
Cotuit Village Citizen Survey

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the 2007 Cotuit Citizen Village Survey is to gather information from Cotuit residents regarding their perceptions of the structure of the Cotuit Fire and Water Departments. This entailed capturing qualitative and quantitative information about how local taxpayers feel about the governance of the Cotuit Fire District. The Advisory Committee can use this information to develop new programs and policies for the Cotuit Fire Department.

A total of 771 completed surveys were returned from Cotuit residents for a response rate of 35.7 percent and a margin of error at approximately +/- 2.8 percent.

The data demonstrates some important trends and highlights which include:

- The majority of respondents' (75.2 %) report that they are very or somewhat familiar with the village of Cotuit's Fire District.
- A very high percentage of respondents' report that they have never been to a public meeting held by the: Prudential Committee (84.5%), the Water Commission (89.6%) and the Fire Commission (88.4%). This may be an indication that those meetings may need to be better publicized or held at more convenient/different times.
- Overall there is a high level of satisfaction from respondents regarding the level of services they receive in relation to what they pay for taxes. For example:
 - An overwhelming majority of respondents (97.8%) strongly agree or somewhat agree that they are satisfied with the amount of services they receive from the Cotuit Fire District.

- Nearly 90 percent (89.8%) of respondents strongly agree or somewhat agree that the quality of services offered by the Fire District is a value considering the amount of money they pay in taxes.
- Over half of respondents indicate that they would not be willing to pay additional taxes to go toward improvements in Cotuit such as landscaping and town dock improvements. Special attention and consideration should be paid to any plans for increased taxes for such improvements.
- Over half of respondents indicate that they are either very or somewhat likely to visit a Cotuit Fire District website. This indicates a need for further exploration of the development of a website.
- Almost 20 percent or 1 out of 5 respondents reported they were confused about the fire district roles and responsibilities, which may indicate a greater need for public outreach and education.
- A very high majority of respondents (85.0%) indicate that they are long term residents of Cotuit (six years or more), which indicates strong community stability and involvement.

Project Overview

Bridgewater State College's Institute for Regional Development, in coordination with the Cotuit Village Advisory Committee, designed and administered a citizen survey for Cotuit residents during the months of May and June 2007.

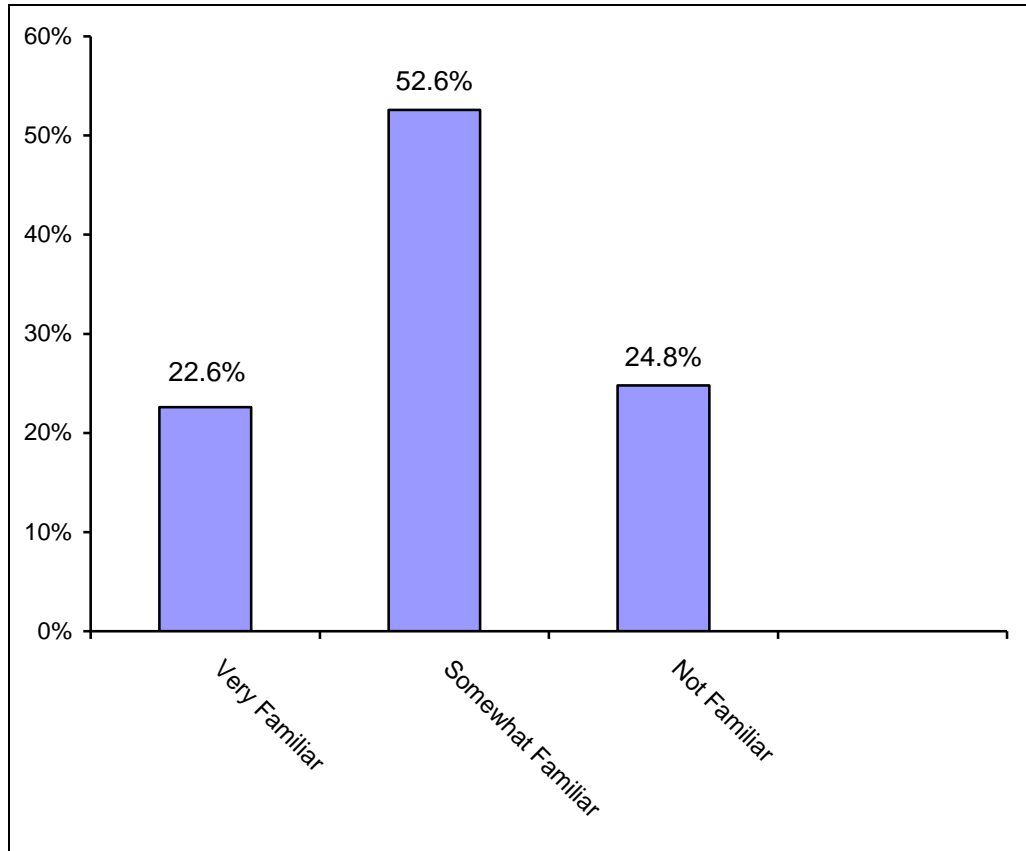
Prior to survey distribution, the Institute for Regional Development applied for and received approval from the Bridgewater State College Institutional Review Board. This board serves to protect human subjects who participate in research done by members of the college community.

