

Q4 2025

New Construction Survey

# What New Home Buyers Want



Photo by CoStar Photographer Adam Queen



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# Key Findings



Photo by CoStar Photographer Jade Meadows



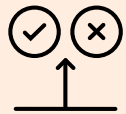
# Takeaways

**Buyer behavior reveals a shift toward long-term value, transparency, and digital engagement.** Today's new home buyers view homes as investments in stability and sustainability. Builders who emphasize trust, seamless digital experiences, and energy-efficient innovation can capture loyalty, as modern purchasers prioritize both emotional assurance and financial foresight in their decisions.



## Evolving Buyer Priorities

New construction buyers—especially first-time purchasers—increasingly focus on future-ready features like **energy efficiency, smart home technology, and modern designs.**



## Top Decision Drivers

**Life-stage changes, the desire for more space, and the appeal of homeownership** remain the strongest motivators in buying a new construction home. First-time buyers show heightened sensitivity to investment potential and financial and emotional building permanence.



## Community and Location Preferences

**Safe, peaceful neighborhoods** dominate preferences, with suburban and urban areas most sought after. Affordability and commuting distance are critical.



## Financial and Process Challenges

**Mortgage rates, inflation, and property taxes are major concerns.** Buyers also face anxiety about qualifying for mortgages, hidden costs, and construction delays—highlighting the need for transparency throughout the building process.



## Digital Tools and Builder Reputation Matter

**Clear cost breakdowns, interactive floor plans, and virtual tours are essential for buyer confidence.** Builder websites, real estate agents, and online portals remain primary resources, while builder reputation and reliability are critical in final buying decisions.





Photo by CoStar Photographer Jon Puckett

# When your marketing strategy supports the buyer journey, both **trust and sales grow**

**Education and support build confidence among buyers,** especially first-time buyers, who may feel overwhelmed by mortgages, down payments, and closing costs. By producing accessible educational content, highlighting build quality, and even staffing on-site mortgage

professionals, sales and marketing teams can reduce hesitancy and win buyer confidence.

**Future-ready positioning highlights sustainability and innovation,** allowing builders to stand out in a competitive market where



buyers increasingly value energy efficiency and smart technology. This appeals to eco-conscious buyers and supports premium pricing and brand differentiation.

**Geo-targeted localization ensures marketing dollars are spent where they matter most.**

By aligning messaging with lifestyle preferences, commute patterns, and local job density, builder marketing teams can generate higher-quality leads and shorten sales cycles.

**Elevated digital tools are equally critical.** Offering interactive floor plans, transparent cost calculators, and virtual tours creates an engaging,

self-service environment that today's buyers expect. This positions home builders as modern and customer centric.

**Ease of buying process through lender partnerships and transparent sales experiences directly impacts conversion rates.**

By addressing common pain points upfront, sales and marketing teams can reduce buyer hesitation and move prospects efficiently from interest to purchase.

**Combined, these strategies will position sales and marketing teams as powerful drivers of sales.**



Photo by CoStar Photographer Claudiu Varzaru



# Survey Summary

## New Home Intenders



**65%**

plan to buy a new home  
in the next 24 months

**42%**

of these are first-time  
buyers

Source: Homes.com/YouGov, 2025



Photo by CoStar Photographer Jon Puckett

## New Home Budgets



**\$660-\$670K**

is the average budget  
for a new home

**\$400-\$499K**

is the average budget  
for first-time buyers

Source: Homes.com/YouGov, 2025



Photo by CoStar Photographer Lawrence Hiatt



# Survey Summary



Photo by CoStar Photographer Antonio Bonner

## New Home Sizes



**Single family**

homes are popular.

(Condo interest is declining)

**~2,500 sq ft**  
is the desired home size.

(Owners skew slightly larger,  
intenders smaller.)

Source: Homes.com/YouGov, 2025

## Design Preferences



**60%**

prefer open-concept  
floor plans

**55%**

prefer energy-efficient  
appliances

**50%**

prefer smart-home  
technology

Source: Homes.com/YouGov, 2025



Photo by CoStar Photographer Adam Jebbeh



# Survey Summary

## Eco-Friendly Priorities



70%

prioritize energy efficiency

47%

prioritize sustainable materials and solar panels

Source: Homes.com/YouGov, 2025



Photo by CoStar Photographer Josh Cavallo



Photo by CoStar Photographer Darren Asay

## Location & Financing



47%

prefer a suburban location



13%

finance their purchase through building lenders

Source: Homes.com/YouGov, 2025



# Who Are New Home Buyers?



Photo by CoStar Photographer Ryan Gwilliam

Deep dive into the latest new construction homebuyer preferences and trends to better meet their needs.



## Who Are the 2025 Intenders?

# Why buyers choose new construction

Despite new construction homes trending smaller — dropping from a median of 2,467 sq ft in 2015 to 2,210 sq ft in 2024\* — **new homes remain highly attractive to both first-time and repeat buyers.**

