

SPRING  
2014

# LIVING

**BEST IN AMERICAN**

REDEFINING  
HOME AND  
COMMUNITY

## 2014 TRENDS ISSUE

Communities, interiors, kitchens *and more!*

**BEST IN AMERICAN LIVING AWARDS**  
*Winners Showcase*

**BLENDING AFFORDABLE  
AND MARKET-RATE HOMES**

**BRAINS & BEAUTY**  
*The NAHBGreen Award Winner*

**NAHB**<sup>®</sup>

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# LIVING

## BEST IN AMERICAN



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# Create a Kitchen that a Home Buyer **LOVES** By Lita Dirks Living in

**What do you get when you combine hundreds of kitchen design options and a buyer who isn't sure what they want, in an area of the home that has high emotional impact? The answer is often a very confused, frustrated and overwhelmed customer.**

At one time, the kitchen served only one purpose—the place where you prepared meals. But today's kitchens are multi-functional. Kitchens are the home's hub of activity—the place where school lunches are packed, evening meals are cooked and shared—the center of our daily lives. So when it comes to building or remodeling a home, the kitchen selection process can be stressful for both the builder and customer. There are countless products to choose from, and even the most upbeat and optimistic customer can quickly become irritated and



## **Arverne By The Sea**

Cupboards with a clean, straight line at the top create a crisp look while statement lighting and pop of paint on the walls bring personality to the overall design.

overwhelmed with the numerous decisions required.

Here are some helpful tips that builders can use to influence the kitchen selection process and turn it from a hair-pulling process into a productive and fun experience that their customers will be raving about for years to come.

## **SURFACES**

When it comes to surfaces, the consumer is desperate for design expertise! Many only select granite because they feel they are expected to. This is a huge opportunity for education and incorporating the home buyer's tastes. The first question to pose





to the customer is not about materials choice, it's about acoustics and reflectivity: Do they want a room that is loud with a shiny finish or a room that is quiet with a matte finish? Kitchens that are quiet with a matte finish tend to have seamless, integrated materials that absorb light and sound, while kitchens that are loud with shiny finishes are highly reflective of both light and sound and can appear brighter.

**ISLANDS**

Regardless of a kitchen's size, islands not only serve as focal point of the room, they

also expand the prep and seating areas. Islands are often the connecting factor between the cooking area and the entertaining area. In the past, people congregated in the kitchen. Today, the island is the jewel in the 'Great Room' that not only works for the cook but provides a common area for communication, work, hobbies and home-work. Islands are taking on different shapes and frequently have different finishes that serve as an accent to the rest of the kitchen. Add statement light fixtures above the island and "voila"—it takes center stage!

**Beechwood Homes**  
Using light and contrasting dark materials set the focus on the functional and fantastic kitchen in this "Great Room" area.



This "hard and shiny" kitchen design is highlighted by a snazzy backsplash and marble waterfall gable on the island.  
*PHOTO CREDIT: BRIAN GASSEL PHOTOGRAPHY*

**Parkwood Homes**  
As more people enter their homes through their back door and garages, it's important to incorporate solid design at these entry points. Well organized "drop zones" work great in these areas that are often attached to the kitchen.  
*PHOTO CREDIT: VIC MOSS*





Drawing Board

ZONES

While walls have disappeared from the main living space of a home, zones still exist within the ‘Great Room’. These zones can include places for cooking, entertaining, dining, and relaxation, plus computer centers, back kitchens, pet suites, and drop zones (the place to put things down after coming in from outside). Some homes even extend these spaces outdoors through creative uses of large windows or moveable wall systems. In an open plan, where walls are not present, it is important to keep in mind functional adjacencies and the importance of forms. For instance, from the kitchen, a home

owner should not have to walk through the living area to reach the dining table, and a person entering the home from the garage should not have to walk through the kitchen prep area to reach the drop zone.

CABINETS

Kitchen cabinets can increase efficiency in a kitchen if used properly. For standard nine- and ten-foot ceilings, wall cabinets should go all the way to the ceiling. For a clean, modern look, select cabinet door profiles with simple lines, and maintain one cabinet height throughout the entire kitchen. Cabinets are also a great place to integrate appliances and features for pets

while maintaining a uniform look within the space. Overall, simplicity is key in today’s kitchen designs.

COLOR CHOICE

There isn’t one single color choice that will appeal to all home buyers. The key is to present options—but not too many. A good place to start is with contrasting colors. Select dark-colored cabinets and flooring and balance it with light-colored countertop and backsplash selections or vice versa. This is a popular way to add drama to a space without adding cost. Another option would be to select cabinets, counters, and flooring that are neutral, and add a bold pop of color either through paint, backsplash or both! Blues, greens and all shades of pink are all popular this year.

The kitchen is where families make important decisions, hold meaningful conversations and laugh a lot! Builders can turn the selection process from a stressful experience to an exciting one by guiding the buyer, listening well and integrating the right materials and products into their model kitchens. 🏠

Lita Dirks is CEO and Leading Interior Design Consultant at Lita Dirks & Co., LLC.



Arverne By The Sea  
Bringing the outdoors in is paramount in today’s design.

What's  
Hot

in  
2014

What's  
Not

Sharing the latest trends with buyers can help them make great selections for their kitchens.

Great Rooms	Compartmentalized Rooms
Hidden Appliances	Appliances as Accessories
Creating Zones	Uncontrolled Chaos
Statement Lighting	Insignificant Sameness
Architectural Faucets	Out of Scale Faucets/or No Style Standard
Quartz & Other Solid Surfaces	Granites
White Cabinets	Yellow Stained Woods
Seamless Living	Isolation
Cabinets to the Ceiling	Not Enough Storage
High Contrasts	Monochromatic
Neutrals with Pops of Color	Neon
Rear Entries	Mud Rooms
Large Islands	Small Islands
Islands as Furniture	Uninteresting Islands
Simple Backsplashes	Borders, Inserts & Tile Details
Indoor Outdoor Relationships	One Small Window Over the Sink
Simple Lines	Ornate Decorative Detailing
Waterfall Gables	Drywall Backs & Side



## A Beacon in an Already Bright Green Community

Nestled in Serenbe, a 900-acre eco-conscious community just south of Atlanta, the Proud Green Home not only embraces the neighborhood's rich environmental focus, it rises above and beyond. This feat is especially impressive considering every home in Serenbe must be certified by EarthCraft, a green building program specifically for builders in the Southeast.

# *the* PROUD GREEN HOME

By Brooke Fishel

This 2014 NAHBGreen award winner combines the best in green building technology with downright gorgeous design elements.



“Imery was able to keep the energy consumption to 60 percent less than that of the same home built to meet the current energy code.”

Certifications and Designations

- EarthCraft House Platinum level certification
- ENERGY STAR certified
- EPA Indoor airPlus home
- EPA WaterSense home
- DOE Challenge

The Proud Green Home features a sleek ENERGY STAR-qualified metal roof. Native and drought-tolerant plants grace the home’s dramatic facade.

The Proud Green Home took honors as the 2014 for Project of the Year–Single Family Small Volume at the NAHBGreen Awards in February.

