



Agassiz Neighborhood Council

Special Report 2006

Retirement Survey Summary

Community Survey Background

Agassiz Neighborhood Council (ANC) volunteers & staff worked to create a broad survey instrument that would identify as much meaningful data as possible regarding the needs of Agassiz neighborhood residents as they aged. The survey would capture relevant demographics information including ages, genders, others in household. It would also ask important questions such as “Do you wish to retire in Cambridge?” and “What kind of assistance do you need now and in the future?” Participants were chosen randomly and the survey was mailed to 200 households with a stamped, return envelope. The respondents remained anonymous.

Summary of Survey Findings

There were 89 returned surveys, and the analysis of a return of 50 is “statistically significant.”

General Information on Respondents

The average age was 63 years
 The range in age was from 50 to 91 years
 Over 30% lived alone
 For those who lived with others
 Average age of 1st person - 57
 Average age of 2nd person - 33
 61% DO NOT have family living nearby to help
 Average length of time living in
 Cambridge - 28.4 years
 Agassiz Neighborhood - 21.6 years
 84% OWN their homes
 81.5% wish to retire at their current address
 35% go away each year for an average of two months

32% would consider housing students in exchange for work
 55% say physical aspects of their home could make living difficult, particularly with respect to stairs

Top Reasons Respondents Might Have to Leave Their Homes

Respondents were asked to name the top three reasons why they might have to relocate. These were the most frequently identified reasons:

1. Health related
2. Financial reasons
3. Stairs, accessibility
4. Weather
5. To be near family and children

The survey provided a list of tasks, and respondents were asked to check the ones they need assistance with now and might need assistance with in five years. As of now 43% employ people to assist with these tasks, and in five years 67% anticipate employing help on these tasks. The results for specific tasks are as follows:

TASKS	NOW	IN 5 YEARS
Snow Shoveling	34.8%	48.3%
Yard Work	32.6%	36%
Home Maintenance & Repairs	30.3%	46.1%
Housework/Laundry	25.8%	29.2%
Heavy Lifting Chores	24.7%	46.1%
Computer/Technology help	20.2%	31.5%
Help with government programs	6.7%	11.2%
Companionship	+/-1%	21.3%
Mobility	+/-1%	20.2%
Shopping	+/-1%	12.4%



Judy Willett and Susan McWhinney-Morse from Beacon Hill Village at the April 5th meeting “Living in Cambridge as Long as You Live”

History

The ANC board of Directors identified the “core competencies” that were unique to the ANC in the 2004 Strategic Plan. These included “the ability to develop specific programs that fit a particular Cambridge niche and need that has been expressed by the community.” The directors also identified potential areas for increased ANC participation that included a rising senior population living in the Agassiz neighborhood.

As a result of this planning session, the directors also developed ANC’s vision statement that included “ANC will enhance our capacity to respond to changing times and the changing needs of the Community with programs, services and forums . . . by providing grass-roots communications for awareness and identifying problems and facilitating solutions.”

To receive the complete report or to get involved, contact Lynn Landon at llandon@agassiz.org or (617) 349-6287, x 12.
 Ask for the 2006 Retirement Survey Report.



About the Agassiz Retirement Initiative

Since 2004 both staff and board members have done informal but significant research on the emerging needs of the aging populations and determined that further investigation was warranted. In January 2006, the ANC submitted a request for funding to the Cambridge-Agassiz-Harvard (CAH) Fund to:

- 1) Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the aging population living in the Agassiz Neighborhood as reported by its residents via a random sample survey to be distributed to 200 individuals ages 50 years and older living in the Agassiz Neighborhood AND
- 2) Invite the entire Cambridge community to attend a well-advertised meeting to learn about the internationally recognized initiative begun in Boston by a not-for-profit called Beacon Hill Village.

In February, the ANC was awarded a grant, and by March, ANC had distributed a community survey to 200 Agassiz residents ages 50 and older.

On April 5th the ANC and Cambridge Council on Aging co-sponsored the "Living in Cambridge as Long as You Live" presentation at the Council on Aging Senior Center. The April 5th event was standing room only as more than 150 Cambridge residents came out to hear the presentation by Judy Willett and Susan McWhinney-Morse on their own Beacon Hill Village initiative that provides concierge services of all varieties to its members. The response, exceeding all expectations for a high turnout, clearly demonstrates the needs for continued discussion about programs like Beacon Hill Village in Cambridge.



Agassiz Neighborhood Council
 Retirement Survey Report Summary
 20 Sacramento Street
 Cambridge, MA 02138
 (617) 349-6287



Retirement Initiative Next Steps

Survey Analysis

Results of the survey are being thoroughly analyzed and next steps will be determined on the basis of that analysis. As this analysis takes place, people all over Cambridge are meeting to determine other avenues of pursuit. Some include:

Outreach and Collaboration

ANC is currently compiling information on services and programs in and around Cambridge, as well as local groups with a purpose similar to ours in order to maximize collaboration and partnerships, and minimize redundancy in services.

Lecture Series

A group of individuals will soon meet with Cambridge Center for Adult Education to see if a series can be organized for the fall around topics of interest to this age demographic. Other ways to partner will also be explored.

In Depth Research

Volunteers will be interviewing people who have agreed to have a visitor take a more in-depth look at their specific situation and possibly point to other necessary services. This will provide qualitative data on unmet needs of senior citizens.

Come to the Next Meeting

The City of Cambridge has organized a follow-up city-wide forum to be held at the Senior Center, 806 Mass. Ave. on June 6, 2006 from 5:30 to 8PM. This meeting will focus on the current services and resources available to the aging population in Cambridge. For information call Susan Pacheco at (617) 349-6220.