

**CIVIC PARTICIPATION BY ASIAN
RESIDENTS OF LEXINGTON:
EXPERIENCES, FINDINGS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Subcommittee on Demographic Change

Lexington 2020 Vision Committee

Final, December 13, 2013

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	6
Introduction	9
Background	9
Subcommittee Charge	9
Subcommittee membership	10
Subcommittee activities	10
Outline of the report.....	11
A note on our terminology.....	11
Data and information on Lexington’s Asian residents	12
Lexington’s Asian population	12
Breakdown of Lexington’s Asian population	12
Residents of Asian origins in Lexington and neighboring communities	13
Asian populations in Lexington schools and in school districts with large Asian population	14
Percentage of Asian students by school	14
Age profiles	15
Citizenship and nativity	15
English proficiency	16
Educational attainment and income.....	18
Asian community associations.....	19
Participation in Town affairs	20
Factors attracting Asians to Lexington.....	22
Subcommittee charge	22

Methodology.....	22
Factors that attract Asian-Americans to Lexington	22
Likely permanent residents vs. transient residents	23
Barriers to participation in Town affairs	25
Subcommittee Charge	25
Methodology.....	25
Findings and Analysis	26
Assessment of our methodology regarding the identification of barriers	35
Activities or events to increase the community’s inclusion of Asian-Americans	37
Subcommittee charge	37
Actions taken by Town Departments and Lexington Public Schools.....	38
Subcommittee charge	38
Methodology.....	38
Findings - Summary.....	38
Detailed Findings.....	39
Steps taken by Massachusetts communities to increase inclusion.....	46
Subcommittee charge	46
Methodology.....	46
Findings	47
Recommendations	48
Recommendations regarding reducing barriers to civic participation by Asian residents	48
Other recommendations.....	50
Acknowledgments.....	52
Appendix A – Subcommittee Charter	54
Appendix B – Background data collection sheet	55

Appendix C – Interview Guide for those who are serving or have served on elected bodies or committees.....	56
Appendix D – Interview guide for those who are serving or who have served on PTAs, PTOs and LexFun	58
Appendix E – Letter of consent	60
Appendix F – Process for interviewers.....	61
Appendix G – Evidence that Asian residents are staying on in Lexington after their children leave home	62

List of figures

Figure 1 - Massachusetts communities with the highest percentages of Asian residents.....	12
Figure 2 - Breakdown by origin of Lexington's Asian residents	13
Figure 3 - Evolution of Asian populations in Lexington and neighboring communities	13
Figure 4 - Percentage of students of Asian origin in Lexington Public Schools (2012-2013).....	14
Figure 5 - Age profiles of Lexington's Asian and non-Asian residents in 2010	15
Figure 6 - Citizenship and Nativity of Chinese, Indian and Korean residents 18 and over in 2000 and 2010	16
Figure 7 - Self-assessed English proficiency of Chinese residents over the age of five	16
Figure 8 - Self-assessed English proficiency of Indian residents over the age of five.....	17
Figure 9 - Self-assessed English proficiency of Korean residents over the age of five	17
Figure 10 - Educational attainment for residents 25 years of age and older	18
Figure 11 - Top reason for moving to Lexington cited by 29 interview subjects.....	22

Figure 12 - Percentage of all reasons for moving to Lexington cited by 29 interview subjects 23

Figure 13 - Percentage of responses given by interview subjects who served on elected bodies and committees to the questions: “What did you enjoy most about serving on the board/committee?” and “How did you personally benefit from serving on the board/committee?” 28

Figure 14 - Percentage of responses given by interview subjects who served on PTA and PTO boards to the questions: “What did you enjoy most about serving on the board/committee?” and “How did you personally benefit from serving on the board/committee?” 29

Figure 15 - Percentage of responses given by those who served on Town bodies regarding the nature of barriers impeding civic participation by Asian residents 31

Figure 16 - Percentage of responses given by those who served on PTA and PTO boards regarding the nature of barriers impeding civic participation by Asian residents 32

Figure 17 – Age profiles for “Asian alone” residents, for all other residents and for elected officials and for volunteers only (20 years and older) 33

Figure 18 - Percentage of residents with Asian ancestry in several communities in the Greater Boston area 46

List of tables

Table 1 - Massachusetts school systems with the highest percentage of students of Asian origin by school year 14

Table 2 - Participation of Asian residents on Lexington's elected bodies and committees 20

Table 3 - Participation by Asian parents on PTA and PTO boards of Lexington’s public schools (2012-2013) 21

Table 4 - Estimates of the percentage and number of Chinese, Indian and Korean adults likely to stay in the USA, and thus Lexington, as long as any other non-Asian adult residents 24

Table 5 - Profile of interview subjects..... 27

Table 6 – Current and planned services and challenges in the Fire Department. John Wilson, Chief	39
Table 7 - Current and planned services and challenges in the Police Department. Mark Corr, Chief.....	40
Table 8 - Current and planned services and challenges in the Human Services Department. Charlotte Rodgers, Director	41
Table 9 - Current and planned services and challenges in the Health Department. Gerard Cody, Director	42
Table 10 - Current and planned services and challenges at Cary Memorial Library. Koren Stembridge, Director	43
Table 11 - Current and planned services and challenges in the Recreation Department. Karen Simmons, Director	43
Table 12 - Current and planned services and challenges in the Lexington Public Schools' English Language Learner Program (ELLP). Robyn Dowling-Grant, Coordinator	44
Table 13 - Current and planned services and Lexington Public Schools' Human Resources. Robert Harris, Assistant Superintendent.....	45
Table 14 - Civic participation in select communities with substantial Asian populations	47

Executive Summary

Background

The Subcommittee on Demographic Change was chartered by Lexington's 2020 Vision Committee to follow up on several recommendations of the Demographic Change Task Force, which the 2020 Vision Committee had also set up and whose report was released in March 2010. The Subcommittee's most important objective was to identify the barriers, real or perceived, that are preventing greater participation of Lexington's Asian residents on the Town's boards and committees and to suggest steps that would lower barriers to their participation. The earlier study had found that, while residents of Asian ancestry were estimated to represent about 20% of the Lexington's population, they only filled about 2% of the positions on the Town's boards and committees.

A Caveat

Throughout the report, we use the terms such as "Asian residents," fully cognizant that this group is not a homogeneous one. Indeed, these residents represent many different cultures and may face different issues. Where our data sources permit, e.g., immigration status or proficiency in English, we are able to draw some distinctions, particularly among residents of Chinese, Indian and Korean ancestry. However, when it comes to our main objective, identifying barriers to civic participation, the numbers that we are dealing with are too low to draw any distinctions based on ancestral origin.

Background data

To establish the context for the current investigation, the Subcommittee drew on data from the Census Bureau, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Town of Lexington, and conducted an email survey. Our investigations reveal the following:

- According to the 2010 Census, Lexington ranks the fourth highest in the Commonwealth in the percentage of Asian residents: 19.9%. Only Quincy at 24.0%, Lowell at 20.2% and Malden at 20.1% have higher percentages.
- The Lexington Public Schools rank second in the Commonwealth in the percentage of students of Asian ancestry – 30.9% in the 2012-13 school year. Quincy Public Schools rank first at 34.2%.
- The quality of our schools was most frequently cited by Asian residents as their reason for moving to Lexington.
- Adult Asian residents have relatively more advanced degrees than non-Asian resident
- Median family incomes are similar: approximately \$160,000 in 2010.
- With the exception of the older residents, the English proficiency of Asian residents is generally high.
- The age profile of Asian residents differs substantially from that of non-Asians: the median age is about seven years lower.
- Approximately 70% of adult Asian residents were either born in the United States or are naturalized citizens. This suggests that they may remain in the United States indefinitely.

- The two Asian community organizations – the Chinese American Association of Lexington (CAAL) and the Indian Americans of Lexington (IAL) – have begun to encourage their members to become more active in civic affairs.
- In 2013, 3% of Lexington residents serving on the Town’s boards and committees are of Asian ancestry. For PTA/PTO boards, the participation rate is substantially higher: more than 13%.

Findings

To identify barriers – real or perceived – to civic participation, the Subcommittee conducted structured interviews of Asian residents who currently, or recently, served as members of the Town’s elected bodies and committees. The Subcommittee also interviewed Asian members of PTA and PTO boards, using a virtually identical interview guide. Our findings reveal that both categories of interview subjects attribute the low participation to three factors:

1. Demographics of the Asian residents: Young, working parents, some of whose free time is taken up with their children’s cultural activities, leaving little time for civic affairs; relatively few older residents who might have time for participation in Town affairs.
2. Culture: A lack of comfort with speaking up and being in the spotlight as well as a limited tradition of volunteering in civic affairs.
3. Lack of awareness: Not aware that much of the work of running the Town is performed by volunteers; lack of information on the work of committees and on the skills being sought by the committees.

Some of those who served on PTA and PTO boards also cited command of English and a perception of not being welcomed by non-Asians.

The Subcommittee also investigated the steps being taken and planned by Town departments and the Lexington Public Schools in response to the growth of Lexington’s Asian population. For the Police, Fire, Health and Human Services, the challenges lie primarily in (a) communicating with elderly Asian residents – predominantly Mandarin-speaking – who speak English poorly or not at all, and (b) ensuring that their staffs develop sensitivity to the Lexington’s different Asian cultures. Their solutions rely on a combination of translated documents, using translators where needed and holding cultural sensitivity training sessions. The Lexington Public Schools are responding by hiring more teachers for the English Language Learner Program, as mandated by Commonwealth Law, and by attempting to hire more teachers and staff of Asian ancestry. They attribute their limited success in hiring the latter to a very small pool of candidates and the preference of some candidates for teaching in urban schools.

Finally, the Subcommittee attempted to learn about activities aimed at increasing civic participation of Asian residents in several communities in the Metropolitan area. Although a few of these communities have elected Asian residents to town-wide bodies, we learned of no formally sponsored initiative similar to the work of our Subcommittee.

