

The Pandemic Didn't Just Disrupt Our Homelife, It Changed How We Understand "Home"

Half of homeowners say their space is being used differently; two-thirds say spending more time at home has made them long for upgrades

CHARLOTTE, N.C., April 7, 2021 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- After a year in which "working from home" began to feel like "living at work," America has undergone a profound shift in its understanding of "home," driving homeowners to want more space, new uses and a better environment to nurture positive changes that evolved during lockdown. They also want to address design, condition and space frustrations they felt while spending uninterrupted time indoors.

According to the 8th annual LightStream Home Improvement Trends Survey,¹ nearly half (47%) of U.S. homeowners say they are utilizing their space differently since the onset of the pandemic. And more than two-thirds (69%) say spending more time at home has made them eager to upgrade.

"Before the pandemic, 'home' was a 'home base' for launching activities. Under stay-at-home orders, it became the only place, for everything," said Todd Nelson, senior vice president of strategic partnerships at LightStream. "Our 2021 survey shows many Americans spent time thinking creatively about what they want and need from their homes. Many are now ready to invest in improvements, remodels and repairs. However, in the rush to renovate it's not only important to plan project outcomes, it's critical to have a smart financial strategy in place to pay for it all."

Addressing House Frustrations

The LightStream survey reports that 91% of respondents say a lack of space in their home became a big frustration during the COVID-19 experience.

Younger homeowners in particular say they wish they had more room (63% of Gen Z vs. 71% of Millennials vs. 64% of Gen X vs. 47% of Boomers). As a result, 12% of those with home improvement plans for 2021 are including a home addition while 14% are planning a basement or attic remodel.

As spaces are being reimagined, the most popular projects homeowners plan to spend money on in 2021 include kitchen remodels (38%), outdoor improvements (35%), bathrooms remodels (32%) and home repair/technology upgrades (30%).

More Family, More Needs at Home

There are many reasons why space utilization has become so important. The LightStream survey uncovered that more than one-in-ten (12%) U.S. homeowners say the number of children or adults in their home has increased during the pandemic due to COVID-19 safety (35%), health reasons (20%) or other changes. As a result, over half (56%) of those newly-expanded households have renovation plans for 2021. Not surprisingly, three-in-four (72%) homeowners whose households have grown wish they had more personal space. Multi-generational families (that may include parents, children and their grandparents) and traditional households (parents and their children) are more likely to undertake 2021 projects than homeowners without children (44% of each vs. 34%), particularly to improve at-home working and learning spaces.

Paying for Home Improvements

While the pandemic has driven consumers to move home improvements forward some, in their urgency, may be setting themselves up for costly financial mistakes.

Surveyed homeowners said their top source of payment for home improvement projects is savings (66%), while their second source of payment is credit cards (30%). Of those who plan to use a credit card to pay for home improvements, 43% expect it to take 6 months or longer to pay off their project charges. One in five (21%) admit they don't know how long it will take to pay off their charges.

"After a year of stay-at-home orders, it makes sense that consumers are rethinking their home needs. But just as important, they should also be strategizing how they're going to pay for those renovations," continues Nelson. "Right now, we're in a low interest rate environment which works well for those who seek out an installment loan. Compared to using credit cards – which on average run over 18% APR – the low fixed rates and fixed terms of a personal loan, cashout refinance or mortgage refinance are really attractive. Homeowners using a credit card to pay for their improvements could end up spending a lot more in the long-run."

Here's a comparison of \$20,000 remodeling expenses paid on a credit card vs a LightStream personal loan:

	CREDIT CARD	LightStream
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FINANCED AMOUNT	\$20,000	\$20,000
Interest Rate	18.52% ²	8.42% ³
Monthly Payment (minimum)	\$600	\$631
Months to Pay-off	298	36
TOTAL REPAYMENT AMOUNT	\$40,868	\$22,702
TOTAL SAVINGS		\$18,166

"We've all been waiting not to just get out, but to put our plans into action. Everyone has an idea on how to better adapt our home to the needs we discovered under quarantine," says Nelson. "Just make sure that the projects you take on don't take you down a long, expensive repayment path."

More information about the LightStream 2021 Home Improvement Survey and financing can be found at [LightStream.com/annual-home-improvement](https://lightstream.com/annual-home-improvement).

About LightStream

LightStream is a national online lending division of SunTrust | Now Truist. LightStream delivers unsecured loans to good-credit customers for practically any purpose, including home improvements. LightStream's current home improvement rates on a \$20,000 home improvement loan for 36 months start as low as 3.99% APR with no fees.⁴ 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. Financing is available in all 50 states.

About Truist

Truist Financial Corporation (NYSE: TFC) is a purpose-driven financial services company committed to inspiring and building better lives and communities. Formed by the historic merger of equals of BB&T and SunTrust, Truist has 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 \$509 billion as of December 31, 2020. Truist Bank, Member FDIC. Learn more at [Truist.com](https://truist.com).

¹The LightStream Home Improvement Survey was conducted by IPSOS among 1,300 nationally representative U.S. homeowners, between February 4th and February 17th, 2021, via 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. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3% at 95% confidence. For complete survey methodologies, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes, contact MediaRelations@LightStream.com.

²18.52% APR is the average credit card interest rate charged after the introductory period ends. Source: Mintel, January, 2021.

³LightStream personal loan calculation is based on a 36-month, \$20,000 loan at 8.42% (the average APR for LightStream Home Improvement loans in 2020 with AutoPay) versus making minimum payments (3% or \$25, whichever is greater) on \$20,000 at the average credit card rate of 18.52% APR.

⁴Current LightStream Home Improvement loan rates as start as low as 3.99% APR with AutoPay and excellent credit. It takes just minutes to apply. Funds can be delivered directly to a customer bank account as soon as the day of application, see disclosures [here](#). Loan terms, including APR, may differ based on loan purpose, amount, term length and your credit profile. Lowest rates require excellent credit. At least 26% of approved applicants applying for the lowest rate qualified for the lowest rate available, based on data from 10/01/2020 to 12/31/2020. Rate is quoted with AutoPay discount. Rates without AutoPay are 0.50% points higher. Subject to credit approval. Conditions and limitations apply. Advertised rates and terms are subject to change without notice. Maximum APR for a LightStream loan is 20.49%

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For further information: MediaRelations@LightStream.com

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