

Brief - Conducting Surveys

The questionnaire is an invitation to all members of the association to voice their opinions and preferences regarding how the community association has evolved and continues to grow. Your association wants to garner a response from the members of the community as this will help the current and future Board in determining short and long term goals and action plans.

Assure the member that his/her individual response will be kept strictly confidential. No name need be required on the questionnaire. Input should generally be used collectively to report community needs and preferences. A summary of the results should be tabulated and distributed to all the members.

In preparation, try to limit the length of the questionnaire so the time spent on it will not overwhelm the average homeowner. Questions should be easy to understand and may often have appropriate responses included so that the person who is responding will only need to circle an answer. (For example, a response to a question by selecting 1-5, with 5 being most favorable.)

Leave an area for individual member input, i.e., the all-important: Is there additional information you would like your association to be aware of?

If the association is interested in tabulating the results into specific demographics, include questions related to gender, age, number of years in the association, etc.

Always highlight the important due date for the questionnaire. This helps create a sense of urgency. Where possible, include a postage paid envelope or obtain a USPO Return Reply permit for facilitating maximum return of the questionnaire.

Questions to Ask

The following are ideas for questionnaires, though not all questions should be addressed in a single questionnaire.

1. How many of your neighbors do you know?
2. How strong is the sense of community in this neighborhood?
3. How often do you participate in activities in this neighborhood?
4. If you do not participate in activities in this neighborhood, why not?
5. What types of activities would you participate in if they were available in this neighborhood?
6. How often do you visit the public parks in this neighborhood?
7. Are you satisfied with the parks in this neighborhood, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with them, or dissatisfied with them?
8. How well are the streets in this neighborhood maintained?
9. Overall, how safe do you feel in this neighborhood?
10. Overall, how clean is this neighborhood?

11. Does this neighborhood have too many, too few, or about the right number of public parks?
12. Does this neighborhood have too many, too few, or about the right number of restaurants?
13. How proud are you to live in this neighborhood?
14. What do you like most about this neighborhood?
15. What do you like the least about this neighborhood?
16. What changes would most improve this neighborhood?
17. How promising is the future of this neighborhood?
18. Overall, are you satisfied with your experience living in this neighborhood, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with it, or dissatisfied with it?
19. Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?

A template for this survey can be found at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/neighborhood-feedback-survey-template/>.

SurveyMonkey is an excellent tool to conduct these types of surveys if you have the resident's email addresses.

Community Impressions

Solicit opinions on what impressions the members have of their community. For instance, ask what they like best or least about living in the community association, such as its reputation, proximity to services, being an age restricted community, amenities such as golf course, recreation center, walking trails, etc.

Safety

Members who use the amenities in the association are the best people to ask about important safety issues that may exist in the association. How frequently and what kind of traffic violations do they observe (e.g., ignoring stop signs, excessive speeding)? What safety measures need to be implemented on association property (signage, repairs, ADA compliance, and lighting)? If the association is an age-restricted community, safety is a high concern for these members.

Appearance and Landscaping

Since a major portion of the association funds are spent on common area appearance, this area of the questionnaire is probably where the association needs to obtain the most useful information. It is advisable to segregate this section into categories, so that the information can be tabulated appropriately. Some suggestions include: landscaping in public areas, neighbor's landscaping, community sidewalks, entry gate, community roads, community street lighting, community traffic signs, water drainage system, block walls, and fencing.

Architectural Review Process

Have you gone through the approval process as a member of the association for building, adding structures, or changing landscaping with the Architectural Review Committee

(ARC)? Do you think the architectural review process is necessary? Do you think the architectural review is effective? Members always have ideas for changes to the Design Guidelines and this would be a great place to seek that input.

Social and Community Issues

In order to create a better sense of community, seek out responses about how involved the members are in community meetings and events. Have you attended any Annual Meeting? Have you ever served on a committee? Have you ever voiced a concern to the Board? If yes, how did you voice your concern? Was the Board responsive to your need? Would you like to serve on a committee? Are you a regular reader of the newsletter? Are you satisfied with the newsletter? What changes would you like to see made to the newsletter? Are there any activities you would like to see the community association sponsor? What activities do you participate in? Do you use e-mail?

Community Demographics

While not always necessary, it can be important to have a certain feel for the background of the respondents. In which area of the association do you reside? Are you a full-time or part-time resident of the community? How many months per year do you reside in your home? How long have you been a homeowner in your association? Other information: gender, age, educational background, retired, occupation, marital status.

Future Vision

Thinking about the future, how should your association evolve over the next 510 years? This is a relevant point as association's age and trends change in how the members see their relationship with their association.

Association questionnaires are an important communication tool for the board of directors and the management company. Has this type of survey ever been completed in the past? Once the information has been tabulated, the board should distribute the results to the members and create an action plan to deal with the priority issues. After all, information becomes knowledge!