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California is home to some of the healthiest cities in the country

Source: Wallet Hub

San Francisco and San Diego ranked first and fourth, respectively, on a list of the healthiest cities in the U.S., according to Wallet Hub, which assessed the 150 most populous cities in the nation — across four categories: health care, food, fitness and green space.

San Francisco's highest ranking was No. 1 in both the green space and food categories, and its residents are some of the best at eating

their fruits and vegetables; the city has the fifth-lowest percentage of adults who don't eat their veggies, tied with Oakland.

Other California cities ranking in the top 25 include Irvine, Huntington Beach, San Jose and Santa Rosa.

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Seven outdoor living trends for 2021

Source: Forbes

Homeowners and house hunters are looking to maximize outdoor space while sheltering at home. The National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) reports a 65 percent uptick in interest among its membership in outdoor living projects this year.

NKBA, John Burns Real Estate Consulting, and Houzz surveyed design professionals and home builders to identify some of the top outdoor trends this year, which include outdoor kitchens and showers, year-round gathering spots, more private areas, direct access to the yard or patio and backyard cottages.

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Four in five millennials believe in homeownership

Source: Apartment List

Millennials, which account for half of all new mortgage originations, enjoyed a strong year in the homeownership market. In fact, they were responsible for a larger share of new home purchases last year than in 2017, 38 percent last year compared to 34 percent in 2017. First time home purchases also increased, from 31 percent to 33 percent in 2020. In fact, home purchases are speeding up enough to close the generational gap.

Still, affordability is the biggest hurdle to improving millennial homeownership. Millennials cited saving for a down payment is among the top challenges; 63 percent of millennials have no down payment saved, and only 15 percent have more than \$10,000 in a down payment saved.

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New home-buying rush expected to continue

Source: REALTOR® Daily News

More house hunters—particularly move-up buyers—are being drawn to new-home construction during the pandemic, and that’s driving a surge in construction across the country.

Single-family starts ended 2020 with the best year in home building since the Great Recession, and 11 percent higher than 2019. Ultra-low mortgage rates and a shift in housing preferences—including a growing demand for larger spaces, home offices, and outdoor amenities—are driving the increase, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). Economists predicted that both existing- and new-home sales will be higher in 2021 due to the rise in buyer demand.

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FHFA extends mortgage forbearance period

Source: Housing Wire

The Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) announced that borrowers with a mortgage backed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac may be eligible for an additional forbearance extension of up to three months. Eligibility for the extension is limited to borrowers who are on

a COVID-19 forbearance plan as of Feb. 28, 2021, and other limits may apply.

Eligibility for the three-month extension is limited to borrowers who are on a current COVID-19 forbearance plan as of Feb. 28. If granted, that means a borrower who has a government loan could now have up to 15 months total of missed and delayed mortgage payments.

FHFA also announced on Tuesday that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were extending the moratoriums on single-family foreclosures and real estate owned (REO) evictions until March 31. The moratoriums were originally set to expire on Feb. 28, 2021.

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Mortgage demand drops

Source: CNBC

Mortgage interest rates have increased in four of the first six weeks of 2021, cooling mortgage demand. Overall mortgage application volume fell 4.1% last week compared with the previous week, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association.

The average contract interest rate for 30-year fixed-rate mortgages with conforming loan balances of up to \$548,250 increased to 2.96% from 2.92%, for loans with a 20% down payment, 76 basis points higher a year ago. Refinance demand, which is most sensitive to

weekly rate fluctuations, fell 4% for the week but were 46% higher than a year ago.

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