

Foundation for Community Association Research Tracking Poll

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I. Methodology and Sample Characteristics

Methodology

Zogby International was commissioned by the Foundation for Community Associations to conduct a telephone survey of National Homeowners or Condominium Association Members.

The target sample is 709 interviews with approximately 37 questions asked from 11/5/07 to 11/8/07. Samples are randomly drawn from telephone CDs of national listed sample. Zogby International surveys employ sampling strategies in which selection probabilities are proportional to population size within area codes and exchanges. Up to are made to reach a sampled phone number.

Cooperation rates are calculated using one of AAPOR's approved methodologies¹ and are comparable to other professional public-opinion surveys conducted using similar sampling strategies.² Weighting by *age, race and gender* is used to adjust for non-response. Margin of error is +/- 3.8 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

Sample Characteristics	Frequency	Valid Percent*
Sample size	709	100
East	169	24
South	222	31
Central/Great Lakes	190	27
West	128	18
Own	661	93
Rent	48	7
18-29	14	2
30-49	257	37
50-64	271	39
65+	153	22
18-24	6	1
25-34	43	6

¹ See COOP4 (p.38) in *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates of Surveys*. The American Association for Public Opinion Research, (2000).

² *Cooperation Tracking Study: April 2003 Update*, Jane M. Sheppard and Shelly Haas. The Council for Marketing & Opinion Research (CMOR). Cincinnati, Ohio (2003).

Sample Characteristics (Continued)	Frequency	Valid Percent*
35-54	300	43
55-69	230	33
70+	115	17
Did not answer age	15	--
Less than high school	12	2
High school graduate	86	12
Some college	128	18
College graduate	296	42
Post graduate	186	26
Did not answer education	2	--
White	625	89
Hispanic	14	2
African American	35	5
Asian/Pacific	21	3
Other/mixed	7	1
Did not answer race	7	--
Live in large city	237	33
Live in small city	160	23
Live in suburbs	236	33
Live in rural area	75	11
Did not answer locale	1	--
Parent of child under 17	222	31
Not parent of child under 17	487	69
Married	503	71
Single, never married	85	12
Divorced/widowed/separated	110	16
Together	8	1
Did not answer marital status	2	--
One in household	150	21
Two	298	42
Three	90	13
Four	100	14
Five	46	7
More than six	21	3
Did not answer # in household	4	--
Less than \$15,000	20	3
\$15,000-\$24,999	25	4
\$25,000-\$34,999	35	6

Sample Characteristics (Continued)	Frequency	Valid Percent*
\$35,000-\$49,999	48	8
\$50,000-\$74,999	130	22
\$75,000 or more	340	57
Did not answer income	111	--
Male	355	50
Female	354	50

* Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100.

II. Executive Summary

For the most part, the responses to this round of polling were very similar to the survey conducted in 2005, with a few noted exceptions.

While there was a huge jump from a quarter to over a third who have no complaints about living in a community association, the major differences seem to fall within the scope of how residents view and interact with the community association's management.

One third say they have contact with their community association board five or more times a year, and just under half believe the members of that elected group strive to serve the best interests of the community as a whole, which is down eight and seven percentage points respectively from 2005.

Furthermore, while seven in ten have had direct interaction with their community manager, which is up 20 percentage points from the previous survey, the number of those who would label that interaction positive dropped 11 percentage points, and the amount of people who say their manager provides value and support also fell.

However, in questions exclusive to this survey, residents seem willing to trust the judgment of community association management to make decisions on their behalf, as three quarters are against the government forcing associations to allow clothes lines, six in ten think associations have the right to control the scope and placement of solar panels on individual homes to maintain architectural standards, and two thirds say that the elected board should determine how community associations prioritize and address environmental issues.

III. Narrative Analysis

3. Which of the following best represents the type of home you are currently living in?

Table 1. Home Type

	2007	2005
Single-family	69	65
Condominium	16	17
Townhouse	10	14
Apartment (cooperative)	5	2
*Other	1	2

***Other responses:** (number in parentheses denotes number of similar responses)
 Mobile home/trailer (8); Patio home (3); Cluster home (3); Cottage; Duplex; Senior citizen home

Seven in ten (69%) are currently living in a single-family home, while about one in six (16%) are in a condominium, one in ten (10%) a townhouse; and 5% are in an apartment (co-op).