The survey was distributed to the entire population of the village of Cotuit's 2,156 residents. (1,348 of the residents mailing addresses were within the village of Cotuit and 808 were elsewhere). The mailing database was provided by the town of Barnstable. A first survey and participation request was sent on May 11, 2007. A second survey and participation request was sent out on May 30, 2007, asking those who had not completed the first survey and return it to do so. On July 7, 2007 the Institute for Regional Development considered all surveys returned and began to analyze the results. A total of 771 surveys were returned from the sample.

At the survey acceptance deadline, survey responses were entered into a computer database. Using the latest state-of-the-art statistical software (SPSS for Windows Version 14.0), the data file was analyzed. Complete protection and confidentiality of the survey database was assured during all phases of data analysis. Access to the database is limited to the project director, and one research assistant.

Fire Service Structure

Figure 1
How familiar are you with the village of Cotuit Fire District?



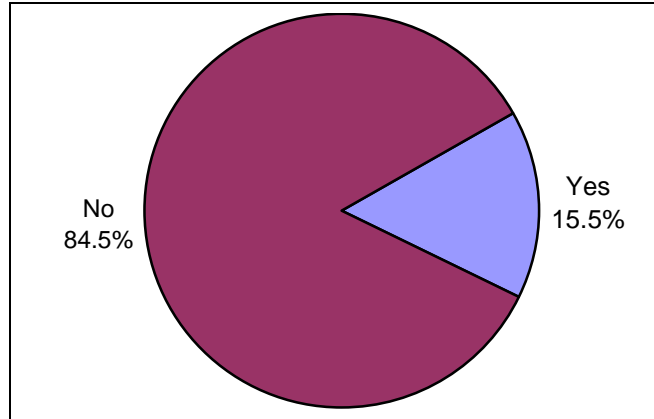
Highlights:

- The majority of respondents (75.2%) report that they are very or somewhat familiar with the village of Cotuit's Fire District.

Fire and Water District Meetings

Figure 2

Have you ever been to a public meeting held by the Prudential Committee?

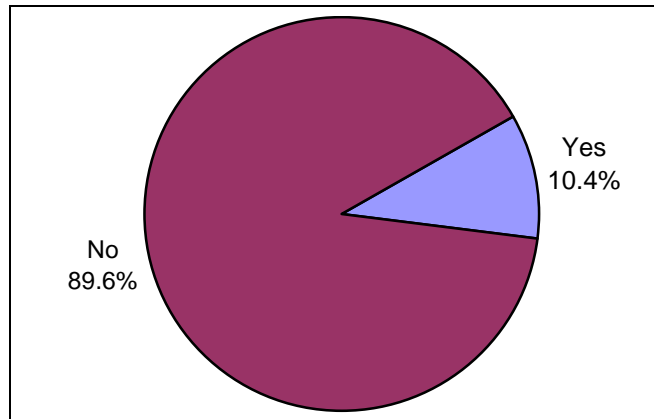


Highlights:

- A strong majority of respondents (84.5%) have never been to a public meeting held by the Prudential Committee.

Figure 3

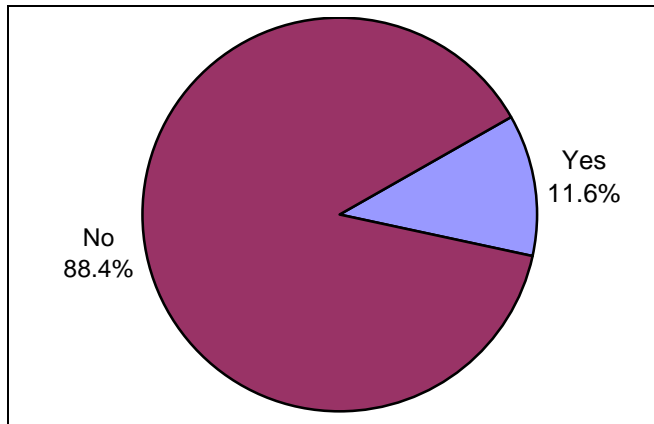
Have you ever been to a public meeting held by the Water Commission?



Highlights:

- Nearly 90 percent (89.6%) of respondents have never been to a Water Commission meeting.

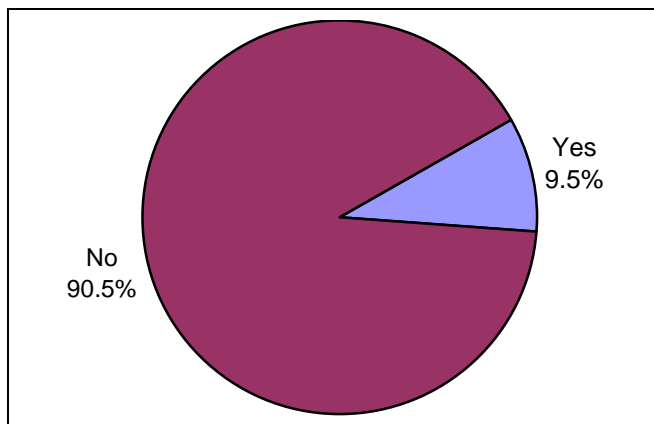
Figure 4
Have you ever been to a public meeting held by the Fire Commission?



