

Eye on Home Trends

This is the time of year when many organizations look back to review the previous year and look forward to predicting home trends to watch.

If you're gearing up to buy, sell, or renovate a home, this data gives you a snapshot of what's driving consumer behavior, what to emphasize to boost your home's salability, and the renovations that bring the most value to you and to future buyers

NATIONAL AVERAGES			
Project Description	Job cost	Value at Sale	Cost Recouped
Garage Door Replacement	\$3,470	\$3,411	98.30%
Manufactured stone veneer	\$8,221	\$7,986	97.10%
Deck addition (wood)	\$10,950	\$9,065	82.80%
Minor kitchen remodel	\$21,198	\$17,193	81.10%
Siding replacement	\$15,072	\$11,554	76.70%

Universal Design Pays Off in Bathroom

This year's Cost vs. Value Report by *Remodeling* magazine (<http://bit.ly/2DDpnDy>) once again shows the 20 most popular home renovation projects that bring the highest return on investment.

Topping this year's list are garage door replacements costing an average of \$3,740 and delivering a 98.3% return on investment.

If you're considering aging-in-place projects, you'll be pleased by the ROI that a bathroom with universal design principles can bring. Plus, it's a project that will serve you while you're living in your house by making the space safer and more comfortable.

If you're debating between a regular bathroom renovation and one with universal design principles (seventh on the list of most popular projects), go for the latter. Because the bathroom with universal design features brings a slightly higher ROI (70.6% versus 70.1%).

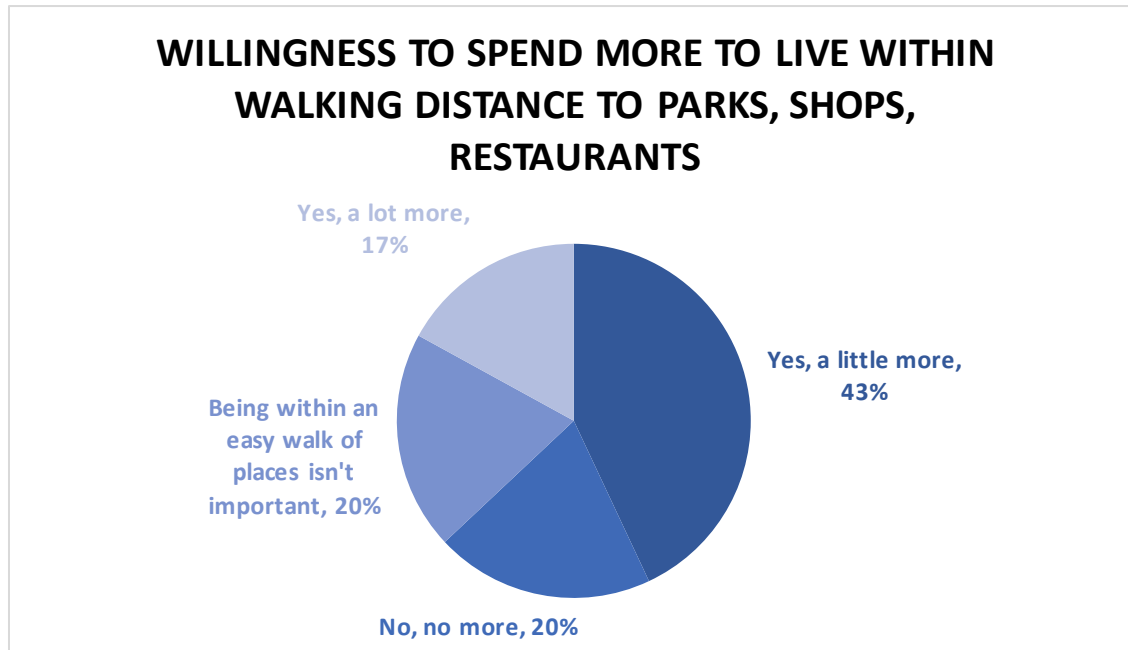
Another bonus is that its job cost (\$16,393) is lower than a normal bathroom remodel (\$19,134).

Here are the five projects that provide the greatest return on investment.

Buyers Will Spend More for Walkability

If your house is in a walkable community, it just may be a terrific selling point to play up in your property's marketing. Increasingly, buyers are looking for things like shorter commute times, walkability, and access to parks, according to the *2017 National Community and Transportation Preference Survey* (<http://bit.ly/2F5MnZb>).

It also found that people who have places to walk are more satisfied with the quality of life in their community. What's better is that buyers will pay more for walkability.



Tidiness Rules the Kitchen

Shopping for kitchen gear usually is a lot more fun than scouring around for the best garage door or siding.

