



Snap Survey

March 2026

138 Respondents from
33 U.S. states

Sustainability Efforts Continue to Take Shape in Community Associations

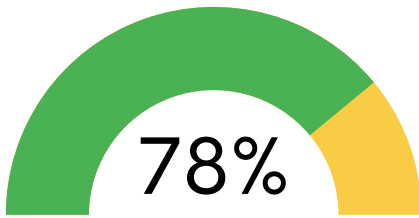
Community associations across the country are increasingly focused on sustainability, energy efficiency, and environmental stewardship as they balance rising operating costs with long-term planning.

To better understand how communities are approaching these priorities, the Foundation for Community Association Research conducted a nationwide Snap Survey examining energy use, sustainability initiatives, and evolving practices. The findings highlight both the progress communities are making and the challenges they face in implementing these efforts.

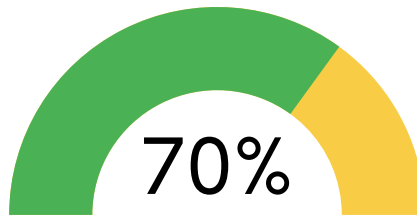
Overall, respondents report growing interest in sustainability, with many communities adopting practical improvements that deliver measurable results, while financial considerations continue to shape decision-making.

Sustainability at a Glance

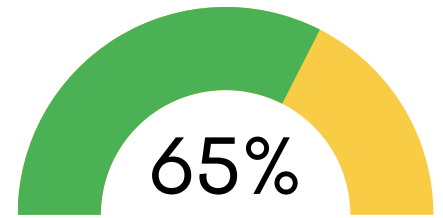
Key Findings from 138 respondents across 33 states



say rising utility costs are impacting budgets



believe sustainability initiatives reduce long-term costs



have implemented LED lighting upgrades



use paperless communications or digital newsletters



say sustainability will be a priority over the next five years



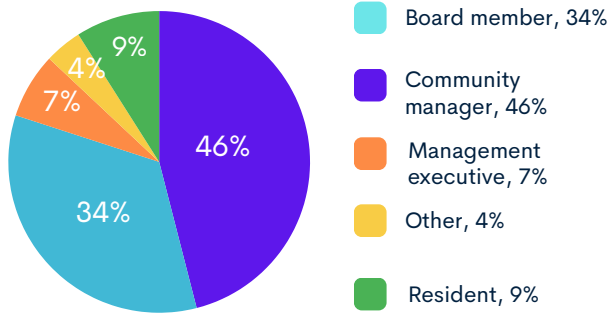
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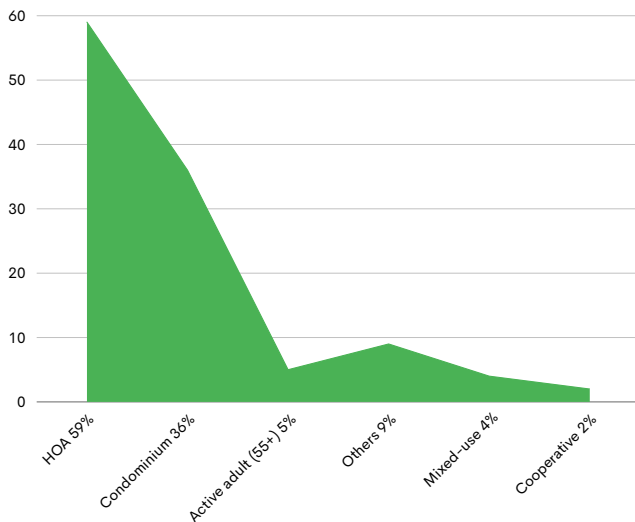
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Background

What is your role in the community association industry?

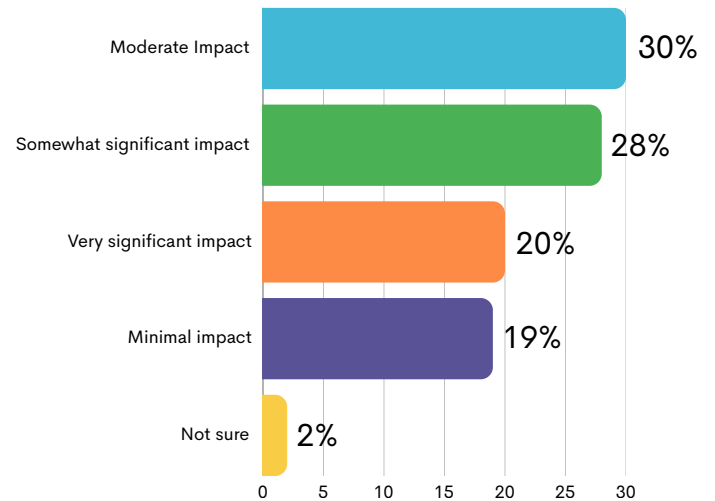


What type of community do you represent?

