

Hammering it home: COVID-19 fails to derail Americans' plans for home renovations

New LightStream Survey: 73% of U.S. homeowners still plan to spend money on home improvement projects in 2020

CHARLOTTE, N.C., June 16, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Seventy-three percent of homeowners are planning to renovate this year, according to a new, May 2020 LightStream home improvement pulse survey conducted by Wakefield Research. This is down slightly from 77% when the survey was initially fielded in January 2020. In fact, those individuals are moving forward or expanding projects (57%) at more than twice the rate of those who are cutting back or cancelling (23%).

The average amount homeowners intend to spend (\$11,851) has actually increased slightly compared to results from January (\$11,473). And while fewer millennials are planning to renovate now (83%) compared to January (92%), they are pursuing more expensive projects; they now expect to spend \$16,088 on these endeavors, whereas those surveyed in January planned to budget \$13,838 this year.

"As a result of COVID-19 shutdowns that closed offices, businesses, schools and more, self-isolation has forced Americans to take a much closer look at their homes," said Todd Nelson, senior vice president of strategic partnerships at LightStream. "Many have clearly decided that renovation remains the right move. And they're acting on it. In fact, as of the end of May, LightStream home improvement loan application volume is up by over 15% compared to January through May in 2019."

Outside & Inside

The pandemic seems to have inspired a strong appreciation for being outdoors. Nearly half of those planning home improvement projects (49%) now plan to tackle outside renovations. The May survey also revealed that parents, compared to non-parents, are significantly more likely to plan upgrades to their outdoor spaces (54% vs. 46%) and take on pool projects (26% vs. 10%).

Home repairs (35%), bathrooms (33%) and kitchens (32%) follow behind outdoor upgrades as popular renovations for those planning home improvement projects.

Seeking Time Apart

All this time at home has also created a need for privacy. More than a third of those surveyed (36%) feel like they do not have personal space in their house. Parents (57%) are more than twice as likely as non-parents (25%) to feel this way.

Opening Their Virtual Doors

Whether connecting with loved ones, attending a virtual class, or meeting with co-workers, video calls have become a part of daily life for many since the pandemic hit. Among those who have made video calls from home, 64% have been embarrassed by parts of their living space. Parents (80%) feel this more than non-parents (55%). Across generations, millennials are the most embarrassed (75%), compared to their older counterparts (66% of Gen X and 55% of boomers).

Whatever their reason for tackling home improvements, consumers remain divided on how to pay for them. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of those renovating this year will use savings, while nearly one-third (31%) will tap credit cards.

Those who planned renovations in 2020 and are cutting back or cancelling projects are doing so because they are either reprioritizing discretionary spending (46%); choosing to build up savings and/or assets (29%); or have experienced loss of income by a family member or as an individual (28%).

"Consumers who are feeling less economic security are wisely holding back spending on discretionary purchases," continued Nelson. "Those planning big ticket purchases must set a budget for their project so that they don't overspend or deplete emergency savings and other important financial assets. And if they are going to borrow to finance their project, they need to look for lower interest rates options, like installment loans, rather than credit cards with higher interest rates."

Visit the [LightStream blog](#) for more information on the May 2020 LightStream home improvement pulse survey. To learn about LightStream's rates and terms on home improvement loans, visit [LightStream.com](#).

About LightStream

LightStream is a national online lending division of Truist. LightStream delivers unsecured, fixed-rate loans with no fees to good-credit customers for practically any purpose, including home improvements. Financing is

available in all 50 states. Through a simple online process, funds can be provided as soon as the same day an application is submitted. Click [here](#) for important disclosures, including a payment example as well as information on same day funding, LightStream's Rate Beat Program and its \$100 Loan Experience Guarantee.

About Truist

Truist Financial Corporation is a purpose-driven financial services company committed to inspire and build better lives and communities. With 275 years of combined BB&T and SunTrust history, Truist serves approximately 12 million households with leading market share in many high-growth markets in the country. The company offers a wide range of services including retail, small business and commercial banking; asset management; capital markets; commercial real estate; corporate and institutional banking; insurance; mortgage; payments; specialized lending and wealth management. Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, Truist is the sixth-largest commercial bank in the U.S. with total assets of \$506 billion as of March 31, 2020. Truist Bank, Member FDIC. Learn more at [Truist.com](https://www.truist.com).

Survey Methodology

The LightStream Home Improvement Survey was conducted by Wakefield Research (www.wakefieldresearch.com) among 1,300 nationally representative US homeowners, between May 7th and May 15th, 2020, using an email invitation and an online survey. Quotas have been set to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the US homeowner population, ages 18+. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. For the interviews conducted in this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 2.7 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample. For complete survey methodologies, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes, please contact MediaRelations@lightstream.com

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