Luis Imery of The Imery Group built this 2,750 square-foot show home, which was designed by architect Chris Laumer-Giddens of LG Squared, Inc. Proud Green Home — an online publishing company that promotes efficient and sustainable construction—sponsored the special project.

The Proud Green Home features rooftop photo-voltaic solar panels as its onsite renewable energy source and produces 9 kWh of energy annually—putting it in the category of net-zero homes (those that can produce at least as much energy as its owners use).

It was Imery’s first net-zero home, and he wanted to make it green all around. “We took a holistic approach to this project. We didn’t just go out and build a house and put solar panels on it to make it energy efficient,” Imery said. “We worked with architects who know building science

to make sure the job was done right and to meet the goals of a net-zero home.”

By focusing on the building envelope, site orientation, lighting, appliances and maintaining efficient layout and volume, Imery was able not only to accommodate generous living spaces, but also keep the energy consumption to 60 percent less than that of the same home built to meet the current energy code.

The list of environment-friendly features in this home is long. Outside, the home boasts an ENERGY STAR-qualified metal roof, rain gutters and downspouts connected to a subgrade drain system, landscaping using native and drought-tolerant plants and shrubs, and a rain sensor for the irrigation system and drain system.

Inside, the home features a high-efficiency ducted mini-split heat pump system that delivers on-demand heating and cooling at the rate that is really needed, as well as continuous slab edge insulation (R-5) to minimize heat loss. In addition, its ZIP System® wall and roof

sheathing products provide structural integrity and water resistance for a durable, airtight shell.

Spray foam insulation was used in the walls and ceiling for a tight building envelope, with insulation values of R-25 and R-21, respectively.

The home also boasts a solar thermal water heating system that is two-and-a-half times more efficient than a conventional electric or gas water heater.

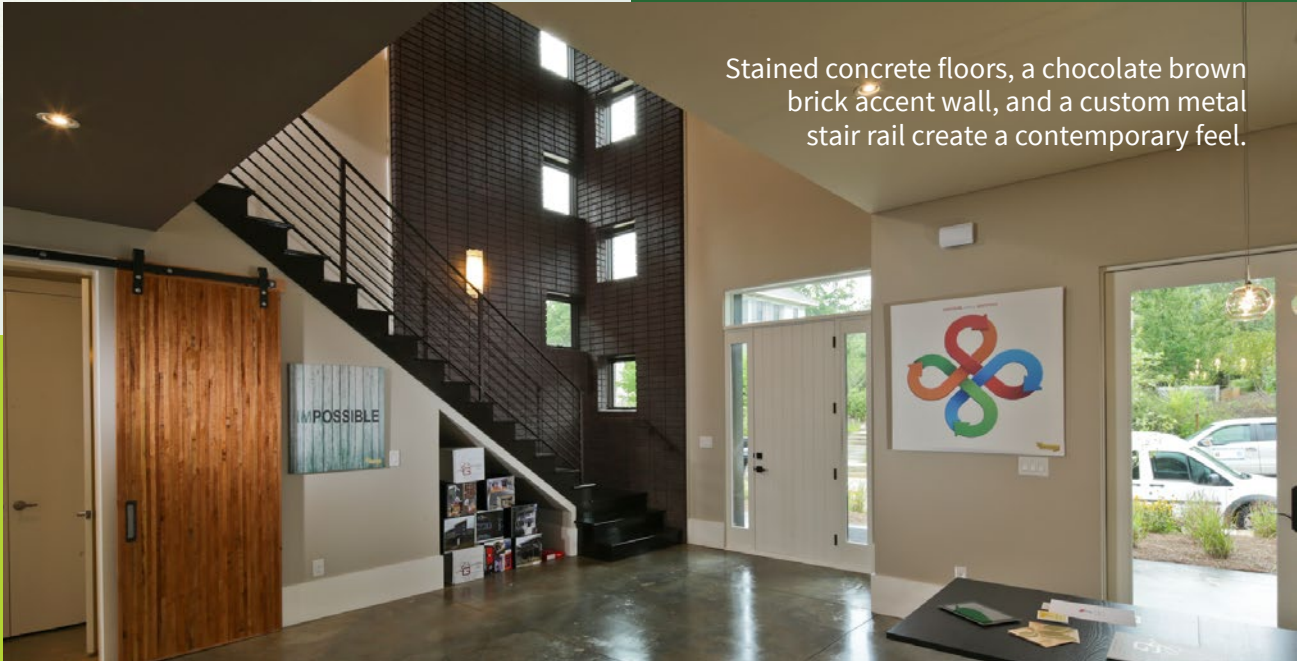
Proud Green Home will monitor the home’s energy use for one year after owners move in to show the effectiveness of its green building techniques.

BRAINS AND BEAUTY

This Proud Green Home isn’t just a prime example of fine green building; beautiful design elements are also a part of the package. On the main level, stained concrete floors lend a contemporary feel to its open floor plan, while a chocolate brown brick accent wall and a custom-designed stairway with metal railing add style to the







Stained concrete floors, a chocolate brown brick accent wall, and a custom metal stair rail create a contemporary feel.

living room. A unique patio invites outdoor entertainment and looks out onto a grove of trees and an adjacent lake.

The home’s downstairs master suite features a double-height ceiling with a wall of windows overlooking the backyard and lake views. The suite is complete with his and hers walk-in closets and a master bath featuring Water Sense low-flow plumbing fixtures.

The spacious contemporary kitchen showcases an island with bar seating and custom cabinets, granite countertops, stainless steel Bosch appliances, under-cabinet lighting and a porcelain tile backsplash.

Hardwood floors span the second level, which includes two bedrooms with a shared Jack-and-Jill bathroom and a flex space for a home office or family entertainment area—which is pre-wired

for high-speed internet, TV and telephone.

There is also potential for a fourth bedroom on the second floor and it is plumbed for an optional third bathroom.