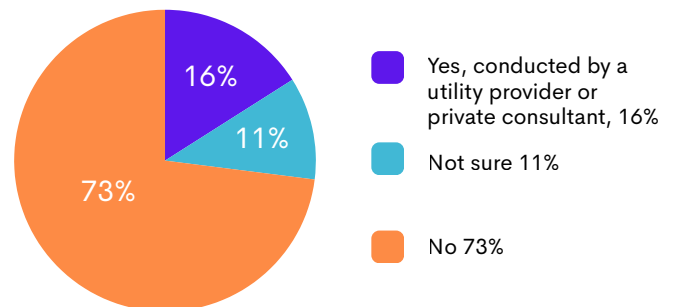


Utility Cost Impact

How much have rising utility costs impacted your association's operating budget over the past three years?



Has your community conducted an energy or utility audit within the past five years?



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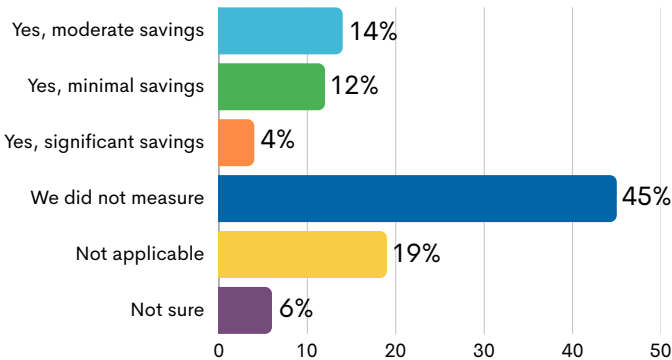
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Energy Efficiency Improvements

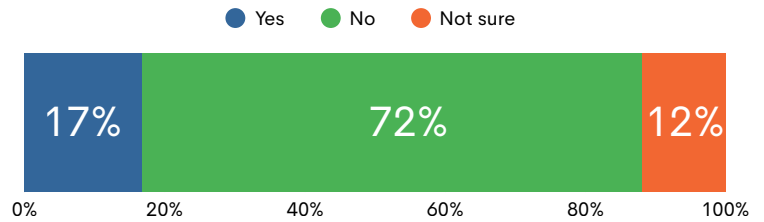
Which of the following energy-efficiency improvements has your community implemented within the past five years?

- 65%** LED lighting retrofits in common areas
- 37%** Motion sensors or lighting timers
- 27%** Smart irrigation systems
- 18%** High-efficiency HVAC systems
- 12%** Window upgrades (e.g., double-pane or low-E)
- 7%** Duct sealing or insulation upgrades
- 7%** Pool covers or heat-retention improvements
- 4%** Portable solar devices
- 4%** Boiler or fuel-source conversion
- 2%** Solar panels on common property
- 1%** Solar hot water systems
- 10%** Other

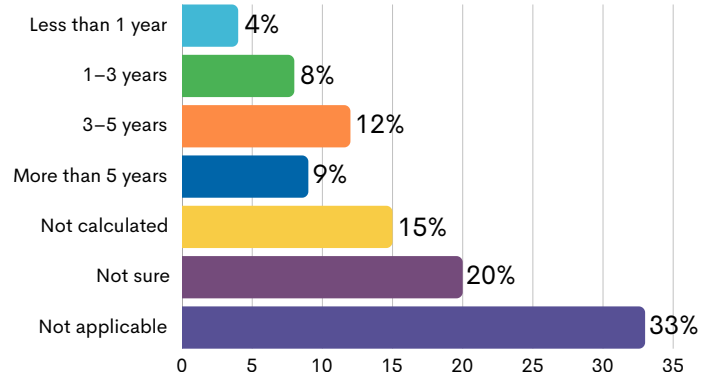
After implementing energy-efficiency improvements, did your association measure the impact on energy usage or costs?



