

Room for improvement:

Why British Columbians are experiencing renovation regret after making home upgrades



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Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, British Columbians have been spending more time than ever in their homes. For many, this additional time at home has increased the desire to complete home improvement projects and, in some cases, complete renovations. However, many British Columbian homeowners are facing renovation regrets and are not necessarily making decisions that will increase the value of their home.

Highlights

- A recent survey¹ conducted on behalf of BC Hydro finds over half of British Columbian homeowners have completed a home renovation project since the COVID-19 pandemic began last March.
- Improving aesthetics was the top motivator for making improvements (35%) followed by comfort (29%), having more free time (10%) and saving energy (10%).
- The most popular renovations or home improvements include interior painting (36%), bathroom (29%) kitchen (23%) and flooring (22%).
- However, while many are happy with the outcome, there are some that would do things differently given another chance, with about 20% admitting they regret some aspect of their renovation—and more than half of DIYers regretting some of their choices.
- These are the types of renovations homeowners are most likely to regret:
 - 16% regret bathroom renovation
 - 15% regret kitchen renovation
 - 14% regret changing flooring
- Most homeowners with regrets wish they had used different products, spent more time planning or invested the money to do the renovation they really wanted.
- Making purely aesthetic improvements that do not necessarily increase or maintain the value of a home long-term is also behind many regrets.
- In fact, most British Columbian homeowners think interior aesthetic home improvements are more likely to increase the resale value of their home (about 60%), more so than energy saving renovations (21%) or exterior aesthetic renovations (14%).
- And while many do see the value of energy saving home renovations, 'green' improvements are last on the list of motivations for completing a renovation project.
- However, while aesthetic improvements can add value, maintaining the worth of a home depends most heavily on energy saving and maintenance upgrades such as updating the heating/cooling system, replacing windows and doors and updating roofing.²
- And while 63% felt making renovations was overwhelming, they are not slowing down—with 41% planning a renovation or improvement this spring.

Solutions

BC Hydro recommends the following solutions to improve energy efficiency and minimize renovation regret:

- Researching which renovations provide the best energy efficiency returns on the market—[bchydro.com/homerenorebates](https://www.bchydro.com/homerenorebates) is a great place to start.
- Taking advantage of rebates and incentives: BC Hydro offers home renovation rebates of up to \$10,000 year-round to improve a home's energy efficiency.
- Tracking electricity use: Identifying areas for improvement in the home by using MyHydro, BC Hydro's online electricity tracking tool.

¹ Online survey conducted on behalf of BC Hydro of 800 British Columbian homeowners from Jan 29 to Feb 2.

² Appraisal Institute of Canada

More home time sparks desire for change

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, British Columbians have spent more time than ever before at home, and for some it has been an eye-opening experience. With the importance of the home magnified, many British Columbians experienced a feeling of dissatisfaction with the way their home looks or functions, and the desire to complete home improvement projects and in some cases complete renovations has been on the rise.

However, a new survey conducted on behalf of BC Hydro finds while over half of British Columbian homeowners have completed a home renovation project since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, many are now facing renovation regrets, and may not have made changes that will maintain or increase the resale value of their home.

This report will explore British Columbians' renovation regrets and provide some possible solutions to help British Columbians make more informed renovation choices.

Renovation regrets

Since March 2020, 53% of British Columbian homeowners have made a home renovation or improvement indoors or outdoors, either by themselves or through a contractor. Almost 80% have completed a DIY project, and over one third said they feel their DIY skills have improved since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, although many are happy with the outcome of their home improvements, renovation regrets are common in British Columbia, with about 20% of B.C. homeowners admitting they regret some aspect of a renovation, and more than 50% of DIYers regretting some of their choices. Homeowners are most likely to regret improvements they have made to their bathroom (16%), kitchen (15%), or flooring (14%). More specifically, of those who had regrets over one-third wish they had selected a different product, a quarter wish they had spent more time planning and 15% wish they had spent more money to do the renovation they really wanted.

Money spent on renovations since March 2020



For those that completed a renovation themselves, the top regret is that the project took longer than expected (21%), followed by not being pleased with the results (10%) and taking on too much (10%). When it comes to cost, most B.C. homeowners have invested between \$1,000 to \$4,999 on home improvements since March of last year, while almost 30% have done a small project under \$1,000, and almost a quarter spent between \$5,000 to \$19,999.

Top DIY renovation regrets



Most regrettable improvements overall

15%



Bathroom

15%



Kitchen

14%



Flooring

Aesthetics over everything

A home's resale value depends on several factors including location, comparable homes in the neighbourhood and condition. According to the Appraisal Institute of Canada³ while some aesthetic improvements such as painting, updating counter tops and flooring or redoing a kitchen can yield a good return on investment when it comes time to sell, it is ultimately what is inside the walls of a home that counts.

Aesthetic changes are the most popular types of renovations made in B.C. homes, and 35% listed improving aesthetics as their main motivation for undertaking a renovation or home improvement in the past year, followed by comfort (29%), having free time (10%), and saving energy (10%). Almost 60% of B.C. homeowners think aesthetic home improvements are more likely to increase the resale value of their home, more so than energy saving renovations (21%) or improving the exterior of their home (14%).

However, aesthetic changes are often the ones most regretted, and these types of improvements may not necessarily increase or maintain the value of a home in the long-term. Although well-planned aesthetic renovations can add value, maintaining the worth of a home depends most heavily on energy saving and maintenance upgrades such as updating the heating/cooling system, replacing windows and doors and updating roofing.

