

# City of Beverly Community Housing Survey

## Summary Results

The City of Beverly is preparing a Community Housing Plan to document current and growing priority housing needs, assess existing housing regulations, and identify new or modified strategies to address unmet housing needs, also recommending how the City can strategically invest its local resources as part of a newly defined housing agenda. **An important component of this planning work was to obtain input from local residents on the City's future housing priorities.** In addition to community meetings and interviews with local and regional housing stakeholders, the City issued a Community Housing Survey as another means for residents to participate in the planning process.

The hard copy version of the Survey was made available at the Planning and Development Department at 191 Cabot Street, the Beverly Council on Aging at 90 Colon Street, and an electronic version was included on the City's website. 190 residents responded to the Survey. While this is a good number of responses, it should be noted that it represents less than 5% of the City's population and is therefore not statistically significant. While this Survey was not conducted in a scientifically random manner, which is very expensive, the results nevertheless reflect a range of perspectives within the Beverly community on housing issues and put the City in a more informed position to finalize the Housing Plan and take action to implement it.

By in large, respondents expressed concern regarding housing affordability and interest in addressing a wide range of housing needs through a diversity of approaches with a general orientation to locating new housing in the downtown, near transit and along the waterfront. There was a small minority of respondents who opposed additional affordable housing development.

**Specific results are summarized below for each question that had at least 5 responses with the number of responses listed next to the selected answers.**

### 1. My biggest *concern* regarding housing in Beverly is \_\_\_\_\_

Affordability	61
Lack of affordable housing	19
Overcrowding	14
Too much low income housing	9
Too many condos all at once	7
Over-development	6
Affordable housing for seniors	6
Windover	6
Traffic	5
Lack of units overall	5

\_\_\_\_\_  
*The overwhelming response was that housing affordability is the greatest concern.*  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2. The City's greatest challenge related to preserving and producing housing affordability and housing diversity is \_\_\_\_\_.**

Cost	25
Windover	16
No space	11
Balancing growth	10
Lack of affordable housing	9
Developers greed	8
Don't know	8
Too much low income housing	7
Too many large condos	7
Crime	6
NIMBY	6

*Respondents suggest that the greatest housing challenges largely relate to rising costs and private developer interest in a context of limited development opportunities and insufficient numbers of existing affordable units.*

**3. The best locations for new housing development include (asked to choose from a list of locations):**

Bass River Area (River Street) / Beverly Depot	72
Near other train stations in Beverly (transit-oriented development)	71
Downtown	69
Harborfront Area (Water Street)	49
Neighborhoods other than downtown	42
No more development	20
Beverly Farms	7

*Respondents indicated support for residential development near transit, downtown and waterfront areas, also with some interest in seeing development in neighborhoods outside the downtown.*

**4. The City should focus its efforts on meeting the housing needs of the following types of households (asked to choose from a detailed list of household types) :**

First-time homebuyers	93
People who grew up in Beverly and want to raise their own families locally	90
People on fixed-income (e.g. retired, widow(er) who has lost primary income)	90
Veterans	82
Seniors	81
Homeless families or those at risk of homelessness	79
Young families	73
Moderate-income families (earning between 80% and 100% of area median income, or between \$65,751 and \$88,300 for a family of 3)	67

People with disabilities	64
Homeless individuals or those at risk of homelessness	63
Employees of local businesses	61
Moderate-income individuals (earning between 80% and 100% of area median income, or between \$51,151 and \$68,700 for one person)	60
Low-income families (earning between 50% and 80% of area median income, or between \$44,151 and \$65,750 for a family of 3)	57
Recent college graduates / young singles	53
Very low-income families (earning less than 50% of area median income, which is \$44,150 for a family of 3)	52
Single-parent households	52
Very low-income individuals (earning less than 50% of area median income, which is \$34,350 for one person)	50
Low-income individuals (earning between 50% and 80% of area median income, or between \$34,351 and \$51,150 for one person)	43
Young individuals aging out of the foster care system	43
Empty nesters	40

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*Responses suggest an interest in meeting the needs of a wide range of household types along a wide range of incomes with a particular emphasis on seniors, young families, veterans, and the homeless.*

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**5. The City should also focus on promoting the following types of housing units in the community (asked to choose from a list of housing types):**