Recommendations to reduce barriers to participation

The Subcommittee believes that removing barriers to participation would help the Asian communities by creating a better understanding of their views, culture and norms, and it would make Asian residents more comfortable living in Lexington. From the perspective of the Town as a whole, it would avoid

potential polarization and enrich the Town with the skills, culture and traditions of its Asian residents. Removing the barriers will require outreach or “pull” from the Town and PTAs and PTOs combined with “push” from CAAL and IAL. Accordingly, the Subcommittee recommends the following:

1. *For the Board of Selectmen*
 - Continue to promote the inclusion of Asian residents.
 - Take steps to establish an ongoing dialogue with CAAL and IAL.
2. *For the officials with authority to appoint board and committee members – the Board of Selectmen, the Town Manager and the Town Moderator*
 - Modify the management of the committees under their purview with the objective of fostering greater participation by Asian residents.
3. *For the PTAs and PTOs*
 - Set up communications channels with CAAL and IAL.
 - Seek advice from Asian PTA/O board members on how to attract more board participation by Asian parents.
 - Establish a collaboration with the CAAL and IAL to identify the factors leading to the perceived lack of welcome and suggest steps to change that perception.
4. *For CAAL and IAL*
 - Continue to encourage their members to participate in Town affairs and on PTAs and PTOs.
 - Continue to provide support to those who do participate.
 - Strengthen their communications with Town leaders.

Other recommendations

5. *For the Fire, Health, Human Services and Police Departments*
 - Twice a year, invite CAAL and IAL to participate in their coordination meetings.
6. *For the 2020 Vision Committee*
 - Continue to monitor the demographics and civic participation of Asian residents.
7. *For the Town Clerk*
 - Provide data to enable item #6 above.

Introduction

Background

In April 2010, the Demographic Change Task Force, chartered in 2008 by the Lexington 2020 Vision Committee, released a [report](#) whose executive summary begins as follows:

Lexington is experiencing a dramatic change in its racial composition and a substantial modification of its age profile.

In 1990, just over 6% of the Town's residents were of Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Korean or other Asian origin. By 2000, the percentage of residents of Asian origin had risen to 11%; at the end of 2009 it may have reached 20%. This percentage is substantially higher in Lexington than in any other neighboring community. According to the 2005-2007 American Community Survey, conducted by the Census Bureau, Asian Americans of Chinese origin represented about 10% of Lexington's population; they were followed by Indians and Koreans, each at about 2.5%, and Japanese and Vietnamese at 0.5% each. At present, residents of Asian origin are significantly under-represented in the Town's Departments, Boards and Committees.

The report recommended several steps to develop a better understanding of the growth of the Asian population; it also recommended the formation of "a task force to identify and implement effective ways to accelerate and broaden participation of Town's Asian-American population in its government, boards, associations, and committees."

Apart from a request by Lexington's Town Manager, Carl Valente, that Town Department Managers (e.g. Chief of Police, Cary Memorial Library Director) identify steps to be taken by their organizations in response to the report, no other action was taken until late 2011. At that time, the 2020 Vision Committee decided to charter a group, the Subcommittee on Demographic Change, to follow up on several of the Task Force's recommendations. By February 2012, the charter was complete, and recruitment of members was initiated. (Details in Appendix A)

Subcommittee Charge

The 2020 Vision Committee gave the Subcommittee the following charge:

1. Assess the steps taken by Town Departments to ensure that services, including emergency services, are effectively delivered to Town residents who do not speak English or speak it poorly.
2. Investigate the factors that attract Asian-Americans to Lexington; estimate the proportion of Asian Americans who move to Lexington with the intention of living here indefinitely and those who are temporary residents.
3. Identify any barriers that currently limit the participation of Town's Asian-American population in its government, boards, associations, and committees; propose and facilitate steps to making them welcome on these bodies and comfortable in participating on them.

4. Develop ideas regarding activities or events that will increase the community's inclusion of Asian-Americans residing here.
5. Assess steps taken by Massachusetts communities that have experienced significant demographic changes in recent years. Determine what worked and what did not, and what could be applied in Lexington.

The 2020 Vision Committee recognized that #3 above was the most important of the Subcommittee's responsibilities and would consume the bulk of its time and effort.

Subcommittee membership

Initially, the Subcommittee was chartered to consist of a maximum of ten members, including three from the 2020 Vision Committee, 3-4 from the Asian-American community, and 2-3 from PTAs (later broadened to include interested residents). In August 2012, having recognized the likely effort required to complete its work by its target date of December 2013, the 2020 Vision Committee voted to increase the maximum size of the Subcommittee to twelve members.

The Subcommittee members and their affiliations are listed below:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Representing</i>
Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti	At large
Pat Costello	At large
Nirmala Garimella	Indian Americans of Lexington (IAL)
Margaret Heitz	At large
Albert Huang	Chinese-American Association of Lexington (CAAL)
Martin Hwang	At large
Bhumip Khasnabish	2020 Vision Committee
Dan Krupka (Chair)	2020 Vision Committee
John Lee	At large
Peter Lee	2020 Vision Committee
Susie Lee-Snell	At large

"At large" members Martin Hwang, John Lee and Susie Lee-Snell are from the Korean community, which has no formal organization such as CAAL or IAL.

Subcommittee activities

The Subcommittee met monthly, with four meetings devoted to discussions with department managers: Mark Corr, Chief, Police Department; John Wilson, Chief, Fire Department; Charlotte Rodgers, Director, Human Services Department; and Koren Stembridge, Director, Cary Memorial Library. It also had discussions with Gerard Cody, Director, Health Department; Robyn Dowling-Grant, K-12 Coordinator English Learner Education Program, Lexington Public Schools; Robert Harris, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Lexington Public Schools; Diamond Hayes, a Lexington-based real estate sales associate and member of Lexington's Chinese community; and Hua Wang, who leads CAAL's program to increase civic engagement of CAAL and its members.

In light of the importance of understanding the barriers that limit participation of Asian residents in Town affairs, several meetings were devoted to developing the process to achieve that understanding. As described in the following, the core of the process consisted of interviews of Asian residents who serve, or who had recently served, on the Town's elected bodies and volunteer committees as well as on PTA and PTO boards.

At each monthly meeting of the 2020 Vision Committee, the Chair of the Subcommittee or one of its members from the 2020 Vision Committee reported on the progress of the Subcommittee. Often, the reports stimulated ideas which were subsequently conveyed to the Subcommittee.

Outline of the report

We begin with background material on Lexington's Asian residents, largely based on the latest data from the US Census Bureau and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The data and information are used to establish a context for the current investigation and to support some of our conclusions. We next examine the factors attracting Asians to Lexington, drawing on the responses of 29 Asian residents and on an analysis of real estate transactions. Data on, and analysis of, the barriers affecting the civic engagement of Asian residents constitute the next and most important section of this report. We describe in detail the interview process used to obtain the data, and we present our findings including (a) the benefits of civic participation reported by the interview subjects; (b) the barriers Asian residents may perceive as affecting their participation in Town affairs; and (c) their suggestions for increasing civic participation. The following section describes the steps being taken and planned by Town Departments and within Lexington's schools in response to the size and growth rate of the Asian population. We then turn to the steps being taken by communities, such as Acton and Westborough with demographics similar to Lexington's, in response to the growth of their Asian populations. All of our recommendations are presented in the final section.

A note on our terminology

Although the charter, given to us by our parent committee, uses the term "Asian Americans," we prefer to use "Asian residents" as a shorthand way of referring to residents of Asian ancestry. We believe that temporary residents who come from China, India, Korea, Japan – or from any Asian country – would not refer to themselves as Asian Americans. We found that repeated use of the term "residents of Asian ancestry" is stylistically awkward, while "Asian" sounds unwelcoming, though unavoidable in some cases. In addition to "Asian residents" and, less frequently, "residents of Asian ancestry," we use "Asian population" and "Asian PTA/PTO members."

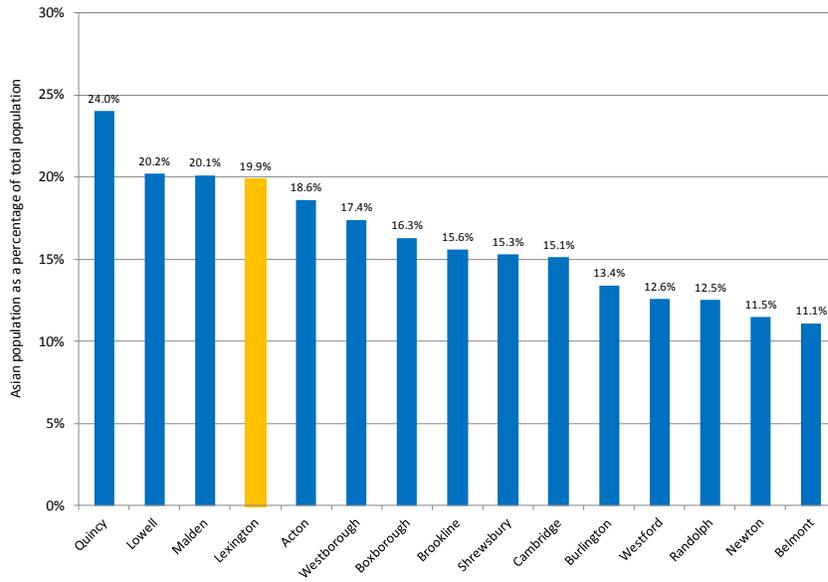
Data and information on Lexington’s Asian residents

To provide context for the work of the Subcommittee, we present data and information on Lexington’s Asian residents, drawn primarily from the 2010 US Census and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE).