Highlights:

- The majority of respondents (88.4%) have never been to a public meeting held by the Fire Commission.

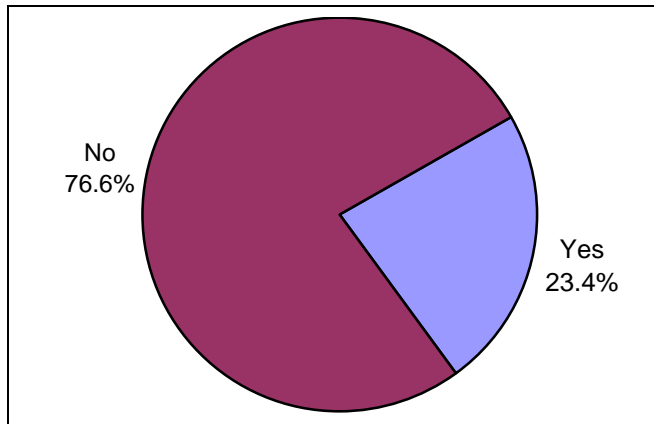
Figure 5
Have you ever attended a fire prevention program offered by the Fire District?



Highlights:

- Over 90 percent (90.5%) of respondents have never attended a fire prevention program offered by the Fire District.

Figure 6
Have you ever attended a Cotuit Fire District Annual Meeting?



Highlights:

- The majority of respondents (76.6%) report they have never attended a Cotuit Fire District Annual Meeting.

Respondent Opinion

Table 1

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am satisfied with the amount of services my family and I receive from the Cotuit Fire District.	64.7%	33.1%	1.0%	1.2%
I think the quality of services offered by the Fire District is a value considering the amount of money I pay in taxes.	54.5%	35.3%	6.2%	4.0%
I am satisfied with the amount of services my family and I receive from the Cotuit Water District.	65.7%	31.0%	2.6%	.7%
I think the quality of services offered by the Water District is a value considering the amount of money I pay in taxes.	58.4%	32.5%	6.8%	2.2%

Highlights:

- An overwhelming majority of respondents (97.8%) are strongly agree or somewhat agree that they are satisfied with the amount of services they receive from the Cotuit Fire District.
- Nearly 90 percent (89.8%) of respondents strongly agree or somewhat agree that the quality of services offered by the Fire District is a value considering the amount of money they pay in taxes.
- The majority of respondents (65.7%) strongly agree that they are satisfied with the amount of services my family and I receive from the Cotuit Water District.
- Over half of respondents (58.4%) strongly agree that the quality of services offered by the Water District is a value considering the amount of money I pay in taxes.

Table 2

	Strongly Support	Support	Somewhat Support/ I need more information	Do not support
Improvements to the Cotuit Library	38.3%	32.5%	24.0%	5.2%
Beautification of parks and open spaces	27.7%	40.5%	24.9%	6.9%
Streetscape improvements	32.5%	33.4%	24.8%	9.3%
Town dock improvements	19.8%	33.3%	35.4%	11.5%
Increased police patrols	25.7%	36.5%	28.7%	9.1%
Improvements to Freedom Hall	17.5%	29.3%	41.8%	11.4%

Highlights:

- The majority of respondents (70.8%) of respondents either strongly support or support improvements to the Cotuit Library.
- Nearly 70 percent (68.2%) of respondents either strongly support or somewhat support beautification of parks and open spaces.
- 65.9 percent of respondents either strongly support or support streetscape improvements in Cotuit.

Table 3
Other description

N=76	Frequency
Road repairs/road improvements	26
Improved/cleaner beaches	19
Sidewalks, especially on Putnam Rd	5
Other	36

Figure 7

Would you be willing to pay additional taxes to go toward improvements in Cotuit such as landscaping, town dock improvements, etc.

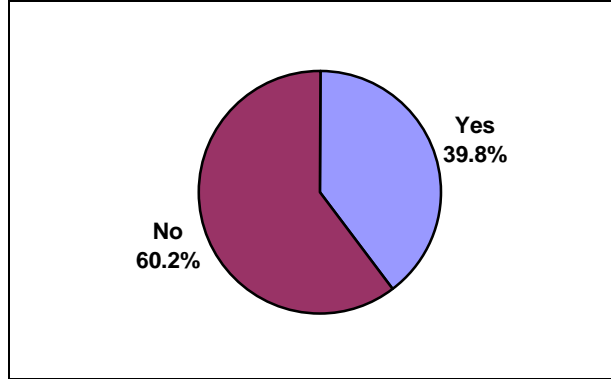


Figure 8

Would you be willing to donate time and or funds to a Cotuit Fire District program or event?

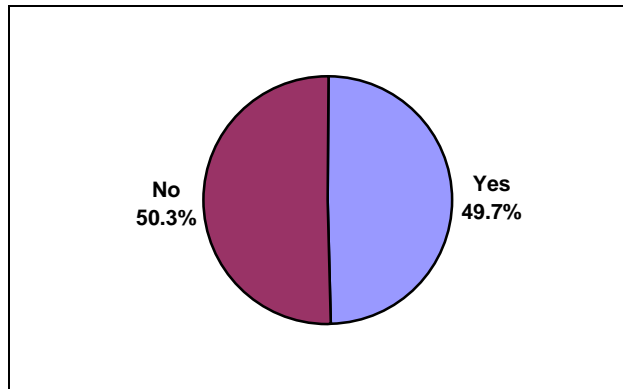


Figure 9

Do you think that the Fire District should develop a plan to improve the village of Cotuit?

