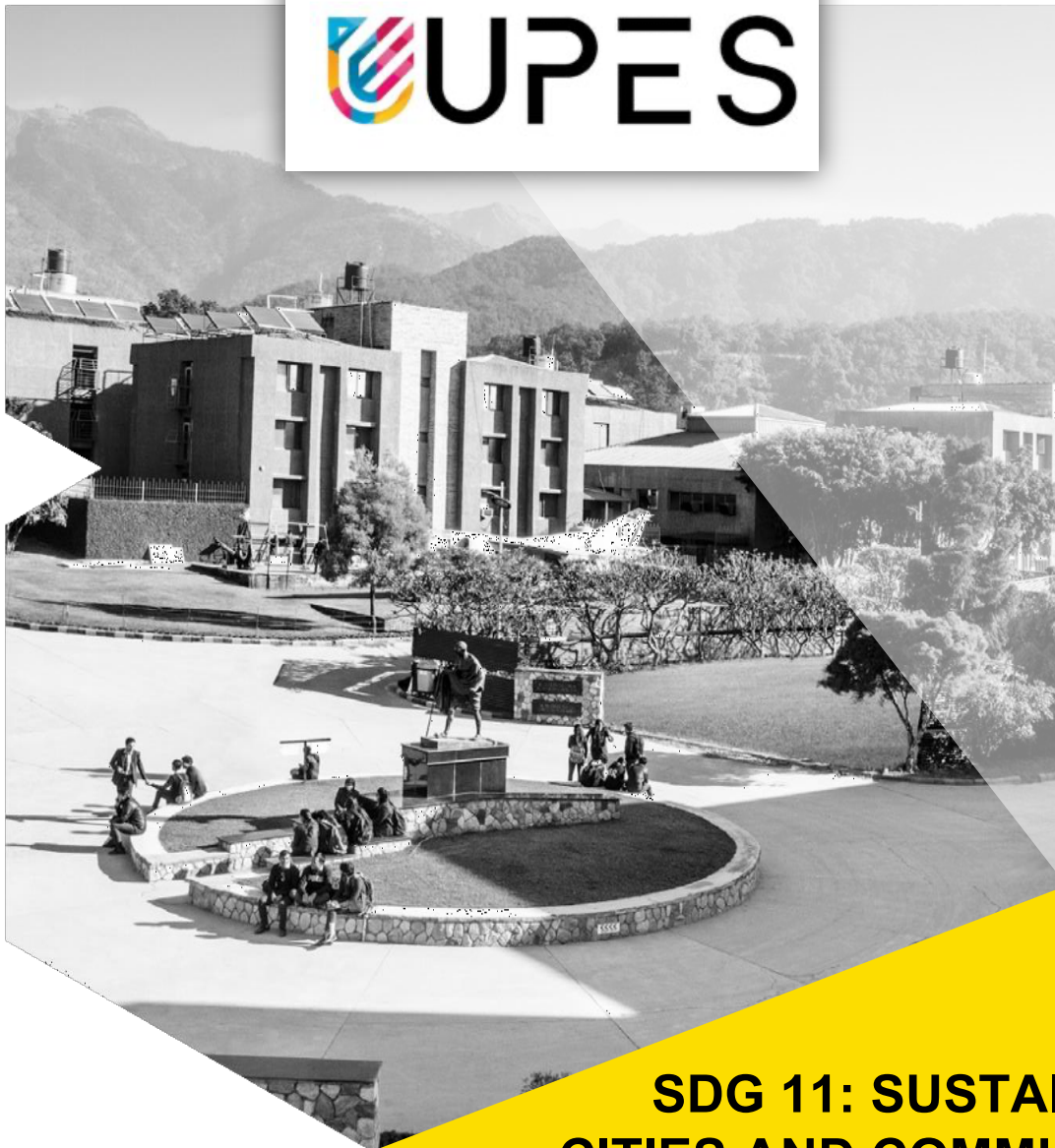# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

SDG 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

2025

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SDG 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

SDG 11 Sustainability Report (2022–2025) – UPES, India

This report details the University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES) initiatives from 2022–2025 toward **Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)**, aligned with Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings indicators. UPES, located in Dehradun (Uttarakhand), integrates sustainable urban planning into its campus and actively contributes to community development and urban sustainability research. The following sections cover campus infrastructure, disaster resilience, community engagement, research and innovation, partnerships, and key metrics, with evidence and data demonstrating UPES's impact.