### Decision Drivers for New Construction Buyers



Source: Homes.com/YouGov, 2025

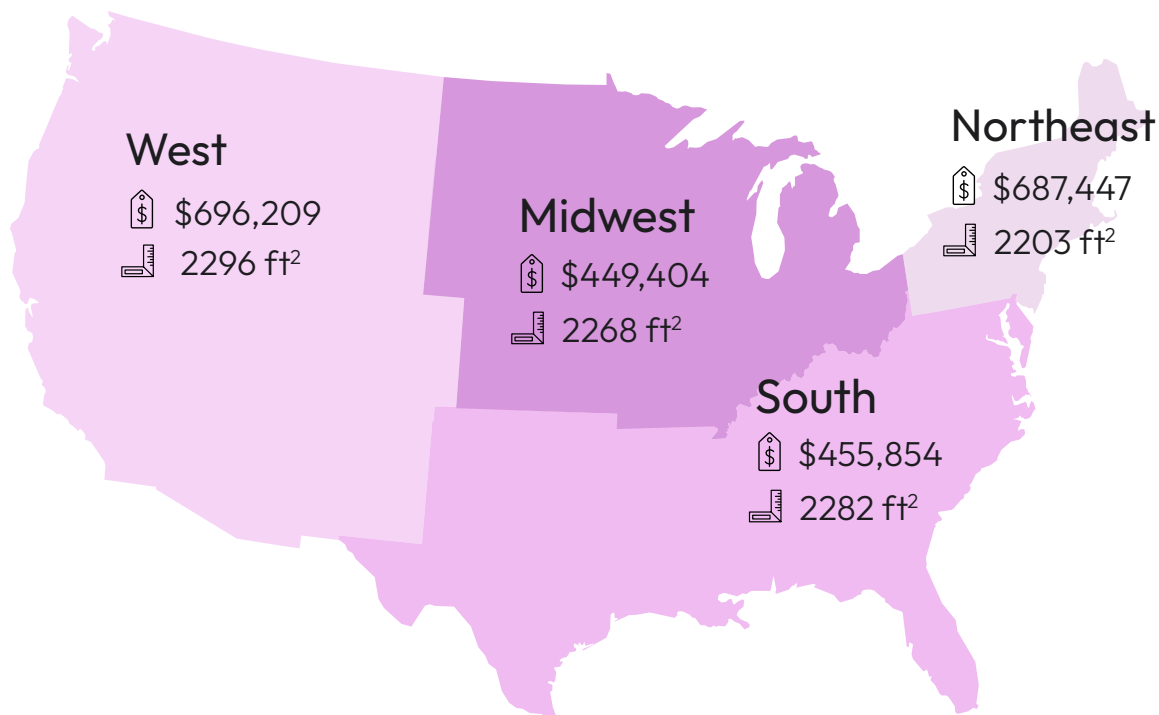
\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). Characteristics of New Housing: 2023 Highlights. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Construction.



# Budget ranges and home size targets

The average budget among all survey respondents was \$664K, with first-time buyers standing out as more budget-conscious, clustering in the \$400-\$499K range.

## Average Square Footage and List Price Nationally



Source: CoStar Internal Data, October 2025



## Financing Concerns

# Concerns about affordability and financing

Survey respondents identified mortgage rates as the biggest challenge in buying a new home, with about a third unsure of what they could afford or how the process works.

Economic concerns—particularly mortgage rates, inflation, and overall uncertainty—loom large, especially for first-time buyers, who also worry about student loans.

Beyond purchase price, buyers are heavily concerned about ongoing costs like property taxes, insurance, utilities, and repairs. Most (61%) expect to finance through a mortgage, primarily from banks or credit unions, though some are drawn to builder incentives such as rate buy-downs or help with closing costs.

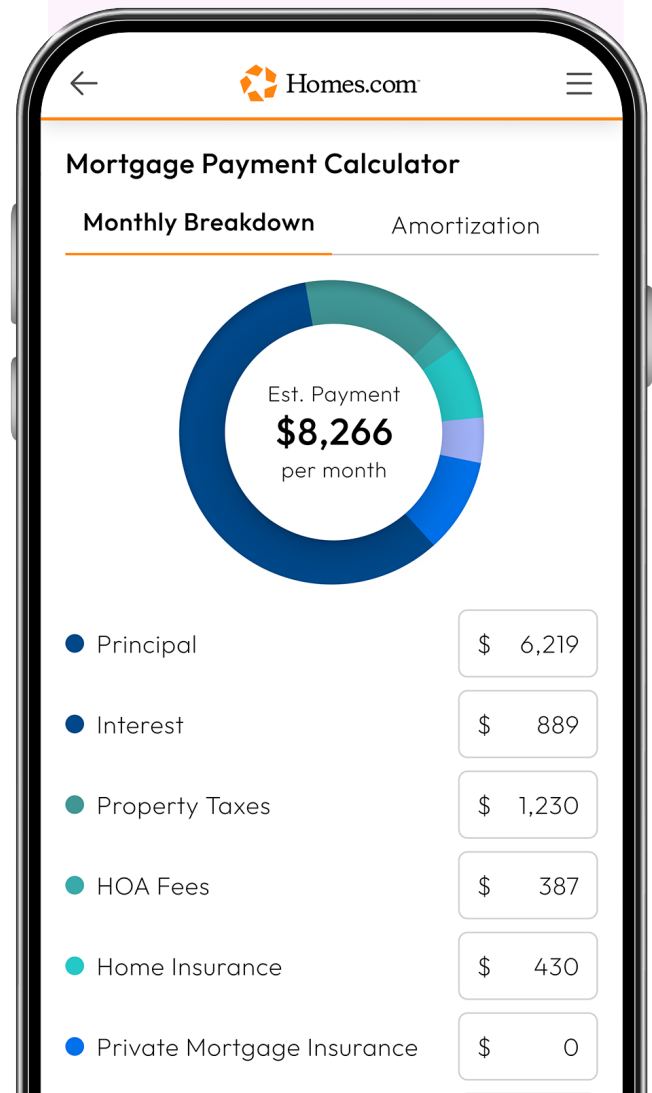


# 74%

of first-time buyers have concerns about qualifying for a mortgage

Homes.com offers a free mortgage calculator, helping home shoppers estimate their monthly mortgage payment.

