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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>NOW</th>
<th>IN 3 YEARS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snow Shoveling</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yard Work</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Maintenance &amp; Repairs</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housework/Laundry</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Lifting Chores</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer/Technology help</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with government programs</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companionship</td>
<td>+/-1%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility</td>
<td>+/-1%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>+/-1%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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 citywide 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.