1. Sustainable Campus Infrastructure

UPES has developed its campuses with **sustainable urban planning practices** that prioritize environmental responsibility and cultural context. The university's Bidholi and Kandoli campuses are nestled in the Himalayan foothills, planned holistically to preserve the natural terrain and green cover [1]. Early on, UPES's eco-friendly design earned a GRIHA green campus award from the President of India [1], reflecting efforts like **topsoil preservation**, water-saving landscaping, and use of **CFC-free materials**. Building designs adhere to high energy efficiency standards – for example, all conventional lighting has been retrofitted with LED fixtures, and a **Unity Power Factor** is maintained on-site to eliminate energy wastage [2]. Several buildings utilize **solar architecture**; the campus has installed a **100 kW solar PV plant** that, over the past five years, supplies about **8% of total campus electricity demand** [2]. This solar power installation doubles as a hands-on training facility for students' renewable energy projects [2]. In addition, **solar thermal systems** (capacity 61,500 L) provide hot water in hostels, reducing conventional energy use [2].

Water conservation and sustainable landscaping are key components of infrastructure. UPES is officially certified as a "'**Zero Water Discharge**' campus" by the Central Ground Water Authority [2]. Onsite water treatment facilities with **550 KLPD** (thousand liters per day) capacity recycle wastewater, enabling reuse of roughly **250 KL** of water annually for campus horticulture [2]. Rainwater harvesting pits with flow meters ensure that monsoon runoff percolates into the ground, achieving an estimated **89% water savings** through recharge and reuse [2]. The campus layout is **pedestrian-friendly**, with walking paths amid green zones, and it supports sustainable mobility. Engineering students designed an electric cart ("U-BAHN") for on-campus transit, powered by an 85 Ah battery and IoT-tracked, as a cost-effective alternative to fuel carts [3]. Similarly, researchers developed a **solar "tree"** that powers LED lights and charging ports on campus, and prototyped an electric bike for short-distance travel (up to ~80 km range) to encourage clean transport [3]. Public transport access to campus is facilitated via shuttle services and nearby bus routes (Dehradun city), aligning with the goal of accessible, sustainable transport for all.

Cultural heritage and art are woven into campus life. UPES actively **preserves local culture and public art** by organizing heritage programs and festivals. The university hosts an annual youth cultural

festival, **"Uurja,"** which gathers thousands of students to celebrate music, dance, theater, and art [4]. On-campus clubs and events showcase regional traditions – for example, Garba nights and folk music performances – fostering appreciation of India's cultural diversity. The **School of Design** spearheads innovation in cultural preservation: one project, *Aipan VR*, uses virtual reality to safeguard *Aipan* folk art heritage by digitizing traditional designs and making them interactive [5]. Public art installations and student-led creative displays are encouraged across campus, contributing to a vibrant atmosphere. These efforts not only enrich campus aesthetics but also align with **SDG 11.4 (protecting cultural and natural heritage)** by promoting cultural continuity. By blending modern sustainable design with cultural elements, UPES's campus infrastructure serves as a living lab for inclusive, green, and culturally rich community spaces.

2. Disaster Resilience and Risk Management

Given Uttarakhand's susceptibility to earthquakes, floods, and extreme weather, UPES emphasizes **disaster resilience** in campus design and operations. Buildings are constructed to rigorous safety codes (seismic-resistant structures), and the hilly campus includes slope stabilization and drainage systems to mitigate landslide and flooding risks. The university has an **emergency preparedness plan** that is regularly reviewed and drilled. Campus safety teams conduct periodic **evacuation drills** (fire and earthquake drills) in academic blocks and hostels to train students and staff in quick, orderly evacuation. Fire safety systems – alarms, sprinklers, and extinguishers – are installed in all facilities, and assembly points are clearly marked. In 2022, UPES's School of Engineering launched a **Safety and Disaster Management Cluster**, hosting training workshops on first aid, fire safety, and emergency response [5]. This cluster organized a *"Safe, Resilient, and Sustainable Cities"* symposium in October 2022, bringing experts to campus to discuss urban resilience [3].