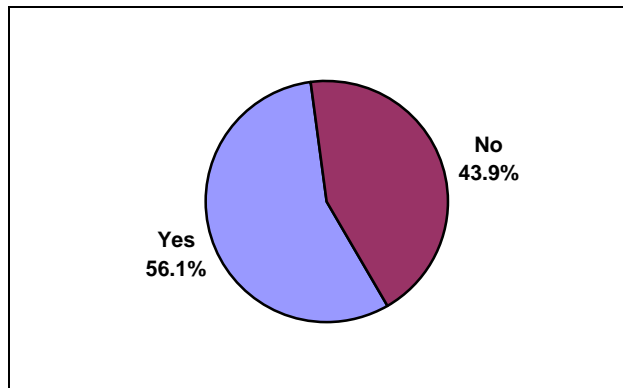
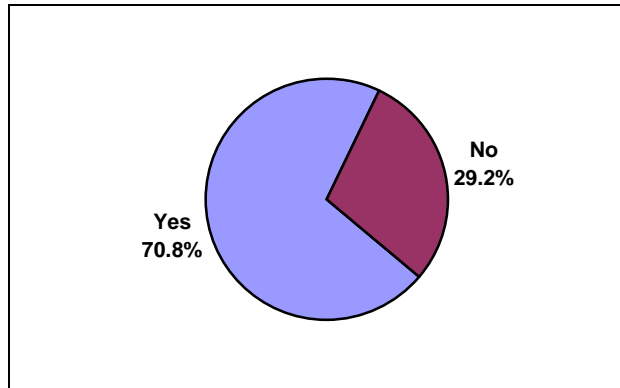


Figure 10

Do you think the Cotuit Fire District should have one central office?

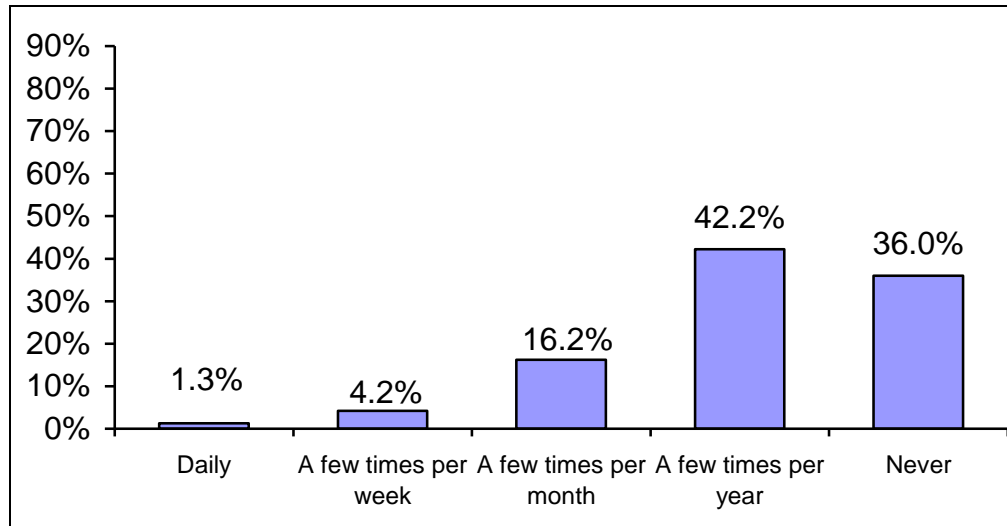


Highlights:

- The majority of respondents (60.2%) are not willing to pay additional taxes to go toward improvements in Cotuit such as landscaping, town dock improvements, etc.
- Slightly less than half of all respondents (49.7%) would be willing to donate time and or funds to a Cotuit Fire District program or event.
- The majority of respondents (56.1%) think that the Fire District should develop a plan to improve the village of Cotuit.
- A strong majority of respondents (70.8%) think that they Cotuit Fire District should have one central office.

General

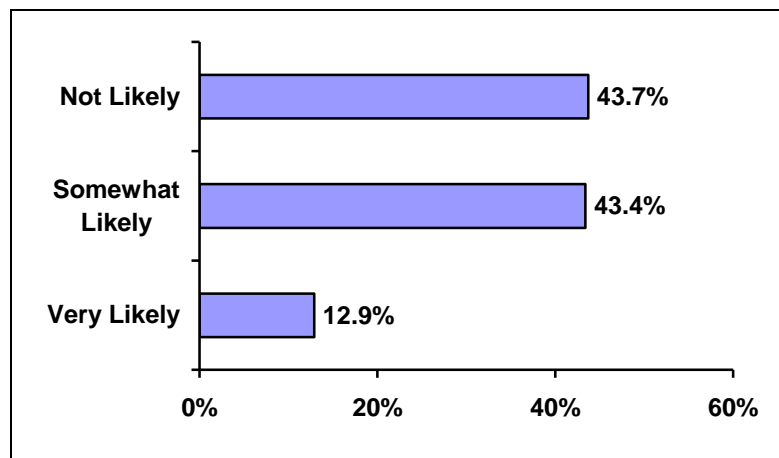
Figure 11
Have often do you visit the Town of Barnstable's website?



