

CCRA Reports Findings of March Survey

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

In March, the Center City Residents' Association conducted a survey of Center City West residents, mostly members, to gather opinions about CCRA's activities, communications, and member attendance at events.

Importance of CCRA's activities

The survey listed CCRA's activities and asked respondents to choose the three most important. Zoning and land-use regulation was chosen by the highest percentage, followed by working with groups to reduce homelessness and panhandling; weekly sidewalk cleaning; street maintenance and safety; and legislative oversight of city and state government. Other activities chosen by more than 10 percent were historic preservation, tree planting, merchant discounts, police liaison, and community garden.

Zoning and land-use regulation includes monitoring land use, development, demolition projects, zoning applications, signage, and new-building height and density, and meeting with developers of large building projects. Almost all activities are conducted by volunteers.

Merchant discounts

Of the merchants offering a discount to CCRA members, the most used or likely to be used was Di Bruno Bros., named by over 90 percent of respondents. Second was Rittenhouse Hardware, named by over 70 percent. Other merchants named by 20 percent or more of respondents were Dom's Shoe Repair, Good Karma Café, and PhotoLounge. Several others were named also, and more than half of respondents said they would tend to patronize merchants offering discounts or specials to members.

Communications

Almost 80 percent of respondents said they use CCRA's weekly e-newsletter for information about CCRA and its community activities, and more than half said they use the *Center City Quarterly* publication. Just over 20 percent use CCRA's website. Almost three-quarters of respondents found the *Center City Quarterly* helpful or interesting, and more than 60 percent favored changing it to electronic distribution to reduce costs. Fifteen percent wanted printing of the *Quarterly* to continue, and the rest had no preference.

Events

More than half of respondents attended a town hall meeting in the past three years, and almost half attended a home and garden tour. About one-third attended an annual meet-and-greet social event.

Other local organizations

Many respondents belong to other local organizations including Center City District* (46 percent), Philadelphia City Institute Library (no-fee user group; 37 percent), Friends of Rittenhouse Square (35 percent), Friends of Schuylkill River Park (30 percent), Friends of Philadelphia City Institute (contributors; 21 percent), and Friends in the City (20 percent).

Profile of CCRA survey respondents

Almost all respondents live within the CCRA footprint between Broad Street and the Schuylkill River, and JFK Boulevard and South Street, and are members of CCRA.

Over 80 percent have lived in this neighborhood more than six years, in either a single-family residence or a large condo or co-op. Half of respondents live in two-person households; just under one-third live alone. Respondents skewed older; most ranged in age from 50 to 80+ years old. More than 40 percent are retired, and about 30 percent work full time. Annual household income skewed toward the high end. Among respondents, almost 60 percent were female, and 40 percent male.

Method

The questionnaire was designed on Survey Monkey and distributed to 1,600 people in March, via CCRA's e-newsletter, and posted on the CCRA Facebook page. The list included CCRA members, former members, and non-members. The response rate of 37 percent consisted of 587 people who completed the questionnaire. Over 80 percent of respondents were members of CCRA.

Center City Residents' Association (CCRA), with almost 600 dues-paying residential members, is a nonprofit, volunteer-led organization devoted to making our neighborhood, Center City West, a better place to live, work and play since 1947. Membership benefits include advocacy for our residential neighborhood, a weekly e-news, a quarterly publication, several annual social events, and merchant discounts.

<https://centercityresidents.wildapricot.org/>

**Center City District (CCD) is a business improvement district with the purpose of making Center City clean and safe for businesses, residents, students, shoppers, and tourists. In addition, CCD manages Dilworth, Sister Cities, John F. Collins and Cret Parks. CCD was created by the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation (CPDC). Center City District Foundation (CCDF) is the charitable affiliate. CCD sends a free e-newsletter about events in Center City upon request.*

<https://centercityphila.org/>