

2018 Remodeling Impact Report: Outdoor Features

National Association of REALTORS® Research Department





Executive Summary

This report takes a deep dive into the reasons why homeowners complete outdoor remodeling projects, the value of taking on lawn and landscape upgrades and enhancements, and the increased happiness experienced by homeowners once an upgrade is completed. It also explores the benefits associated with landscape enhancements to commercial property. The report covers:

- The typical cost of 13 outdoor residential projects and 10 commercial enhancements, as estimated by members of the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP).
- How much appeal each residential project is likely to have for buyers, according to REALTORS®.
- How much REALTORS® estimate homeowners can recover on the cost of the outdoor residential projects if they choose to sell the home.
- The top outdoor projects for commercial properties, according to NALP members and REALTORS®.



Executive Summary

Highlights for Residential Outdoor Features & Landscape Enhancements:

- REALTORS® ranked a standard lawn care service as the number one project that appeals to buyers again this year. REALTORS® also estimated that lawn care would recover 267 percent of the cost estimated by landscape professionals.
- Landscape maintenance and tree care recover 100 percent of the costs at the time of sale, according to NALP members and REALTORS®.
- Consumers gave a fire feature addition and irrigation system installation a perfect 10 on the Joy Score. A new wood deck, water feature, statement landscape, and new patio all received Joy Scores of 9.7 or higher.
- The projects that gave consumers the greatest desire to be at home include a new pool (92 percent), statement landscape (87 percent), landscape upgrade (85 percent), and a new patio (84 percent).



Executive Summary

Highlights for Commercial Outdoor Features & Landscape Enhancements:

- Standard lawn care services, overall landscape upgrade, hardscape upgrade, and landscape management services were ranked the top four projects by REALTORS® that would add value for potential buyers as well as add value to a property at resale.
- Landscape management services, standard lawn care services, and an overall landscape upgrade are the top three most requested projects by landscape professionals.
- NALP members have seen an increase in requests from clients for an overall landscape upgrade and landscape management services in the last year.



Methodology

Survey of Consumers Who Have Completed Outdoor Projects:

From March to April 2018, homeownership site HouseLogic.com surveyed consumers about the last outdoor project they undertook. A total of 4,079 respondents took the survey. The Joy Score was calculated by combining the share who were happy and those who were satisfied when seeing their completed project and dividing the share by 10 to create a ranking between 1 and 10. Higher Joy Scores indicate greater joy from the project.

National Association of Landscape Professionals Cost Survey:

From March to April 2018, NALP e-mailed a survey on the average costs of outdoor projects to its 2,113 member companies. A total of 456 responses were received. The survey had an adjusted response rate of 21.6%.

Respondents were asked to take the following into consideration for residential property: “Generally, assume a 2,466-square foot house—the average size according to U.S. Census data. The house is a post-1978-built home with no hidden issues. To ensure the most applicability, projects and materials represent standard or typical quality; a few projects feature ‘better-quality’ materials. But there are no top-of-the-line projects.”

Respondents were also asked to provide the average cost per square foot and the average cost for completed project for commercial properties based on their experience in the industry.



Methodology

National Association of REALTORS® Value Survey:

In April and May 2018, NAR e-mailed an outdoor project survey to a random sample of 133,916 members (61,242 commercial and 72,674 residential members). A total of 6,911 responses were received. The survey had an adjusted response rate of 5.2%.

Respondents were asked to take the following into consideration for residential property: “Based on a survey from the National Association of Landscape Professionals, we have included the median cost of each professional remodeling project. Additionally: Generally, assume a 2,466-square foot house—the average size according to U.S. Census data. The house is a post-1978-built home with no hidden issues. To ensure the most applicability, projects and materials represent standard or typical quality; a few projects feature ‘better-quality’ materials. But there are no top-of-the-line projects.” Regarding commercial property, respondents were asked questions on their view of landscape enhancements in relation to buyers and sellers of commercial properties.

The primary measure of central tendency used throughout this report is the median, the middle point in the distribution of responses to a particular question or, equivalently, the point at which half of the responses are above and half are below a particular value.

