

Real Estate w/ Cindy

~A Monthly Newsletter

LACKS HOME
GROUP

♦
March 2024



SPRING'S AROUND THE CORNER — HERE ARE THE SEASON'S HOTTEST OUTDOOR DESIGN TRENDS

Spring is right around the corner, and with it comes longer days and better temperatures, which means more time spent outside.

As a homeowner, if you're going to be spending more time outside, you want to do everything you can to make your space feel relaxed, well-designed, and on-trend.

So what, exactly, does that look like this spring?

A recent article from [realtor.com](https://www.realtor.com/news/trends/outdoor-design-trends-spring-2024) outlined some of spring's hottest outdoor design trends.

[Click here for
THE REST OF THE STORY](#)

In this newsletter you can expect:

Season's Hottest
Outdoor Design
Trends

Need Money for
Home
Improvements?

What's New in the
Lou?

Community News

Ask the Expert

Blog of the Month



NEED MONEY FOR HOME IMPROVEMENTS? BE LEARY OF OFFERS FOR “FREE MONEY” THAT SOUND TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

Some home improvements are the type you have on a wishlist, and don't need to be done, like a new kitchen. But there are some, such as a new furnace or roof, that are hard to ignore once they're failing. Either way, a lot of people just don't have enough extra cash laying around to devote to a project, whether they want to or not. Unfortunately, this leads to many people putting off maintenance and renovation projects until they can save up enough money, take out a loan, or rack up their credit card bills.

While a home equity loan is often an option, even if you have a lot of equity built up in your home to borrow against, some people have difficulty accessing it because they've recently lost a job, have credit issues, or simply can't handle an additional monthly payment for a home equity loan. Or perhaps you're well qualified, but want to avoid paying the current interest rates.

So imagine how appealing it would sound if you got a letter in the mail saying you could get your hands on all the money you need to do your projects, without having to pay back a single cent... at least for now.

Business Insider [recently reported](#) that there are companies that offer to give homeowners cash they can use toward home improvements, without having to pay the money back until they sell their house.

What's the catch? On top of paying back the original amount they loan the homeowner, they'll also take a percentage of how much the home has appreciated during that time.

Sound a little too good to be true? Well, it kind of depends upon your situation and point of view.

[Click here for
THE REST OF THE STORY](#)

What's New in the Lou

Welcome to What's New in the Lou, where we round up the best activities for fun times in St. Louis! Enjoy a weekend of unique events and experiences with your friends and family!



- [Animals Aglow](#) - **(April 6-7)** Walk around the St. Louis Zoo at twilight amidst the glow of 60 lanterns depicting animals, plants and traditional Chinese elements.
- [Wing Week](#) - **(April 8-14)** St. Louis Wing Week is seven days of paying homage to the wing. Each participating St. Louis Wing Week restaurateur and Chef will fry up their own take on the wing — from signature sauces to secret menu specialties and more.
- [Family Sunday](#) - **(April 7)** Head to the St. Louis Art Museum for a day of musical performances, origami, calligraphy, and more inspired by Shimmering Silks.



- [Sips, Souls, and Strolls: Iconography](#) - **(April 12)** The Victorians left meaningful, and sometimes secret, messages and stories behind in stone. Our guides will reveal these clever meanings and messages as you stroll through the cemetery. Enjoy beer, wine, and light hors d'oeuvres as you walk through the beautiful grounds of Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum.
 - [BODYTRAFFIC](#) - **(April 6)** Direct from Los Angeles, Dance St. Louis presents this innovative dance company in a compelling, contemporary dance concert.
 - [Spring Pop-Up at "Ssippi" Natural Wine Bar](#) - **(April 6)** Enjoy an evening of spring inspired art prints, jewelry, flash tats, and a cute sakura cocktails.
 - [Viva La Retro](#) - **(April 7)** Dive into nostalgia at Two Plumbers Brewing in St. Charles with retro shopping, an electrifying video game showdown, and more!
 - [Pop-Up Market & National Beer Day Party](#) - **(April 7)** Enjoy an afternoon of shopping and beer with live music, beer sampling, exclusive beer, and food trucks!
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FARMERS MARKET

- [Kirkwood Market](#) - Daily Starting April 6 ~ Flowers, Produce, Local Goodies, Snow Cones
- [University City Farmers' Market](#) - Saturdays, April 6-November 23 ~ Produce, Local Eats, Craft Goods
- [Lake St. Louis Farmers' & Artists Market](#) - Saturday, April 6-November 2 ~ Local goods and produce, Voted Sauce Magazine's "Readers Choice"
- [Washington Farmers' Market](#) - Saturdays, April-October ~ Flowers, Art, Produce, Local Specialty Food
- [Tower Grove Farmers' Market](#) - Saturdays, April 6-November 2 & Tuesdays, May 7-September 24
- [Soulard Farmers' Market](#) - Wednesday- Saturday, All Year Round ~ One of the Largest and Oldest Continuously Operating Farmers' Markets in the US!
- [Wildwood Farmers' Market](#) - Saturdays, May 25-October 5 ~ Produce, Flowers, Handmade Items
- [The Boulevard Market](#) - Sundays, May 7-October 29 ~ Produce, Flowers, Local Goodies

Looking to the Future

- [Bugs Bunny at the Symphony](#) - (May 11) "What's up, Doc?" In this thrilling blend of classical music and classic animation Bugs Bunny and his Looney Tunes pals join audiences of all ages at Stifel Theatre with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra for Bugs Bunny at the Symphony.)
- [Animals Aglow](#) (March 13 - May 5)
- [An Evening with John Cusack](#) (March 30)
- [Styx & Foreigner in Concert](#) (June 18)



COMMUNITY NEWS



NORTH ST. LOUIS COUNTY COMMUNITY BANDS TOGETHER AGAINST TEEN VIOLENCE

Following a series of violent incidents involving teens, community members gathered to voice their commitment to stopping the cycle of violence.