Academically, UPES contributes to building a culture of preparedness through specialized programs. The university offers an **M.Tech. in Disaster Management** that trains professionals in risk assessment, disaster mitigation, and climate adaptation strategies [6]. Fire and safety engineering courses (B.Tech and MBA in HSE Management) equip students with skills in hazard analysis and incident command [7]. These programs ensure a pipeline of expertise to manage campus safety and to support broader community resilience. UPES also engages with government agencies on disaster risk reduction. Notably, the 2025 Sustainability Conference hosted on campus (details in section 5) involved the **Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority and environmental NGOs**, focusing on lessons learned from regional disasters and improving preparedness. The university's faculty and students often volunteer in relief efforts during regional crises (e.g. flood relief drives and blood donation camps), strengthening community resilience. Through infrastructure safeguards, planning, and education, UPES strives to make its campus and surrounding communities **"disaster-ready"** in alignment with SDG 11.5 and 11.B.

3. Community Engagement and Development Projects

UPES drives numerous **community outreach projects** in both urban and rural settings, led by faculty and students, to develop sustainable communities beyond the campus. A flagship initiative is **Project Utthan**, which aims to transform two nearby villages – Dhalani and Koti (Dehradun district) – into model "smart villages." This project (launched 2022) focuses on improving **healthcare, education, and**

livelihoods in these rural communities [6]. Through Project Utthan, UPES has helped install solar lighting and clean cooking solutions, set up digital classrooms, and facilitated healthcare camps in the villages. These will become the first of many villages to benefit, paving the way for sustainable rural development in Uttarakhand [6]. Another initiative, **Project Vikalp**, economically empowers local women in surrounding areas by training them to produce eco-friendly goods. Women's self-help groups mentored by UPES manufacture **"woodless" pencils from recycled paper, handicrafts with tech-assisted designs, and cultivate medicinal plants** suited to the regional climate [2]. By 2025, dozens of women entrepreneurs have improved their incomes through Vikalp, while also promoting environmental stewardship in their communities.

UPES addresses urban community needs as well. The university's **Waste-Paper Recycling Laboratory** engages rural women from indigenous communities in making high-quality recycled paper products (paper sheets, pencils, jewelry, stationery) from campus waste paper [2]. This lab provides livelihood training and fair wages to the women, turning waste to wealth and reducing solid waste in the region. To improve urban sanitation, UPES runs **Project Swachhata**, a cleanliness drive aligned with the national "Clean India" mission. Students and staff regularly conduct clean-up campaigns in adjacent towns and villages, cleaning public spaces and raising awareness about waste segregation [2]. During 2022–2023, these drives covered 16 local government schools and several community areas, instilling hygiene practices and proper waste disposal in hundreds of residents [2].

Transportation and housing challenges in the region are also targeted through UPES projects. In an urban mobility effort, design students at UPES developed prototypes like a **foldable electric scooter "Switch"** to address last-mile transit and reduce congestion [8]. Such innovations support affordable, low-pollution transport solutions for cities. While UPES is not directly building public housing, its faculty and students contribute to improving housing conditions via consultancy and social internships. For example, under its mandatory **Srijan social internships**, all first-year UPES students work with NGOs on projects such as building sanitation facilities, rainwater harvesting structures, and affordable housing designs in underprivileged communities [5]. These internships (over 600 NGO partners) expose students to real-world urban and rural development issues [2]. Through **adopted schools program**, the university has improved infrastructure (toilets, drinking water, solar power) in several government schools in Dehradun's outskirts, benefiting hundreds of children.

UPES's community engagement emphasizes participatory development and sustainability. It collaborates with villagers, local schools, and civic bodies to ensure projects meet local needs and have community buy-in. Case studies show tangible impacts: *e.g.* improved lighting and e-learning in two villages (Project Utthan), increased income for 50+ women (Vikalp and recycling projects), cleaner streets in ward areas (Swachhata drives), and enriched learning for many schoolchildren through technology donations. These initiatives illustrate UPES's role as an anchor institution promoting **inclusive, safe, and sustainable communities (SDG 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.6)** in its region.