Lexington’s Asian population

According to the 2010 census, Lexington had the fourth highest percentage of Asian residents in the Commonwealth. Only Quincy, Lowell and Malden had higher percentages. The results for the 15 communities with the highest percentages of Asian residents are shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1 - Massachusetts communities with the highest percentages of Asian residents



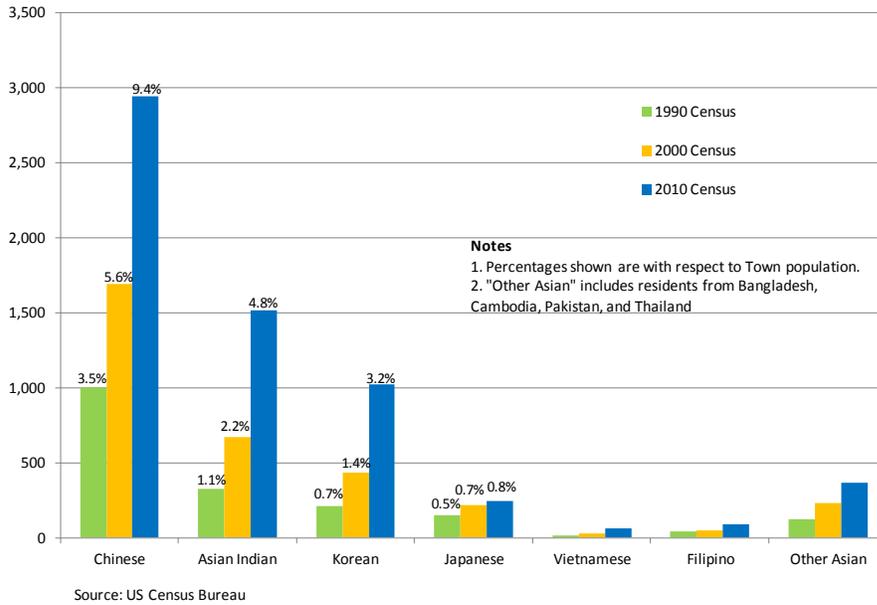
Source: Census Bureau (2010 Census SF1, Chart DP-1)

Breakdown of Lexington’s Asian population

As shown in **Figure 2**, Lexington’s Asian population is growing rapidly. In 1990, residents of Asian origin represented 6.4% of the Town’s population; by 2000, they accounted for 10.9%. Between 2000 and 2010 their numbers nearly doubled: In 2010, 19.9% of the Town’s residents were of Asian ancestry. If the overall Asian population has grown at the same rate as the number of Lexington students of Asian origin (see below), Asian residents represent approximately 22% of the Town’s population in 2013.

The Chinese residents, whose number tripled from 1990 to 2010, now account for about 50% of Lexington’s Asian population. Indian and Korean residents represent about 25% and 15%, respectively. Currently, the Indian and Korean communities are growing more rapidly than the Chinese community.

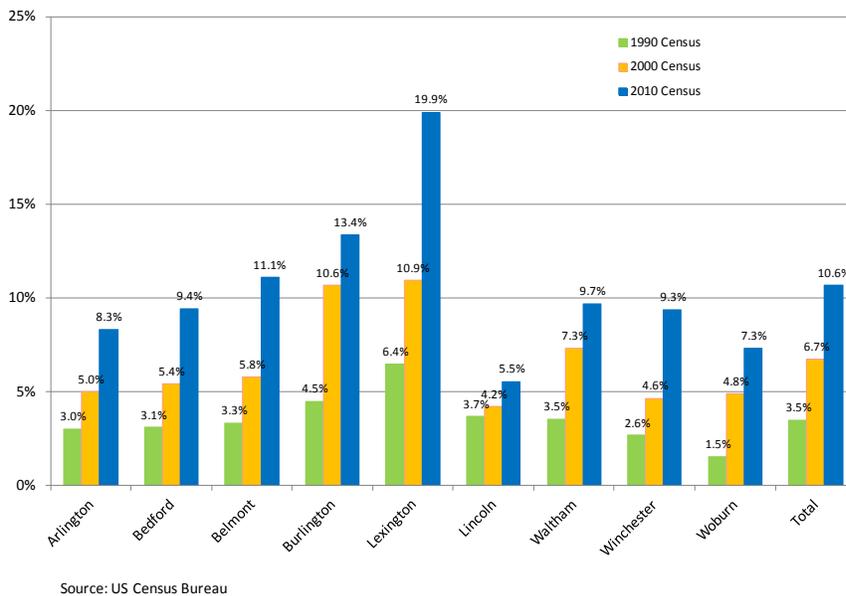
Figure 2 - Breakdown by origin of Lexington's Asian residents



Residents of Asian origins in Lexington and neighboring communities

Lexington's percentage of residents of Asian origin is growing more rapidly than that of any other neighboring community except Winchester. **Figure 3**, based on data from the past three censuses, demonstrates that all communities have rapidly growing Asian populations. Indeed, from 1990 to 2010, the Asian population in Lexington and its immediate neighbors grew by 216%.

Figure 3 - Evolution of Asian populations in Lexington and neighboring communities



Asian populations in Lexington schools and in school districts with large Asian population

Table 1 demonstrates that the percentage of students of Asian origin in Lexington’s schools has grown faster than Lexington’s total population. (The data exclude charter schools and schools offering a specialized curriculum).

Table 1 - Massachusetts school systems with the highest percentage of students of Asian origin by school year

1997-1998		2002-2003		2007-2008		2012-2013	
School System	% Asian	School System	% Asian	School System	% Asian	School System	% Asian
Lowell	30.5	Lowell	29.9	Quincy	29.8	Quincy	34.2
Quincy	19.1	Quincy	25.5	Lowell	28.7	Lexington	30.9
Malden	17.1	Malden	20.8	Acton	23.1	Lowell	29.6
Brookline	15.6	Brookline	18.9	Lexington	22.6	Acton (ES)	29.5
Lynn	13.3	Acton	17.5	Malden	21.8	Boxborough (ES)	27.9
Lexington	13.0	Lexington	16.7	Acton-Boxborough	18.9	Acton-Boxborough	23.3

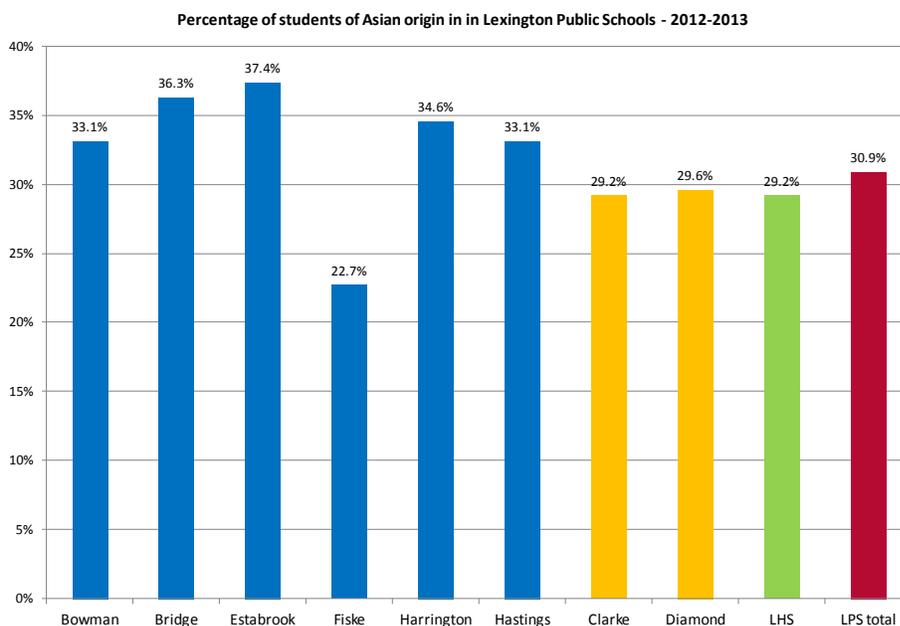
Source: MA DESE

The percentage has been increasing at approximately 1% annually since 1995. Only Quincy schools have a higher percentage.

Percentage of Asian students by school

In the 2012-2013 school year, Estabrook School had the highest percentage of Asian students – over 37% – while Fiske School had the lowest, about 23%. The middle schools and the High School had approximately 29%. **Figure 4** shows the details.

Figure 4 - Percentage of students of Asian origin in Lexington Public Schools (2012-2013)



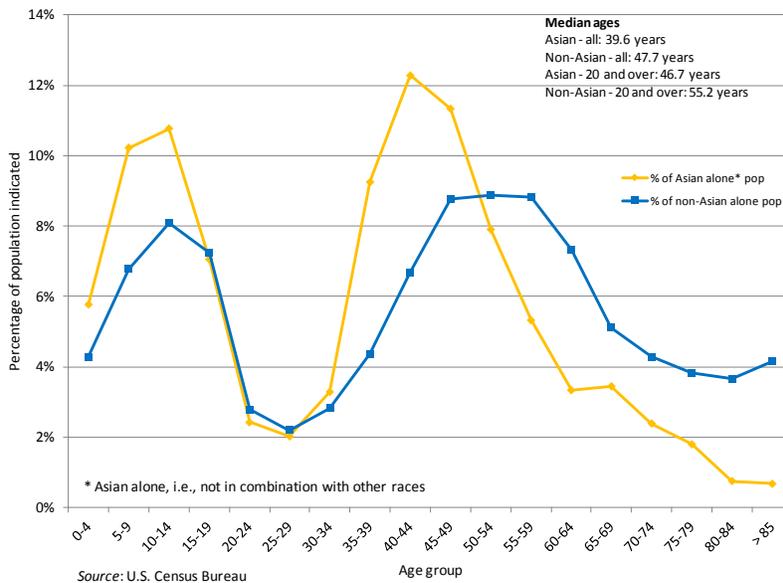
Source: MA DESE

Figures 1 - 4 and Table 1 demonstrate that Lexington's Asian population is large and growing rapidly, with the growth rate of the Asian school-age population exceeding that of the population as a whole. Next, we examine the Asian population in more detail.

Age profiles

Figure 5 shows that the current age profile (distribution by age group) of Lexington's Asian residents differs substantially from that of non-Asian residents, yet both are characterized by a peak in the school-age population that indicates that many families, Asian or non-Asian, move to Lexington as their children attain school age. The proportion of school-age children of Asian origin, an unknown number of whom were adopted by non-Asian parents, is about 28% higher. The median age of adults over the age of 20 is about 7.5 years lower, and the percentage of residents over the age of 55 is significantly lower than their non-Asian counterparts. As we shall later discuss, the differences in the age profiles may account for the limited participation by Asian residents in Town affairs.