Married people (79%) are more likely than divorced/widowed/separated (52%), and singles (31%) to live in a single-family home, as are those with children under 17 (85%) compared to those without (61%); rural residents (88%) vs. residents of small cities (72%), suburbs (70%), and large cities (58%); and Southerners (76%), Central/Great Lakes (75%), and Westerners (72%) compared to Easterners (49%).

The overall 2007 numbers do not vary much from the 2005 poll, but there is a slight increase in residents of single-family homes (65% to 69%), and a slight decrease in the number of townhouse dwellers (14% to 10%).

4. On a scale of one to five, with one being very bad and five being very good, how would you rate your overall experience living in a community association?

Table 2. Overall Experience

	Negative (1+2)	3	Positive (4+5)
2007	9	19	72
2005	10	19	71

Close to three quarters (72%) rate their overall experience of living in a community association a positive one, while only one in ten (9%) would label it negative.

Those aged over 65 (83%) are more likely than 30-49 year-olds (70%) and 50-64 year-olds (69%) to say their overall living experience is positive, as are rural residents (85%) compared to residents of the suburbs (75%), small cities (72%), and large cities (65%); and residents of the Central/Great Lakes region (80%) vs. those in the east (78%), west (66%), and south (64%).

The overall percentages are nearly identical to the 2005 poll.

5. *Have you ever attended any community association board meetings?*

Table 3. Board Meeting Attendance

	Yes	No
2007	70	30
2005	72	28

Seven in ten (70%) say they have attended community association board meetings, while three in ten have not (30%).

Seniors (76%) and 50-64 year-olds (76%) are more likely than 30-49 year-olds (59%) to have attended meetings, as are men (76%) compared to women (64%); those without children under 17 (77%) vs. those with (54%); rural residents (82%) compared to residents of the suburbs (72%), large cities (68%), and small cities (64%); and Southerners (76%), Westerners (71%), and residents of the Central/Great Lakes (72%) vs. Easterners (58%).

The overall responses are about the same as they were in the 2005 survey.

6. *How many times a year, on average, would you say you have contact with your community association board (in person, by letter or phone or in meetings)?*

Table 4. Yearly Board Contact

	2007	2005
Five or more	33	41
One	23	17
Two	16	14
Four	11	10
Three	8	9
Not sure	10	9

One third (33%) say they have contact with their community association board five or more times a year. That is down eight percentage points from 2005, when it was also the top response (41%).

Those aged 50-64 (37%) and seniors (36%), are more likely than 30-49 year-olds to have contact with their board five or more times a year, as are men (36%) compared to women (30%); singles (45%) vs. married people and those that are divorced/widowed/separated (25%); Residents of rural areas (39%) and small cities (39%) compared to residents of large cities (30%) and suburbanites (31%); and Westerners (39%) and Southerners (38%) vs. Easterners (28%) and those in the Central/Great lakes region (29%).

About a quarter (23%) say they have contact with the board only once a year, which is up six percentage points from the previous survey (17%).

Those aged 50-65 (26%) are more likely than seniors (19%) to have contact once a year, as are married people (26%) compared to those who are divorced/widowed/separated (20%) and singles (11%); residents of small cities (26%) vs. rural residents (19%); and Westerners (30%) compared to those in the Central/Great Lakes (24%), the South (23%), and the East (16%).

7. Do you think the members of your elected governing board strive to serve the best interests of the community as a whole?

Table 5. Board Members Serve Your Interests

	2007	2005
Absolutely	47	54
For the most part	41	35
Not at all	10	9
Not sure	3	2

Nearly half (47%) think that the members of their elected governing board absolutely strive to serve the best interests of the community as a whole, while two in five (41%) only think they do for the most part.

Seniors (56%) are more likely than 50-64 year-olds (51%), and 30-49 year-olds (37%) to think the board absolutely has their best interests at heart, as are those without children under 17 (51%) compared to those with (38%); suburbanites (54%) and rural residents (51%) vs. residents of small (42%) and large cities (42%); and those in the Central/Great Lakes region (57%) compared to Westerners (47%), Southerners (44%), and Easterners (41%).

In 2005, more respondents thought that the governing board absolutely strives to serve the best interests of the community (54%), and less said they serve their interests for the most part (35%).

8. Overall, would you say you are on friendly terms with your current community association board, or would you say you are on unfriendly terms with them?

Table 6. Terms With Your Board

	Friendly	Unfriendly	Not sure
2007	89	5	6
2005	90	4	6

Nearly all surveyed (89%) say they are on friendly terms with their current community association board, which is almost exactly the same amount that said so in 2005.