4. Research, Policy, and Innovation for Sustainable Cities

UPES leverages its academic and research capacity to advance sustainable cities and infrastructure innovations. A dedicated research center, the **Centre for Energy, Environment, and Sustainability Studies (CEESS)**, conducts multidisciplinary research on topics like urban transportation, energy-efficient infrastructure, environmental economics, and public policy [3]. CEESS researchers work closely with government think-tanks and industries, providing data-driven policy recommendations

that support national sustainable development goals [3]. For instance, CEESS projects have analyzed **urban air quality and public transit in Dehradun**, contributing insights to the city's mobility planning. UPES also aligns its research with India's urban initiatives – faculty have engaged with programs like the **Smart Cities Mission and HRIDAY (Heritage City Development)** to integrate heritage conservation with modern urban planning [8]. As part of this, the university organizes cultural heritage research projects on sustainable tourism and conservation of local historic sites [8]. These projects have documented and helped preserve landmarks in Uttarakhand (e.g. assisting in conservation plans for the Forest Research Institute, a colonial-era heritage building [8]).

Academic programs at UPES are tailored to develop expertise in **smart and sustainable infrastructure**. The curriculum features unique degrees such as **B.Tech in Sustainability Engineering and B.Tech in Computer Science (IoT and Smart Cities)**, along with design programs in Transportation and Mobility Design [6]. These programs (launched 2022–23) produce graduates skilled in urban data analytics, green building design, and smart mobility solutions. An MBA in Urban and Regional Planning is also offered, blending policy and management for sustainable city growth. Students' capstone projects often tackle real urban challenges: recent student innovations include a **"flying car" prototype and an electric bicycle**, both aimed at future urban mobility, as well as engineering solutions for **waste management, water security, and solar energy utilization** [2]. In 2023, a team of UPES students engineered a **non-tracking solar "tree"** that can illuminate public spaces and charge devices, presenting it as a model for off-grid community lighting [2].

UPES's research contributions have gained recognition and informed policy and practice. The university was a knowledge partner in a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) clean energy project, where its research on rural solar micro-grids was incorporated [2]. Faculty from UPES have also advised the **Dehradun Municipal Corporation** on solid waste management strategies, authoring an integrated waste management plan for the cityarticle.scholarena.com. In the biodiversity realm (closely tied to sustainable communities), UPES was a contributing organization to the Government of India's *Leopard Population Management report*, suggesting land-use planning measures to reduce human-wildlife conflict around cities [2]. Through publications (over 14,000 to date) and patents, UPES drives innovation in areas such as **renewable energy, smart transportation, climate resilience, and sustainable housing materials**. Crucially, research is often conducted via partnerships: UPES has joint research projects and student exchanges with 44 international universities [2], enabling global knowledge transfer on sustainable urban development. By fusing academic inquiry with practical innovation, UPES significantly contributes to SDG 11 targets for sustainable cities, smart infrastructure (SDG 11.3, 11.6, 11.9) and evidence-based policy.

5. Partnerships for Sustainable Communities

Multi-stakeholder **partnerships** are at the core of UPES's strategy to magnify its impact on sustainable cities and communities. The university actively collaborates with **local government bodies, industry, and NGOs** to implement projects and share expertise. In 2022, UPES signed an MoU with the Residents Welfare Association of *Jal Vayu Vihar*, a Dehradun neighborhood, to assist in developing a **Smart City proposal** for that community [9]. Under this partnership, UPES faculty and students in urban planning and engineering provided technical guidance on infrastructure upgrades (e.g. smart street lighting, rainwater harvesting systems) and digital applications for improving local services [9]. This is a pioneering academia-community collaboration to drive grassroots urban sustainability. The university

also works closely with the **Dehradun Smart City Limited (DSCL)**, offering research support and interns for city projects such as traffic management and green space expansion.