Check it out here.



## Content &amp; Information Needs

# Hidden costs are home buyers' biggest pain point

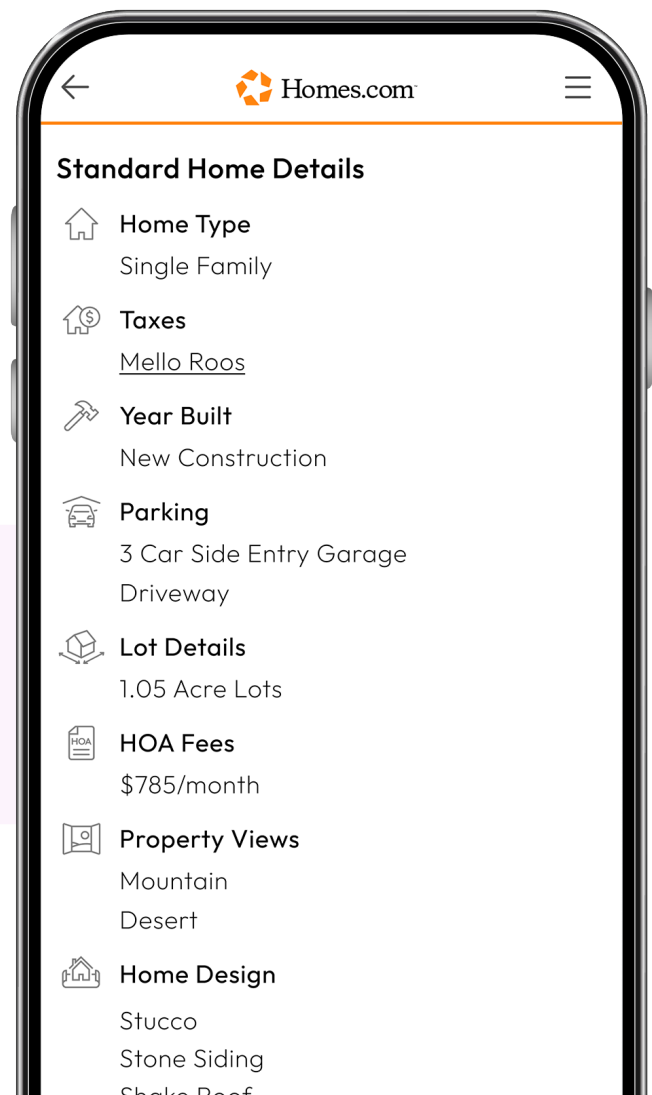
Buying a new home comes with hidden costs and upgrades that can surprise even seasoned buyers—expenses often overlooked in the sticker price. Thirty-five percent of respondents cited hidden costs or unexpected upgrades as the top pain point during the sales process. **Builders who offer clearer information may be better positioned to attract homebuyers.**



The survey found that nearly **9 in 10 buyers would like clarity on total home costs and fees.**

Source: Homes.com/YouGov, 2025

Homes.com's new construction listings display builder incentives, HOA data, special taxes and more to provide home buyers as much financial clarity as possible.



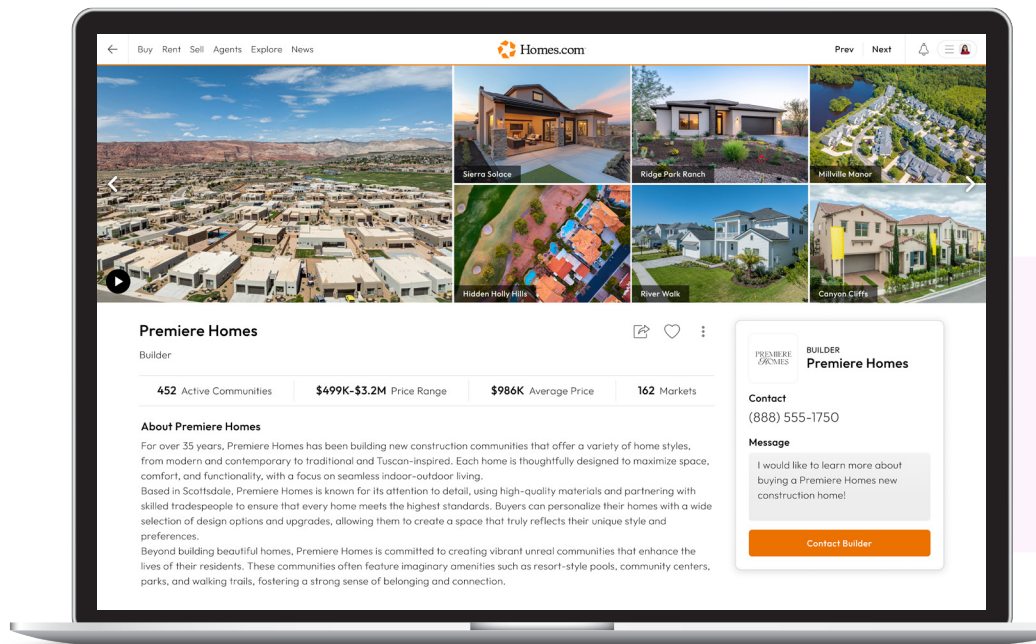


## Top Pain Points in the Buyer Journey

# The importance of a builder's reputation

When shopping for new construction homes, buyers place the greatest emphasis on trust and credibility, with 36% ranking reputation above all other factors.

