

25 Must-Have Features for a Great Apartment or Condo (From Someone Who's Lived in a Bunch)

I've lived in quite a few apartment complexes around Madison, WI — and now I live in a condo. Some places were great, others... not so much. Over the years, I've taken mental notes of what actually makes a place livable and enjoyable. If you're planning to build or renovate apartments or condos, this wishlist is worth reading. These are real features your tenants or owners will genuinely appreciate.

Top Features to Include

1. **Indoor mailboxes:** Put them in the entryway or inside the building, not out on the curb where it's cold and rainy.
2. **Trash and recycling chutes:** No one wants to haul trash through the whole building. Just make sure the chutes are wide enough.
3. **Modern doorbell/intercom system:** One that works with mobile phones, rings multiple lines, and doesn't require a landline. Avoid per-call charges.
4. **Shared amenities:** A pool, whirlpool, fitness room, and clubhouse all add value.
5. **Heated underground parking:** Include remote-controlled doors for both entry and exit.
6. **Secured bike storage:** A locked room in the garage just for bikes is a big bonus.
7. **Designated work bay in garage:** A well-lit stall with a spigot and outlets for car washing or minor maintenance.
8. **Storage locker near your parking stall:** Not tucked away somewhere else — keep it convenient.
9. **Designated trailer parking:** A tucked-away lot for trailers, with optional small rental fees if needed.
10. **Quiet stairways:** Don't place stairs right next to bedrooms, and insulate/pad them to reduce noise.
11. **Let tenants paint (within reason):** It helps people feel more at home.
12. **Ethernet and coaxial jacks in every room:** Especially in the living room. Wired connections are still relevant.
13. **Patch bay setup:** In every unit have sort of a "patch bay" for coax where you have an antenna mounted on the roof or in the attic for over the air TV for everyone to tap into, one for satellite and one for cable TV. Then clearly mark the jack for each room and then leave room for the cables so that you can hook things up how you want. Do the same for phone and Ethernet.
14. **In-unit washer and dryer:** But don't place them next to bedrooms.
15. **Bedroom separation:** Spread out the bedrooms for privacy and quiet.
16. **Full-sized fridge and quality dishwasher:** Some cheap dishwashers barely rinse, let alone clean.
17. **Microwave over the stove:** Saves valuable counter space.
18. **Plenty of kitchen cabinets:** Storage is always a selling point.
19. **Wall switches connected to outlets:** Ideal for floor lamps. Dual switches (one for ceiling, one for outlets) are even better.

20. **Ample closet and storage space:** This is a deal-breaker for many renters and buyers.
21. **Durable entry flooring:** Use tile or vinyl near entrances — it keeps the place cleaner than carpet.
22. **In-ground sprinkler system:** Keeps the lawn green and the property looking well-maintained.
23. **Sound insulation between units:** Good walls and floors matter — trust me, you don't want to hear everything from upstairs.
24. **Natural gas hookup on the patio:** For gas grills — no more propane runs. Fire sprinklers can help meet code too.
25. **Fire safety features:** Sprinkler systems inside and on patios give peace of mind (and allow gas grills in some municipalities).

Pet-Friendly Features to Consider

- Dog washing station in the garage or laundry area
- Fenced-in dog run or pet relief area on the property
- Durable flooring (like vinyl or laminate) in common areas and units
- Pet waste bag stations and trash cans outdoors
- Reasonable pet deposit and clearly stated policies

EV Charging Stations



As electric vehicles become more common, installing EV charging stations — or at least providing the infrastructure to support them — will make your property stand out. Even having 1–2 shared chargers can go a long way.

Smart and Energy-Efficient Features

- Programmable thermostats in each unit
- Smart lighting in common areas (motion-activated)
- Solar panels for common electricity use (if feasible)
- Energy-efficient appliances (with Energy Star ratings)

Security That Makes People Feel Safe

- Security cameras in shared spaces like parking garages and entryways
- Well-lit outdoor pathways and entrances
- Keyless entry or fob systems for buildings and units

Outdoor Spaces That Make a Difference

- Community patio or grilling area with seating
- Garden plots or landscaping that allows for greenery
- Walking paths or a small fenced-in park for pets

Things That Sound Cool But Often Don't Work Out

- **Fountains:** High maintenance and costly repairs
- **Rooftop patios:** Often leak or require expensive upkeep
- **Built-in Bluetooth speakers:** Cool at first, but tech becomes outdated quickly
- **Overly trendy finishes:** Design fads age fast — stick to timeless materials

Final Thoughts

I know this list is long — but these are the features that make a condo or apartment feel like home. They're the little things that help people stay longer, recommend the place to others, and feel proud to live there.

If you're building, remodeling, or investing in multi-family housing, take a few of these ideas and bake them into your plans. Your future residents will thank you.

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