Top 5 Renovations to Maintain Worth



Replacing the roofing



Updating the heating/cooling system



Replacing windows and doors



Updating electrical

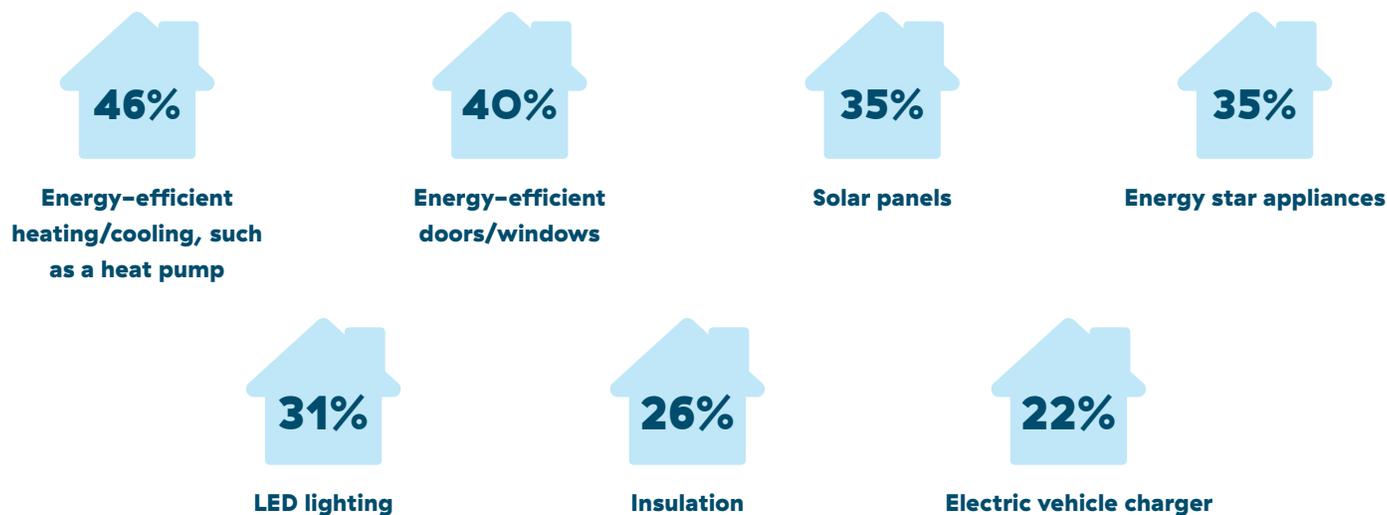
The energy efficiency factor

Despite a focus on aesthetics 47% of B.C. homeowners said they have made energy-efficient upgrades to their home, while 50% have not. Of those that have not made any energy-efficient upgrades, over one-third said it is because they think these upgrades would be too expensive to make.

However, the survey found more B.C. homeowners would be willing to make significant energy-efficient upgrades if money were no object. For instance, when asked what projects B.C. homeowners would undertake if price were not a factor, 46% would install a more efficient heating/cooling system, 40% would opt for energy-efficient windows and doors and 35% would purchase solar panels.

³ Appraisal Institute of Canada

Most wanted energy-efficient upgrades



Renovations by region

While many British Columbian homeowners regret a recent renovation, the degree of regret and the type of improvements made vary across the province.

For example, homeowners in the Okanagan/Kootenays are the most likely to have undertaken a renovation/home improvement project during the pandemic (62%) with bathroom and kitchen renos being their top choices. Okanagan/ Kootenay homeowners are also primarily motivated by aesthetics when it comes to renos.

Meanwhile, homeowners who live in Northern B.C. care the least about aesthetics when compared to other regions and are almost 40% more likely to have completed a building envelope reno during COVID-19 than homeowners in any other region. However, Northerners are the most likely to regret their reno decision (about 25%) and are also the most likely to complete a DIY reno. They are also much more likely to be completing higher price tag renos. For example, Northerner homeowners were twice as likely to complete a renovation between \$20,000 to \$50,000.

Those who live on Vancouver Island are the most likely to care about energy efficiency when making home renovation choices, while those who live in Northern B.C. are the least likely to consider energy efficiency when upgrading a home. Vancouver Islanders are also the most likely to think energy efficiency upgrades will improve the value of their home. In the Lower Mainland, most homeowners (63%) think improving aesthetics will have the biggest impact on their homes' resale value.

Solutions

Even though many British Columbians face renovation regrets, and close to two-thirds felt making renovations was overwhelming, it does not appear that B.C. homeowners will be slowing down on renovations any time soon. In fact, 41% of B.C. homeowners are planning a renovation or improvement this spring.

In order to have the smoothest reno experience possible, BC Hydro recommends researching the most energy efficient options for upgrading a home. A great resource is [bchydro.com/homerenorebates](https://www.bchydro.com/homerenorebates).

BC Hydro also recommends taking advantage of its rebates and incentives. Home renovation rebates are offered through BC Hydro year-round to improve a home's energy efficiency, including rebates up to \$2,000 for upgrading windows and doors, and up to \$2,000 for installing a heat pump—the most efficient way to heat in the fall and winter and cool in the summer.

Last year, there were about 6,000 applications for home renovation rebates. When it comes to rebate applications, Vancouver Islanders are the most likely to apply, with heat pumps and insulation topping the list of most applied for rebates.

