREA	576 SQ. FT.
BALCONY AREA	95 SQ. FT.
TOTAL GROSS	671 SQ. FT.



NET AREA	908 SQ. FT.
BALCONY AREA	185 SQ. FT.
TOTAL GROSS	1093 SQ. FT.



NET AREA	1348 SQ. FT.
TOTAL GROSS	1488 SQ. FT.



NET AREA	1348 SQ. FT.
BALCONY AREA	140 SQ. FT.
TOTAL GROSS	1488 SQ. FT.



## INTERIOR DESIGN TRENDS

After enduring several months of stay-at-home orders, many residents may be looking for upgraded unit interiors and community amenities that maintain a fruitful lifestyle both in and out of quarantine. Newly recognized requisites include anti-microbial surfaces and materials, private spaces for working from home, on-site access to convenience stores, and a greater connection to nature.

We asked the design team at [HPA Design Group](#) for their insight and creativity, technical proficiency, and space-planning savvy on how to achieve a healthier community.

As we spend more time in our homes, we are all reminded how much a warm and inviting living space can increase our quality of life. Whether you're building from the ground up or working on a comprehensive renovation, there are plenty of methods and opportunities to integrate these ideas and design elements into your community

**Materials and Fixtures.** On May 21, 2020, the CDC showed that coronavirus does not spread as easily from surfaces as previously thought. However, it's still the case that people can get COVID-19 by touching an infected surface and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes so, keeping surfaces clean should still be a top priority.



**COPPER FIXTURES.** Once hidden away behind walls in plumbing fixtures and piping, this metal is being brought to the foreground due to the fact that the viruses can last for only four hours on the surface. It also offers a warm, natural aesthetic.



**COUNTERTOPS.** One of the most-touched surfaces in a home is undoubtedly the countertops within the kitchen and bathrooms. Easy-to-clean and non-porous surfaces such as quartz and granite fall into this category.



**LINOLEUM AND CORK FLOORING.** These eco-friendly options repel microbes and are easy to clean and maintain.



**TOUCHLESS/VOICE CONTROLLED TECHNOLOGY.** There has been a move toward more smart home features, touchless sensors and voice command. Now these innovations will no longer be seen merely as conveniences or luxuries, but as necessary features.



**JEFFERSON WOODLANDS** in Garland, TX showcases a custom architectural divider separating the entry of the lobby from the seating areas behind it.

**Space Planning.** With social distancing in mind, most areas will require some thought and reconfiguration. Assign communal areas and unit plans with areas as low, frequent, or high interaction and plan accordingly.

**Partitions and Sneeze Guards.** Often portable, these are ideal for reception, check-in areas, fitness facilities, waiting areas, salons, and spas.

**Architectural Dividers:** Typically, dividers have created utilitarian solutions to harmonize large open spaces and bring coziness into an area. They also help to limit spaces where residents may congregate in large groups, by creating socially-distant appropriate zones for lounging and gathering.

**Enhanced Signage and Wayfinding.** As we step carefully back into the world, we will need to shift our behaviors, interactions, and ways of moving through certain spaces. New signage and wayfinding methods below can guide people through communities and limit unnecessary foot traffic.

- Consider how signage can guide and assist the user through a space, from entry to exit.
- When selecting a signage system, evaluate how people are returning to these spaces - what are they thinking, feeling, and needing?
- Don't forget about the elevator, common corridors, or the entry into their home.
- Markers for security and check-in processes, hand sanitizer stations, meeting room protocols, congregation zones and walk-way designations will become necessary.