The 2018 U.S. Houzz Kitchen Trends Study (<http://bit.ly/2BjLaet>) shows what's trending in the world of kitchen design, and the information may help you narrow down the vast options you face when you redo your kitchen.

The most popular kitchen has stainless steel appliance, white cabinets, wood floors, and gray walls. The L-shaped kitchen is in and the U-shaped kitchen is out. There's a fixation with tidiness, as evidenced by some of the most popular built-in storage features, including

include pullout waste or recycling centers (67%), cookie sheet/tray organizers (55%), deep drawer organizers (45%), and pull/swing-out trays and shelves (44%). Spice, cutlery, and utensil organizers also are popular.

Houzz calls out decluttered counters (75%) an obsession among home renovators, who also are focused on function, with ease of storing and finding things topping the list of functional priorities at 63%.

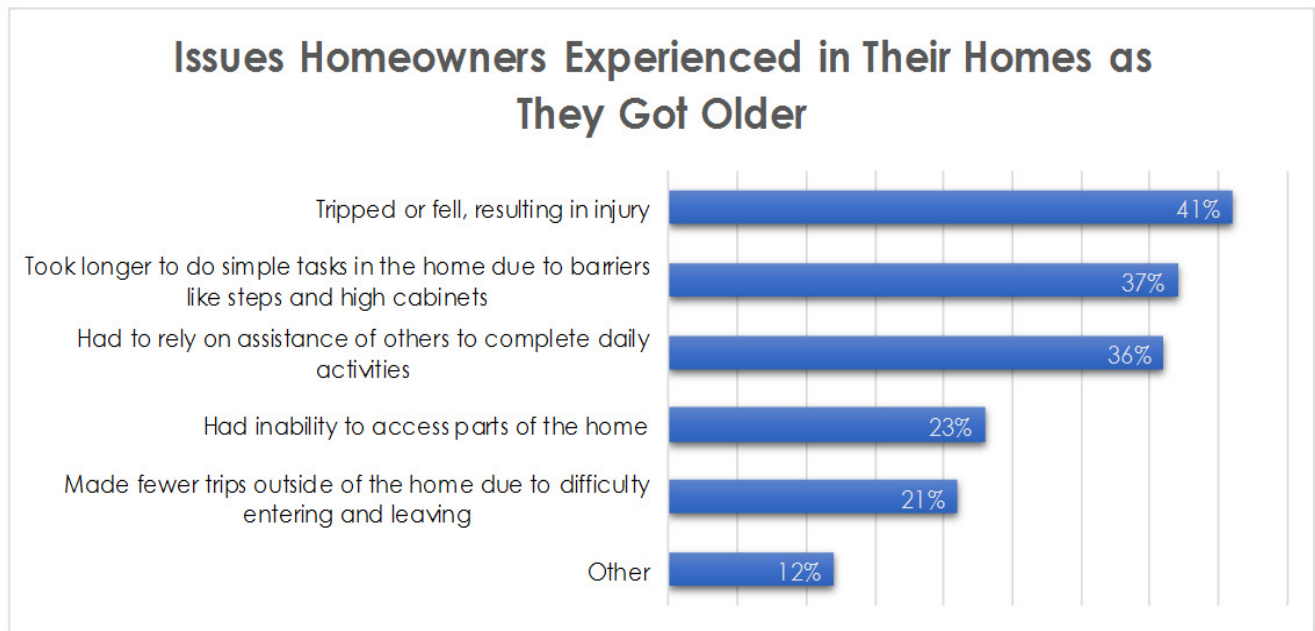
And if you've never been in love with granite countertops, this is your year. Engineered quartz now is more popular than granite as a countertop material.

Holistic Planning for Aging-in-Place Changes

HomeAdvisor's 2017 Aging-in-place Report (<http://bit.ly/2zIU48p>) talked to two sets of homeowners—those aged 55 to 75 and those over the age of 75—to assess their motives for making home upgrades.

It's hard to know exactly what disabilities you're going to face and what modifications will be needed down the line, so one strategy is taking a holistic look at a home and choosing home upgrades with an eye toward making life easier now and in the future. That may mean ensuring that a home is in good condition and simplifying landscaping, organizing closets and storage spaces, replacing door knobs with door handles, and making repairs that affect safety.

Respondents' comments about how watching loved ones struggle with aging motivated them to improve their homes makes the report compelling. And remarks by older respondents about the projects they wish they'd done earlier are equally motivating. After all, many aging homeowners now face tremendous challenges functioning at home, and more than one-third said that they can no longer access some parts of their homes.



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Team Tiry Real Estate, LLC
1820 Brackett Ave, Eau Claire, WI 54701
Aaron & Cheree Tiry



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