Married people (90%) and those who are divorced/widowed/separated (88%) are more likely than singles (83%) to say they are on friendly terms with their board, as are those in the Central/Great Lakes region (93%) compared to Southerners (89%), Westerners (88%) and Easterners (84%)

9. Does your association employ a community manager?

Table 7. Community Manager Presence

	Yes	No	Not sure
2007	51	40	9
2005	52	40	8

Half (51%) say that their association employs a community manager, but two in five (40%) do not. There is no change from the 2005 data.

Seniors and 30-49 years-olds (53% each) are more likely than 50-64 year-olds (46%) to say they have a community manager, as are those who are divorced/widowed/separated (56%) compared to married people (50%) and singles (46%); residents of large cities (53%) vs. rural residents (74%); and Westerners (66%) compared to Southerners (60%), Easterners (45%) and those in the Central/Great Lakes region (34%).

(Only asked of those with community managers.)

10. In your view, does the manager provide value and support to residents and the community as a whole?

Table 8. Community Manager Value/Support

	Yes	No	Not sure
2007	73	21	6
2005	78	13	9

Three quarters (73%) say that their community managers provide value and support to residents and the community as a whole, which is down from 2005 (78%).

Meanwhile one in five (21%) say their managers do not provide value and support, which is up eight percentage points from the previous survey (13%).

Seniors (78%) and 50-64 year-olds (73%) are more likely than 30-49 year-olds (69%) to say yes, as are parents of children under 17 (78%) vs. those who are not (70%);

11. Have you had any direct interaction with your community manager?

Table 9. Community Manager Interaction

	Yes	No	Not sure
2007	69	31	0
2005	49	48	2

Seven in ten (69%) have had direct interaction with their community manager, while three in ten have not (31%).

Those aged 50-64 (71%) are more likely than 30-49 year-olds (67%) and seniors (66%) to have interaction with their managers, as are those who are not parents of children under 17 (71%) compared to those who are (63%).

The overall change is significant from 2005 when it was split right down the middle (49% yes to 48% no).

(Only asked of those who have had direct interaction with their community manager.)
 12. Was it generally a positive experience?

Table 10. Positive Interaction with Community Manager

	Yes	No	Not sure
2007	79	20	2
2005	88	10	2

Of those who had interaction with their community manager, eight in ten (79%) say it was positive, which is down sharply from 2005 (88%).

The amount of people that say it was not a positive experience doubled from the last poll (20% to 10%).

13. Which of the following best describes the amount of assessments you currently pay to your community association per month?

Table 11. Amount of Assessments Paid

	2007	2005
Less than \$25	18	20
\$25-\$50	20	19
\$51-\$100	16	14
\$101-\$300	22	29
\$301-\$500	9	7
More than \$500	4	4
Do not pay dues	8	4
Not sure	4	3

Just over one in five (22%) pay \$101-300 in assessments to the association per month, which is down from 2005 (29%). Another one in five (20%) pay \$25-50, which is the same as the previous poll.

Singles (35%), those who are divorced/widowed/separated (32%), seniors (29%), those who are not parents of children under 17 (29%), 50-54 year-olds (26%), suburbanites (26%), small city residents (24%), Southerners (23%), women (22%), and Easterners (21%) are more likely to pay \$101-300.

Rural residents (32%), parents of children under 17 (29%), Westerners (28%), 30-49 year-olds (26%), males (24%), married people (23%), are more likely to pay \$25-50.

Meanwhile, those in the Central/Great Lakes region (34%) are more likely to pay less than \$25, and residents of large cities are evenly split between paying \$101-300 and less than \$25 (19%) each.

14. Considering your overall assessments and the services provided by your association, how would you describe the return for what you pay in assessments?

Table 12. Assessment Return

	Positive			Negative			Not sure
	Great	Good	Overall	Not so good	Bad	Overall	
2007	24	53	77	15	5	20	3
2005	25	55	80	13	6	19	2

Over three quarters (77%) have a positive view of the return they get on their paid assessments, a quarter (24%) of which label it great. One in five (20%) have a negative view. Those figures are nearly identical to 2005.

Seniors (85%) are more likely than 50-64 year-olds (76%) and 30-49 year-olds (74%) to have a positive view, as are married people (80%) compared to those who are divorced/widowed/separated (75%); Suburbanites (83%) and rural residents (81%) vs. residents of small (78%) and large (68%) cities; and those in the Central/Great Lakes region (89%), compared to Easterners (78%), Southerners (72%), and Westerners (68%).