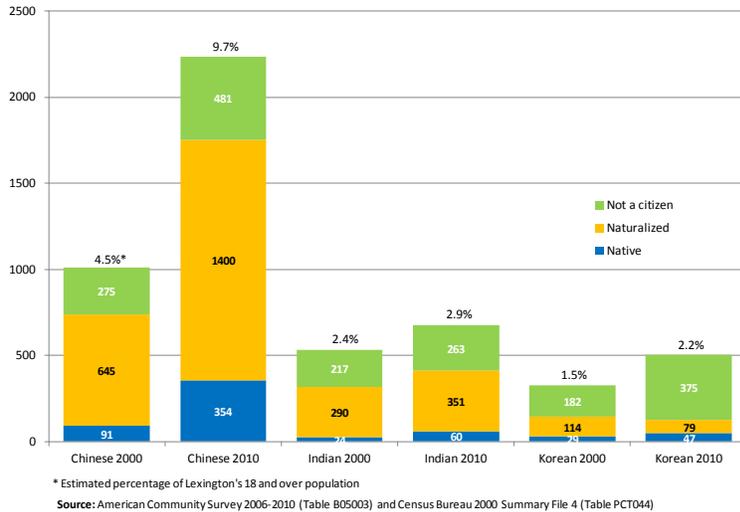
Figure 5 - Age profiles of Lexington's Asian and non-Asian residents in 2010



Citizenship and nativity

Because only US citizens may run for elected positions, and because citizenship status may affect interest in Town affairs, a low percentage of Asian residents who are US citizens could affect participation in Town committees. **Figure 6** suggests, however, that citizenship should not be a major barrier for Chinese residents: Based on the most recent Census Bureau data, about 78% of Lexington's adult (18 and over) Chinese residents hold US citizenship, either because they were born in the USA or by virtue of naturalization. For Indian residents, the corresponding figure is 61%. By contrast, only 25% of Lexington's adult Korean residents hold US citizenship.

Figure 6 - Citizenship and Nativity of Chinese, Indian and Korean residents 18 and over in 2000 and 2010



English proficiency

It is natural to expect that self-assessed proficiency in English might influence participation of Lexington's Asian residents in civic activities, whether associated with schools or with Town business.

Figures 7-9 suggest that, on the whole, only a small number of Asian residents believe they do not speak English "well" or do not speak it at all.

Figure 7 - Self-assessed English proficiency of Chinese residents over the age of five

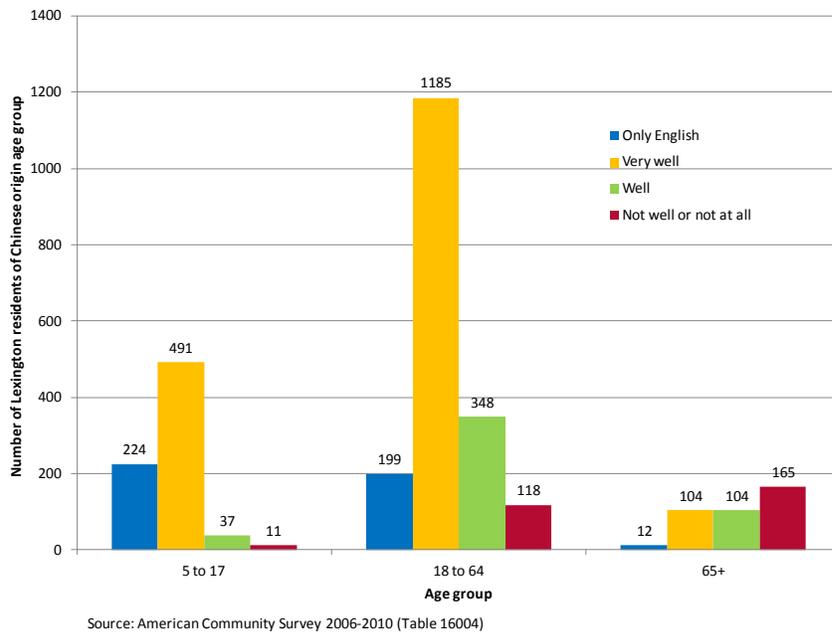
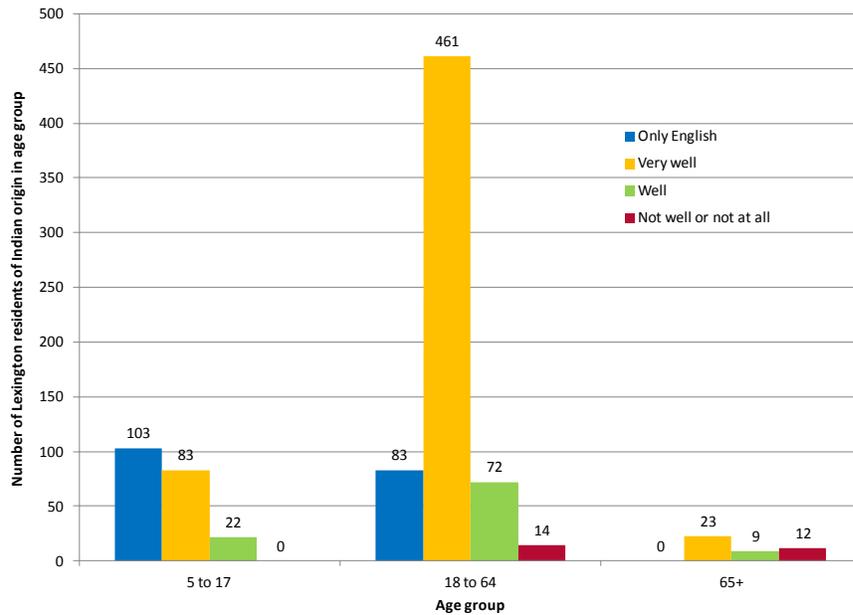
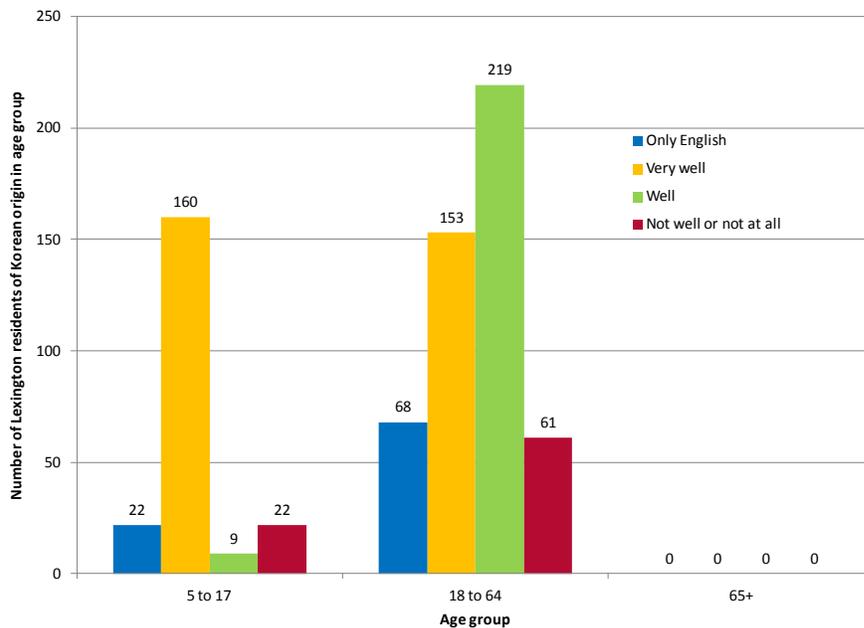


Figure 8 - Self-assessed English proficiency of Indian residents over the age of five



Source: American Community Survey 2006-2010 (Table 16004)

Figure 9 - Self-assessed English proficiency of Korean residents over the age of five



Source: American Community Survey 2006-2010 (Table 16004)

Figure 9 suggests that there are no Korean residents aged 65 or older, it is important to point out that the data are based on a sample with a margin of error of +/- 127.

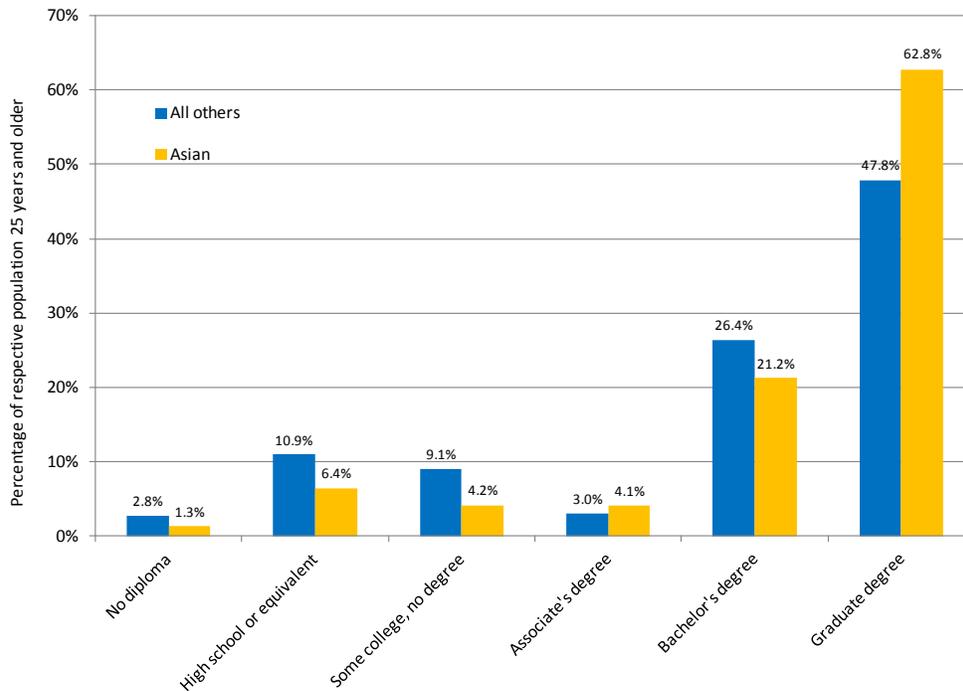
Because Indian schools teach students in English from an early age, it is not surprising that it is Indian residents who are most proficient in the language. Almost half of the school-age children speak only English, and the majority of Indian residents 65 and older speak English very well. Relatively speaking, Korean residents are less proficient in English than Chinese and Indian residents. The figures show that there are about 400 Asian residents who speak English poorly or not at all; almost half of these are Chinese residents over the age of 65.