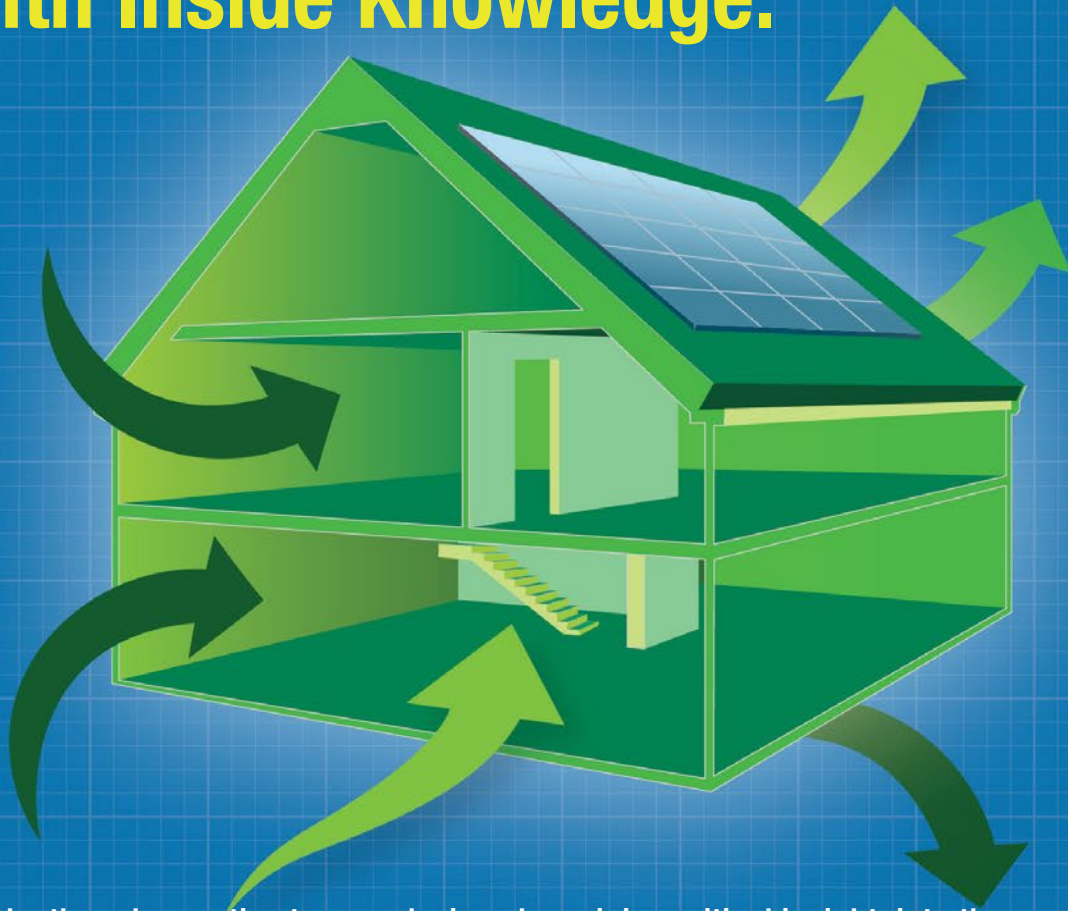
After construction was complete, the home served as a classroom of sorts to educate the public and construction industry about green building. It is now for sale, priced at \$699,900.

A 3D virtual tour and additional energy-efficiency and design specifications can be found at [proudgreenhome.imerygroup.com](http://proudgreenhome.imerygroup.com). 🏡

**Brooke Fishel** is a communications consultant in the San Francisco Bay Area.



# Smart Green Design Begins With Inside Knowledge.



Add depth and expertise to your designs by gaining critical insight into the green building process. Earn the Certified Green Professional (CGP) and Master Certified Green Professional (Master CGP) designations from NAHB. The **CGP** curriculum provides a solid background in green building methods and demonstrates how to cost-effectively incorporate green building principles into homes. The **Master CGP** comprises a more in-depth study of green building science and expands into the mechanics of green building.

Learn more at  
[nahb.org/CGPinfo](http://nahb.org/CGPinfo)  
[nahb.org/MasterCGPinfo](http://nahb.org/MasterCGPinfo)



Join the Conversation.





# Community Design Trends

As the housing market continues its recovery, there are new community design trends emerging as a result of the great recession and our subsequent lifestyle changes. These trends were compiled from research on what the large regional builders are designing, submissions for the Best in American Living Awards, and the Urban Land Institutes survey defining American community preferences, "America in 2013."

.....

## WHAT'S OLD IS NEW

Adaptive reuse—transforming old industrial and commercial buildings into homes and common spaces—is helping urban communities come to life in a variety of ways. Entire sites such as airports and old mills are being remade into unique neighborhoods. These spaces utilize existing services and infrastructure and often encourage further redevelopment around them. In many cases, demolition of these buildings would have been a significant loss to their cities' character and history.

## SAY GOODBYE TO THE FRONT LAWN!

The traditional front lawn is being replaced by lush landscaping, which often serves a dual purpose of managing stormwater and adding to the curb appeal of a community.

By Claire Worshtil

### Edmonton City Center Airport | Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

The Blatchford lands count among the most historic locations in Edmonton. The history of the site as Canada's first municipally managed airfield, which was home to many pioneering aviators, will be embodied through initiatives including:

- Naming of the development
- Preservation of historic buildings
- Naming of the area, roads and major public areas







This allows large homes to occupy a smaller lot and encourages residents to use common areas and trails for recreation, instead of their front yards. These gardens frequently feature native species, which integrate the home into the natural landscape and preserve regional character.

### SINGLE-FAMILY IN THE CITY

The line between urban and suburban is blurring, especially as Generation Y enters the home buying market. Historically, the inability of cities to retain families was partly due to the homogeneity of urban housing stock. Cities are beginning to change their zoning to accommodate single-family detached homes for residents who want a larger home but still want to enjoy city living. This is also happening in the close-in suburbs, where mixed-use neighborhoods are creating an urban feel by providing shopping and entertainment within walking distance of homes.

#### Alta Del Mar—San Diego, Calif.—Bassenian | Lagoni

These romantic front-yard gardens are deceptively low maintenance and create a unique design opportunity, acting as a picture frame for the home beyond. The color, pruning, shape, size and feel of the landscaping all contribute to the design of the larger community.

## Winning Design Starts with the Right Education

### Amp up your design skills with:

- Webinar Wednesdays - Design and Technology Series
- Universal Design/Build and Green Building courses
- Continuing Education for AIA credit
- IBS Design Central and education sessions
- Best in American Living Awards
- *Best in American Living* magazine





AFTER

**The Foundry Lofts—Washington, D.C.**  
This site, which was formerly part of a Navy Yard, suffered from neglect and crime after Navy consolidation. The buildings' original function as pattern and joiner shops on a long, narrow yard dictated the design of this 40-acre development. Architects skillfully situated 177 unique townhouses and flats within the renovated buildings, retaining their robust concrete framing and capital-topped columns. The structure is completely exposed in the final design, juxtaposed with new construction on top and influenced by the riverfront location.



**City Homes at the Hampshires —Washington, D.C.**  
The City Homes at the Hampshires, developed and built by Comstock Homes, consists of 38 single-family homes and 73 townhomes located in Washington, D.C. The elegant design of the homes' exteriors complements the historic ambiance of the surrounding area. The Hampshires combines the conveniences of upscale, urban living in a Metro-accessible location, with rare private open-space amenities. Comstock consolidated multiple parcels to create a gorgeous city-style neighborhood that is transforming this older city block.

DAVIDMADISONPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



**The Fitzgerald—Baltimore, Md.**  
The Fitzgerald is the first residential building in the Mid-Atlantic to install public EV charging stations. Since parking spaces in multifamily rental communities are often not adjacent to the apartments (and thus electric outlets), public stations within an apartment community make owning an electric vehicle a real possibility for renters.

**THE ECO-RESIDENCE**  
Bikes here, bikes there, bikes, bikes everywhere! Bike riding is becoming such a popular mode of transportation that many architectural firms are now engaging in bike access planning. Bike paths and parking areas create a community amenity, and a study from the University of Delaware found that bike paths surrounding a community increases property values. Many multifamily buildings are even providing extra space for bikes in the elevators and adding racks as an amenity within the units. Communities are also beginning to cater to the electric car owner by including charging stations in their designs. The federal government offers a 50 percent tax credit toward the cost of charging stations, including installation. 🏠

Claire Worshtil is the Land Use Program Manager at NAHB and Associate Editor of *Best in American Living* Magazine.