15. What do you think your community should do when residents neglect to pay their assessments?

Table 13. Payment Negligence

	2007	2005
Insist that every homeowner pay the assessments, involving attorneys only if delinquent accounts are not brought up to date after sufficient notification	70	77
Curtail services and amenities such as reducing pool hours, delaying improvements and spending less on landscaping	8	5
Make up the loss by increasing assessments for paying homeowners	3	5
Not sure	20	13

Seven in ten (70%) think their community should insist that every homeowner pays assessments, and that if residents neglect to pay, attorneys should be involved only if delinquent accounts are not brought up to date after sufficient notification, which is down from the 2005 poll (77%). One in five (20%) are unsure what to do, which is up from the previous poll (13%).

Men (74%) are more likely than women (66%) to think attorneys should get involved if homeowners fail to pay their assessments, as are 30-49 year-olds (71%) and 50-64 year-olds (72%) compared to seniors (64%); rural residents (77%) and suburbanites (76%) compared to residents of large (66%) and small cities (63%); and Westerners (76%) vs. Southerners (69%), Easterners (69%) and those in the Central/Great Lakes region (68%).

16. Do the rules in your community protect and enhance property values, harm them or make no difference?

Table 14. Property Value Effect

	2007	2005
Protect and enhance	74	78
No difference	22	19
Harm	3	1
Not sure	2	2

Three quarters (74%) say that the rules in their community protect and enhance property values, while nearly a quarter (22%) say it makes no difference.

Married people (76%) are more likely than singles (66%) or those who are divorced/widowed/separated (70%) to say that their community rules protect and enhance property values, as are suburbanites (78%), rural residents (75%) and residents of small cities (75%) compared to residents of large cities (68%), and Southerners (76%) and those in the Central/Great Lakes region (77%) vs. Easterners (70%) and Westerners (70%).

The 2007 percentages differ only slightly from 2005.

17. What is the single best thing about living in a community association?

Table 15. Best Thing About Community Association

	2007	2005
Clean/attractive neighborhood	19	15
Maintenance-free	18	23
Property Values	16	4
Safe neighborhood	14	13
Responsible neighbors	6	6
Amenities like swimming pools and tennis courts	6	4
Nothing good	6	8
Quiet neighborhood	5	4
You have a say in the rules	3	2
Everybody knows the rules	2	7
Other/not sure	4	14

About one in five each say the best thing about living in a community association is the clean/attractive neighborhood (19%) or the maintenance-free lifestyle (18%).

Westerners (24%), parents of children under 17 (23%), suburbanites (22%), married people (21%), and 30-49 year-olds (21%) think the best thing about living in a community association is the clean/attractive neighborhood, while singles (29%), Easterners (29%), seniors (27%), those who are divorced/widowed/separated (26%), women (21%), and those without children under 17 (21%), are more likely to say it is the maintenance-free lifestyle.

A clean/attractive neighborhood and maintenance-free lifestyle were also the top two responses in the 2005 poll, however, living maintenance free (23%) came in ahead of clean/attractive neighborhood (15%).

18. *What is the single worst thing about living in a community association?*

Table 16. Worst Thing About Community Association

	2007	2005
Nothing bad	36	25
Restrictions on exterior home improvements	15	15
Dealing with neighbors/members	10	2
Paying dues	9	15
Dissatisfaction with board	8	4
The rules	7	11
Restrictions on parking	5	4
Restrictions on landscaping	4	2
Meetings	1	2
Other/not sure	6	20

Over a third (36%) say there is nothing bad about living in a community association, which is a significant increase over 2005 (25%).

Over one in seven (15%) say that the restrictions on exterior home improvements is the worst thing, while on the previous survey paying dues was said the most frequently (15%).

Seniors (52%) are more likely than 50-64 year-olds (39%) and 30-49 year-olds (25%) to say there is nothing bad about living in a community association, as are women (40%) compared to men (32%); those who are divorced/widowed/separated (46%) vs. married people (36%) and singles (26%); rural residents (40%) and suburbanites (39%) compared to residents of large (34%) and small (33%) cities; and those in the Central/Great Lakes region (47%) vs. Southerners (33%), Westerners (32%), and Easterners (30%).

19. *The governance of community associations is subject to differing state laws and regulations. Would you like to see more government control of these associations?*

Table 17. Government Control

	Yes	No	Not sure
2007	17	80	4
2005	15	78	7

Eight in ten (80%) would not like to see more government control of community associations, while one in six (17%) would.