In the wake of a series of violent incidents involving teenagers in our area, residents are taking a stand against youth violence.

[Read More ...](#)



THE BEST PARKS IN ST. LOUIS

Are you looking to take a stroll or play with the kids? Work up a sweat on a hike or while playing a sport? Appreciate art or history? Just enjoy nature? There's a park for that, as highlighted in this expansive guide of more than 50 metro area parks.

Maybe if the world were a little calmer and greener, and everybody had a big, self-mowing back yard with a lake... But most of us don't. We need our parks: They keep us sane and happy and connected; give us breathing space; kindle romance and absorb kid and canine energy. If [Forest Park](#) is the heart of St. Louis, then these parks help circulate its oxygen.

[Click here for details](#)

Ask the Expert



A seller recently asked me this question: How do I get my house ready to go on the market?

Great question!

We can create a plan to make it as simple as possible without reducing the value. My goal is to help you NET the most money you can, not necessarily GET the most. If you spend a fortune remodeling your kitchen you may get more, but you won't recoup what you spend to do it.

Have a question for me? Let me know and I'll feature it in an upcoming newsletter! Chances are other folks are asking the same question!

[ASK AWAY!](#)

BLOG OF THE MONTH

Each month, we'll highlight a Blog post from our website.

Want more now? Go to www.cindylacks.com/blog for more great helpful information!

NEWLY BUILT HOMES COULD BE A GAME CHANGER THIS SPRING

Buying a home this spring? You're probably navigating today's affordability challenges and dealing with the limited number of homes for sale. But, what if there was a solution that could help with both?

If you're having a hard time finding a home you love, and mortgage rates are putting pressure on your budget, it may be time to look at newly built homes. Here's why.

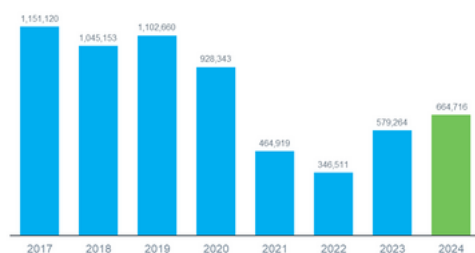
New Home Construction Is an Inventory Bright Spot

When looking for a home, you can choose between existing homes (those that are already built and previously owned) and newly constructed ones. While the number of existing homes for sale has increased this year, there are still fewer available than there were in more typical years in the housing market, like back in 2018 or 2019.

So, if you're looking to expand your pool of options even more, turning to newly built homes can help. As Danielle Hale, Chief Economist at Realtor.com, explains: "The shortage of existing homes For Sale has opened up the possibility of new-home construction to more buyers who may not have once considered it."

And the good news is, there are more newly built homes to pick from right now. The graphs below use data from the Census to show how new home construction is ramping up in two key areas (see most recent spike in green):

Number of Homes For Sale
Since 2017, February of Each Year

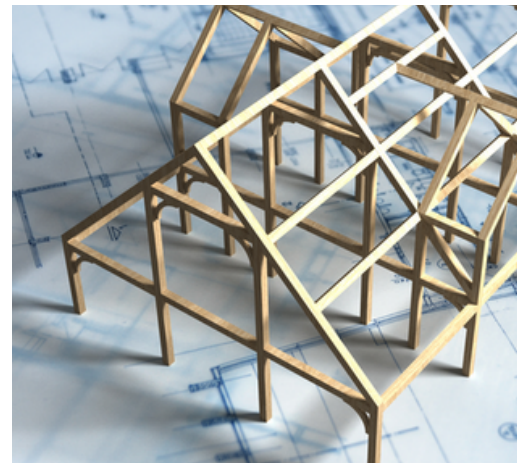


Starts, or homes where builders just broke ground, have seen a big increase lately. And completions, homes that builders just finished, are also up significantly. So, if you want a new, move-in ready home or you want to get in early and customize your build along the way, you have more options right now.

Bottom Line

If you're struggling to find a home to buy, or with today's affordability challenges, connect with a local real estate agent to see if newly built homes could be the solution you're looking for.

Cindy Lacks ~ Lacks Home Group/Keller Williams Chesterfield
Email: Cindy@cindylacks.com
Website: Cindylacks.com
Mobile: (314) 495-3713



Builders Are Offering Incentives To Help with Affordability

And to sweeten the pot, builders are offering things like mortgage rate buy-downs and other perks for homebuyers right now. This can help offset today's affordability challenges while also getting you into your dream home. Mark Fleming, Chief Economist at First American, explains why you may find builders have more wiggle room to offer more for you than the typical homeowner:

"Builders aren't rate locked-in. They would love to sell you the home because they're not living in it. It costs money not to sell the home. And many of the public home builders have said in their earnings calls that they are not going to be pulling back on incentives, especially the mortgage rate buydown, so that will help the new-home market continue to perform well in the spring home-buying season."

An article from HousingWire also says this about what builders are offering right now:

"... the use of sales incentives still shows some momentum as 60% of respondents reported using them, up from 58% in February."

Just remember, buying from a builder is different from buying from a home seller, so it's important to partner with a local real estate agent. Builder contracts can be complex. A trusted agent will be your advocate throughout the process.

They'll be your go-to resource for advice on construction quality and builder reputation, reviewing and negotiating contracts to get you the best deal, helping you decide on which customizations and upgrades are most worthwhile, and a whole lot more.

Thank you for reading!