This report provides a cost recovery estimate for representative outdoor projects. The actual cost of each project and cost recovery are influenced by many factors, including project design, quality of materials, location, age and condition of the home, and homeowner preferences.



Top Outdoor Residential Features

REALTOR® rank of projects' appeal to buyers (highest to lowest)	REALTOR® rank of projects' likely added value to home for resale (highest to lowest)
1. Standard Lawn Care Service	1. Landscape Maintenance
2. Landscape Maintenance	2. Overall Landscape Upgrade
3. Overall Landscape Upgrade	3. Standard Lawn Care Service
4. Tree Care	4. New Patio
5. New Wood Deck	5. New Wood Deck
6. New Patio	6. Tree Care
7. Landscape Lighting	7. Landscape Lighting
8. Fire Feature	8. Statement Landscape
9. Irrigation System Installation	9. Irrigation System Installation
10. Statement Landscape	10. Outdoor Kitchen
11. Outdoor Kitchen	11. Fire Feature
12. New Pool	12. Water Features
13. Water Features	13. New Pool



Curb Appeal

Curb appeal plays a significant role in tackling any outdoor project. Among REALTORS[®], 94 percent have suggested sellers improve their curb appeal before listing a home for sale. When working with a residential seller, 99 percent of NAR members believe curb appeal is important in attracting a buyer (79 percent very important, 20 percent somewhat important). Ninety-seven percent believe curb appeal is important to a potential buyer (66 percent very important, 31 percent somewhat important).

NALP members report curb appeal is also very important to the majority of consumers when they hire a professional to tackle a project. According to a 2016 survey of NALP members, most new business is brought to landscape professionals because the homeowner does not have time to care for their lawn/landscaping (66 percent), the homeowner does not have the expertise to care for their lawn/landscaping (65 percent), to ensure the lawn/landscaping looks healthy to host a big life event (30 percent), or to ensure the lawn/landscaping looks healthy for the sale of a home (21 percent).



Landscape Maintenance

Project Description:

- Annual mulch application, mowing of 2,835 square feet of lawn, pruning of shrubs, and planting of approximately 60 perennials or annuals.

Seventy-four percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers complete a landscape maintenance program before attempting to sell, and 17 percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Cost Recovery:

- Landscape Professionals' cost estimate: \$3,000
- REALTORS®' estimated cost recovered: \$3,000
- Percent of value recovered from the project: 100 percent



Landscape Maintenance

Consumers' Viewpoint After Completing the Project:

- Top reason for doing the project: time for a change - 28 percent
- Second most common reason: to add features and improve livability - 24 percent
- Most important result: beauty and aesthetics - 39 percent
- Seventy-five percent said they have a greater desire to be home since completing the project, 59 percent have an increased sense of enjoyment when they are at home, and 63 percent feel a major sense of accomplishment when they think of the project.
- Joy Score: 9.5



Overall Landscape Upgrade

Project Description:

- Install a front walkway of natural flagstone three feet wide and 30 feet long. Add two stone planters six feet long and two feet wide. Install five flowering shrubs and one deciduous 15-foot-tall tree. Mulch with landscaping bark.

Twenty-seven percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers complete a landscape upgrade before attempting to sell, and 11 percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Cost Recovery:

- Landscape Professionals' cost estimate: \$6,000
- REALTORS®' estimated cost recovered: \$5,000
- Percent of value recovered from the project: 83 percent



Overall Landscape Upgrade

Consumers' Viewpoint After Completing the Project:

- Top reason for doing the project: just moved in and wanted to customize to personal tastes - 28 percent
- Second most common reason: to add features and improve livability - 27 percent
- Most important result: beauty and aesthetics - 35 percent
- Eighty-five percent said they have a greater desire to be home since completing the project, 78 percent have an increased sense of enjoyment when they are at home, and 79 percent feel a major sense of accomplishment when they think of the project.
- Joy Score: 9.6



Standard Lawn Care Service

Project Description:

- Perform standard lawn care service (to include six applications of fertilizer and weed control) on 2,835 square feet of lawn.