Conversion of existing non-residential buildings to housing units	89
Housing proximate to public transit ("transit-oriented development")	73
Cluster development with more compact development and preserved open space (such as our "Open Space Residential Design")	72
Single-family units	67
Conversion of existing large homes/estates to multiple units	66
Small cottage-style or bungalow units	60
Rental units in small, multi-family properties (2- to 4-units)	59
Mixed-income properties	59
Handicapped accessible units	54
Transitional housing for formerly homeless	50
Multi-family rental units (e.g. apartments)	49
Mixed-use properties	44
Two-family properties with both owner and tenant units	43
Side-by-side duplexes	42

Condominiums	36
Assisted living units	33
Co-housing development with some shared facilities	26
Congregate units with some shared living spaces	24
Accessory apartments	22
Single Room Occupancy (SRO) development	13
Scattered-site, infill units	7

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*Responses suggest significant support for developing a diverse range of housing types with particular interest in converting existing housing into long-term affordability as well as development that reflects “smart growth” principles such as transit-oriented development, more clustered development, mixed-uses and denser development that meets a wide range of housing needs.*

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**6. The City should pursue the following priority actions to address unmet housing needs in Beverly (ask to choose from a detailed list of actions):**

Decrease expenses for severely cost burdened seniors who are homeowners through reduced taxes/fees	93
Work with developers to ensure good design and other community amenities	86
Develop additional opportunities for seniors who own homes to move into new units that better accommodate their existing lifestyles, opening their homes to families	83
Convert existing housing to long-term affordability	75
Support the development of housing units for moderate-income households (households earning between 80% and 100% of area median income, so called "workforce housing")	74
Work in tandem with non-profit developers and service providers on housing initiatives	74
Continue to work with Regional Task Force to identify housing opportunities for the homeless, or those at risk of homelessness	69
Allow 2-family homes in more districts (Zoning change)	67
Allow wider range of housing types in neighborhoods (Zoning change)	66
Prepare an inventory of City-owned property and analyze feasibility for development	65
Provide down payment and closing cost assistance to first-time homebuyers	62
Adopt mixed-use zoning for Bass River area (Zoning change)	56
Pursue transit-oriented development	56
Encourage mixed-income housing that provides housing for several income tiers	55
Support the development of housing units for low- and very-low income households (households earning less than 80% of area median income)	53
Preserve the Beverly Housing Authority (BHA) inventory and identify potential redevelopment opportunities	53
Allow mixed-uses in more areas (Zoning change)	51

Operationalize the Affordable Housing Trust Fund	49
Preserve historic properties by allowing more units to be created in the existing structure and/or through additional units on the property (Zoning change)	48
Help qualifying renters with upfront cash requirements	47
Provide ongoing community education and outreach on housing issues	47
Find resources to reintroduce a Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program and/or Emergency Repair Program	41
Amend inclusionary zoning ordinance to require units for even lower income levels (Zoning change)	39
Amend zoning to allow more accessory apartments (Zoning change)	30
Establish a Smart Growth Overlay District/40R district (Zoning change)	18
Promote scattered-site infill development	12

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*Answers suggest strong support for assisting cost burdened seniors who are homeowners in addition to providing mixed-income housing, promoting partnerships with developers and service providers, dealing with homelessness, developing City-owned property, preserving BHA properties, and adopting a number of zoning changes to better promote housing diversity and affordability.*

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**7. The City should invest its limited local housing *subsidy funds* (Community Preservation funds, payments through the City's inclusionary zoning ordinance, others) on the following housing activities (*asked to choose from a list of actions*):**

Decrease expenses for severely cost burdened seniors who are homeowners through reduced taxes/fees	80
Develop additional opportunities for seniors who own homes to move into new units that better accommodate their existing lifestyles, opening their homes to families	75
Dedicate funds for the development of housing units for moderate-income households	74
Work in tandem with non-profit developers and service providers on housing initiatives	64
Preserve the Beverly Housing Authority (BHA) inventory and identify potential redevelopment opportunities	61
Convert existing housing to long-term affordability	58
Provide down payment and closing cost assistance to first-time homebuyers	57
Provide ongoing community education and outreach on housing issues	55
Dedicate funds for the development of housing units for low- and very-low income households	53
Continue to work with Regional Task Force to identify housing opportunities for the homeless or those at risk of homelessness	48
Help qualifying renters with upfront cash requirements	47
Find resources to reintroduce a Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program and/or Emergency Repair Program	43

Responses generally reflect the answers to question #6 regarding priority housing actions that the City should take to promote housing affordability and diversity.