Educational attainment and income

Figure 10 presents data on educational attainment (the highest level of schooling completed) for residents 25 years of age and older. It shows that a remarkable 63% of Lexington’s Asian residents hold advanced degrees (Master’s, Professional school degree, Doctorate degree). For the rest of the population, the comparable figure is 48%. As we shall see, the high percentage of Asian residents with advanced degrees may affect civic participation.

The high educational attainment does not appear to translate into a difference in income. According to Census Bureau data, in 2010, the median family income for Asians and Whites (the majority of the rest of Lexington’s population) was approximately \$160,000.

Figure 10 - Educational attainment for residents 25 years of age and older



Source: ACS 2009-2011, Charts B15002, B15002B

Asian community associations

Chinese American Association of Lexington (CAAL)

CAAL, formed in early 1980s, grew out of the effort to establish a Chinese school in Lexington. Its current mission is to represent Chinese-American interests in education, local politics and cultural issues. It also provides members with opportunities for involvement in the Lexington community through networking and social events.

CAAL members have been actively involved in the Lexington Fair Housing and Human Relations Committee, School Superintendent Review and Interview Committee, Estabrook School Principal Search Advisory Committee, the Lexington 2020 Vision Committee, the Lexington Education Foundation, Cary Library Foundation Board of Directors, the LexFest Lexington festival and the Lexington 300 Celebration Committee. CAAL sponsors a town-wide Chinese New Year dinner and celebration, an annual summer family picnic, a forum for candidates for School Committee and the Board of Selectmen, and a Diversity Award for the Lexington Public Schools.

In 2011, CAAL formed the Community Task Force (CTF) to encourage CAAL members to participate in civic activities, including PTAs and PTOs, and to ensure that CAAL itself participates in as many Town activities and events as reasonably possible. Stimulated by the CTF, CAAL now participates in the Martin Luther King parade, contributes to the campaign for Christmas lights, and is represented at Lexington Education Foundation's annual fundraising function. One of CTF's major goals was to have a CAAL member elected to a Town-wide office. It succeeded with the election of Weidong Wang to the Lexington Housing Authority. Its current objective is to further increase representation in Town Meeting and other elected bodies, while ensuring that the candidates run on platforms addressing Town issues, not as representatives of the Chinese community.

Despite its success, the CTF continues to struggle with getting more CAAL members involved. One major reason is lack of time to make the three-year commitment associated with Town committee membership. Many prefer specific projects, which have a clear objective and a finite duration.

Indian Americans of Lexington (IAL)

The IAL was formed in 2008 when Lexington's Indian American community had grown to about 300 families. Until then the community's main activity was the annual celebration of the cultural festival of Diwali. The founders felt the time had come to expand its purpose, to increase its visibility by contributing to the community as a whole and to establish a more formal structure.

Current activities, largely for the benefit of IAL members and their families, include the Diwali Festival; the IAL Friends Club, which serves as a support network for Indian families; seminars, discussions and dialogues between IAL members and leaders, thinkers and educators; and a program to increase the Cary Library's holdings of Indian books and other materials. The latter also serves to expose Lexington residents to Indian culture.

To increase links with the Town, the IAL has established a Public Affairs and Town Liaison Committee whose objective is to create consciousness among the members about the importance of involvement in civic affairs, and to generate visibility and contacts in those areas for the good of the members of the IAL community. As part of this initiative, the IAL has partnered with the Lexington Historical Society to host events of joint interest, and participated actively in the Town’s 300th celebrations. This year two members of IAL joined the Citizens’ Academy in town and two more joined the Cary Memorial Foundation Board.

The IAL has also formed a Community Outreach Committee to raise the Indian community’s awareness of humanitarian causes, and to motivate its members to contribute. Local beneficiaries include the Food Pantry and Friendly Independent Sympathetic Help (FISH).

Motivating IAL members to participate in Town affairs has proven to be a challenge for IAL leaders because many members do not appear to be interested in, or have time for, such activities. The members are more inclined to serve on PTAs and PTOs because they are invested in their children’s education.

IAL leaders have also recognized that the IAL finds it difficult to achieve its desired impact because the Association has not set up a formal membership structure and does not collect dues. This hinders outreach and planning. The IAL also faces the challenge that many in the Indian community feel more affinity for their regional subgroups, e.g., the Gujarathi or Tamil association and many others in which they are active. However this year, the IAL is pushing to engage the community in a more concerted, focused manner with the formation of a new executive board and a broad agenda.

There are no organizations like CAAL and IAL for Korean and Japanese residents.

Participation in Town affairs

Elected bodies and volunteer committees

Analysis of the memberships of Lexington’s elected bodies and volunteer committees in 2013, summarized in **Table 2**, reveals that only 17 Asian residents out of approximately 530 (3.2%) serve either as elected officials or as members of Town committees. Yet, according to the 2010 census Asian residents 20 years and older comprised 18.2% of Lexington’s residents in this age group. And that figure may have grown to over 20% in 2013. Whatever number is used, it is evident that Asian residents are significantly under-represented on these bodies.

Table 2 - Participation of Asian residents on Lexington's elected bodies and committees

<i>Total number of elected officials</i>	<i>Number of Asian residents on elected bodies</i>	<i>Participation of Asian residents on elected bodies</i>	<i>Total number on volunteer committees, not elected</i>	<i>Number of Asian residents on volunteer committees, not elected</i>	<i>Participation of Asian residents on volunteer committees</i>
210	7	3.3%	320	10	3.1%

PTAs and PTOs

Table 3 presents data on the participation of Asian residents on PTA and PTO boards. It demonstrates that their representation in these organizations – 13% – is much higher than it is on Town boards and committees. Nevertheless, it is less than half of the percentage of students of Asian ancestry in Lexington Public Schools.

Table 3 - Participation by Asian parents on PTA and PTO boards of Lexington's public schools (2012-2013)

<i>School</i>	<i>Percentage of students of Asian ancestry#</i>	<i>Number on Executive Board</i>	<i>Asian residents on Executive Board</i>	<i>Number on General Board</i>	<i>Asian residents on General Board</i>	<i>Source</i>
Bowman	33.1	8	0	71	9	Florencia Donaghy
Bridge	36.3	11	2	47	11	Sue Buckley Kingsbury
Estabrook	37.4	11	1	39	4	Gretchen Reisig
Fiske	22.7	8	3	40	4	Deepika Sawhney
Harrington	34.6	8	0	55	9	Kim Goldinger
Hastings	33.1	9	2	72	9	Bettina McGimsey & Becky Barrentine
Clarke Middle School	29.2	12	0	42	2	Kathleen Lenihan
Diamond Middle School	29.6	7	2	15	1	Dawn Rusnak
High School	29.2	7	1	15	4	Lori Bliss Tambone
Total		81	11	396	53	
% Asian	30.9		13.6		13.4	

#Source of percentages for each school: http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/enrollmentbyracegender.aspx

Factors attracting Asians to Lexington

Subcommittee charge

Investigate the factors that attract Asian-Americans to Lexington; estimate the proportion of Asian Americans who move to Lexington with the intention of living here indefinitely and those who are temporary residents.

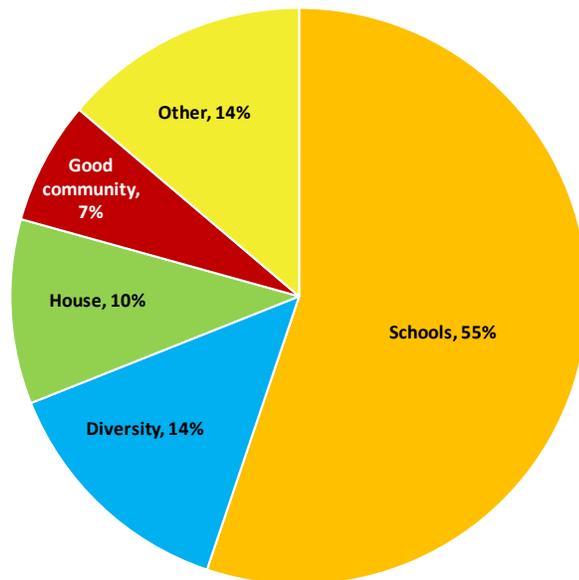
Methodology

To identify the factors that attract people of Asian ancestry to Lexington, we contacted the subjects of our interviews, described in the next section (Barriers to participation in Town affairs), and asked them the following question: “Please let us know the most important reasons that led you to move to Lexington.” To estimate the proportion of Asian residents likely to remain in Lexington indefinitely, thereby becoming potential participants in Town affairs, we combined Census Bureau data and an analysis of home purchases prepared by Diamond Hayes, a realtor and guest at our November 2012 meeting.

Factors that attract Asian-Americans to Lexington

Because we asked our question regarding the reasons for moving to Lexington without limiting the number of reasons, the responses ranged from a single reason to seven. When more than one reason was given, we assumed that the first on the list was the top reason. **Figure 11**, based on 29 responses, shows how frequently a particular top reason was cited.

Figure 11 - Top reason for moving to Lexington cited by 29 interview subjects

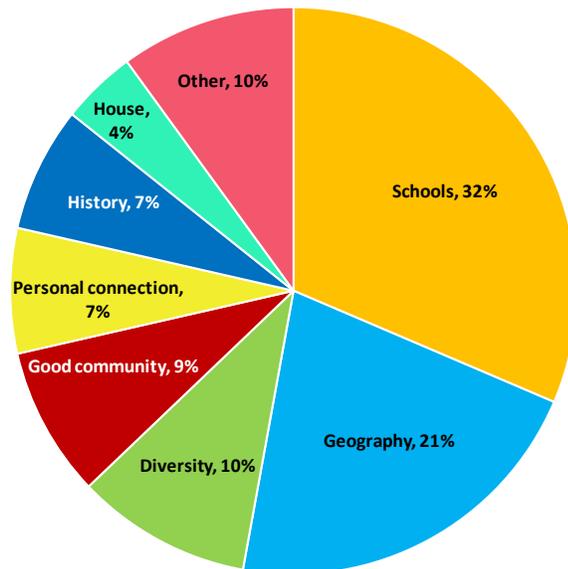


It is not surprising that more than 50% cited the quality of the schools as the top reason. Evidence of the importance of Lexington’s schools in attracting families – regardless of origin – had been noted

earlier in explaining the school-age peaks in the age profiles shown in **Figure 5**. Nearly 15% were attracted by Lexington’s diversity, suggesting that they moved here because they believed that they and their families would not be isolated or stand out. Approximately 10% simply liked the house they were shown: it was attractive, the right size or the right price. “Good community” was cited by 7% of the interview subjects without elaboration. The other reasons included having friends who lived in Town, the Town’s beauty and finding an apartment that accepted dogs.