Highlights:

- Only 1 out of 5 respondents (21.7%) visit the Town of Barnstable's website at least monthly.

Figure 12
If the Cotuit Fire District established a website, how likely would you be to use it?



Highlights:

- 56.3 percent of respondents report that they would be very or somewhat likely to visit a Cotuit Fire District website.

Table 4
What types of information would you like on the website?

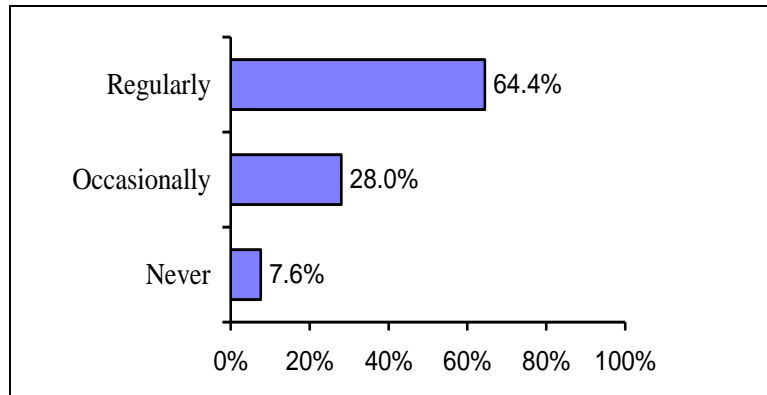
N=238	Percent
Area activities, events, general information	42.0%
General town information	16.8%
Village news	14.7%
Dates and information on public meetings	9.2%
Village budget information	2.9%
Tourist/beach information	2.5%
History of Cotuit	1.7%
Other	10.1%

Highlights:

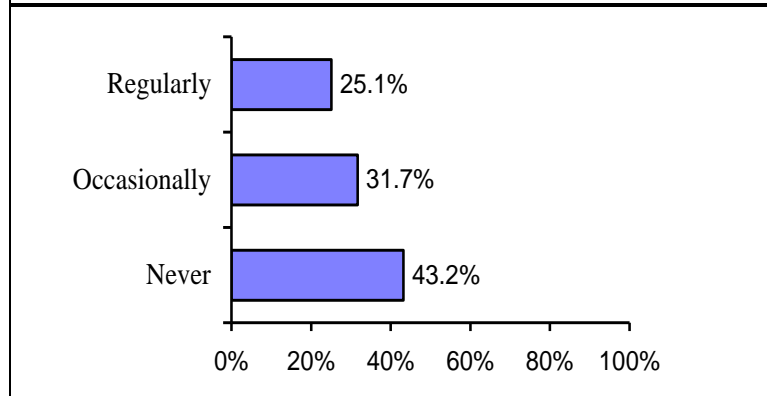
- The majority of respondents (42.0%) would like to see information on area activities, events and general information on a Cotuit Fire District Website.

How often do you watch, listen, or read any of the following news outlets?

