New-Construction Buyers Prioritize Space, Financial Confidence and Function, Homes.com Survey Finds

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Home offices, customization, builder reputation and AI-enabled search are shaping the 2026 new-home market

ARLINGTON, Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Sep. 10, 2026-- Homes.com, a CoStar Group (NASDAQ: CSGP) leading online residential marketplace, found that today's new-construction buyers approach the home buying process with more information and higher expectations than ever, often anchoring their decisions in having larger homes and long-term financial confidence, according to a newly published survey.

The New Construction Market Landscape Study *What New Home Buyers Want*, conducted by Good Run Research and CMI Research and published by Homes.com, surveyed over three thousand American adults aged 25 or older who were primary or joint housing decision-makers and had a newly constructed home purchase price or budget of at least $250,000 over a two-year period.

The report, which operates at a 95% confidence level, identifies seven key insights into the evolving preferences and challenges individuals face when buying newly constructed homes and is broken down across demographics and buyer profiles that include age, price point and state.

A drilldown into homebuyer preferences across 10 states found that priorities vary widely by region, underscoring the importance of builders tailoring their offerings to local demand.

Together, the results paint a picture of buyers who reward transparency and quality above all else. Below is a breakdown of the seven key findings:

- **AI and Video Drive the Search:** 51% of respondents used AI tools during their home search, and 62% engaged with AI three or more times a week. Buyers also leaned on richer digital media to evaluate homes before visiting. Videos of homes and communities were the most popular virtual search tool at 42%, followed by interactive floor plans at 36% and interactive site plans at 29%.
    - Among Gen Z buyers, one in four said they struggle to visualize a completed home, reinforcing the value of immersive media.
- **More Space and Financial Autonomy Are Key Motivators:** The desire for a larger home or more indoor or outdoor space topped buyer motivations at 35%. The next three drivers were all tied to financial autonomy: achieving financial readiness at 32%, finding an affordable area at 31% and the desire to own a home rather than continue renting at 31%. Health and safety standards were another motivator for 25% of buyers.
- **Home Offices Are a Necessity:** 64% of respondents work remotely at least one day per week, making dedicated workspace a core requirement. A home office was important to 74% of buyers, the highest-priority additional room in the study, while 49% wanted a second home office. Recent purchasers also reported reducing their daily commute by an average of eight minutes, or 26%, after moving into a newly constructed home.
- **New Construction Is Seen as an Opportunity to Customize:** 70% of buyers want full structural and aesthetic customization. They view the ability to begin with a blank slate and tailor finishes and layouts as a baseline expectation rather than a premium feature, making personal control a central part of new construction's appeal.
- **Reputation and Quality Decide the Builder:** Affordability shapes what buyers can purchase, but trust and quality play a larger role in determining whom they buy from. 57% considered the quality of materials and 54% considered builder experience, compared with 30% who considered financial incentives. Objective reviews also carried more weight than social media, reinforcing the value of an established reputation.
- **Financial Considerations Still Matter:** While financial incentives were not the leading factor in builder selection, buyers remained highly attentive to the broader costs of homeownership. Homeowners insurance was a concern for 50% of respondents, while 49% cited property taxes and closing costs. Financing presented an additional challenge for first-time buyers, 74% of whom expressed concern about qualifying for a mortgage. This group accounted for

55% of all respondents and 71% of Gen Z respondents.
- **Function Is More Important Than Aesthetics:** Buyers consistently favored practical features over visual upgrades. A private backyard ranked first at 51%, followed by security features at 47% and flexible spaces at 36%. In the kitchen, natural light was important to 85% of buyers, while quality cabinetry and additional storage were each cited by 84%. Buyers most often wanted a home to feel “comfortable” at 38% and “safe” at 33%, while “impressive”, “exclusive” and “upscale” each drew significantly less interest. Overall, homebuyer preferences across 10 states varied widely by region, underscoring the need for builders to tailor offerings to local demand.

For more information on the New Construction Market Landscape Study visit https://www.homes.com/solutions/new-home-buyer-trends-report-2026.

About Homes.com

Homes.com is the fastest-growing residential real estate marketplace and a leading destination for homebuyers, sellers, and real estate professionals. A brand of CoStar Group (NASDAQ: CSGP), Homes.com is redefining online real estate by putting agents and homeowners first through a more transparent, agent-friendly marketplace.

Unlike traditional real estate portals, Homes.com is built around a simple principle: Your Listing, Your Lead™. By connecting consumers directly with the listing agent, Homes.com helps agents win more listings, generate more leads and deliver greater value to their clients. Millions of buyers use Homes.com’s powerful search tools, rich property content, and AI-driven experiences to discover homes and connect with local real estate experts.

Backed by the largest marketing investment in residential real estate, Homes.com has invested $1.25 billion to build nationwide brand awareness, generating more than 100 billion impressions and establishing Homes.com as a household name among consumers. The platform continues to experience rapid growth, with 83 million average monthly unique visitors*, 115% year-over-year growth in organic search traffic, and more than 36,000 Member Agents joining in just two years.

Homes.com Membership gives agents exclusive marketing advantages and unmatched exposure to help grow their businesses. Based on an internal analysis of approximately 11,000 Member Agents, Members earned an average of $36,400 more in commission during their first year of membership. Members win 60% more listings and received five times more leads than non-member agents**.

For more information, visit Homes.com.

*The Homes.com Network, which includes Homes.com, the Apartments Network, and the Land Network, averaged 83 million monthly unique visitors through July 2026, according to Google Analytics.

** This figure represents an average of 11,000 agents who completed one full year of membership and is not a guarantee of future results. Individual results may vary based on market conditions, geographic location, agent activity, and other factors.

About CoStar Group

CoStar Group (NASDAQ: CSGP) is a global leader in commercial real estate information, analytics, online marketplaces, and 3D digital twin technology. Founded in 1986, CoStar Group is dedicated to digitizing the world’s real estate, empowering all people to discover properties, insights, and connections that improve their businesses and lives.

CoStar Group’s major brands include CoStar, a leading global provider of commercial real estate data, analytics, and news; LoopNet, the most trafficked commercial real estate marketplace; Apartments.com, the leading platform for apartment rentals; Homes.com, the fastest-growing residential real estate marketplace; and Domain, one of Australia’s leading property marketplaces. CoStar Group’s industry-leading brands also include Matterport, a leading spatial data company whose platform turns buildings into data to make every space more valuable and accessible; STR, a global leader in hospitality data and benchmarking; Zonda, a leading provider of data, analytics, software, and marketplace solutions for the residential construction industry; Ten-X, an online platform for commercial real estate auctions and negotiated bids; and OnTheMarket, a leading residential property portal in the United Kingdom.

CoStar Group’s websites attracted over 118 million average monthly unique visitors in the second quarter of 2026, serving clients around the world. Headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, CoStar Group is committed to transforming the real estate industry through innovative technology and comprehensive market intelligence. From time to time, we plan to utilize our corporate website as a channel of distribution for material company information. For more information, visit CoStarGroup.com.

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