

FROM... **Gensler.**

## What is the future of urban life in the post-pandemic city?

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“As an update to our [previous Gensler City Pulse](#), we conducted a survey of 10 cities in February 2021 to see how urban residents were doing as the world approached one year of living with COVID-19 and mass vaccinations began in many countries.

“Twenty-eight percent of residents surveyed across 10 cities around the world are likely to move out of their city soon, as urban living satisfaction continues to decline. This doesn't necessarily mean a wholesale flight from cities — the most popular destination for relocation is a city with a smaller population. Urban residents are, however, eyeing these moves as solutions to “big city” problems of affordability, crowdedness, and the loss of cultural heritage. To retain residents and attract new ones in the wake of these migrations, cities will need to focus on what people still love about urban living — great neighborhoods, employment opportunities, and multimodal transportation options.

“**Gensler** is a global architecture, design, and planning firm with 50 locations across Asia, Europe, Australia, the Middle East, and the Americas. Founded in 1965, the firm serves more than 3,500 active clients in virtually every industry. Guided by determined optimism, we believe the power of design can spark positive change and create a future that promotes equity, resilience, and wellbeing for everyone.”

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[“This data is collected from an anonymous, panel-based online survey of 5,000 urbanites in 10 cities conducted from January 25 to February 25, 2021. Learn more about our methods.”](#)

GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS, EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, AND MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION ARE THE FOUNDATIONS OF A GREAT CITY.



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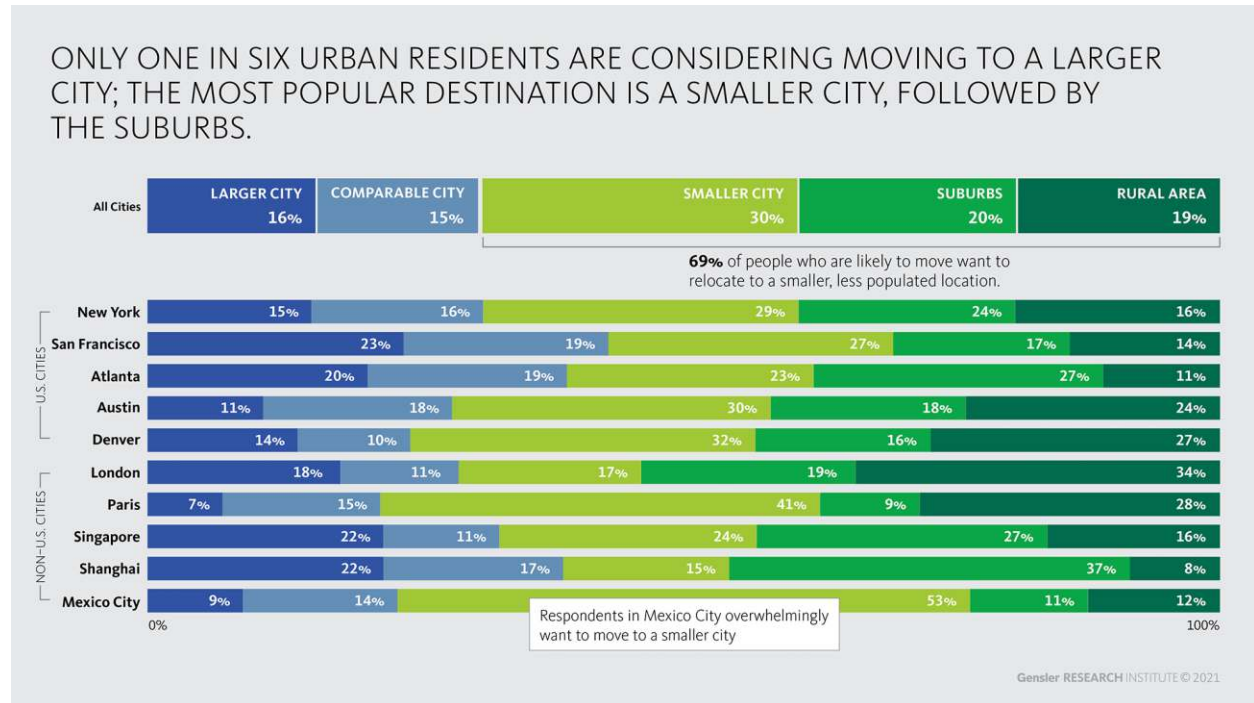
## What makes or breaks a city?

“Our analyses identified five factors — the positive and negative influences — that predict people’s propensity to stay in or leave their current city. These factors can provide a blueprint for what cities can do to retain residents and attract new ones.

“The three factors that motivated people to stay are great neighborhood design, employment opportunities, and transportation options. People who feel that their neighborhoods are beautiful, authentic, safe, clean, and pedestrian-friendly are more likely to want to stay in their current cities. When it came to employment opportunities, we found that people need both job options and opportunities for career advancement. Finally, cities should take a multimodal approach to foster a seamless mass transit experience — one that not only accommodates cars but also integrates micro-mobility options.

“The factors that drive people to leave are “big city” problems and affordability. People who feel that their cities are too big, too noisy, too crowded, have too much traffic, and are losing their cultural

heritage are more likely to consider relocating. Additionally, people who are living paycheck to paycheck, who feel that their neighborhoods are becoming increasingly unaffordable, and who feel the anxiety from these stressors, are much more likely to consider leaving.



The smaller city experience could possibly be the future of urban life.

“Regardless of the size of their current city, well over two-thirds of survey respondents who were considering moving say they want to relocate to a smaller, less populated location — ranging from smaller cities to the suburbs to rural areas. For urban residents who are thinking about relocating, the most popular destination is a smaller city, according to the City Pulse Survey findings.”

## CITY PULSE SURVEY 2021

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