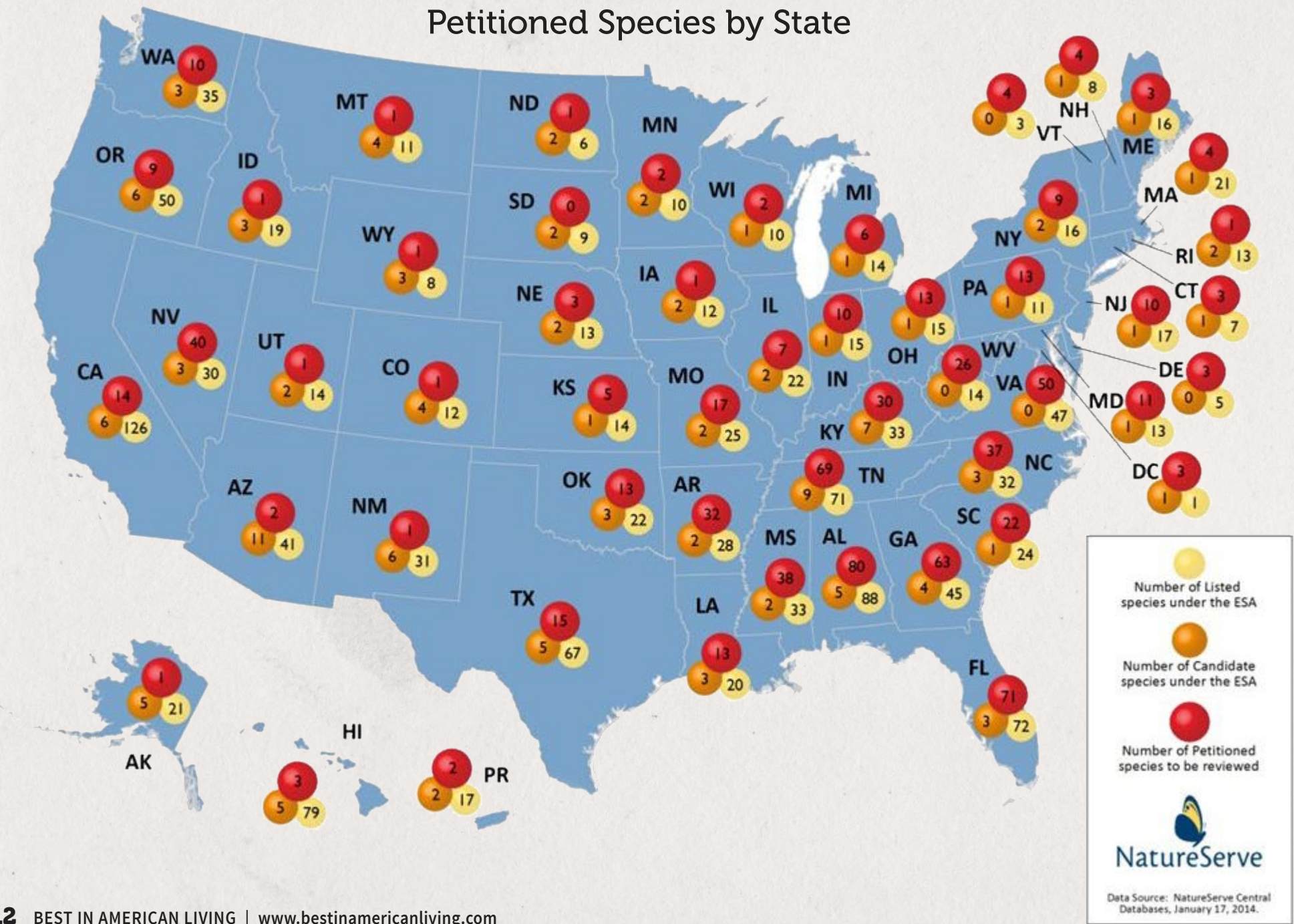




# ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT: New Rules Accelerate Listings and Ignore Accrued Costs

By Larissa Mark

U.S. ESA Listed, Candidate, and  
Petitioned Species by State



The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was created in 1973 to preserve, protect and recover key domestic species. But over the past 40 years, the act has been plagued by inefficiency and is responsible for additional mitigation costs, delays and loss of land use by builders and developers.

If the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) continues on its current path, increased species listings and increased permitting oversight may be the building industry's new norm. Today, more than 1,500 species and sub-species are listed. In fact, less than two percent of those listed have been recovered and removed since 1973. Most species remain, and hundreds more could be added in the next four years.

“Of the more than 1,500 species and sub-species listed, less than two percent have been recovered and removed since 1973.”

In 2011, FWS agreed to two complementary settlement agreements following complaints filed by the WildEarth Guardians and the Center for Biological Diversity. Under the agreements, the FSA must follow a specific workplan to make hundreds of species



### ESA: Terms and Definitions

→ **Endangered Species Act of 1973:** Authorizes the federal government to protect endangered and threatened species and their habitat. When the law was enacted, there were 109 species listed for protection.

→ **Candidate Species:** A plant or animal species that is classified as a candidate for possible listing as an endangered or threatened species but is not currently protected under the Act.

→ **Critical Habitat:** Geographic areas that may contain features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and may require special management considerations.

→ **Section 7 Consultation:** Requires federal agencies to coordinate their activities with the Fish and Wildlife and Service and National Oceanic Atmosphere Administration's Fisheries Service to carry out endangered species conservation programs and to ensure that their activities do not jeopardize endangered species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat.

→ **Incidental Take Statements:** A statement that expresses the amount or extent of population reduction of listed species that may be caused by the proposed action, along with reasonable and prudent measures to minimize the impact on the species population, as well as terms and conditions for compliance.

listing decisions and designate critical habitat under the ESA. These agreements also mandate that more than [250 candidate species](#) be reviewed for final listing as either threatened or endangered by 2018.

While the court agreements do not require that a candidate species definitely become a listed species, over the past two years more than 80 percent (210 of 251) of the decisions resulted in either listings or proposals to list.

In preparation for the dramatic increase in protected species, FWS has proposed several regulations that will affect the types of projects undertaken, the permitting process and the costs associated with permitting and compliance.

**“Over the past two years, more than 80 percent of the candidate species that have been reviewed have become either listed species or resulted in a proposal to list.”**

One notable regulation finalized last year alters the way in which economic analysis is conducted during critical habitat designations, clarifying both when the analysis is to occur and what types of economic costs must be considered.

The most significant change is a new [rule](#) that will no longer allow for all economic impacts to be evaluated and instead take a more targeted approach to consider only those costs caused by the federal protections extended to the species at the time of listing—and not the costs that may accrue solely due to the designation of critical habitat.

The [final rule](#) also requires FWS to propose critical habitat and conduct the required economic analysis at the same time.