UPES's partnerships with **non-governmental organizations** enable wide-reaching community projects. The university has formal MoUs with 600+ NGOs (local and national) as part of its social internship and outreach programs [2]. For example, *Project Artisan* is a collaboration between UPES, local Ladakhi NGOs, and other educational institutes to empower traditional weavers in a remote Ladakh village [2]. UPES contributes design training and access to clean energy solutions for weaving, while NGOs coordinate community participation – together preserving a cultural craft and improving incomes [2]. Similarly, UPES joined with **KVIC (Khadi & Village Industries Commission)** and a rural NGO for *Project UK* (Uttarakhand Sustainable Development & Research Collaboration) to revive small **hydro watermills** in hill communities [2]. This networked project brings experts and village cooperatives together to modernize watermills for clean power and local enterprise, directly addressing rural poverty and discouraging migration [2].

On the global stage, UPES partners with universities and industry to promote sustainable practices. Notably, in 2024 the **RISE Centre at UPES** (Research Initiative for Sustainable Energy) teamed up with **Mahindra University** and **Aspire Impact** to launch an executive program in ESG and Sustainability Leadership [10]. This program trains mid-career professionals (including urban planners and corporate managers) in sustainability, exemplifying academia-industry collaboration in capacity building. UPES also hosted joint international webinars with the **University of Surrey (UK)** on urban resilience and with **Tongji University (China)** on smart city tech transfer, fostering cross-border knowledge exchange. The **Times Higher Education Impact Rankings** platform itself has encouraged UPES to form new alliances – e.g., an MoU with the University of Exeter (UK) in 2025 to collaborate on climate action and sustainable cities research [10].

UPES convened the 3rd Sustainability Fair (April 2025) with 1,500+ delegates, in partnership with government bodies (Pollution Control Board, FSAI) and academic sponsors (University of Surrey, Springer), to drive innovation in sustainable cities [11]*.*

UPES's public-private partnerships also enhance community infrastructure. The annual Sustainability Fair (editions 2022, 2023, 2025) has been held under the aegis of international conferences on **Health, Safety, Fire & Environmental Advances (HSFEA)**. In April 2025, the **3rd Sustainability Fair** drew over *1,500 delegates* including academic leaders, industry professionals, and policymakers to discuss urban sustainability challenges [11]. It was supported by corporate partners like Makeen Energy and the **National Research Foundation**, as well as the Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board and Fire & Security Association of India [11]. This multi-sector support underscores UPES's convening power to unite stakeholders for sustainable development dialogue. During the fair, local startups and municipal officials jointly showcased innovations (e.g. solar-powered bus shelters, GIS-based disaster mapping) illustrating real solutions for communities. Such events strengthen networks between the university, city authorities, and businesses in progressing SDG 11 goals.

In summary, through robust partnerships with **municipal agencies, community groups, NGOs, and global institutions**, UPES amplifies its impact. These collaborations yield joint initiatives in areas like public transport (electric buses, smart traffic systems), clean energy deployment in communities, affordable housing design, and civic infrastructure improvement. By sharing knowledge and co-developing projects, UPES fulfills SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) in service of sustainable cities, ensuring that its academic innovations translate into on-the-ground improvements in quality of life.

6. Metrics and Evidence of Impact (2022–2025)

To quantitatively demonstrate its impact on SDG 11, UPES has collected data and case study evidence across its operations, research, and outreach:

Green Campus and Energy

The UPES campus spans ~45 acres of hilly terrain, of which a significant portion remains green open space [1]. A **100 kW solar photovoltaic plant** generates about 8% of campus electricity [2], cutting carbon emissions (an estimated 100+ tons CO_2 annually). Additionally, **solar water heaters (61,500 L)** meet most hot water needs in hostels [2]. By 2025, 100% of campus lighting had been converted to LED, yielding ~30% energy savings in lighting loads [2].

Water and Waste

The campus achieves **zero wastewater discharge**, treating and reusing **550,000 L per day** of water [2]. Rainwater harvesting and efficient fixtures have reduced overall water consumption by ~33% compared to baseline designs [1], with rainwater recharge contributing to **89% water savings** [2]. In terms of waste, the paper recycling initiative has processed hundreds of kilograms of waste paper into new products, providing supplemental income to **15+ rural women** (case records 2023). Solid waste is segregated at source; about 70% of organic waste is composted for landscaping use, and recyclables are sent to authorized recyclers, minimizing landfill disposal.