Fifty-five percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers perform a standard lawn care service before attempting to sell, and seven percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Cost Recovery:

- Landscape Professionals' cost estimate: \$375
- REALTORS®' estimated cost recovered: \$1,000
- Percent of value recovered from the project: 267 percent



2018 Remodeling Impact: Outdoor Features



Standard Lawn Care Service

Consumers' Viewpoint After Completing the Project:

- Top reason for doing the project: in need of upgrade - 34 percent
- Second most common reason: to promote lawn health and growth - 20 percent
- Most important result: beauty and aesthetics - 34 percent
- Sixty-eight percent said they have a greater desire to be home since completing the project, 49 percent have an increased sense of enjoyment when they are at home, and 54 percent feel a major sense of accomplishment when they think of the project.
- Joy Score: 9.0



2018 Remodeling Impact: Outdoor Features



New Patio

Project Description:

- Install a backyard 18-foot-by-16-foot concrete paver patio, dry set over compacted gravel, and sand base.

Four percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers add a new patio before attempting to sell, and two percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Cost Recovery:

- Landscape Professionals' cost estimate: \$7,200
- REALTORS®' estimated cost recovered: \$5,000
- Percent of value recovered from the project: 69 percent



New Patio

Consumers' Viewpoint After Completing the Project:

- Top reason for doing the project: to add features and improve livability - 57 percent
- Second most common reason: to upgrade worn-out surfaces, finishes, and materials - 16 percent
- Most important result: better function and livability - 44 percent
- Eighty-four percent said they have a greater desire to be home since completing the project, 83 percent have an increased sense of enjoyment when they are at home, and 77 percent feel a major sense of accomplishment when they think of the project.
- Joy Score: 9.7



New Wood Deck

Project Description:

- Build a 14-foot-deep-by-18-foot-wide wood deck attached to the house with a ledger. Decking, railing, and stair treads are constructed with cedar lumber. All cedar is finished with a clear deck sealer.

Nine percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers add a new wood deck before attempting to sell, and four percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Cost Recovery:

- Landscape Professionals' cost estimate: \$10,000
- REALTORS®' estimated cost recovered: \$8,000
- Percent of value recovered from the project: 80 percent



New Wood Deck

Consumers' Viewpoint After Completing the Project:

- Top reason for doing the project: to add features and improve livability - 48 percent
- Second most common reason: to upgrade worn-out surfaces, finishes, and materials - 37 percent
- Most important result: better functionality and livability - 49 percent
- Eighty-one percent said they have a greater desire to be home since completing the project, 74 percent have an increased sense of enjoyment when they are at home, and 77 percent feel a major sense of accomplishment when they think of the project.
- Joy Score: 9.8



Tree Care

Project Description:

- To include three applications of tree fertilizer, regular spraying, trimming and pruning, as well as the removal of one 30-foot-tall tree by professional.

Forty-six percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers provide tree care before attempting to sell, and three percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Cost Recovery:

- Landscape Professionals' cost estimate: \$2,000
- REALTORS®' estimated cost recovered: \$2,000
- Percent of value recovered from the project: 100 percent



Tree Care

Consumers' Viewpoint After Completing the Project:

- Top reason for doing the project: time for a change - 25 percent
- Second most common reason: to add features and improve livability - 24 percent
- Most important result: beauty and aesthetics - 31 percent
- Sixty-nine percent said they have a greater desire to be home since completing the project, 50 percent have an increased sense of enjoyment when they are at home, and 62 percent feel a major sense of accomplishment when they think of the project.
- Joy Score: 9.2



Landscape Lighting

Project Description:

- Installation of a standard 600w transformer and twenty LED lights.

Eleven percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers add landscape lighting before attempting to sell, and only one percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Cost Recovery:


- Landscape Professionals' cost estimate: \$5,000
- REALTORS®' estimated cost recovered: \$2,500
- Percent of value recovered from the project: 50 percent



Landscape Lighting

Consumers' Viewpoint After Completing the Project:

- Top reason for doing the project: to add features and improve livability - 51 percent
- Second most common reason: time for a change, upgrade worn-out surfaces, finishes, and materials, and just moved in and wanted to customize to personal tastes - all three with 11 percent
- Most important result: beauty and aesthetics - 40 percent
- Seventy-three percent said they have a greater desire to be home since completing the project, 60 percent have an increased sense of enjoyment when they are at home, and 59 percent feel a major sense of accomplishment when they think of the project.
- Joy Score: 9.6



2018 Remodeling Impact: Outdoor Features



Statement Landscape

Statement landscape enhancements include unique features such as serenity gardens, created spaces for hobbies like yoga, and activity areas for croquet or bocce ball.