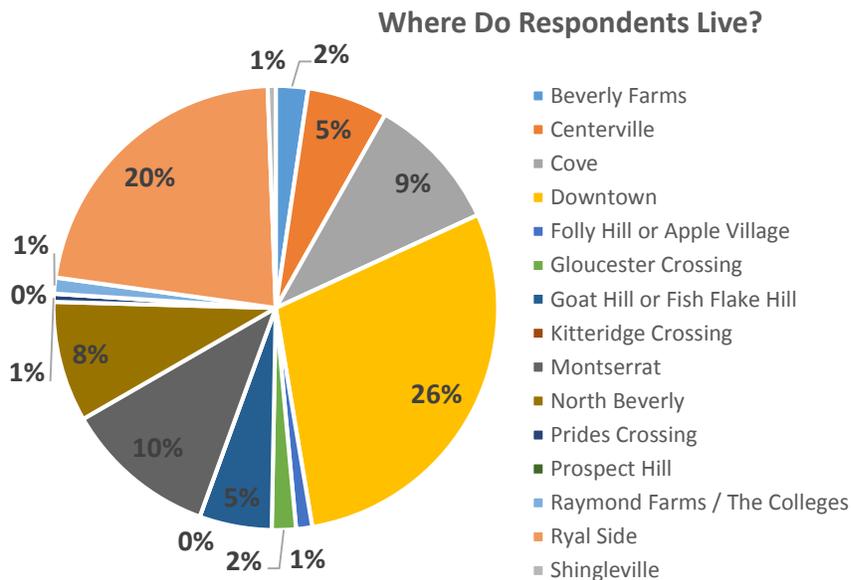
**8. What are the best ways for the City to attract more *community interest, involvement and support* in housing issues?**

Social Media	31
Don't know	15
Survey	11
Education	11
Listen to feedback	9
Advertise meetings better	8
Stop Developing	7
Public forum	5
Better access to information	5
Community outreach	5
Meetings in all neighborhoods	5

The most prevalent response is for greater use of social media.

The remaining questions related to obtaining demographic information about the respondents with the following results:<sup>1</sup>

**9. In what Beverly neighborhood do you live?**

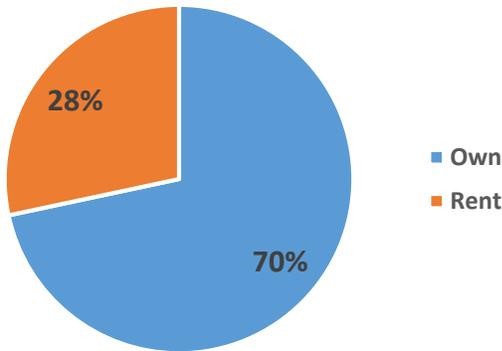


Almost half of the respondents were from either the downtown or Ryal Side; the others distributed throughout the city. A few respondents are not residents but work or own a business in Beverly.

<sup>1</sup> Citywide demographic figures are from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2014.

**10. Do you own or rent?**

**Who Rents v. Owns?**



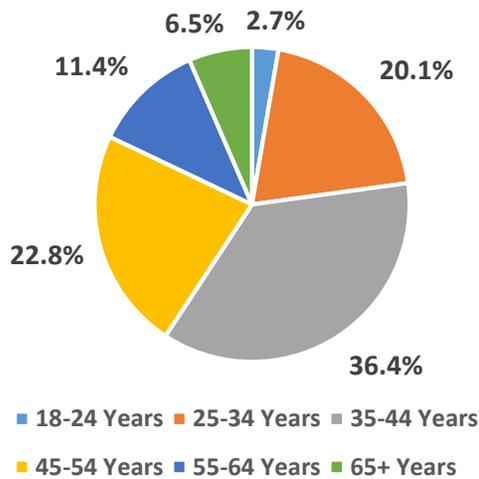
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*70% of respondents were homeowners which is higher than the 61% owner-occupancy rate for the City as a whole.*

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**11. Which category best describes your age?**