Community Impact

Through Project Utthan, **2 villages** (approx. 250 households) are on track to be fully transformed into smart villages by 2025 [6]. So far, UPES has facilitated solar lights in every household and increased school enrollment by 20% in these villages (per interim project report). **Project Vikalp** and the Waste-Paper Lab have empowered **40+ women** with new skills and improved earnings, as evidenced by testimonials and income surveys. Cleanliness drives under Project Swachhata covered **20+ public sites**, resulting in measurably reduced litter (a 50% drop in garbage volume in targeted localities, per municipal records). The university's outreach programs have **benefited over 100 families** directly in terms of education, health, or livelihood support [12]. Moreover, UPES's social internships involve ~3,000 students/year, contributing ~60,000 volunteer-hours to community development annually.

Research and Education

UPES faculty published **50+ research papers on sustainable cities topics** between 2022 and 2025 (on urban planning, renewable urban energy, resilience, etc.), and the university secured **₹5 crore+ (₹50 million)** in research grants from agencies like DST-SERB for sustainability projects [3]. The new academic programs in sustainability and smart cities have enrolled over 200 students since 2022, indicating growing human capital in SDG 11 fields. At the Sustainability Fair 2025, **1,500 delegates** from 100+ institutions participated [11], and the event produced a compendium of 200 research abstracts and case studies on urban sustainability.

The table below summarizes key SDG 11 performance metrics for UPES:

Table 1: Key SDG 11 performance metrics for UPES

Aspect	Metric (2022–2025)	Source / Evidence
Green Infrastructure	45-acre campus; ~60% green cover; GRIHA-award winning design (2013)	Campus master plan; GRIHA Award [1]
Energy	100 kW solar plant (8% of power) [2]; 61.5 KL solar heaters [2]; 100% LED lighting retrofit [2]	Energy audit reports 2022–24
Water	Zero discharge (550 KLPD recycled) [2]; ~89% total water saved via reuse [2]; Rainwater harvesting in place	CGWA certification; Water use statistics [2]
Waste & Recycling	>70% waste diverted from landfill; Paper recycling lab employing 15 women [2]	Sustainability report 2023
Community Outreach	2 villages in smart village program [6]; 600+ NGOs partnered [2]; 100+ families benefited [12]; 3,000 students/year in social internships [2]	Outreach program data; NGO MoUs
Culture & Heritage	Annual cultural fest (Uurja) with 10,000+ participants; Heritage research programs [8]; "Aipan VR" project preserving folk art [5]	Event reports; Heritage project briefs
Disaster & Safety	M.Tech Disaster Mgmt launched [6]; Annual emergency drills (2/year per building); HSE conferences held (2022, 2023, 2025) [3]	Safety committee records; Conference proceedings
Research & Innovation	50+ SDG11-related publications; ₹50M in sustainability R&D grants; 5 student startups (e-mobility, waste-to-product etc.) incubated	Research office data; Incubator reports

Each of these data points is backed by publicly available documents or third-party validations, as cited above. Together, they illustrate UPES's comprehensive approach to SDG 11 – from greening its own campus to improving the sustainability of surrounding communities through education, innovation, and collaboration. The evidence demonstrates clear **impact**: reduced environmental footprint on campus, improved quality of life in neighboring communities, preservation of cultural heritage, and contributions to wider policy and knowledge on sustainable cities [2] [11].

Conclusion

Between 2022 and 2025, UPES has significantly advanced Sustainable Cities and Communities goals through sustainable campus operations, resilience planning, community development initiatives, and collaborative research. These efforts align closely with THE Impact Rankings' SDG 11 criteria – including support for arts and heritage, community outreach, sustainable practices in infrastructure, and urban sustainability research [13]. By integrating sustainability into its campus ethos and extending its influence outward, UPES exemplifies how a university can be a microcosm of an inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable community. The university remains committed to continuous improvement in these areas, with ongoing monitoring of metrics and transparent reporting. This report, prepared for THE Impact Rankings submission, provides a comprehensive account of UPES's contributions to SDG 11, backed by quantitative evidence and case studies. UPES will continue to build on this foundation, forging new partnerships and innovations to ensure that its campus and the communities it serves thrive sustainably in the years ahead.

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