Thirteen percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers adding a statement landscape feature before attempting to sell, and three percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.



Statement Landscape

Consumers' Viewpoint After Completing the Project:

- Top reason for doing the project: to add features and improve livability - 58 percent
- Second most common reason: just moved in and wanted to customize to personal tastes - 16 percent
- Most important result: beauty and aesthetics - 29 percent
- Eighty-seven percent said they have a greater desire to be home since completing the project, 72 percent have an increased sense of enjoyment when they are at home, and 82 percent feel a major sense of accomplishment when they think of the project.
- Joy Score: 9.7



Irrigation System Installation

Project Description:

- Installation and management of irrigation system for a lawn that is 2,835 square feet. No boring required.

Three percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers install an irrigation system before attempting to sell, and only one percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Cost Recovery:

- Landscape Professionals' cost estimate: \$3,500
- REALTORS®' estimated cost recovered: \$3,000
- Percent of value recovered from the project: 86 percent



Irrigation System Installation

Consumers' Viewpoint After Completing the Project:

- Top reason for doing the project: to add features and improve livability - 23 percent
- Second most common reason: to upgrade worn-out surfaces, finishes, and materials - 19 percent
- Most important result: better functionality and livability - 37 percent
- Forty-six percent said they have a greater desire to be home since completing the project, 52 percent have an increased sense of enjoyment when they are at home, and 69 percent feel a major sense of accomplishment when they think of the project.
- Joy Score: 10



Outdoor Kitchen

Project Description:

- Install one inset grill, stainless steel drawers, ice chest, sink, 60 square feet of concrete counter top, made from veneered masonry stone.

Only one percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers install an outdoor kitchen before attempting to sell, and one percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Cost Recovery:

- Landscape Professionals' cost estimate: \$14,000
- REALTORS®' estimated cost recovered: \$10,000
- Percent of value recovered from the project: 71 percent



Fire Feature

Project Description:

- Install dry-stacked natural stone kits, gas burner with 10-foot diameter flagstone patio.

Two percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers add an outdoor fire feature before attempting to sell, and less than one percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Cost Recovery:

- Landscape Professionals' cost estimate: \$6,000
- REALTORS®' estimated cost recovered: \$4,000
- Percent of value recovered from the project: 67 percent



Fire Feature

Consumers' Viewpoint After Completing the Project:

- Top reason for doing the project: to add features and improve livability - 57 percent
- Second most common reason: just moved in and wanted to customize to personal tastes - 17 percent
- Most important result: adding more individual personality to the home - 33 percent
- Eighty-three percent said they have a greater desire to be home since completing the project, 66 percent have an increased sense of enjoyment when they are at home, and 68 percent feel a major sense of accomplishment when they think of the project.
- Joy Score: 10

The background of the slide is a composite image. The top portion shows a close-up of a tiled roof with various colored tiles (red, grey, brown). The bottom portion shows a decorative water feature with multiple jets of water spraying upwards from a stone basin. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with a blurred image of orange and yellow flowers. Overlaid on the left side of the slide are two white circular graphic elements.

Water Feature

Consumers' Viewpoint After Completing the Project:

- Top reason for doing the project: to add features and improve livability - 63 percent
- Second most common reason: just moved in and wanted to customize to personal tastes - 17 percent
- Most important result: beauty and aesthetics - 38 percent
- Eighty-three percent said they have a greater desire to be home since completing the project, 79 percent have an increased sense of enjoyment when they are at home, and 81 percent feel a major sense of accomplishment when they think of the project.
- Joy Score: 9.8



New Pool

Project Description:

- Install an 18-foot-by-36-foot in-ground pool with gunite walls, 3-foot to 7-foot depth, standard filtration system. Include 3-foot-wide-by-4-inch thick concrete perimeter surround.