When all the reasons cited by the interview subjects are considered, the distribution changes substantially. Schools continue to be the most frequently cited, but “geography” – proximity to work or to Boston in general – accounted for 22% of the responses. The “Other” category includes low crime rate, progressive politics and educated citizens. **Figure 12** shows the results.

Figure 12 - Percentage of all reasons for moving to Lexington cited by 29 interview subjects



It is important to note that the results shown in Figure 11 and Figure 12 are based on responses of interview subjects who have resided in Lexington from one year to 47 years. Consequently, the distribution of reasons for moving to Lexington may not correspond to the distribution of Asian residents who arrived in the last few years.

Likely permanent residents vs. transient residents

We used the data on citizenship and nativity of Asian residents, presented in Figure 6, to estimate the number of residents of Chinese, Indian and Korean origin who are likely to stay in Lexington as long as their non-Asian counterparts. If we assume that adults, 18 and over, who were either born in the USA or are naturalized citizens, will remain in the USA – and thus Lexington – we arrive at the estimates shown in **Table 4**.

Table 4 - Estimates of the percentage and number of Chinese, Indian and Korean adults likely to stay in the USA, and thus Lexington, as long as any other non-Asian adult residents

	<i>Chinese</i>		<i>Indian</i>		<i>Korean</i>	
	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>
Likely to stay in Lexington	78%	1754	61%	411	25%	126
Perhaps transient	22%	481	39%	263	75%	375

If the estimates are correct, nearly 80% of Chinese residents will stay, but only about 60% of Indian and 25% of Korean residents will do so. Although, the estimates for the Chinese and Korean residents are plausible, the estimate for Indian residents appears to be low in light of the data on home sales provided by Diamond Hayes: In 2011, of the 283 single-family homes sold in Lexington, 19.3% were purchased by Chinese (9.4% of Lexington's population in 2010), 15.8% by Indians (4.8% of Lexington's population in 2010) and 2% by Koreans (3.2% of Lexington's population in 2010). If a home purchase is taken as evidence of a commitment to stay in Lexington indefinitely, the home purchases by Indian residents suggest that the estimate (of those likely to stay) based on nativity and naturalization – 61% – is too low. The Subcommittee believes that a better estimate of the percentage of Indian residents likely to remain in Lexington lies between 60% and 80%. On the other hand, the estimate of 25% of Korean residents likely to stay appears to be reasonable. If we assume that 70% of Indian residents are likely to stay, we estimate that 60-70% of Asian residents would be potential candidates for serving on Town boards and committees.

Barriers to participation in Town affairs

Subcommittee Charge

Identify any barriers that currently limit the participation of Town's Asian-American population in its government, boards, associations, and committees; propose and facilitate steps to making them welcome on these bodies and comfortable in participating on them.

Methodology

Before describing our methodology, we wish to point out that we recognized at the outset of our investigation that the barriers we were seeking to identify could be real or perceived. For example, otherwise well-qualified residents who speak English very poorly would face a real barrier to participation on a Town board or committee. Similarly well-qualified residents whose English is impeccable may perceive that they are not welcome on a committee in which they are interested. One can also imagine real barriers, deliberately set to exclude certain people. Suffice it to say that we encountered no examples of such barriers.

To identify the barriers, the Subcommittee conducted structured interviews of Asian residents who are serving or recently served as members of

- elected bodies (e.g., Town Meeting)
- Town committees (e.g., Communications Advisory Committee)
- parent-teacher groups (e.g., PTAs, LexFun)

In the interviews, generally conducted by one member of the Subcommittee and lasting about 45 minutes, we sought to learn

- whether the interviewee obtained the position because she was recruited or encouraged, or whether the interviewee applied for the position
- the interview subject's experiences in the position, probing for any problems that might be associated with being of Asian ancestry
- their most enjoyable experiences serving on the various committees and the benefits they derived from their service
- their assessment of the barriers to greater participation in Town affairs faced by Asian residents
- their assessment of the importance of increasing participation of Asian residents
- their suggestions for steps that could be taken by Asian communities as well as by the Town to increase the participation of Asian residents

Before conducting the interviews, we asked the interview subjects for background information that would provide the interviewers some context for the interview. For example, we requested:

- their history of participation in Lexington – positions and dates
- their history of participation in civic activities before moving to Lexington
- demographic information (e.g., ancestry, whether or not US born, number of years in the US and in Lexington)

To assure the interview subjects that we would not reveal their private opinions, we prepared a letter describing the steps that we would take to preserve their privacy and requesting their consent to the interview. The letter, signed by the Subcommittee Chair, was given to the interview subjects, and they were asked to sign two copies before the interview. One copy was retained by the interview subjects, the other was kept on file by the Subcommittee Chair.

Copies of the interview instruments (background Information, interview guide for Town “committee” members, interview guide for “PTA/PTO” members and the consent letter) are found in **Appendices B – E**.

To promote uniformity in the interviews, the Subcommittee participated in a training session conducted by Marian Cohen, PhD, a member of the parent 2020 Vision Committee and Professor of Sociology at Framingham State University. Dr. Cohen also played a major role in the design of the interview instruments.

Potential interview subjects serving on Town “committees” (elected bodies and volunteer committees) were identified by searching the “Boards and Committees” section of the Town web site and identifying members with Chinese, Indian, Japanese and Korean surnames. To identify prospective interviewees on PTAs, PTOs and LexFun, we approached Leslie Zales, Chair PTA/O Presidents Council (PPC), who, in turn asked PTA and PTO presidents to forward the names and contact information of potential interview candidates to the Subcommittee.

Interviewers were responsible for contacting their interview subjects, and then for following a process that included sending the “background” form and a personalized consent letter to the interview subject; scheduling and conducting the interview; and transmitting the interview report, completed “background” form, and signed consent letter to the Chair of the Subcommittee. (Please see **Appendix F** for details).

Information and data contained in the background form and interview report were summarized and entered into an Excel spreadsheet by the Chair of the Subcommittee. To preserve a measure of confidentiality, interview subjects were identified by a random number between 1 and 100, and a key linking the names and numbers was maintained in a separate file. Only the Chair of the Subcommittee had access to the complete spreadsheet and the key.

Findings and Analysis

Background information on the interview subjects

Table 5 presents data on the two categories of interview subjects, viz., “Town Meeting/Town committee” and “PTA/PTO.” In addition to the 34 residents whose demographic data is shown, we interviewed two subjects whom we regard as highly knowledgeable stakeholders because of their current responsibilities and experience relevant to our investigation. One was of Asian ancestry; the other was a non-Asian PTA/PTO executive board member.

Table 5 - Profile of interview subjects

	<i>Category of interview subject</i>	
	<i>Town Meeting/ Town committee</i>	<i>PTA/PTO</i>
Ancestry		
China/CAAL member	9/7	8/2
India/IAL member	7/4	4/2
Japan	-	1
Korea	2	3
Birthplace		
Outside USA	16	15
USA	2	1
Median number of years		
in the USA	28	27
to participation on first committee after moving to Lexington	12	4
Language(s) spoken at home		
English only	6	8
English plus one or more others	11	2
Chinese only	1	2
Korean only	-	2
Tamil only	-	1
Sex		
Male	14	3
Female	4	13
Age bracket		
Under 40	2	2
40 - 65	12	13
Over 65	4	-

The most significant observations are that only 3 of the 34 interview subjects were born in the United States, and that those who serve on PTA and PTO boards began to participate much more rapidly upon arrival in Lexington than those who serve on Town “committees” despite the virtually identical median years of residence in the USA. The short time to initial participation may reflect the high priority accorded to the education of the subjects’ children – the most frequently cited reason for moving to Lexington. It is also possible that serving on PTA and PTO boards is regarded as being less demanding than serving on Town committees. About half of those serving on PTAs and PTOs report that only English is spoken at home.

In proportion to their town-wide population, residents of Indian ancestry appear to more likely to be involved in Town or school affairs than other Asian residents. While this may be an artifact of our relatively small sample size, it is possible that most adult Indian residents received much of their education in English, and are thus more comfortable in situations characterized by informal discussions.

About 81% of the PTA/O board members whom we interviewed were women, while 78 % of the members of elected bodies and committees were men.

Experiences in obtaining the position and serving on the committee

With a few exceptions, interview subjects reported that they had been invited to join a committee or had been encouraged to participate. The few, who were not invited or encouraged to join, applied

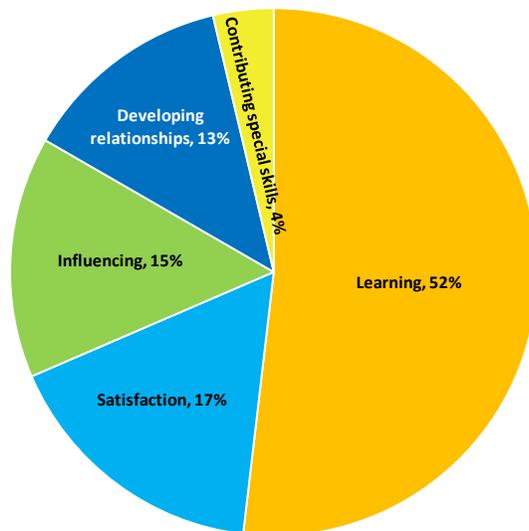
because they were interested in running for office or volunteering, and felt confident that they had skills and experiences that would be appreciated.