Most begin their search online, using resources like Google, Yelp, the Better Business Bureau, and the National Association of Home Builders, alongside builder websites and real estate agents.



Homes.com's builder profile empowers builders to highlight their brand and expertise.

What's Most Important to Buyers About Their Builder

36%



Builder reputation

21%



Experience

18%



Quality of materials

Source: Homes.com/YouGov, 2025



## Top Pain Points in the Buyer Journey

# Buyers care more about affordability and walkability than commute time

While affordability ranks as the top priority for first-time and repeat buyers, nearly 6 in 10 respondents said living in a **walkable neighborhood** with access to retail and activities was very or extremely important.



About 7 in 10 recent or prospective new home buyers prefer urban and suburban communities to exurban and rural locales.

With Homes.com's **Neighborhood Pages**, you can dive into the essence of a community.

From school ratings and demographics to local amenities, commute times, and real estate trends — these pages are designed to give homebuyers an immersive experience of what it's like to live there.

Check out the **Great Park Neighborhood** page!



Buy Rent Sell Agents Explore News

Homes.com

**Great Park**  
Suburban Neighborhood in Irvine, California  
Orange County 92618

<b>\$2,189,287</b> Average Value	<b>\$710</b> Average Price per Sq Ft	<b>222</b> Homes For Sale
----------------------------------	--------------------------------------	---------------------------

**Community living at one of Irvine's largest master development communities**

Centered around an active lifestyle and the idea of community, Great Park is an elaborately planned neighborhood development in Irvine with heritage trees and various subdivisions built around the community's parks. Serving as a centerpiece of the Great Park neighborhood, each park is a gathering place and connects the communities, residential homes and top-performing schools together with walking and biking paths. The Great Park Neighborhoods Community Association also organizes community events at the parks, including movie and concert series, seasonal socials and holiday celebrations as well as recreational organizations, including swim, compost, garden, fitness and culture clubs. "There will be a total of 10,000 homes when Great Park is finished, so there's not another community like it in size. Residents have access to all the parks, clubhouses and the amenities are resort-style," says Ronnie Hackett, Realtor at Berkshire Hathaway California Properties who is better known as part of the Ronnie & Cyrena Team, which has sold over 125 homes in the Great Park area while also providing property management services. "Another fantastic thing about living here is the walkability factor; everything is very close together and children can walk to schools."

Angeli...  
homes

# What Do They Want?



Photo by CoStar Photographer Jon Puckett

**We've done your homework.**  
Explore the top priorities and decision drivers of today's new construction homebuyer.



## Desired Home Features

# Open floor plans top wish lists, followed by family-ready layouts

When picking their homes, **61% of new construction owners and 59% of new construction intenders** said an open-concept floor plan was the most important feature.

While 27% of respondents prioritized multigenerational living, the trend was especially pronounced among first-time buyers, who are increasingly seeking flexible layouts to accommodate returning college students or aging parents.

### Matterport 3D Imaging



## Important Features for New Intenders

**59%** open-concept floor plans

**59%** energy-efficient appliances

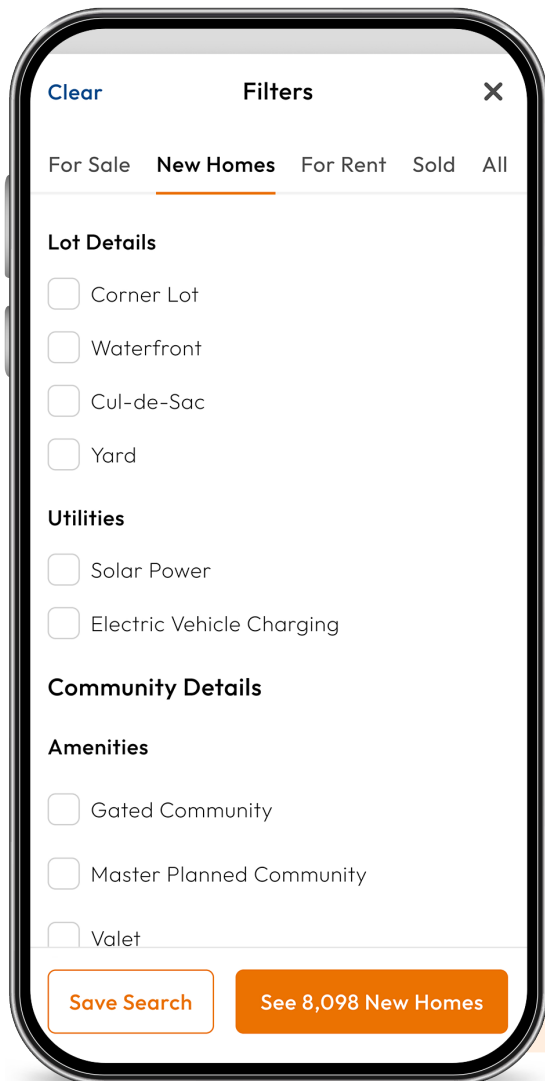
**54%** smart home technology

Source: Homes.com/YouGov, 2025

## Outdoor & Eco Features

# Energy-efficient appliances top buyers' eco-friendly wish list

The most highly sought after eco-friendly features homebuyers seek are energy-efficient appliances, with **65% of owners** and **72% of intenders** ranking them as extremely important.