Less than one percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers add a new pool before attempting to sell, and two percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Cost Recovery:

- Landscape Professionals' cost estimate: \$57,500
- REALTORS®' estimated cost recovered: \$25,000
- Percent of value recovered from the project: 43 percent



New Pool

Consumers' Viewpoint After Completing the Project:

- Top reason for doing the project: to add features and improve livability - 44 percent
- Second most common reason: just moved in and wanted to customize to personal tastes - 26 percent
- Most important result: better functionality and livability - 46 percent
- Ninety-two percent said they have a greater desire to be home since completing the project, 83 percent have an increased sense of enjoyment when they are at home, and 79 percent feel a major sense of accomplishment when they think of the project.
- Joy Score: 8.8



Top Outdoor Commercial Features

REALTOR® rank of projects' appeal to buyers (highest to lowest)	REALTOR® rank of projects' likely added value to resale (highest to lowest)
1. Standard Lawn Care	1. Standard Lawn Care
2. Overall Landscape Upgrade	2. Overall Landscape Upgrade
3. Hardscaping Upgrade	3. Landscape Management Services
4. Landscape Management Services	4. Hardscaping Upgrade
5. Outdoor Patio and Seating Area	5. Outdoor Patio and Seating Area
6. Landscape Lighting	6. Landscape Lighting
7. Irrigation System Installation	7. Sustainable Landscape Feature
8. Sustainable Landscape Feature	8. Interiorscaping
9. Interiorscaping	9. Irrigation System Installation
10. Holiday Lighting and Décor	10. Holiday Lighting and Décor



Commercial Properties

Curb appeal plays a significant role in outdoor landscaping for commercial property. When working with commercial sellers, 81 percent of NAR members believe curb appeal is important in attracting a buyer (36 percent very important, 45 percent somewhat important). Forty-three percent of NAR members have suggested improving the curb appeal before listing the commercial property for sale.

According to NALP members, the top three most requested projects for commercial property include landscape management services, standard lawn care services, and an overall landscape upgrade, and three fourths of members are likely to recommend these services to commercial property owners. Projects that NALP members have seen an increase in requests to complete in the last year also include an overall landscape upgrade and landscape management services. For NALP members servicing commercial properties, the primary selling offer includes experience and references followed by the best possible solution for the property.

The primary commercial properties NALP members report serving are: office buildings/services offices (79 percent), industrial property such as offices/warehouses, garages, and distribution centers (59 percent), and multifamily structures such as apartment and multifamily housing buildings (59 percent). Additional types of commercial property include retail, healthcare, and industrial.



Standard Lawn Care

Thirty-nine percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers perform a standard lawn care service before attempting to sell, and six percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Landscape Professionals' cost estimate:

- Weed application by square foot - \$3.00
- Fertilizer application by square foot - \$4.00



Overall Landscape Upgrade

Twenty-six percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers complete a landscape upgrade before attempting to sell, and six percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Landscape Professionals' cost estimate:

- By square foot - \$9.00



2018 Remodeling Impact: Outdoor Features



Landscape Management Services

Twenty-seven percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers have a landscape management service before attempting to sell, and five percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Landscape Professionals' cost estimate:

- Property Management by square foot - \$7.50



2018 Remodeling Impact: Outdoor Features



Hardscaping Upgrade

Sixteen percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers upgrade the hardscape before attempting to sell, and three percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Landscape Professionals' cost estimate:

- Concrete by square foot - \$7.00
- Pavers by square foot - \$18.00
- Stone by square foot - \$22.00
- Wood Decking by square foot - \$18.00

2018 Remodeling Impact: Outdoor Features



Outdoor Patio and Seating Area

Nine percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers add an outdoor patio and seating area before attempting to sell, and three percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Landscape Professionals' cost estimate:

- Concrete by square foot - \$10.00
- Pavers by square foot - \$20.00
- Stone by square foot - \$22.00
- Wood Decking by square foot - \$19.50