Another proposal under review addresses amendments to the authorization of [incidental take](#)—the estimated reduction in species population due to a proposed project—as part of the formal consultation required under Section 7 of the ESA. This proposal sets standards for using a surrogate species to quantify the amount of incidental take, and clarifies the treatment of incidental take in biological opinions on programmatic actions.

In its current form, the proposal may require projects to enter into Section 7 consultation not only for imminent building plans, but also for future projects not yet scheduled for production. NAHB firmly rejects this proposed change and disapproves of requiring future projects to engage in consultation unnecessarily.

FWS is aggressively moving forward to streamline its review process for hundreds of species under the 2011 settlement agreement and other future listing petitions. These actions are likely to result in increased costs, mitigation requirements and project delays.

NAHB has created tools to help stakeholders understand the changes under the ESA regulations. The [NAHB species finder](#) helps users find information on listing decisions under the settlement agreement. 🏠

**Larissa Mark, Ph.D.,** is a Program Manager for Environmental Policy at the National Association of Home Builders.





# Home & Community DESIGN TRENDS on the Horizon

This year’s BALA winners reveal  
home building’s hottest trends.

By Jaclyn S. Toole

The way we live today is significantly different from when we were children and will most definitely be different from how we live in the future. Homes and communities continually change to reflect lifestyles, needs and personal tastes. Often designers and builders look to the past for inspiration and wisdom, while combining today’s technological advances and new materials to shape their homes and communities. The winners of the 2013 Best in American Living Awards (BALA) demonstrate they are at the forefront of innovative design and give a sneak preview of trends home buyers will see over the next several years. The trends predicted by this year’s winners include:

**Jaclyn S. Toole, Assoc. AIA, CGP** was formerly with NAHB’s Land Use and Design Department and is now Senior Program Manager, Green Building.



DESIGN  
TREND  
#1

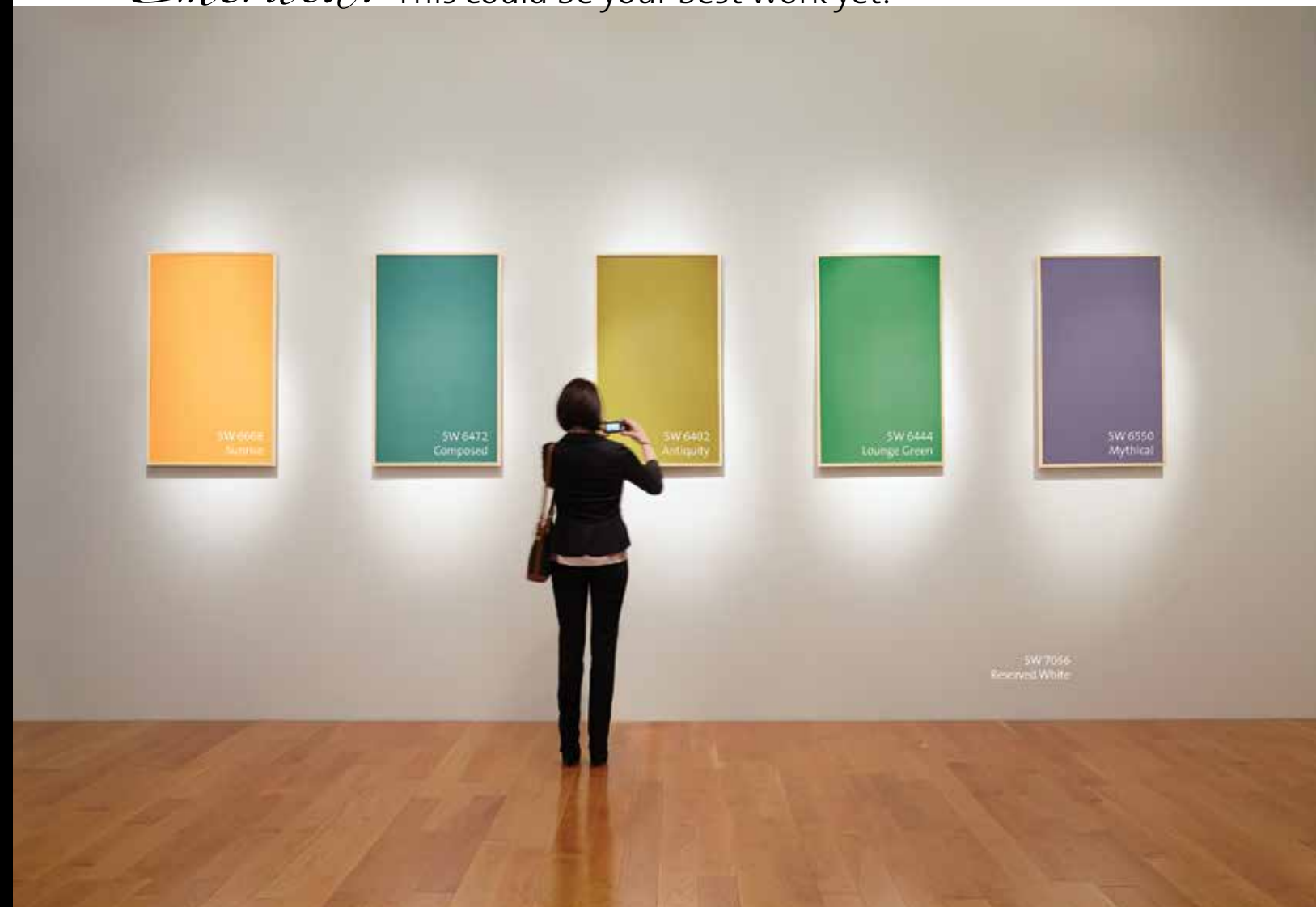
## White on White



Cabinets, flooring, backsplashes, counters, fixtures and appliances are beginning to lighten up. The new approach of layering white on top of white in kitchens and bathrooms gives a fresh and light feeling. This year’s Best in Pacific Region winner achieves clean lines and a modern feel by using European cabinetry, geometric light fixtures and glass walls. Shiny surface materials on appliances, backsplashes and countertops, add to the contemporary vibe.



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# BALA

Best in American Living Awards

2013 WINNERS SHOWCASE



## REMODELING WINNERS

### Silver

Entire Home up to \$250,000 per unit

Alexander Street Renovation • Houston, Texas

Architects aimed to make the home blend into the surrounding community and maintain the unique feel of a bungalow. The completed project updated the feel of the entire home, while respecting the historic neighborhood's craftsman architecture.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE WILLCOX



#### PROJECT TEAM

**ARCHITECT** Content, Houston, Texas

**REMODELER** Southern Green Builders, Houston, Texas

**INTERIOR DESIGNER** Nest & Cot, Houston, Texas





# BALA

Best in American Living Awards

2013 WINNERS SHOWCASE



## INTERIOR DESIGN WINNERS

# Gold

Design Detail

Alta Del Mar - Plan 4 • Del Mar Mesa, Calif.