## Top 10 Most Common Community Amenities on Homes.com

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Community pool        |  Pond in community  |
|  Trails               |  Fitness center    |
|  Community playground |  Pickleball courts |
|  Park                 |  Dog park          |
|  Clubhouse            |  Greenbelt         |

**The Homes.com's Research Team has inventoried over 5 million features!**

### TIP:

Make sure to select "Solar Power System Upgrade" as a feature on your listing if available. If it's not in your feed, simply add it when Editing Your Community.



## Customization Expectations

# Buyers want customization—until costs set in

The survey found 58% of new home intenders and 67% of first-timers prefer full customization as they look to complete their purchase.

Ninety-two percent want some level of customization; however, when evaluating recent owner preferences, full customization dropped closer to 55%, pointing to the reality of the costs associated with upgrades.

### Preferred Level of Customization Between Prospective New Home Buyers and Recent Owners

**8%** None

Prospective new home buyers

Limited—  
only specific  
areas like  
kitchen,  
floors

**34%**

Full—  
floor plans,  
finishes,  
etc.

**58%**

Full—  
floor plans,  
finishes,  
etc.

**55%**

Recent owners

Source: Homes.com/YouGov, 2025

# The Home Buyer Journey



Photo by CoStar Photographer Kristinah Archer

From where new construction buyers are looking to live to what tools they use to help them decide on a home — these **helpful insights** can help you fill your communities.



## Search Behaviors &amp; Channels

# New-build buyers embrace virtual search tools, with nearly 60% considering them essential

Nearly 60% of home shoppers rely on virtual tools like photos, videos, Matterport 3D Tours, Google Maps/Street View and more.

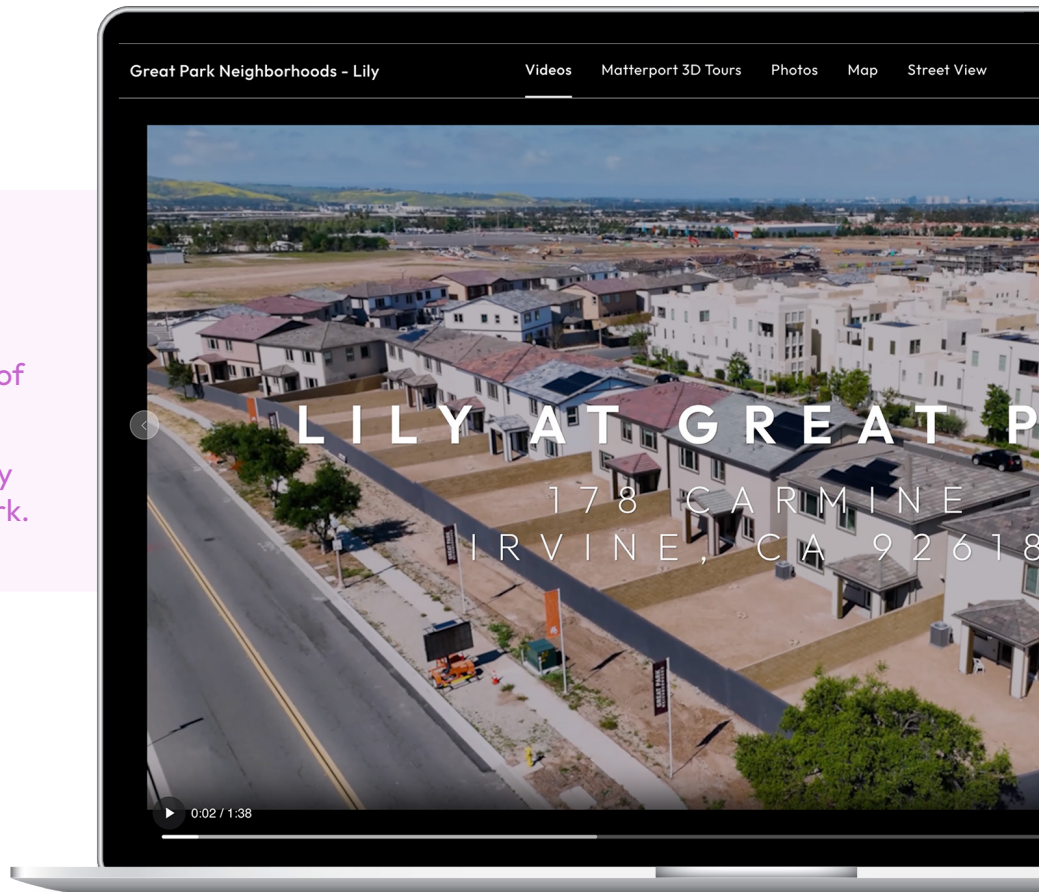
Google Maps/Street View is the most popular tool, used by 64% of survey respondents.

**50%**

of respondents rely on videos of the home or community

Boosted communities on Homes.com receive a professionally produced immersive video as part of their media package.

Check out this community video of Lily at Great Park.