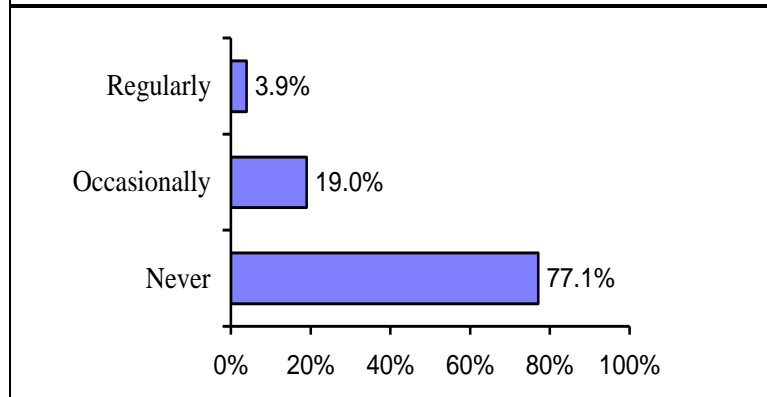
**Figure 13
The Cape Cod Times**



**Figure 14
The Barnstable Patriot**



**Figure 15
The Register**



**Figure 16
Channel 18 Town Cable Network**

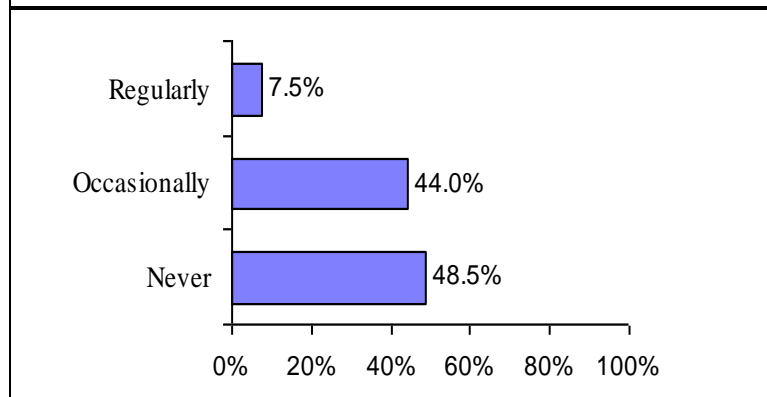


Figure 17
Municipal
Newsletter: The
Barnstable Bulletin

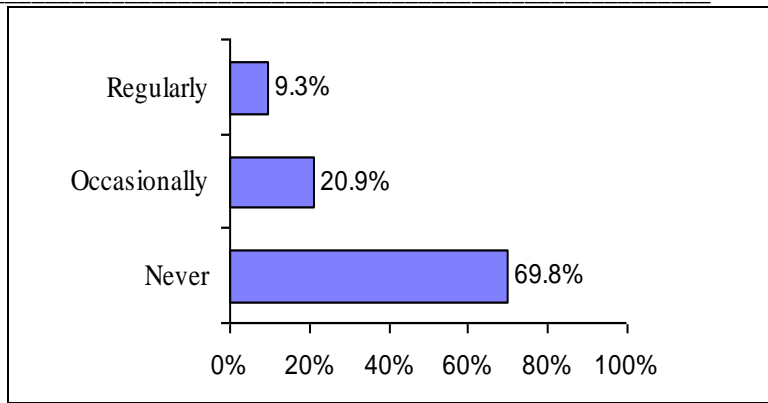


Figure 18
WXTK 95.1

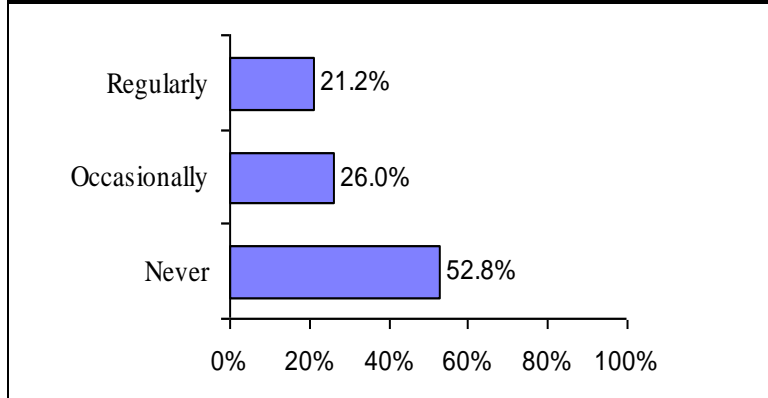
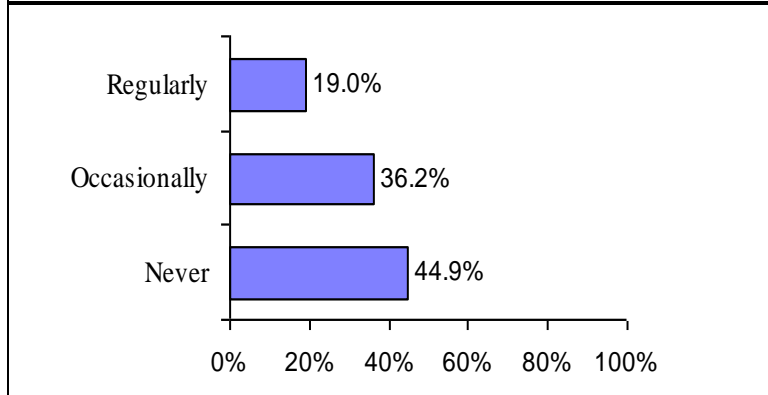


Figure 19
WQRC 99.9



Highlights:

- Almost 65.0 percent (64.4%) of respondents regularly read The Cape Cod Times.

Table 5
Other, please write in...

N=105	Frequency
Other radio stations	43
Cotuit Currents	18
Boston Globe	13
WCAI	11
NPR	6
Other TV Stations	4

Table 6
Are there any other comments, concerns, or questions you have about the Cotuit Fire District?

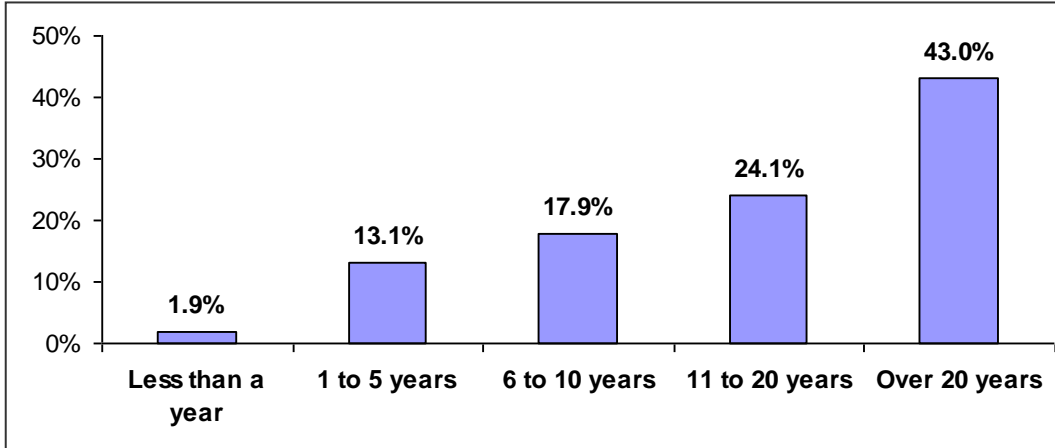
N=198	Percentage
Confusion about fire district responsibilities	19.7%
Happy with current fire district performance	19.7%
Consolidate fire departments	8.6%
Roads repairs and improvements	7.6%
Fire fighters are overpaid	7.1%
Taxes should be lowered	5.1%
Do not consolidate fire departments	4.4%
Cleaner beaches and parks	2.5%
Other	25.8%