A sweeping arch on the underside of the stair leads to the semi-subterranean wine room and with its own window, the landing also becomes a destination.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC FIGGE PHOTOGRAPHY



## PROJECT TEAM

**ARCHITECT:** Bassenian/Lagoni Architects, Newport Beach, Calif.

**BUILDER:** Pardee Homes, El Segundo, Calif.

**INTERIOR DESIGNER:** Pacific Dimensions, Inc., El Segundo, Calif.

**DEVELOPER:** Pardee Homes, El Segundo, Calif.

**LAND PLANNER:** Latitude 33, San Diego, Calif.

**INTERIOR MERCHANTISER:** Pacific Dimensions, Inc., El Segundo, Calif.





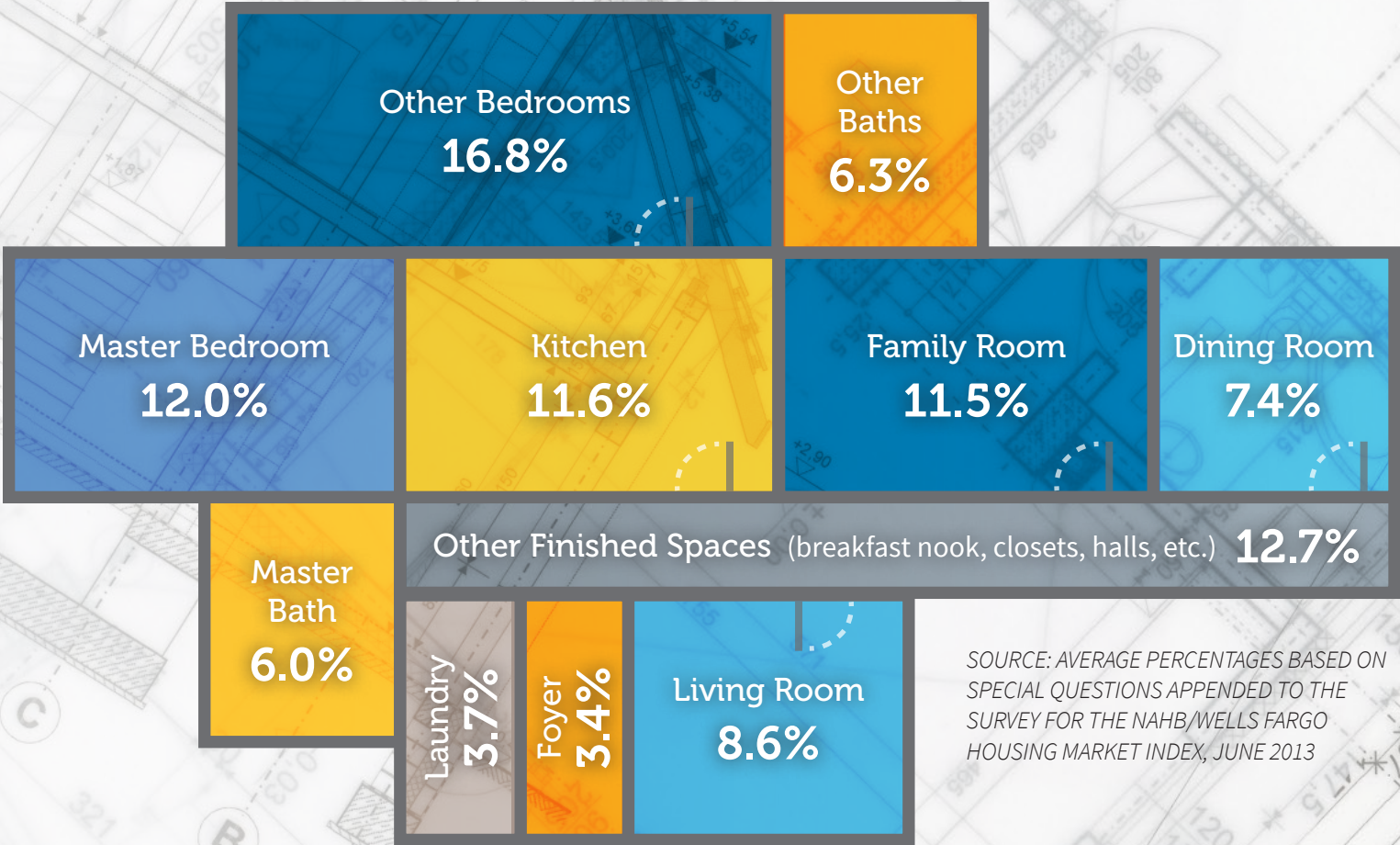
# where builders place their space



A recent survey reveals how builders allocate square footage in their homes. How do your plans compare?

Not long ago, NAHB asked single-family builders how they distribute the finished floor space in their typical new homes. A total of 204 single-family builders across the country answered the questions, which NAHB added to its NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index survey. **Figure 1** shows the average percent distribution calculated from their answers.

The survey asked about space allocated to ten different types of rooms—plus a great room that could be a combination of several types of spaces—and allowed builders to describe any other areas in their own words. A separate question covered the space devoted to walk-in pantries and closets. The survey left what constitutes a particular type of room up to the builders’ discretion.























































SOURCE: AVERAGE PERCENTAGES BASED ON SPECIAL QUESTIONS APPENDED TO THE SURVEY FOR THE NAHB/WELLS FARGO HOUSING MARKET INDEX, JUNE 2013

By Paul Emrath

Figure 1: How Space Is Distributed In An Average New Home



**Figure 2**  
**How Often Builders Provide Various Rooms and Spaces in New Homes**

	All New Homes	By Home Size (sq. ft.)		
		Under 2,000	2,000-2,999	3,000+
Master Bedroom	100% 	100% 	100% 	100% 
Other Bedrooms	95% 	91% 	96% 	94% 
Master Bathroom	96% 	91% 	98% 	97% 
Other Bathrooms	96% 	94% 	96% 	96% 
Laundry Room	96% 	94% 	99% 	93% 
Entry Foyer	89% 	74% 	95% 	91% 
Separate Kitchen	93% 	87% 	95% 	93% 
Separate Dining Room	79% 	68% 	82% 	84% 
Separate Living Room	52% 	51% 	45% 	61% 
Separate Family Room	64% 	43% 	67% 	73% 
Great Room	46% 	43% 	50% 	46% 
Other Finished Space	67% 	60% 	73% 	67% 
Walk-in Kitchen Pantry	60% 	51% 	56% 	76% 

**Figure 3**  
**Allocation of Finished Floor Space in New Homes**  
(SQUARE FEET)

The survey showed that builders always designate one larger bedroom as the master—respondents said they include a master bedroom in 100 percent of homes. And while every new home also contains a kitchen area, this is sometimes combined with other space in a great-room configuration, so only 93 percent reported including a kitchen as a completely separate room. Other rooms included in more than 90 percent of new homes are a master bathroom, additional bedrooms, other bathrooms and a laundry room.

**Figure 2** shows these percentages and as well as how much space is allocated to each room in small, medium and large homes—less than 2,000 square feet, 2,000 to 3,000 square feet, and more than 3,000 square feet. The share of new homes built with separate dining rooms, separate family rooms, and walk-in pantries increases regularly as the homes get bigger. The same is not true, however, for a separate living room, great room or other finished space. Entry foyers are present in more than 90 percent of new homes with at least 2,000 square feet, but are slightly more common in these medium-sized homes than in homes with 3,000 or more square feet of space.