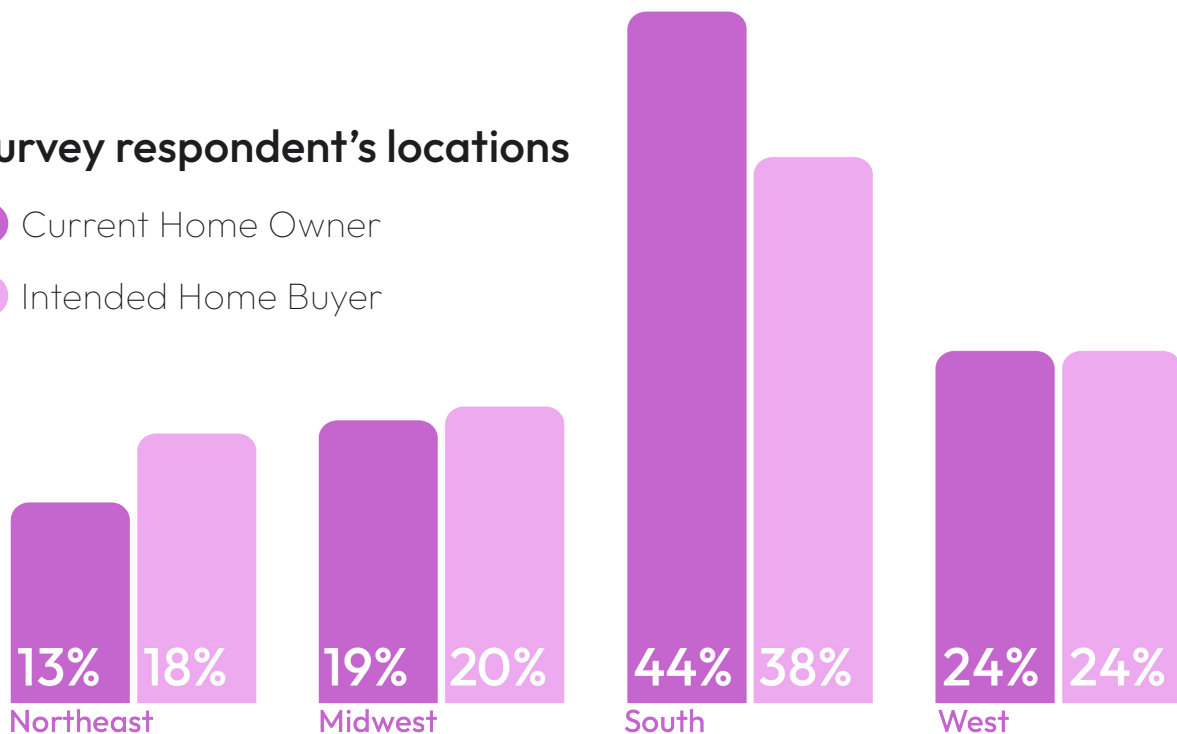
## Local Market Strategy and Geo Insights

# New construction buyers are in the Sunbelt markets

40% of these buyers bought or were looking to buy in the South. Affordability was the top consideration for location, with 69% of respondents labeling it very/extremely important. Conversely, only 48% put that kind of emphasis on being close to friends and family.

### Survey respondent's locations

- Current Home Owner
- Intended Home Buyer



Source: Homes.com/YouGov, 2025

Photo by CoStar Photographer Jade Meadows



# The Homes.com Difference



Photo by CoStar Photographer Mitch Hester

Learn more about the  
Homes.com difference



Discover how Homes.com increases exposure to your communities through insight-driven, consumer-friendly tools.



Photo by CoStar Photographer Brian Lee

# Homes.com helps builders reach and **convert** the **first-time buyer** through immersive media

**First-time buyers are often overwhelmed**, price-sensitive, and digitally driven. We offer them the resources and educational information that helps them feel confident in their ability to become first-time homeowners.

**74% worry about qualifying for a mortgage**, and many don't realize new construction is even an option for them. Thankfully, our new homes search receives priority placement on our homepage, encouraging engagement from buyers.



With **42%** of future new construction buyers planning their first home purchase, builders have a massive opportunity, but must lead these buyers through an unfamiliar and anxiety-inducing process.



## Neighborhoods and Schools

# Our **exclusive neighborhood** and **school** content provides buyers all the information they want—and more

With engaging localized insights, and a strategy grounded in CoStar's data, Homes.com showcases featured builders to home shoppers exploring neighborhoods and schools.

This data, available only on Homes.com, empowers first-time buyers, transforming them into confident decision-makers interested in your community.



**Our Neighborhood and School detail pages are built to educate, not just advertise.**

We offer:

- Communities and builders on our neighborhood and school pages to reach early-stage searchers. Boosted communities receive priority page placement.
- Internal linking from neighborhood pages and school pages to your community listings so buyers can learn more about the area

Our Dedicated New Construction Search

# Increase your exposure to buyers looking for new-builds

Homes.com has a dedicated new construction search experience, making it easier and more engaging than ever for homebuyers to explore new construction.

Homes.com offers hundreds of filters to surface builders, communities, plans, ready move-ins, custom homes and lots in all searches across the site. Plus, home shoppers use Homes.com to unlock a deeper understanding of surrounding areas with interactive map layers that unlock commute times, noise levels, environmental factors and more.

Learn more about the  
Homes.com difference



Why it matters: Homes.com ensures your communities, plans and move-in-ready homes are visible to the 100 million consumers using the Homes.com network, whether they know they are looking for a new construction home or not.

