

COVID-19 June 2020 Update: Home

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new meaning to the word “home,” which now serves as simultaneous workplace, school, restaurant, doctor’s office, and more. In May and early June 2020, the MIT AgeLab fielded a follow-up to an earlier survey that launched in March. These survey waves offer a cross-generational picture of how the spread of SARS-CoV-2 has impacted what home means to people, how connected they feel to their neighborhoods, and their plans to move.

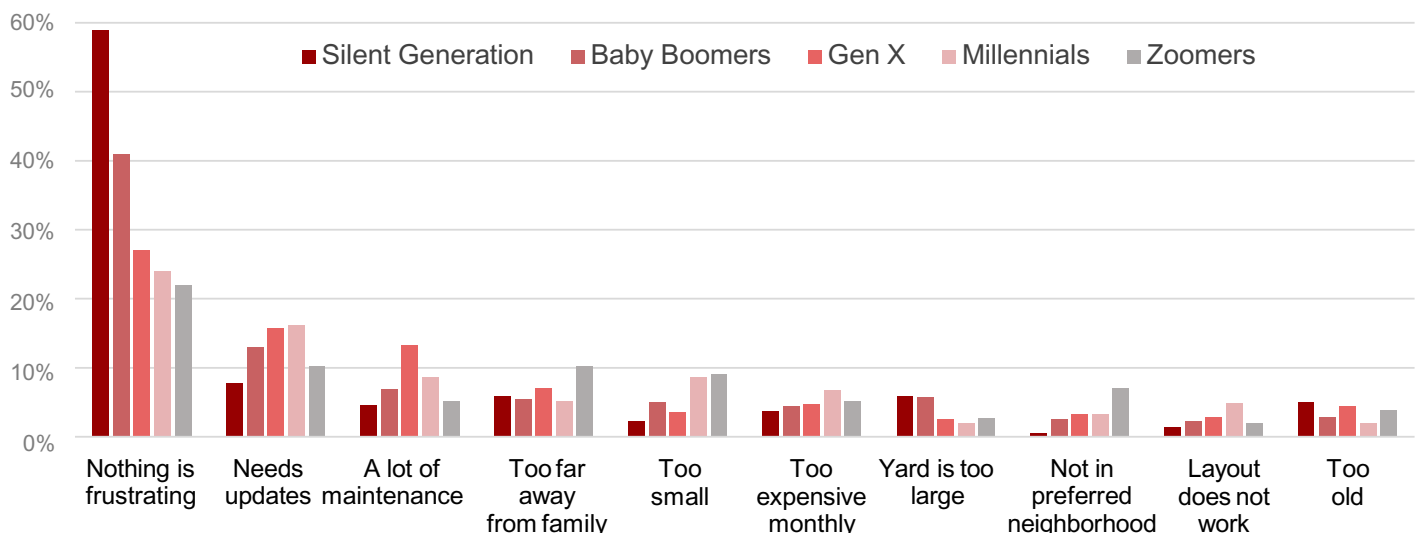


The meaning of home today

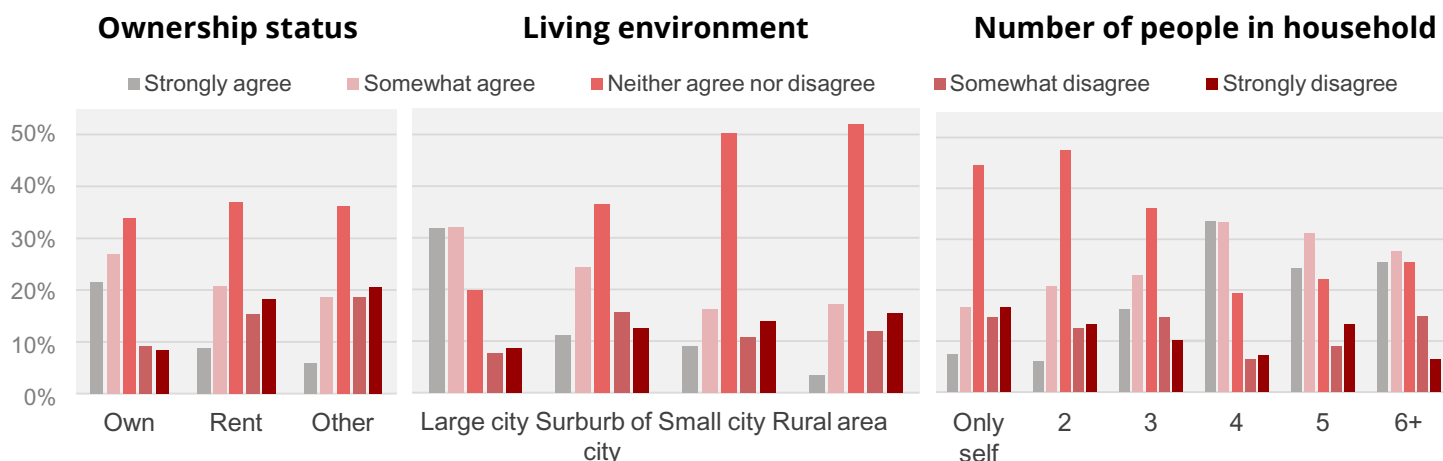
Safe, security, comfort, sanctuary, peace, and family were the terms most frequently brought up by survey respondents describing what their home means to them—both during the COVID-19 pandemic and in thinking back to life beforehand. However, many respondents’ chosen words became more negative during the pandemic, with people more often invoking terms such as “boring,” “chaos,” or “isolation.” In response to a separate question, survey participants also chose isolation as one of the biggest challenges caused by the spread of COVID-19 (14%), second only to the general uncertainty around when COVID-19 will be over (25%).