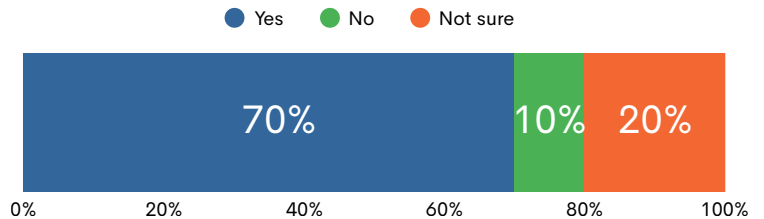
Has your association received utility rebates, tax incentives, or grants to support energy-efficiency improvements?



What was the expected payback period for your association's largest energy-related investment?



Do you believe sustainability initiatives help reduce long-term operating costs for your community?



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Sustainability Initiatives

Which of the following sustainability initiatives are currently in place in your community?

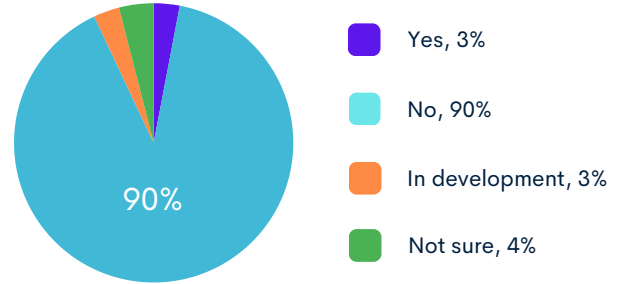
- 65% Paperless communications or digital newsletters
- 47% Native or drought-tolerant landscaping
- 44% Community recycling program
- 34% Reduced irrigation programs
- 24% Reduced pesticide or chemical use
- 18% Stormwater management upgrades
- 16% Electronic waste (e-waste) recycling events
- 15% Composting program
- 15% Bike paths or walkability initiatives
- 12% Resident education programs on sustainability
- 11% Community garden
- 7% Sustainability or "green" committee
- 4% Rainwater harvesting
- 3% Construction waste diversion practices
- 3% Promotion of carpooling or public transit
- 4% Other

Other Common Trends

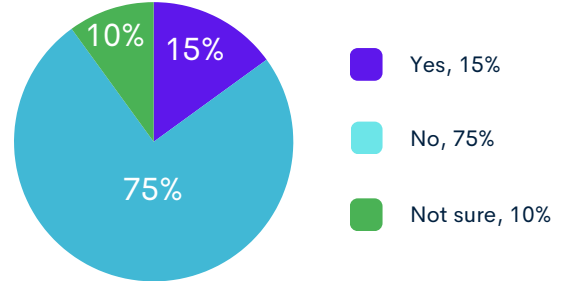
In addition to the primary responses, several communities highlighted additional sustainability efforts that reflect growing innovation and engagement, including:

- Green roof installations to improve energy efficiency and stormwater management
- Volunteer-led clean-up projects that promote community involvement and environmental stewardship
- Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations to support the transition to cleaner transportation

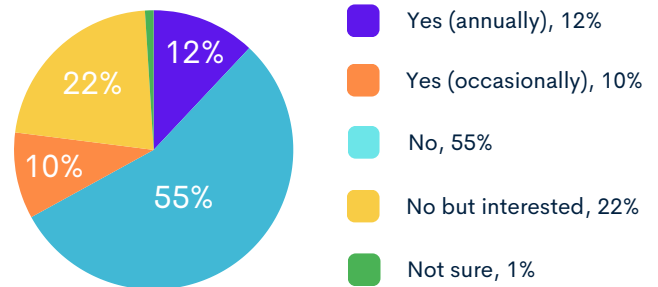
Does your association have a formal sustainability or environmental policy?



Has your community integrated sustainability considerations into reserve planning or capital improvement planning?



Does your community recognize or participate in Earth Day through events, communications, or environmental initiatives?