The survey shows some irregularity in the great room statistics—not surprising given the variable nature of that space.

Sometimes builders reported the same space in the home as both a great room and a separate family room (in which case it is counted as both in **Figure 2**). But more often builders described great rooms as some combination of family room, living room, dining room and kitchen. Although a family-living room combination was most common, builders reported many different configurations, including great rooms encompassing all four types of living spaces.

To calculate the average space distribution shown in **Figure 1**, NAHB combined data on the types of spaces present and the reported size of each space. To derive the distribution, the calculations allocated great room square footage according to the type of area it contains (family, living, dining, kitchen).

In addition to the average space breakdown, **Figure 3** also shows the breakdown for a small home (based on averages for homes under 2,000 square feet) and a large home (based on homes with at least 3,000 square feet).

Bedrooms in total account for just under 29 percent of the floor space, irrespective of home size. On a square footage basis, the area covered by bedrooms increases from 468 square feet in the average small home (of about 1,600 square



feet) to 1,080 square feet in the average large home (about 3,800 square feet). In smaller homes, the master bedroom takes up a greater share of the floor space. Apparently, this is one area of the home that builders don't want to sacrifice for affordability.

The percentage of bathroom square footage as a share of the total area is 12.3 percent on average, with more space in a large home, less in a small home. Like bedrooms, the master suite accounts for a greater share of total bathroom space in smaller homes.

The proportion of space used for the laundry room—which is present in the vast majority of homes, irrespective their size—is 3.7 percent and varies only to a minor extent with the size of the home. The entry foyer accounts for 3.4 percent of the finished area in the average home, as well as in large ones. For the small home, the share falls to 2.9 percent, primarily because, as **Figure 2** shows, entry foyers are not as common in homes under 2,000 square feet.

The share of space allocated to kitchen and dining rooms declines only modestly with house size. The 195 square foot kitchen accounts for 11.9 percent of the space in the small home, while the 420 square foot kitchen amounts to 11.1 percent of the large home. Similarly, the 126 square foot dining area takes up 7.8

percent of the space in the small home, while the 266 square foot dining room uses 7.0 percent in the large one.

Builders said they use a little more than 11 percent of the home for the family room in all three sizes—the small, medium and large home. The living room, on the other hand, takes up nearly 12 percent of the space in the small home, but only 7.5 percent in the large one. As a result, slightly less space is devoted to the family room than living room in the small home; but in the large home family rooms are more than 50 percent larger than living rooms.

This information should be useful to builders who want to compare their typical floor plans to an industry standard. It also allows those who are planning to build homes of a different size range see how space distribution within a home varies with square footage. 🏠

Paul Emrath is NAHB's Vice President for Survey and Housing Policy Research.



# Home Buyer Preferences

## What Home Buyers Really Want: Ethnic Preferences NEW!

NAHB Economic Group & Housing Policy Group

This study is based on a survey of recent and prospective home buyers that compares and contrasts how housing preferences are affected –or not– by the racial/ethnic background of the home buyer (controlling for factors such as age and income). The analysis focuses on four groups: White (non-Hispanic), African-American (non-Hispanic), Hispanic, and Asian home buyers. Get insight into buyers' home preferences.

Available as an eBook at [ebooks.builderbooks.com](http://ebooks.builderbooks.com). However, limited print copies are available to purchase while supplies last at [BuilderBooks.com](http://BuilderBooks.com).

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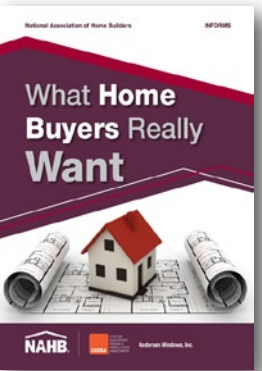


## What Home Buyers Really Want

NAHB Economic Group & Housing Policy Group

This study provides insight into buyers' preferences for home type and size, room layout and design, kitchen and baths, windows and doors, accessibility and outdoor features, electronics and technology in the home, energy efficiency, choosing a community, and trade-offs buyers are willing to make. Results are available by age, income, race, and Census division, among other demographic characteristics.

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# Mix & Match

How a novel approach to public housing created an old-fashioned success story.

By Brian (AJ) Jackson



**As federal subsidies for affordable housing have declined, cities and developers across the nation are being forced to find innovative financing methods to create mixed-income communities.**

In one prime example, Bethesda, Md.-based developer EYA, teamed up with the City of Alexandria, Va. and the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA) to create a successful public-private

partnership for a redevelopment financed exclusively by market-rate land value and Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

## CREATIVE FINANCING

In the late 1980s ARHA acquired the 152-unit Glebe Park apartments using HUD-insured financing. By 2006, Glebe Park was more than fifty years old and had been plagued by a series of floods and physical problems that left more than 100 of the units uninhabitable. Faced with an uninhabitable stock of affordable housing

units burdened by a mortgage, ARHA selected EYA to form a public-private partnership to redevelop the property. The mortgaged property became phase 1 of a six-phase one-for-one replacement effort in which ARHA offset the cost of redeveloping Glebe Park by also redeveloping James Bland, a more valuable piece of land perfectly situated between Braddock Metro station and the Potomac River. The James Bland property provided the necessary land value to fund a \$10 million shortfall that ARHA would have incurred to

rebuild the 194 homes at Glebe Park and pay off the community's mortgage debt.

Today, James Bland is known as Old Town Commons, a five-city-block vibrant new neighborhood in the heart of Old Town Alexandria, Va. The community includes 155 market-rate townhomes selling for up to \$1 million and 76 condominiums more moderately priced from \$350,000-\$550,000. One-third of the housing at Old Town Commons is public housing serving low-income families—a ratio that in EYA's experience was acceptable to buyers of market-rate homes.

Open space at Old Town Commons provides a place for kids to play and neighbors to mingle.





Prices for the market-rate townhomes have increased 20 percent since the community opened.

STACKING UP SUCCESS

Old Town Commons is located in a historic district, and it was imperative that the new development be seamlessly woven into the architectural and contextual fabric of the community. So instead of building large public housing buildings, EYA built

stacked apartments among its market-rate historic townhome designs, making them indistinguishable from the market-rate homes. The affordable homes blend beautifully with the historic rowhome community and increase density without increasing the perception of density.

THE MORE WE GET TOGETHER

From concept to the building permit phase, EYA, city staff and ARHA met with local civic associations and resident groups to ensure the proposed plan was consistent with the Alexandria’s master plan and to address resident and



Stacked-flat rental homes take on the appearance of individual townhomes.