Pain points and frustration with the home

Extra time spent at home during the pandemic has the potential to make the daily frustrations, difficulties, and annoyances of home life feel more acute. Respondents’ domestic frustrations varied according to generation and whether they owned or rented their home. The Silent Generation and Baby Boomers were the generations most likely to report nothing frustrating about their home during the pandemic. Gen X and Millennials, on the other hand, were more likely to report that their home needed updating or remodeling, and Zoomers were most likely to describe their home as too far away from family.



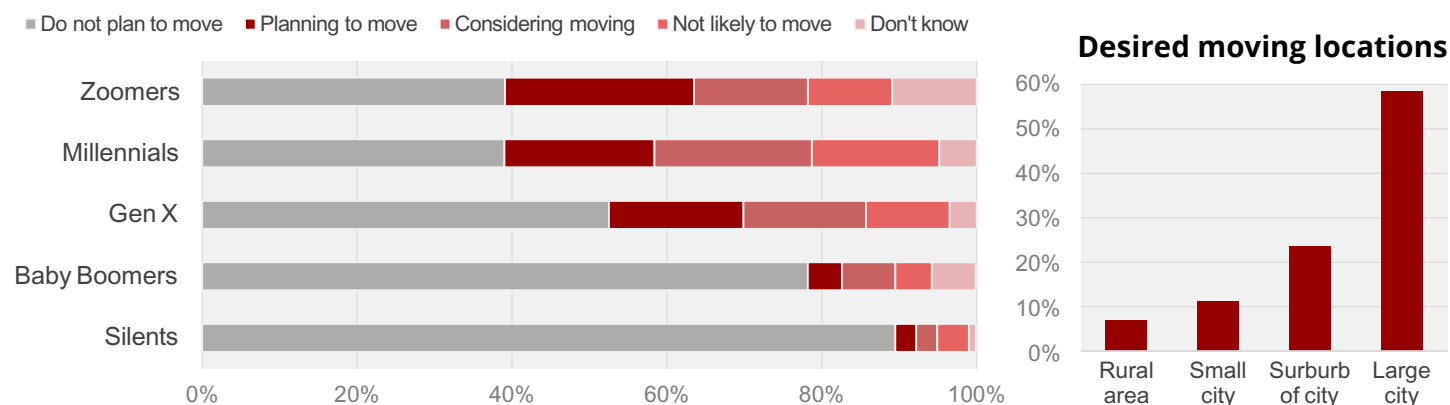
Community connectedness and the pandemic



A plurality of respondents (42%) strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement, "I feel more connected to my community/neighborhood as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic." Homeowners were more likely to agree with this statement compared to renters. Current residents of large cities were more likely to agree compared to people living in other environments. People living with others were more likely to agree than those living alone.

Should I stay or should I go?

It is still unclear how the pandemic will impact people's choices around real estate and moving. At the time of the June survey, most people (60%) did not have plans to move in the next twelve months. Millennials and Zoomers were the generations most likely to be planning a move. Among those planning a move, the majority (58%) intended to move to a large city. Most people plan to move to the same type of area as where they currently live (e.g., people who currently live in a large city plan to move a large city).



These results represent a snapshot of perceptions in the time window in which data was collected: May 8-June 8, 2020. Sample collected from Qualtrics Panels. Number of cases for analysis ranges from 1250 to 1387. Ages in 2020: Silents, 75-92; Baby Boomers, 56-74; Gen X, 40-55; Millennials, 24-39; and Zoomers, 18-23. Less than 6% of the March sample (March 17-19, 2020) was re-interviewed in the second survey; the balance represents a new cross-sectional sample. The MIT AgeLab continues to monitor how different generations' attitudes and perceptions shift over time.

What is known about COVID-19 changes daily. For more information about preventing the spread of COVID-19 and keeping yourself and your family safe, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.