Almost all who are serving or who served on Town committees report that they encountered no problems that could be ascribed to their ethnic origin. Only one commented on an “entrenched mindset” and an aversion to new ideas. Likewise, the majority of those who served or are serving on PTA and PTO boards reported no problems that could be attributed to their Asian origins, but a few were concerned about “traditional thinking.” In addition, one reported being uncomfortable socializing with other PTA board members, and one reported being criticized by her own Asian community for allegedly using PTA board membership to seek special favors for her children.

Most enjoyable aspects of participation and benefits of participation

Interview subjects were asked to describe (a) what they had found most enjoyable about serving and (b) the benefits they had derived from their service. As we learned in analyzing the responses, the two categories of interview subjects gave very similar answers to these two questions. We therefore combined the responses, and organized them into five themes. **Figure 13** shows the percentage of responses, by theme, for interview subjects who served on elected bodies and committees.

Figure 13 - Percentage of responses given by interview subjects who served on elected bodies and committees to the questions: “What did you enjoy most about serving on the board/committee?” and “How did you personally benefit from serving on the board/committee?”



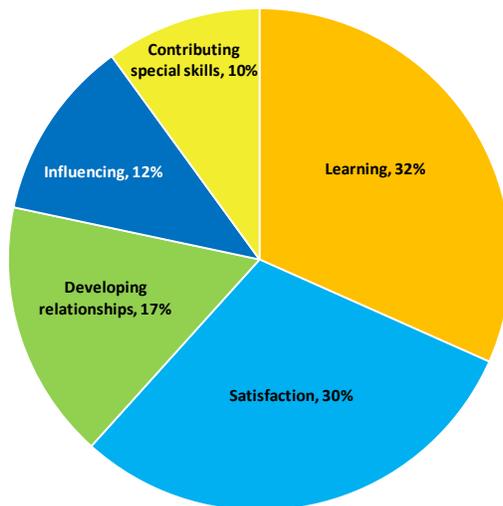
Percentage of responses of board and committee interview subjects

Below, we illustrate the responses of those who served on elected bodies and committees with a selection of (mostly) paraphrased comments. It is worth noting that, despite the fact that many on “committees” may be considered to have special expertise, the majority of their responses are associated with learning.

- **Learning**
 - Becoming aware of hurdles faced by other Asian families
 - Learning about how Town is run and money is spent
 - Learning from others who have a lot more experience
 - Learning a lot about different technical aspects of energy conservation
- **Drawing satisfaction with the work**
 - Sense of serving the Town
 - Appreciation by the rest of the committee
 - Making a difference
- **Influencing the organization**
 - Opportunity to voice concerns of Chinese community
 - Opportunity to share cultural background
 - Shaping the Committee's goals
- **Developing new relationships**
 - Meeting interesting people
 - Enjoying the camaraderie on the committee
 - Getting integrated into the Town
- **Contributing special skills to the organization**
 - Contributing my insights to important work
 - Helping the Committee execute its program

The responses of those who served on PTA and PTO boards may be classified into the same five themes. **Figure 14** shows the breakdown by theme. Once again, the most frequently given response was “learning from the experience.” However, “satisfaction” is cited almost as frequently as “learning.”

Figure 14 - Percentage of responses given by interview subjects who served on PTA and PTO boards to the questions: “What did you enjoy most about serving on the board/committee?” and “How did you personally benefit from serving on the board/committee?”



Percentage of responses of PTA/O interview subjects

Below, we list examples of their responses, mostly paraphrased, organized into the five themes.

- **Learning**
 - Learning how to help her child
 - “Learning so much through my kids – from nursery rhymes to curriculum”
 - Learning about how school systems work
 - Learning about other cultures
- **Drawing satisfaction from the work**
 - Giving back to community
 - Personal pride in doing something worthwhile
 - Sharing information about school with other Korean parents
 - Seeing kids amazed at what parents do and know via the Science Fair
 - Giving her the opportunity to be role model for her children so they will volunteer as adults
 - “My kids love it when I'm involved in the school.”
 - Personal satisfaction of introducing activities that proved to be popular
- **Developing relationships**
 - Building new friendships
 - Developing more connection to the community
 - Better understanding of the views of others
 - Getting to know teachers, her child's friends and other parents
- **Influencing the organization**
 - Policy making on Site council
 - Bringing a male perspective to an environment that is mostly women
 - Introducing Asian Arts night, which elicited wide interest from school community
 - Getting parents involved in activities, e.g., panel discussion on parents with diverse backgrounds (gay, single, extended)
- **Contributing special skills to the organization**
 - “As someone with background in management, I enjoyed problem solving and resolving issues.”
 - Making an impact on the kids through Science Club and Math Night

The lists, by virtue of their lengths and variety of reasons, could serve as recruiting material for volunteer work. They also suggest that those who served on PTA and PTO boards drew more satisfaction from their participation than those on elected bodies and Town committees. Although this tentative conclusion could be the consequence of a small sample, it could also follow from parents’ interest in their children’s activities and welfare.

Concerns regarding the low participation by residents of Asian ancestry

The interview subjects were asked if they viewed the under-representation by Asian residents on Town boards and committees as being problematic. If they believed it to be so, they were asked to provide their reasons.

By a 2:1 ratio, those who serve (or served) on Town bodies felt it was problematic. The most frequently cited reason was that lack of participation results in a negative image of the Asian population. Other reasons cited were a concern that their rights and interests would not be adequately considered, and that the Town would fail to benefit from their talents.

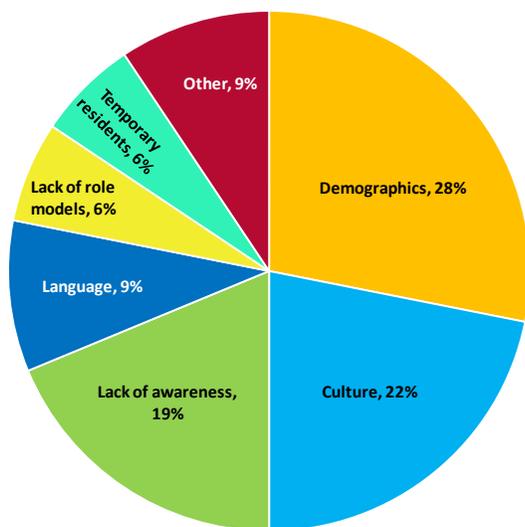
One of the interview subjects drew attention to the danger of creating a negative stereotype: “If people don't know you, they tend to stereotype you. Therefore, you need to get involved to get known and have people understand how you think.” Another stressed the need for the Asian residents to acknowledge that Lexington is their home and their responsibility: “This is our home. We’re not doing our share. We’re not being responsible. We need to keep our identity and maintain our heritage, but we can’t just take. We need to give.”

Those who serve on PTA and PTO boards were slightly more concerned about the low participation than those on Town bodies. Their concerns centered on the need to have the perspectives of the Asian communities understood. Here is how one of them expressed it: “Issues could arise in Town that might affect them, but they would have little influence.” He added: “The Town itself could benefit from their culture, perspectives and skills. Without their participation, this is more difficult.”

Barriers to participation

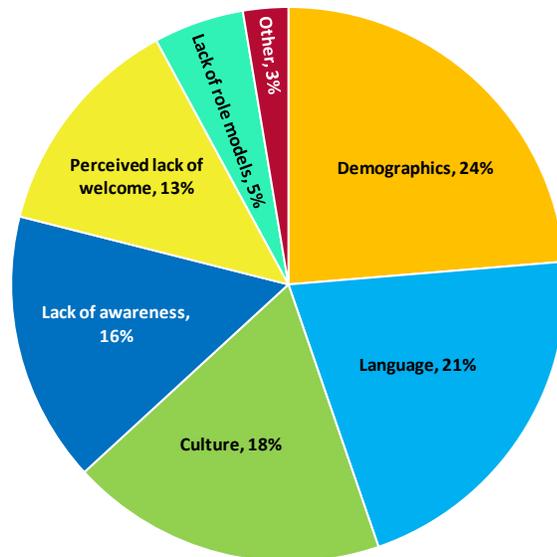
If the majority of the interview subjects believe that low participation is problematic, what barriers did they identify as preventing Lexington’s Asian residents from getting more involved in Town activities? The breakdown of barriers cited by those on Town bodies is shown in **Figure 15**, while **Figure 16** shows the breakdown for those on PTA and PTO boards.

Figure 15 - Percentage of responses given by those who served on Town bodies regarding the nature of barriers impeding civic participation by Asian residents



Percentage of responses of board and committee interview subjects

Figure 16 - Percentage of responses given by those who served on PTA and PTO boards regarding the nature of barriers impeding civic participation by Asian residents



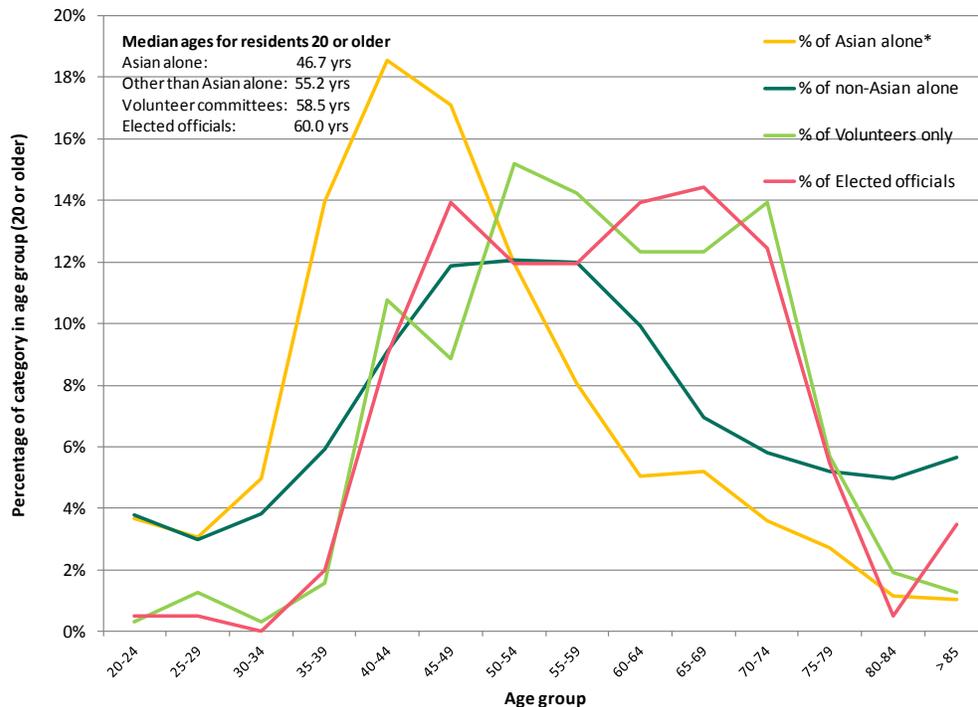
Percentage of responses of PTA/O interview subjects

The top three barriers, cited by both categories of interview subjects are discussed below:

Demographics. Typically, both parents work and, by virtue of being slightly younger than their non-Asian counterparts, may be at an earlier stage in their careers. Consequently, their remaining, limited, time tends to be devoted to their children’s activities, which often include language and cultural classes in addition to sports and music. Little time is thus left for participating in civic activities. We refer to this group as “young and busy.” Participation by Asian residents is further reduced because, as shown in **Figure 5**, there are relatively few Asian residents over the age of 55, who might have the time to serve on committees. These two factors contribute to a demographic barrier.

