

It's All About the Amenities



Proper focus on choosing the right amenities makes leasing easier for Cityscape Residential.

BY KELLI LAWRENCE

When it comes to conceiving project and programming in new markets, the Partners at Cityscape Residential conduct in-depth research about the needs of consumers to learn which onsite and off-site amenities are in demand and will set their communities apart.

The site's context and neighborhood are central to determining project amenities. For example, at one of Cityscape's newest properties under development in Louisville, Ky., the company expects a large cycling population both for recreation and transportation purposes.

Therefore, it's crucial to include ample bike parking and also a space where residents can repair or tweak their bikes as many enthusiasts are inclined to do.

Communal spaces continue to be of utmost importance to residents and Cityscape incorporates design elements that echo each neighborhood's distinct architectural style and the potential profile of expected residents.

These types of communal spaces, such as the resident lounges, always include a significant amount of technology with the latest in audiovisual equipment, as well as strong Wi-Fi capabilities with access to computers and printers.

Cityscape is pre-wired for Google Fiber in Google-ready municipalities and has installed the infrastructure to enable Google

Fiber in communities where it is not yet present.

In Indianapolis, Cityscape has direct AT&T Fiber to each apartment and, in Kansas City, they ensure each residence can receive Google Fiber, which is 100 times faster than today's basic broadband. Other critical aspects to incorporate within these spaces include gaming and social components because these areas often become the "social hub" during fall or winter months when the pool is closed, or they become a business environment for those who may work from home.

While amenity trends change over time and by location, some onsite amenities such as a high-end fitness room and well-designed outdoor areas are required by residents. Throughout every project, Cityscape strives to provide the latest technology and quality equipment.

It's really a wow-factor even if residents do not actually always use it. Residents take comfort in knowing that the latest and greatest equipment is available to them. The company guarantees individuals won't find the same equipment or technology in any two fitness rooms at any of their communities.

For example, at the 82 Flats at the Crossing community in Indianapolis, they installed a virtual boxing machine offering a live video instructor that is able to walk an individual through a boxing circuit workout.

Residents can also utilize live video-streamed instructors while



A virtual boxing machine is an amenity at Cityscape communities.

stationary biking, providing a “mini spinning class” without ever having to leave the community. These types of amenities are strong selling points, particularly in high-end properties.

Fine Finish

Focused on a signature blend of high-end finishes and unparalleled design, Cityscape looks to the latest trends in hospitality and high-end resorts to help design community pools and outdoor grilling areas. Their team wants their residents to feel like they are at a five-star resort when lounging by the pool, hanging by the fire pit or grilling in the outdoor kitchen.

Pet-friendly features are another major amenity category that continues to grow in importance to many residents. This is particularly appropriate for urban areas where grassy spaces are limited.

Cityscape always works to ensure that there is a pleasant area set aside for people to enjoy with their animals, but also distant from other residents who choose not to have pets. They are also creating areas where people can bathe and clean their pets outside of their apartments.

Cityscape does not believe in creating single-purpose spaces such as conference rooms or commercial-style kitchens, as these types of spaces require high upfront investment costs but are rarely used to their fullest capabilities.

Rather, the company focuses on making communal spaces completely functional with wide appeal, and including practical equipment such as microwaves, push-button coffee stations, ice makers, beverage refrigerators and more.

Cityscape has learned that the onsite amenities at many of their apartment communities, along with the interior design elements and details, are one of the many reasons residents continue to choose their communities over competitors.

Amenities are vital to residents for a variety of reasons. For example, their fitness centers are designed to such a level as to potentially make gym membership unnecessary for its residents, which then reinforces the value of their communities, even at higher rents.

Cityscape properties are at the top-of-the-market in terms of rental rates, but they encompass high-quality, unique amenities that fit each particular location and resident profiles providing value.

A Few More Extras

Having nicer and richer trim throughout apartments provides a sense of quality for Cityscape properties. Specific items that the company uses because they are particularly popular right now include home wine refrigerators, which run from \$500 to \$700 in upfront costs and generate \$50 to \$75 monthly premium for those units; front-load washers and dryers that cost \$100 to \$200 more than typical side-by-side machines; and \$15 to \$20 USB charging outlets in kitchen areas, which can help to reinforce the high-end technology in Cityscape apartments.

The Cityscape team surveys current residents so it can better understand their priorities. Using a tablet computer allows Cityscape to easily survey prospects during the touring and sales process. Current and past residents are also provided an annual online survey to complete. ■

Kelli Lawrence is a Partner with Cityscape Residential.

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