**Age Distribution of Respondents**

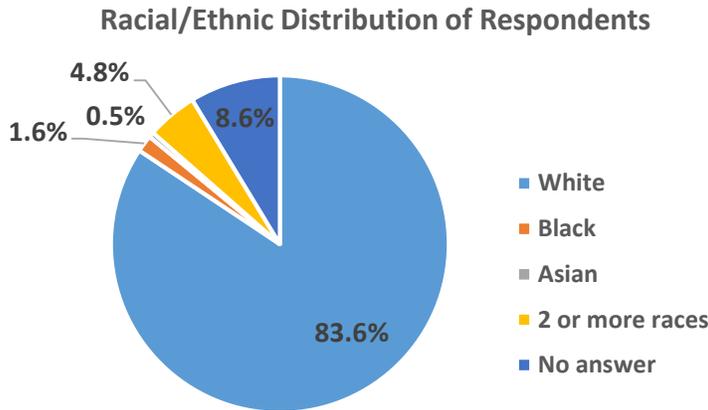


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*36.4% of the respondents were between the ages of 35 and 44 with another 22.8% age 45 to 54, significantly higher than 12.4% and 15.1% for the City as a whole, respectively. Another 20.1% of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 34, still higher in comparison to the 12.2% level for the city. 9.2% of respondents were age 55 or over while the City level was 29.6%. Given that the responses of older adults are typically over-represented in surveys, this result is somewhat surprising.*

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**12. With which race(s)/ethnicity do you identify (*optional; not limited to one answer*)?**

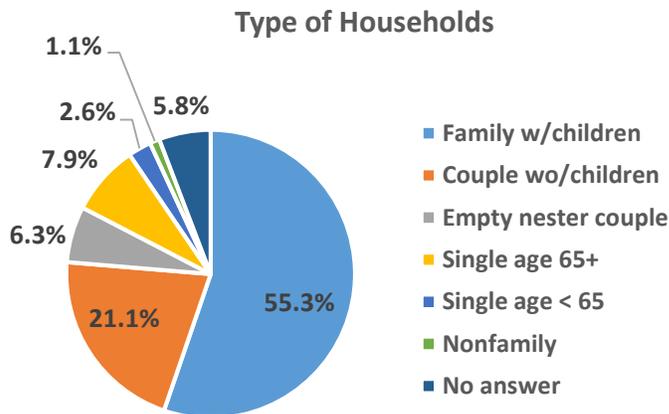



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*84% of respondents were White, which suggest that respondents represented somewhat greater diversity given the City's total White population of 94%.*

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**13. Which of the following best describes your household?**

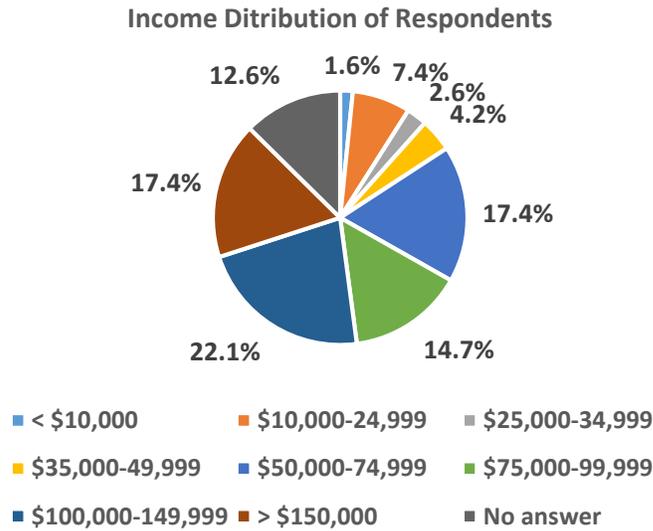



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*55.3% of all those who responded to the survey were in families with children living with them, only slightly higher than the 45.8% citywide level. Another 21.1% included couples without children living with them compared to 27% citywide. About 10% of respondents were single individuals living alone, much lower than the 31% level for the city as a whole.*

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**14. Which category best describes your annual household income?**




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*Respondents represented somewhat more affluent households with about 40% earning \$100,000 or more annually compared to 36% citywide. On the other end of the income range, 9.0% of respondents earned less than \$25,000, half the 18.8% level for the city as a whole.*

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**15. I would like to be notified of any future housing-related meetings.**

Of the 170 persons who responded to this question, 72 or 42% requested to be notified of future meetings on the housing issue.

**16. Please provide any other comments or suggestions in the space below.**

There were 57 respondents who provided additional comments that ranged considerably and included the following major themes:

- Broader housing affordability
- Housing development / gentrification
- That certain segments can live in Beverly (long-time residents, seniors, veterans)
- Downtown: economic development, arts and culture, character
- Conversion of existing buildings / preservation
- Homelessness
- Public services (schools, roads, infrastructure, parks)
- Institutional expansion
- Zoning and its impact
- Open space preservation / conservation
- Mixed-income, mixed-age, mixed-need housing
- Public outreach and involvement