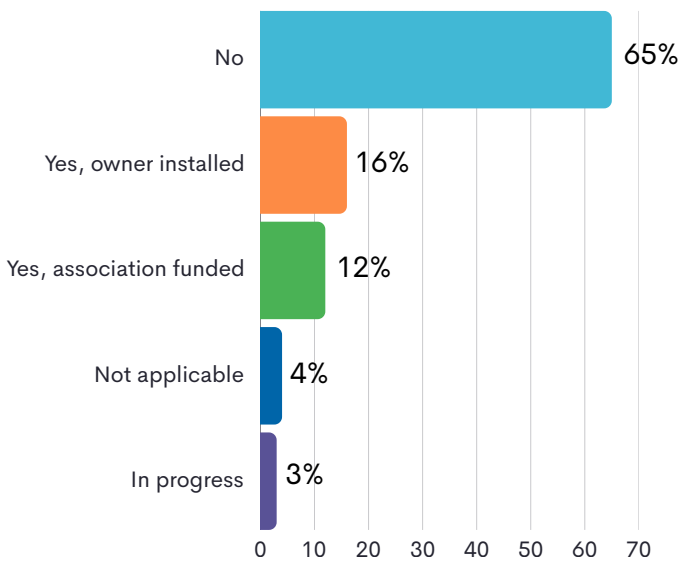
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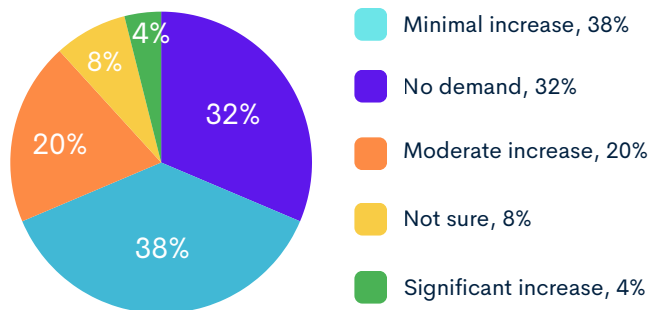
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Electric Vehicles

Has your community installed electric vehicle (EV) charging stations?

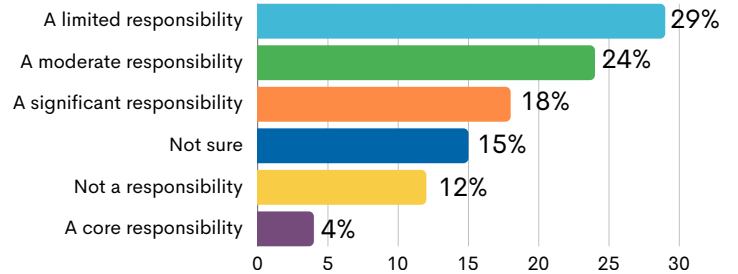


How would you describe demand for EV charging within your community over the past three years?

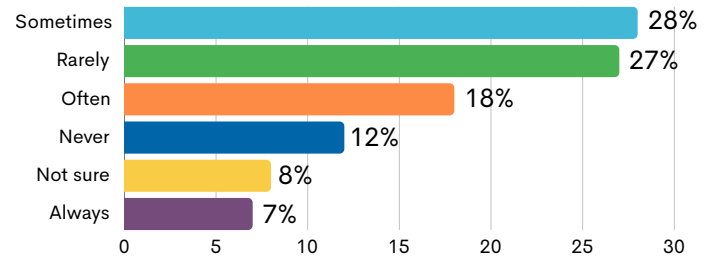


Environmental Stewardship & Resilience

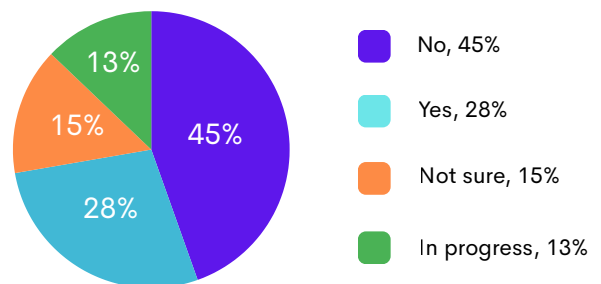
To what extent does your community view environmental stewardship as part of its responsibility?



When making capital or operational decisions, how often does your board consider environmental impact in addition to cost?



Has your community taken steps specifically to improve climate resilience (for example, flood mitigation, wildfire mitigation, or storm preparedness)?