Highlights:

- Nearly 1 out of 5 respondents (19.7%) report that they are confused about the fire district responsibilities.

Sample Demographic Characteristics

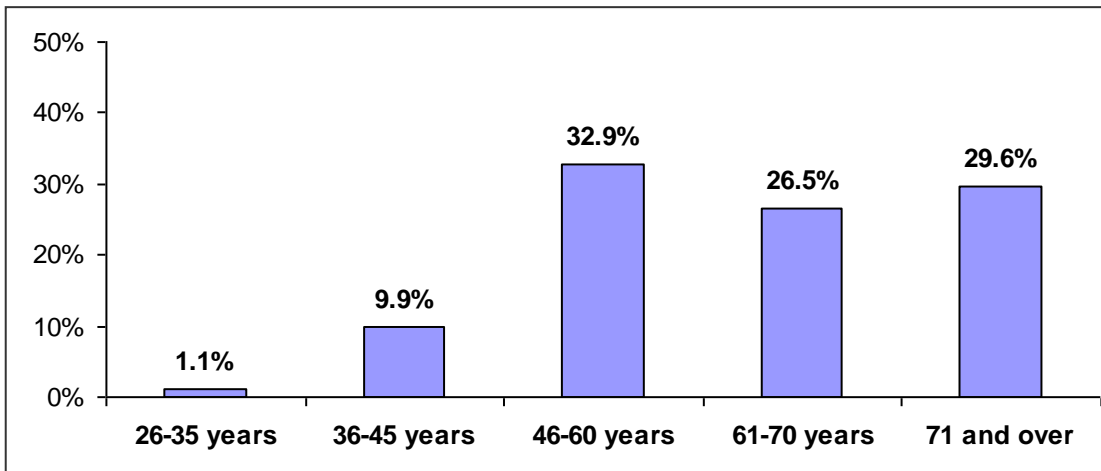
Figure 20
How long have you lived in Cotuit?



Highlights:

- A strong majority of respondents (67.1%) have lived in Cotuit ten years or more.

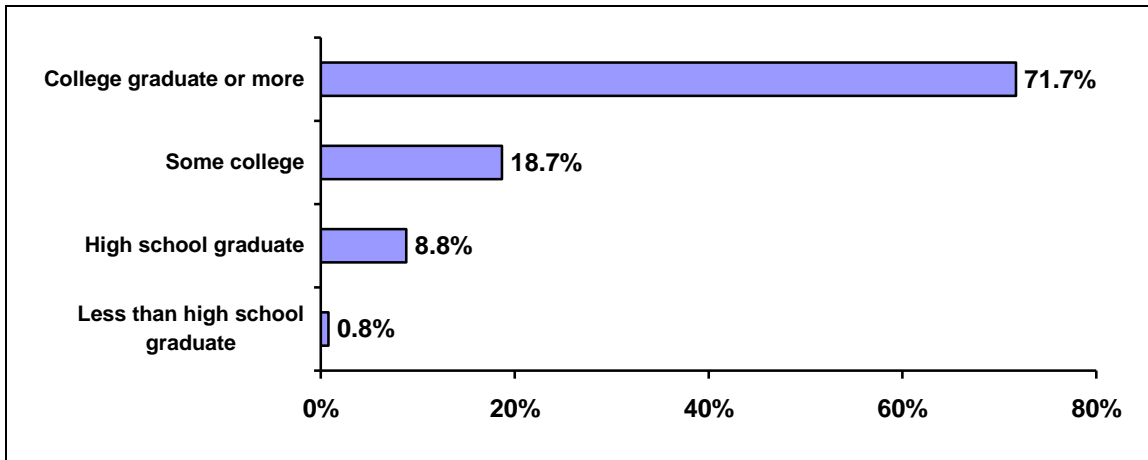
Figure 21
Into which of the following age groups do you fall?



Highlights:

- More than half of respondents (56.1%) are over age 61.

