



Keeping Your Community in the Loop

Keeping your community in the loop means collecting input from community members, taking action based on that input, and then communicating back what was done in response.

For example, if residents suggest adding a walking group and one is started, sharing that update in a newsletter or on a bulletin board shows the community that their voices made a difference. Another example is following up personally with residents who voiced concerns at a meeting to let them know how their ideas are being addressed.

Keeping your community in the loop is still important even when a resident's idea can't or hasn't been acted on yet. In this case, it's about respectfully acknowledging their input by explaining why the idea isn't moving forward, and offering alternative ways to stay involved.

For example, a resident suggests renovating the common area of the building to be more accessible, but the budget isn't available. A strong response would include following up — perhaps through a meeting, call, or newsletter — to thank them for the suggestion, explain the funding limitations, and share any smaller improvements that are possible (like adding moveable ramps or planning for future grants).

What is the Value of Keeping Your Community in the Loop?

Letting residents know how their ideas were addressed — or why they weren't addressed this time — helps residents feel heard and valued. It is essential for:

- Building trust
 - Promoting ongoing community dialogue
 - Encouraging continued participation
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1. Reporting Back to your Community

Once you've gathered community input (through surveying or other methods of listening to your community) and you've picked an activity or initiative to work on, it's time to keep your community in the loop. This means reaching back out to let them know what initiatives you will be working on and how they have been shaped by the input residents shared.

Ways to Keep Your Community in the Loop:

- Post updates on bulletin boards, newsletters, or your community website
 - Try adding the heading "You Said, We Did" to your community message board
 - For example: "You said you're interested in different options for exercise. Next month, we'll be bringing chair yoga to the meeting room. Sign up here!"
- Host follow-up meetings or town halls to share what's being done
- Reach out directly to people who shared their input via phone calls, emails, or in-person visits
- A "You Said, We Did" bulletin board
- A text or phone update system to notify residents of any updates
- A community storytelling event to share changes and progress in action
- Recognizing resident contributions in newsletters or meetings

2. Encouraging Further Engagement (Keeping the Conversation Going)

Keeping your community in the loop can be particularly helpful for building trusting engagement over time.

There are many reasons individuals or communities might not feel initially inclined to participate in surveys or other community engagement initiatives. Some neighbours may have had past experiences where their voices were ignored or dismissed. This may lead to a lack of trust or fear that sharing their opinions won't lead to real change. Language barriers, cultural differences, or feeling unwelcome in decision-making spaces can also make participation harder. Maybe a neighbour didn't feel comfortable participating in a survey the first time, but seeing that ideas are really considered and implemented might encourage them to participate later.

Tips for More Involvement:

- Celebrate small wins (e.g., "Thanks to your input, we're trying chair yoga!")
- Personalize outreach to engage quieter or less vocal residents

Reflection Questions:

- Knowing your community's specific context, what might be one or two good methods to share how your group listened and what decisions you made with your community?
- How will we make sure less vocal residents feel included?
- What's a recent community win we can celebrate?