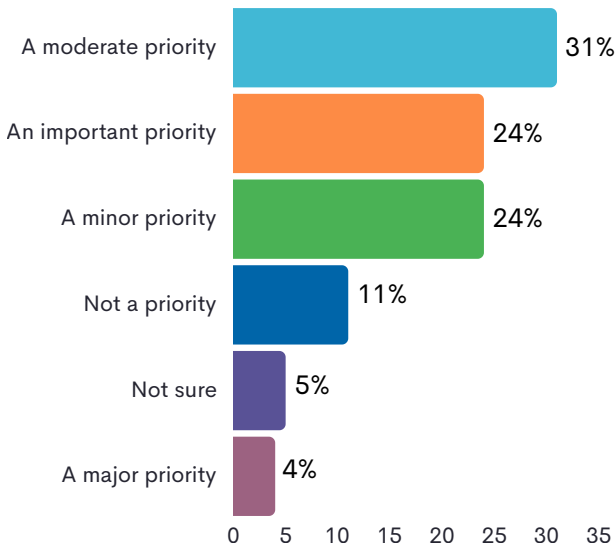
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Engagement & Outlook

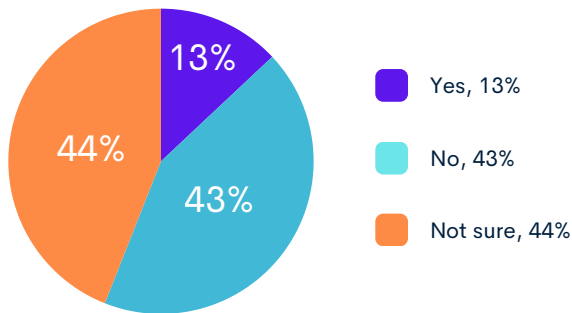
How important will sustainability and energy efficiency be to your community over the next five years?



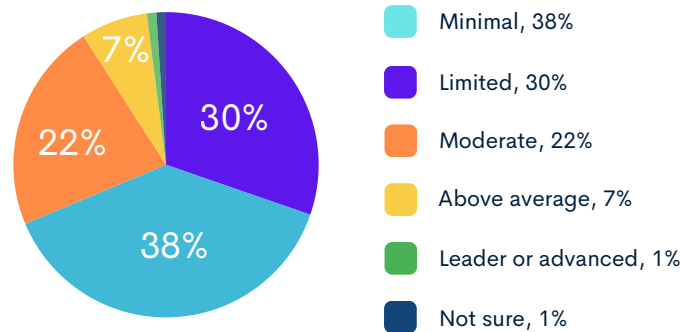
What are the biggest barriers to implementing sustainability initiatives in your community?

- 61% Cost
- 31% Not a priority
- 27% Lack of reserve funding
- 27% Owner resistance
- 25% Board hesitation
- 24% Lack of technical expertise
- 13% Regulatory complexity
- 10% Vendor availability
- 9% Not sure
- 3% Insurance limitations

Have sustainability initiatives strengthened community engagement or resident satisfaction?



Overall, how would you describe your community's current level of sustainability adoption?



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Voices from the Field: Sustainability in Practice

What is the most impactful sustainability or energy-efficiency initiative your community has implemented, and what results have you seen?

Common Themes

Energy Efficiency Leads the Way

LED lighting, HVAC upgrades, and insulation improvements are the most widely adopted initiatives, delivering measurable efficiency gains and operational savings.

Water Management Is a Priority

Irrigation systems, drought-tolerant landscaping, and stormwater improvements are helping communities reduce water usage while strengthening long-term resilience.

Resilience Is Driving Action

Wildfire mitigation, flood control, and emergency preparedness efforts are becoming increasingly integrated into community planning.

Engagement Through Sustainability

Recycling, landscaping, and community programs are increasing resident awareness and participation in sustainability efforts.

Cost Remains a Consideration

While budget constraints and return on investment remain important factors, communities are actively working to balance financial realities with long-term sustainability goals.

Results Are Emerging — With Momentum Building

Many communities are already seeing meaningful savings and efficiency gains, while others are in early stages of implementation and planning.

What Respondents Are Saying

"We upgraded nearly all common areas to LED lighting and reduced electricity costs while improving safety across the property."

"Stormwater management improvements have reduced flooding and improved system performance during heavy rain."

"Drought-tolerant landscaping has significantly reduced our water usage and irrigation costs."

"We saved over 100,000 kWh year-over-year through conservation efforts by management and residents."

"Paperless communication has reduced administrative costs and improved efficiency."

"Our EV charging stations are seeing increased usage as more residents transition to electric vehicles."

"The biggest challenge is cost — boards are hesitant to invest without a clear return on investment."

"Education and awareness are key — small changes by residents can make a meaningful impact."

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