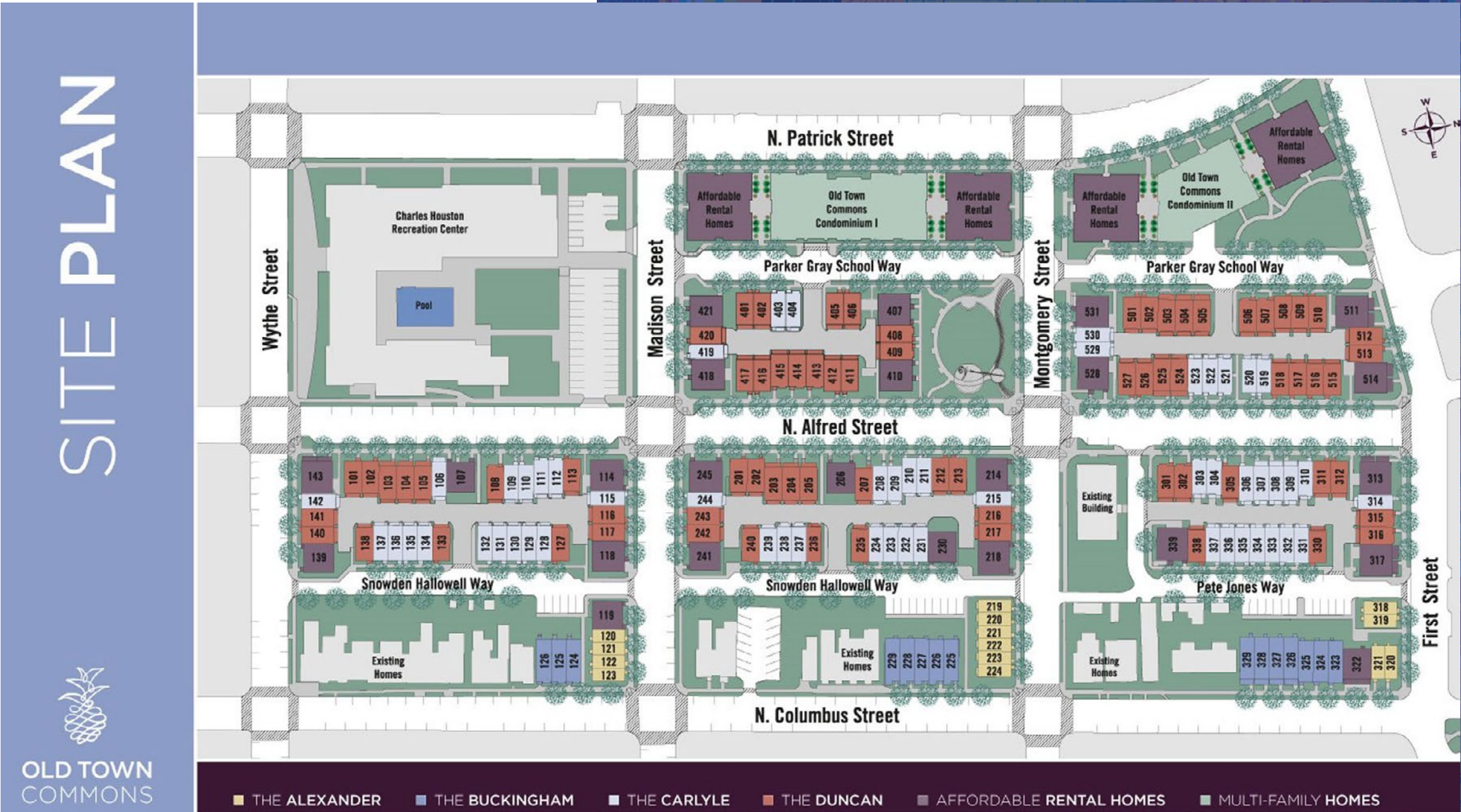
neighborhood concerns. These meetings built public consensus about density, height, open space, parking, historic context and the like. An Advisory Group represented the diverse interests of the neighborhood, and EYA took initiative to engage the existing public housing residents in the planning process. The company held a series of community meetings, focus groups and neighborhood barbecues to solicit feedback and listen to concerns. ARHA also employed a consultant to facilitate further outreach with public housing residents. Planning staff regularly attended ARHA board meetings to better understand their goals and keep them updated on the City’s plans.  
In order to create a viable mixed-income community with attractive market-rate housing, the total number of housing units



Tools & Techniques

EYA skillfully blended affordable stacked-flat rental homes with market-rate townhomes, both of which fit perfectly with the surrounding historic townhomes of Old Town, Alexandria.

on the site was doubled and sixty of the existing affordable housing units were relocated. The new development, consisting of three- to four-story townhomes and four- to five-story multifamily buildings replaced what had been a development of two-story barracks-style buildings. The team worked to build public support for a new Small Area Plan that provided the necessary zoning flexibility to allow these increases in height and density. As a part of the process, they used image boards and photography to demonstrate how the height and density would feel at street level, making the scale of the project easier to comprehend. The tallest buildings were located along Route 1, an adjacent major roadway, while three-story buildings with set-back terraces were planned closer to the existing historic row homes so that the transition in height between the new development and the surrounding neighborhood would be gradual and less dramatic.



THE PAYOFF

Old Town Commons covers five city blocks, and EYA began construction of one or two blocks each year beginning in 2010. Regulations required a new Low Income Housing Tax Credit application for each phase of the project and each phase

had to be completed within two years. Every phase of the project was successful in competing for tax credits and has been delivered on schedule. Sales of the market-rate homes have been more brisk than anticipated and sales prices have increased 20 percent since the project opened. Today, these LEED-certified homes are

combined with public parks and courtyards to provide a pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented community with an improved quality of life for all its residents. Old Town Commons provides a global model for public-private partnerships in which public agencies can harness real estate land values for redevelopment efforts. 🏡

Brian (AJ) Jackson is a Partner with EYA and serves as Senior Vice President of Land Acquisition and Development.





# Door Surrounds and Entry Ways

By Anna Castle

We have all heard the expression, “putting your best face forward.” There is no better place to apply this age-old saying than your front entryway. Because the face of any home or building lies within the entry, it gives off the first impression and requires the utmost care and grooming from a designer. There are hundreds of different styles and features that can go into constructing the perfect entryway, but most importantly it needs to reflect the style of the rest of the home. The front door should be recognizable as the entrance to a home, but it’s best to keep things simple. Gaudy detailing on entablatures or excessive embellishments on columns and pilasters can distract from a home’s overall style and cause the entrance to appear messy or disorganized. Here are some tips and tricks to designing an inviting, stylish and practical entry way. ▲

## Tips & Tricks

1

Transoms should always use vertical lights—horizontal lights can appear squashed.

2

Entablature should align with the front and side of the pilasters/columns.

3

Entablature height should be proportional to the diameter of the neck of the pilaster (1:2).

4

Avoid gratuitous ornament; when in doubt go with something simple and stylistically relevant.

5

Casing should be 5-6 inches wide on a standard-sized door.

6

Do not use brickmold on a house that has exterior siding.

7

Avoid alternatives to the correct pediment design. If you can’t afford the proper materials and design, it is better to leave the pediment out.

8

The neck of the pilaster should be dropped slightly, but no more than the neck’s width.

**Anna Castle** is an English major at Indiana University with a double minor in business and communications. She worked for NAHB in Land Use & Design as an intern last summer.