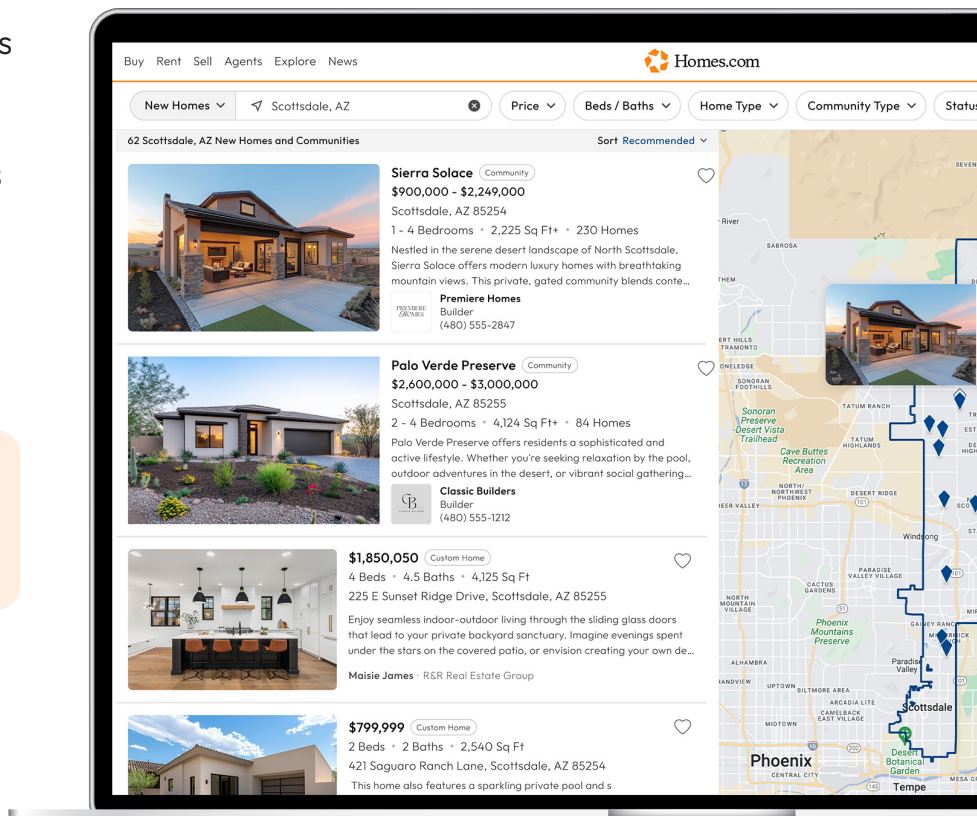


Photo by CoStar Photographer Adam Jebbeh



Combined For-Sale Experience (New + Resale)

# Homes.com offers a seamless search experience for all home shoppers

Many buyers are undecided between resale and new construction. In our primary For Sale search experience, Homes.com:

- Surfaces new construction inventory alongside resale listings
- Sorts boosted communities higher, getting additional exposure

This hybrid search path ensures your homes remain visible even when users aren't searching "new" directly —capturing attention before intent is finalized.

With deep integration of builder inventory into both dedicated and blended search paths, Homes.com maximizes your exposure at the local level, where buyers are most active and decisions are made.

Learn more about the Homes.com difference.

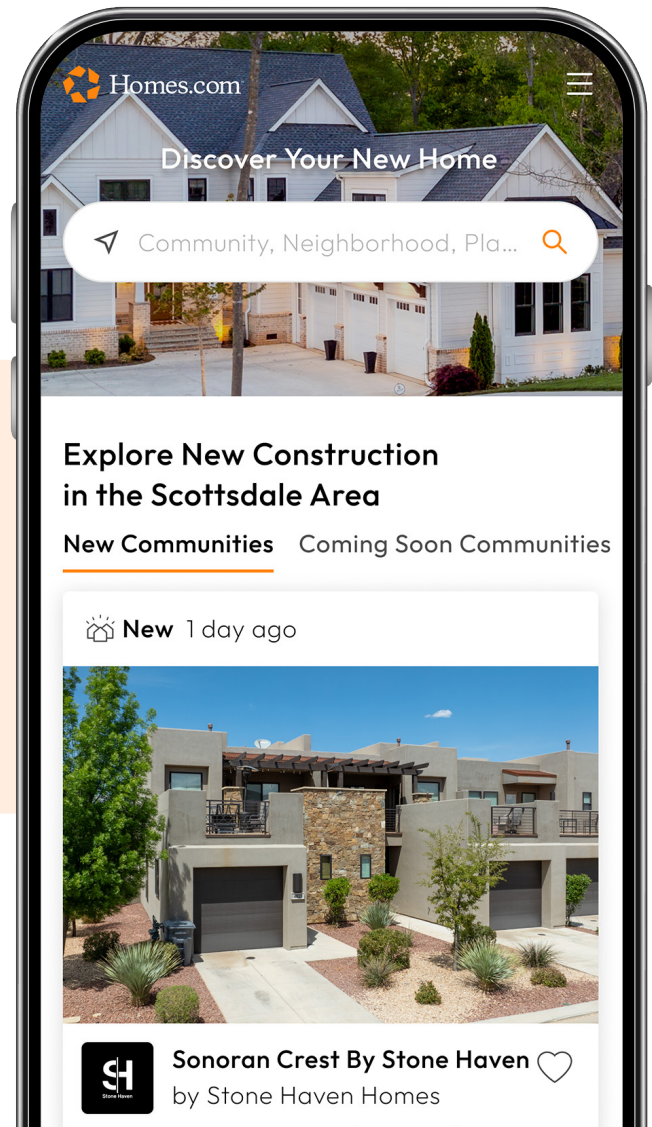


Photo by CoStar Photographer Adam Jebbeh

## Building Trust to Drive Conversion

# How Homes.com helps builders **build trust**—and **drive conversions**

**Buyers searching on Homes.com don't just see your homes—they see why they should trust you.**

With embedded reviews and news content, your builder brand becomes more than a listing. It becomes a known, reputable name in the market to the over 100 million visitors on Homes.com each month.

When it comes to new construction, trust isn't a nice-to-have—it's a deal-breaker. According to The Homes.com/YouGov New Construction Survey, builder reputation ranks as the #1 factor in how buyers choose whom to work with.