Those aged 30-49 (21%) are more likely than 50-64 year-olds (14%) and seniors (13%) to be in favor of more government control of community associations, as are those who are divorced/widowed/separated (18%) and married (17%) compared to singles (12%); parents of children under 17 (23%) vs. those who are not (14%); residents of large cities (26%) compared to residents of small cities (13%), suburbanites (13%), and rural residents (7%); and Easterners (25%) vs. Southerners (20%), Westerners (13%), and those in the Central/Great Lakes region (8%).

The numbers from 2007 are practically identical to 2005.

20. When you were considering the purchase or rental of your current home, were you told that it was in a community association?

Table 18. Community Association Awareness

	Yes	No	Not sure
2007	86	12	2
2005	89	10	1

Nearly everyone surveyed (86%) says that they were told that their current home was in a community association when they were considering buying or renting it, which is almost identical to 2005 (89%).

(Asked only of those who knew their home would be in a community association.)

21. Did the fact that your current home is in a community association make you more likely to purchase or rent your home, make you hesitant about purchasing or renting your home, or have no impact?

Table 19. Effect of Community Association on Decision

	More likely	Hesitant	No impact	Not sure
2007	30	9	61	1
2005	28	9	63	1

Six in ten (61%) say knowing that their current home was in a community association had no impact on their purchase or rental, but three in ten (30%) say it made them more likely to do so.

Knowing that their home would be in a community association made 30-49 (35%) more likely to purchase their home than 50-64 year-olds (28%) and seniors (26%), as well as parents of children under 17 (37%) compared to those who are not (27%).

The figures from 2007 are nearly identical to 2005.

22. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all and 5 being very well, how well would you say you get along with your immediate neighbors?

Table 20. Relationship with Neighbors

	Don't get along (1+2)	3	Get along (4+5)	Not sure
2007	3	7	90	0
2005	5	8	86	1

Nearly everyone polled (90%) says they get along with their neighbors, which is up slightly from 2005 (86%).

Seniors (96%) are the most likely to say they get along with their immediate neighbors, while singles (77%) are the least.

(Asked only of those who don't get along with their immediate neighbors.)

23. What would you say creates most of the conflict?

Table 21. Reason for Neighbor Conflict

	2007	2005
Pets	36	28
Personal habits	27	6
Landscaping/yard issues	15	4
General lifestyle	8	11
Noise	7	9
Appearance of a home	2	3
Other	5	27
Parking	--	8
Not sure	--	5

Pets create the most conflict between neighbors (36%), which is up eight percentage points from 2005. Around a quarter also say personal habits (27%) cause conflicts, which is quadruple the amount that said so on the previous poll (6%).

24. *Should community associations, as private organizations, be forced by government to allow individual residents to hang their laundry on clothes lines that are visible to their neighbors?*

Yes	18%
No	74
Not sure	8

Three quarters (74%) say that community associations should not be forced by the government to allow individual residents to hang their laundry on clothes lines that are visible to their neighbors, while about one in five (18%) say they should.

Those aged 50-64 (21%) and 30-49 (19%) are more likely than seniors (10%) to say that the government should force community associations to allow clothes lines, as are singles (22%) compared to married people (17%); parents of children under 17 (23%) vs. those who are not (16%); and Westerners (21%), Easterners (21%), and those in the Central/Great Lakes region (20%) compared to Southerners (13%).

25. *Should community associations, as private organizations, have the right to control the scope and placement of solar panels on individual homes to maintain architectural standards?*

Yes	59%
No	35
Not sure	6

Six in ten (59%) say that community associations have the right to control the scope and placement of solar panels on individual homes to maintain architectural standards, but a third (35%) do not.

Those aged 30-49 (42%) are more likely than seniors (36%) and 50-64 year-olds (26%) to say that community associations do not have the right to control the placement of solar panels on homes, as are residents of small cities (40%), large cities (37%), and rural areas (37%) compared to suburbanites (28%); and Easterners (44%) and Westerners (41%) vs. Southerners (28%) and those in the Central/Great Lakes region (30%).

26. *Who should determine how community associations prioritize and address environmental issues?*

Association homeowners through their elected board	66%
Local governments	20
State government	5
Federal government	3
Not sure	6

Two thirds (66%) say that association homeowners should determine how community associations prioritize and address environmental issues through their elected board, while one in five (20%) say it should be handled by local governments.

Seniors (72%) and those in the Central/Great Lakes region (71%) are the most likely to say that association homeowners should prioritize and address environmental issues through their elected board, while parents of children under 17 (61%) and residents of small cities (61%) are the least likely.