2018 Remodeling Impact: Outdoor Features

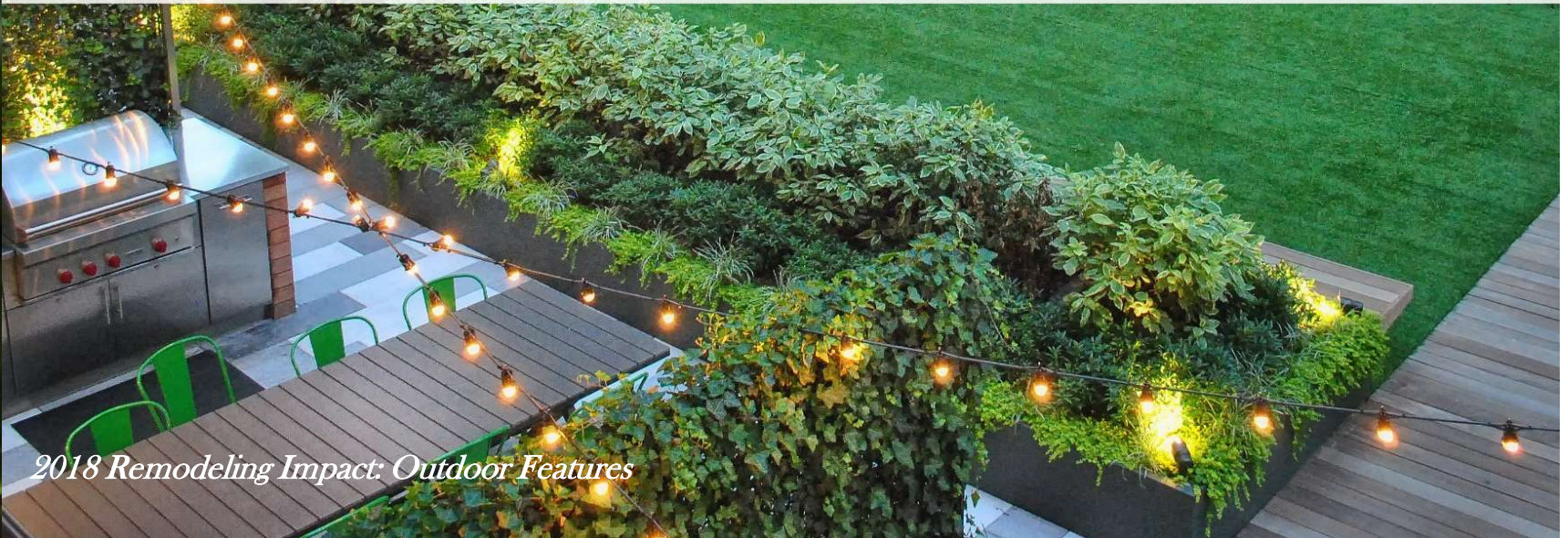


Landscape Lighting

Sixteen percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers add landscape lighting before attempting to sell, and two percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Landscape Professionals' cost estimate:

- \$7,500 for complete project



2018 Remodeling Impact: Outdoor Features



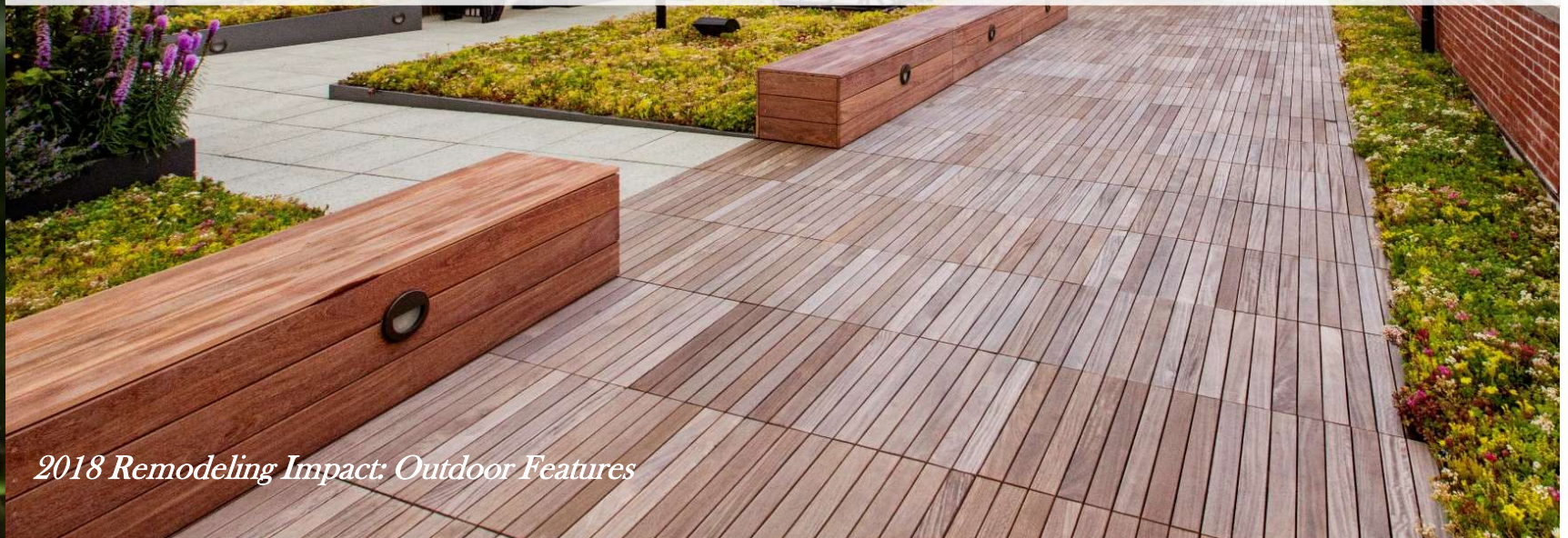
Sustainable Landscape Feature

Nine percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers add a sustainable landscape feature, such as a green roof, before attempting to sell, and only one percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Landscape Professionals' cost estimate:

- Green Roof Installation: \$10,000 for complete project*

*(*costs may vary depending on size and scope of the project)*



2018 Remodeling Impact: Outdoor Features



Interiorscaping

Fourteen percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers add interiorscaping before attempting to sell, and two percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Landscape Professionals' cost estimate:

- Green Wall Installation by square foot - \$115.00–175.00
- Interior Moss Wall by square foot - \$95.00
- Green Plant Maintenance by square foot - \$6.00



2018 Remodeling Impact: Outdoor Features



Irrigation System Installation

Seven percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers install an irrigation system before attempting to sell, and less than one percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Landscape Professionals' cost estimate:

- \$8,500 for complete project



Holiday Lighting and Décor

Four percent of REALTORS® have suggested sellers add holiday lighting and décor before attempting to sell, and less than one percent said the project most recently sealed a deal for them, resulting in a closed transaction.

Landscape Professionals' cost estimate:

- Interior Lobby Décor: \$5,000 for complete project



2018 Remodeling Impact: Outdoor Features



The National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) represents an industry that employs nearly 1 million landscape, lawn care, irrigation, and tree care professionals who create and maintain healthy green spaces that benefit families, communities, and the environment. Landscape professionals have a passion for bringing the best outdoors where Americans live, work and play.

Homeowners and property managers can learn more about lawn care, landscaping, sustainability and the latest trends in bringing residential and commercial spaces to life at www.LoveYourLandscape.org.

Landscape professionals who seek information on the best ideas and practices in the landscape industry and collaboration that allows companies to serve their clients with the most current knowledge and creativity should visit www.LandscapeProfessionals.org. NALP is focused on professionalism and establishing the highest standards for the industry. The association administers the Landscape Industry Certified designation which is a benchmark for educational achievement for lawn care and landscape professionals.



The National Association of REALTORS®, “The Voice for Real Estate,” is America’s largest trade association, representing 1.3 million members, including NAR’s institutes, societies and councils, involved in all aspects of the real estate industry. NAR membership includes brokers, salespeople, property managers, appraisers, counselors and others engaged in both residential and commercial real estate.

The term REALTOR® is a registered collective membership mark that identifies a real estate professional who is a member of the National Association of REALTORS® and subscribes to its strict Code of Ethics.

Working for America’s property owners, the National Association provides a facility for professional development, research and exchange of information among its members and to the public and government for the purpose of preserving the free enterprise system and the right to own real property.

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

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