Homes.com helps builders turn reputation into a competitive advantage by embedding credibility-building features directly into the home search experience and branded content journey.

Here's How We Help Highlight a Builder's Reputation:

### 1. Enhanced Builder Detail Pages

- Showcased reviews, community photos, and videos
- Specialization including a focus on energy efficiency and smart home tech

### 2. Highlighting awards and experience

- Customer Testimonial Integration
- Display of builder star rating on detail pages
- Buyer testimonials on builder pages

### 3. Expert Content

- Recent news about the builder displays on detail pages
- Articles including video interviews about trends and craftsmanship.

**Learn more about the Homes.com difference**



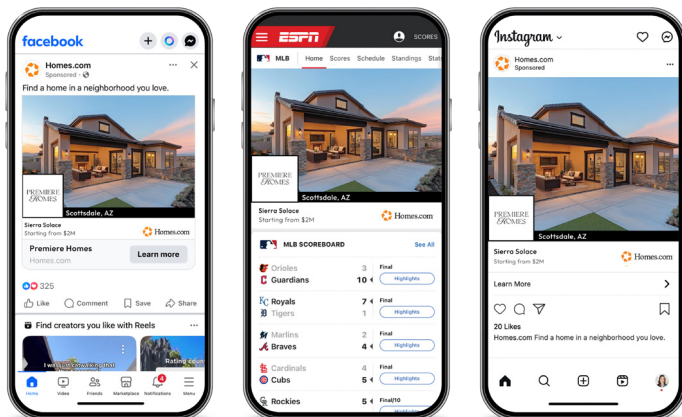
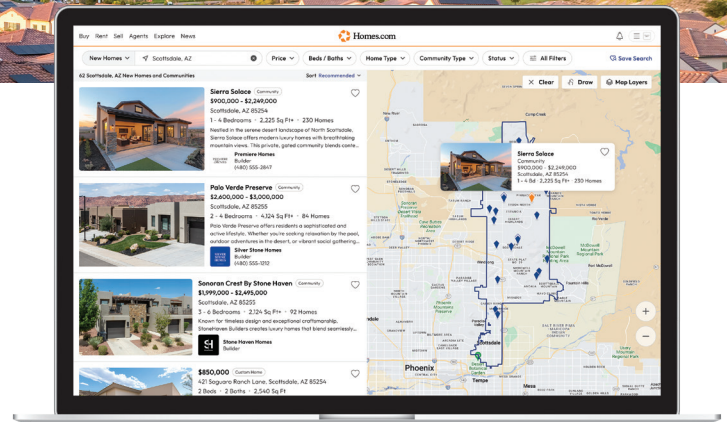




# Reach More New Home Buyers With a Community Boost

## Sort Higher, Increase Your Visibility

Boosted community listings **sort above all other communities in your market**. Move-in ready homes or plans will also sort higher than existing and new homes, giving your listings **significantly more exposure**.



## Custom, AI-Powered Retargeting Ads Follow Buyers Across the Web

After visiting your Homes.com listings, home buyers will see **engaging, professionally produced video display ads** that highlight your community—delivered across thousands of popular websites, including Facebook and Instagram.

## Media Package

Community Boost media package delivers turnkey media and premium exposure — no coordination, no edits, just polished results. The package includes **high quality images, Matterport 3D Tours and a community video** optimized for display ads.



## Save Time with Pre-Screened Leads!

Our lead vetting team reaches out to buyer inquiries to learn more about their timeline, budget and goals.

# Methodology

## Purpose and Scope

The Homes.com/YouGov New Construction Survey, conducted by YouGov in collaboration with Homes.com, was designed to explore the preferences, motivations and challenges individuals involved in the purchase of newly constructed homes face. The research profiled both recent purchasers and prospective buyers of new construction homes in the U.S. to understand what drives decision-making in this segment of the housing market.

## Survey Administration

The survey was conducted via an online survey administered between May 22 and May 29, 2025. It was structured for ease and efficiency, with an average completion time of approximately 12 minutes. All responses were collected in English and limited to individuals residing in the United States.

## Participant Criteria and Sampling

Respondents were screened to meet specific eligibility criteria: they had to be at least 25 years old and have a household income of \$50,000 or more. Eligible participants included those who had either purchased a newly constructed home in the past 24 months or who intended to make such a purchase within the next 24 months. This yielded a total sample size of 1,009 individuals, broken down into two primary subgroups: 351 recent purchasers (“owners”) and 658 prospective buyers (“intenders”).

## Demographic Composition

The sample was demographically diverse, with deliberate representation across age, income, region, and household composition. Owners generally skewed older (65+), with higher household incomes and smaller household sizes. They were more likely to live in the South. Intenders and first-time buyers, on the other hand, were typically younger (ages 25–34), had more moderate household incomes, and tended to live in larger households with children. These groups showed a stronger presence in the Northeast and West regions and exhibited greater interest in urban living environments.

## Analytical Approach and Statistical Reliability

All statistical testing within the survey was conducted at a 95% confidence level. Differences between groups—such as owners vs. intenders or first-time buyers vs. experienced homeowners—were flagged when statistically significant. These distinctions help highlight meaningful insights across subgroups and enhance the interpretive depth of the findings.

## Additional Resources

Data was collected from CoStar Group’s new home research team of 22,534 actively selling and coming soon communities as of August 11, 2025. CoStar’s new home community data is sourced from primary research, market input, public records and data feeds, including our Homes.com network—the industry’s leading online residential marketplace.





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