West Cambridge Residential Survey

Prepared by
Opinion Dynamics Corporation

October 2004
Executive summary

• The survey was conducted from June 24th to June 30th.

• 400 residents of West Cambridge were surveyed over the telephone, using a random-digit dialing method to ensure fair representation of the populace.

• The margin of error on the full, 400-member sample is +/- 4.9% at the mid-range of the 95% confidence interval. That is, when conducting 100 such surveys, 95 of them will yield results that are-at worst-4.9 points on either side of a given percentage.

• Nearly two thirds of respondents (64%) are homeowners; 35% are renters.

• Most (79%) would support low and moderate income housing. Respondents saw an equal need for more rental housing (32%) and more home ownership (28%) in Cambridge, 16% saw the need for both.

• Less than ten percent (8%) of the respondents believe that West Cambridge is a worse place to live than it was five years ago or that the quality of life will worsen five years from now (9%).

• Traffic (24%) and expense of living (18%) were listed as the aspects residents liked least about living in West Cambridge.

• Convenience to shops and resources (35%) and the parks and greenery (31%) were listed as the aspects residents liked most about living in West Cambridge.

• Seventy-one percent of respondents believe that West Cambridge is a good (37%) or excellent (34%) place to raise a child.

• Seventy-five percent of respondents believe that West Cambridge is a good (39%) or excellent (36%) place to retire.

• Seventy-two percent of renters, if they could buy a home anywhere, would buy a home in West Cambridge.
## Methodology and Demographics

**Employment Status**
- Full-time: 52%
- Retired: 24
- Part-time: 10
- Full-time student: 6
- Homemaker: 4
- Unemployed: 3

**Household**
- Couple without children: 34%
- Single, living alone: 29
- Couple with children: 26
- Living with roommates: 5
- Single parent: 2

**School Completed**
- Some high school: 2%
- Graduated high school: 7
- Some college/technical school: 6
- College/technical school degree: 34
- Post graduate or professional degree: 50

**Race/Ethnicity**
- White/Caucasian: 90%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 5
- Black: 2
- Latin/Hispanic: 1
- Not sure/refused: 3

**Age**
- Under 20: 1%
- 20 to 34: 20
- 35 to 44: 14
- 45 to 54: 13
- 55 to 64: 20
- 65 or older: 29
How long have you lived in West Cambridge?

- 21 years or more: 33%
- 11 to 20 years: 17%
- 5 to 10 years: 22%
- 1 to 4 years: 24%
- Less than 1 year: 4%
Compared with five years ago, how would you rate West Cambridge as a place to live?

- A better place to live today: 23%
- About the same: 57%
- A worse place to live today: 8%
- Don't know: 12%
How would you rate West Cambridge as a place to raise children?

- Good: 37%
- Excellent: 34%
- Not sure: 15%
- Only fair: 12%
- Poor: 2%
How would you rate West Cambridge as a place to retire?

- Excellent: 36%
- Good: 39%
- Only fair: 13%
- Poor: 6%
- Not sure: 6%
In the next five years, do you expect the quality of life in West Cambridge to improve greatly, improve somewhat, stay the same or get worse?

- Improve greatly: 4%
- Improve somewhat: 23%
- Don't know: 7%
- Get worse: 9%
- Stay the same: 57%
What do you like most about living in West Cambridge? (multiple response)

- Convenient to shops/resources: 35%
- Parks/greenery: 21%
- Friendly/good community: 18%
- Quiet: 15%
- Proximity to Harvard/Harvard Square: 15%
- Proximity to Boston: 11%
- Public transportation: 10%
What do you like least about living in West Cambridge? (multiple response)

- Traffic/Parking: 24%
- Too expensive: 18%
- Noisy: 6%
- Less diversity: 4%
- People/not friendly: 4%
- Not enough restaurants/shops: 4%
- Sidewalk/road conditions: 4%
Please tell me whether each issue is a major concern for you, a minor concern, or not a concern at all

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Major concern</th>
<th>Minor concern</th>
<th>Not a concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traffic congestion</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of parking</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street, sidewalk, and public shrubbery repair</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of open space</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition of parks or open space</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise level</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Public Transportation</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness of streets and sidewalks</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street lighting</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of recreation facilities</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specifically, why do you feel new commercial developments in Cambridge have had a positive/negative effect on West Cambridge?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Effect</th>
<th>Negative Effect</th>
<th>No effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too far away/Hasn’t affected me</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New jobs/Contributes to taxes</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved underdeveloped/depressed area</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overdevelopment</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive comments (general)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drives up property values/costs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice looking</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increases diversity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More housing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic/Parking</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More shops/restaurants/resources</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative comments</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/refused</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Where do you shop for groceries most often?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Auburn Street Star Market</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Pond Whole Foods</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porter Square Star Market</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huron Village (Huron Market and/or Formaggio’s)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaw’s</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Basket</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trader Joe’s</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop &amp; Shop</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Where do you shop and perform other errands most often?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harvard Square</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watertown and Belmont</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porter Square</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huron Village</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Pond Mall</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlington Mall</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Square</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridgeside Galleria</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do you run errands and go shopping?

- Car: 56%
- Walk: 30%
- Public transportation: 7%
- Ride a bike: 2%
- Other/Don't know: 4%
Do you own or rent your home?

- Own: 64%
- Rent: 35%
- Don't know/Refused: 1%
Which one of the following two types of housing are needed more in West Cambridge?

- Rental Housing: 32%
- Home Ownership: 28%
- Both equally: 16%
- Don't know/Refused: 18%
- None, neither: 6%
Would you support additional housing in West Cambridge for people with lower incomes?

- Yes: 79%
- No: 12%
- Don't know: 9%
(Renters only) If you could afford to buy a home anywhere, would you buy it in Cambridge?

- Yes: 72%
- No: 23%
- Don't know: 5%
Do you currently work or attend school in Cambridge, Boston, or somewhere else?

- Cambridge: 48%
- Boston: 22%
- Somewhere else: 27%
- Other: 3%
How do you usually get to work or school?

- **Private Vehicle**: 44%
- **Public Transportation**: 22%
- **Walk**: 18%
- **Bicycle**: 4%
- **Work at home**: 12%
Please rate how effective you think each of the following methods are for keeping you informed about development plans for your neighborhood.

- Flyers in the mail: 79% effective
- Newspaper articles: 77% effective
- Neighborhood newsletters: 63% effective
- Word-of-mouth communications: 57% effective
- Community meetings: 50% effective
- Direct E-mail notice from Cambridge City government: 49% effective
- City of Cambridge website: 46% effective
- Meetings at City Hall: 43% effective
- Cambridge Community TV, or other cable access: 55% effective
Please rate how effective you think each of the following methods are for keeping you informed about development plans for your neighborhood. (*Computers and younger demographic*)

- **Direct E-mail notice from Cambridge City government**
  - Very effective - Overall respondents: 31%
  - Very effective - Respondents younger than 44 years old: 42%

- **City of Cambridge website**
  - Very effective - Overall respondents: 19%
  - Very effective - Respondents younger than 44 years old: 30%