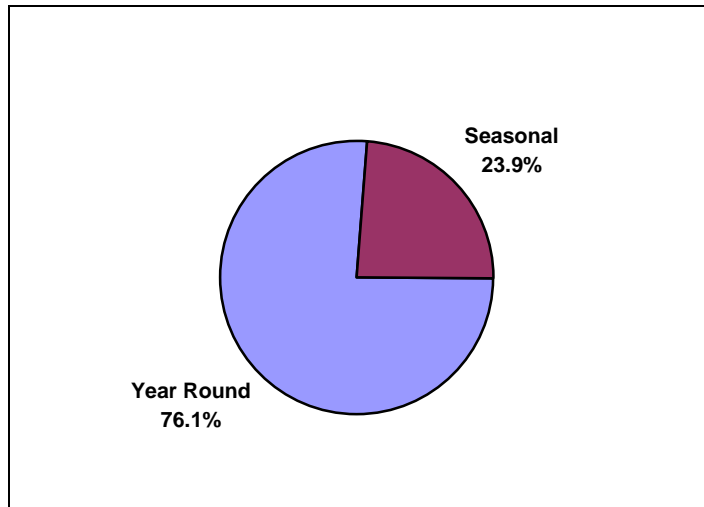
Figure 22
What is the last grade in school you completed?



Highlights:

- A strong majority of respondents (71.7%) report that they are college graduates or more.

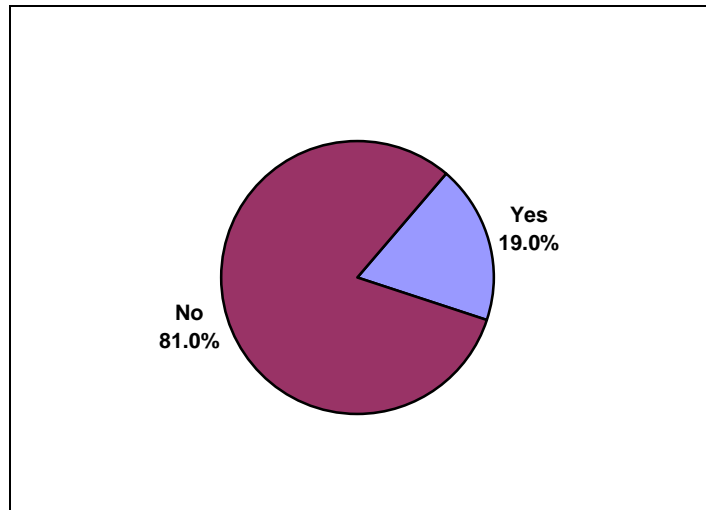
Figure 23
Are you a seasonal or year round resident?



Highlights:

- The majority of respondents (76.1%) report that they are year round residents of Cotuit.

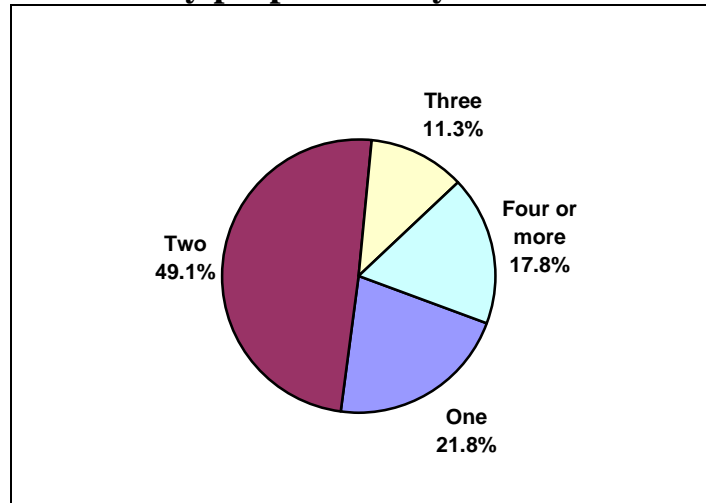
Figure 24
Do you have children under the age of 17 living in your home?



Highlights:

- A great majority of all respondents (81.0%) report not having children under 17 years of age living in the home.

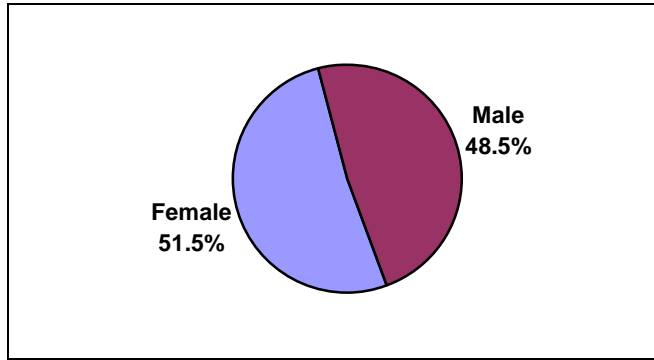
Figure 25
How many people live in your household?



Highlights:

- Nearly half of all respondents (49.1%) report that they have two people who live in their household.

Figure 26
What is your gender?



Highlights:

- Slightly more than half of respondents (51.5%) are female.



Institute for Regional Development

One of the missions of Bridgewater State College is to serve the Southeastern Massachusetts region by working to enhance its intellectual, economic, cultural and civic well being. To this end, the College established the Institute for Regional Development on September 1, 1996. The Institute serves as the viable focal point for College initiatives related to enhancing the quality of life in Southeastern Massachusetts. The mission of the Institute is to serve as a resource center for the public, private, and non-profit sectors of Southeastern Massachusetts through applied research, training, and technical assistance programs.

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