Figure 17 illustrates the demographic barrier using four age profiles for residents 20 years of age or older: (1) for Asian residents (“Asian alone, not in combination with another race”); (2) for all other residents; (3) for 316 residents serving on the Town’s volunteer committees, excluding staff and elected officials; and (4) for 201 residents elected to Town Meeting and other boards. (The data for profiles 3 and 4 are based on 2013 membership, but the members’ ages are calculated as of 2010 to ensure consistency with the age profiles, which are based on 2010 census data). The age profiles for volunteers and elected officials are quite similar: The majority of the participants range in age from 45 to 75. The figure shows that volunteers and elected officials are somewhat older than the Town’s non-Asian residents and considerably older than Asian residents. Thus, the percentage of Asian residents who might have time to serve on boards and committees is proportionally smaller than for non-Asians.

Figure 17 – Age profiles for “Asian alone” residents, for all other residents and for elected officials and for volunteers only (20 years and older)



* "Asian alone": Respondents self-identified as being Asian, not in combination with another race
Sources: Census Bureau - 2010 census; Lexington Town Clerk's office - 2013 membership, ages attained in 2010

Culture. Even if time were available for Town activities, there appears to be a cultural barrier.

Responses fell into three categories:

- *Lack of comfort in debating*
 - “[D]ebating opposing sides if the issue would have been considered ‘rude’ in Chinese culture.”
 - “Too shy to take on the role.”
 - “Not comfortable in the spotlight.”
- *Lack of tradition of volunteering for civic activities*
 - “[I]n Chinese culture there has been little or no parent involvement in schools.”
 - “As a (Korean) culture, we tend to keep to ourselves.”
 - “Family takes priority, not serving the Town.”
- *Concerns by intellectuals about involvement in politics*
 - An interview subject from China cited the fact that Chinese intellectuals were badly burned by politics during the Cultural Revolution. Although much time has passed, it is possible that younger generations of intellectuals – and, as demonstrated in Figure 10, many in Lexington’s Chinese community are highly educated – still don’t wish to get involved in such matters despite understanding that they now reside in the United States, not China.

Lack of awareness. Many are not aware that so much work in Lexington is performed by volunteers. The lack of awareness shows up in three ways:

- *Holders of elected office as volunteers*
 - “I didn’t know that the Board of Selectmen is an elected volunteer body.”
- *Lack of knowledge of local government*
 - “First generation doesn’t know how government works.”
 - “Not familiar with Town Government.”
 - “Koreans know very little about how the community works.”
- *Lack of information regarding opportunities to serve the Town*
 - “Lack of knowledge about committees and their work.”
 - “Friends ask friends to get involved, so it's an issue of dealing with new residents.”
 - “Level of commitment: 3-year appointment, monthly meetings.”

Those serving on PTA and PTO boards frequently identified two additional barriers.

Language. Half of the PTA/O interview subjects advanced this barrier, but they did not elaborate. The Subcommittee believes that the barrier is not the ability to understand and to speak English in a business setting, because – as shown in Figures 7, 8 and 9 – the majority of Asian residents speak English well. Rather, we believe that it refers to a lack of comfort in participating and debating effectively in an informal setting. “Language” was also identified as a potential barrier by those serving on the Town’s elected bodies and committees, but much less frequently.

Perceived lack of welcome. Although the question regarding barriers, posed during the interviews, refers to barriers to participation on the Town’s boards and committees, not PTA and PTO boards, we believe that the answers of the PTA/PTO interviewees reflect their own experiences on PTA and PTO boards. Despite the fact that many report enjoying their participation on the boards, one quarter of the PTA/PTO interviewees cited the following:

- *Lack of encouragement*
 - “Need to bridge the gap between the communities – possibly a welcome committee. They assume Asians know, but parents need to reach out and guide Asians how to participate – show them they are a valuable and useful members.”
 - “Also some Chinese people may not feel like they are part of the community.”
- *Cliquish committees*
 - “Sometimes there’s a group and it’s hard to break in.”
- *Intimidation by incumbent*
 - “Intimidation factor of people already entrenched in these positions who have a name, stature and reputation.”

These responses are consistent with some of the interview subjects’ perceptions regarding a lack of welcome to new ideas mentioned above.

The remaining barriers appearing in Figure 15 and Figure 16 are self-explanatory. The “Other” categories include the need to get acclimated in Town before devoting oneself to volunteer work, and concern over the commitment to three-year appointments and monthly meetings associated with committee work.

Suggestions offered by interview subjects for how the Asian associations could contribute to increasing participation

Interview subjects agreed that the Asian associations – CAAL and IAL – should encourage greater participation and offered the following examples:

- Identify potential candidates, whether for Town boards and committees, including Town Meeting, or for PTA and PTO boards.
- Offer to provide support and mentorship to those who volunteer.
- Set goals for participation, such as a target number to be elected to Town Meeting.
- Monitor opportunities to participate in Town events or projects.

They also suggest that CAAL and IAL adopt a variety of communication channels to create awareness among their members regarding issues and opportunities. In order to accomplish this, CAAL and IAL should

- Solicit Town leaders to keep the associations aware of opportunities.
- Maintain a list of open Town positions that might be of interest to their respective communities.

Suggestions offered by interview subjects for steps to be taken by Town leaders to increase participation

Interview subjects serving on Town boards and committees made recommendations that fall into two categories:

- *Encourage diversity.* They suggested that this could be accomplished by setting diversity targets and monitoring participation; encouraging committees to build diverse memberships; and through personal outreach to members of the Asian communities.
- *Create awareness of opportunities to serve the Town.* The interview subjects suggested that this could be done by distributing flyers; creating information packets for newcomers; and by enhancing the Town web site.

Those serving on PTA and PTO boards offered the following recommendations:

- *Be more welcoming.* Suggestions include offering assignments that make use of their skills; creating the opportunity to test their interest in a committee with a temporary or trial position; sponsoring multicultural events; participating in events sponsored by Asian communities; and by translating important Town documents.
- *Create awareness of opportunities to serve the Town.* Suggestions include providing more complete information on boards and committees, and by giving talks at PTA and PTO meetings on opportunities to serve the Town.

Assessment of our methodology regarding the identification of barriers

A potential shortcoming of our methodology is its reliance on interviews of Asian residents who have participated in civic affairs rather than interviews of Asian residents who have chosen not to participate.

While we acknowledge this potential shortcoming, we believe that we have captured opinions of some who have decided not to get involved through the interview question “Have you encouraged other members of your community to participate on this board or committee or other boards and committees?” Twenty-six of the 34 interview subjects reported that they did encourage others. When asked the follow-up question regarding the typical response (of those whom they encouraged), the most frequently cited reasons were “too busy,” “wouldn’t be good at it,” and “OK for special events; not interested in full-time commitment.” Thus the responses of those who have decided not to participate are consistent with the reasons summarized in Figure 14 and Figure 15. We believe, therefore, that our methodology leads to credible findings.

Activities or events to increase the community's inclusion of Asian-Americans

Subcommittee charge

Develop ideas regarding activities or events that will increase the community's inclusion of Asian-Americans residing here.

The ideas have been incorporated into the **Recommendations** section (p.48).

Actions taken by Town Departments and Lexington Public Schools

Subcommittee charge

Assess the steps taken by Town Departments to ensure that services, including emergency services, are effectively delivered to Town residents who do not speak English or speak it poorly.

Methodology

The Subcommittee identified eight departments or programs that might be most affected by the Town's demographic change: six Town departments (Fire, Police, Health, Human Services, Library and Recreation) and two Lexington Public School programs (English Language Learner Program and the hiring of teachers of Asian ancestry). We asked their leaders to address the following topics:

- Current services or activities stimulated by the growth in the number of the Town's Asian residents
- Steps being taken or planned, if any, in response to the demographic change
- Challenges or needs for which complete solutions have not been developed

Findings - Summary

Four departments – Fire, Police, Health and Human Services – have shared, and continue to share, a concern and responsibility for working with a group of elderly Chinese residents of the Lexington Housing Authority's Greeley and Vynebrook Villages, who speak English poorly or not at all. The deaths of two residents of Greeley Village while attempting to cross Worthen Road in the vicinity of Stop & Shop led to the installation of a talking light at the intersection of Worthen Road and Bedford Street and a crosswalk on Worthen Road near the Stop & Shop. In addition, ID cards were created for Greeley Village residents by an intern in Human Services. Meanwhile, the Fire Department is seeking to have emergency cards created for residents of Greeley and Vynebrook Villages.

The Police and Fire Chiefs and the Directors of Health and of Human Services have also drawn attention to the importance of better understanding the cultures of the Asian communities, even when the residents speak English well. Accordingly, they are seeking to arrange appropriate training sessions for their staffs. They are also considering a monthly coordination meeting, whose topics would include issues unique to the Asian communities.

The Cary Memorial Library has long held a collection of Chinese and Indian material, created with the assistance of interested Lexington residents. In addition to planned expansion of these collections, it is seeking to build a Korean collection. Two members of the Library speak Mandarin and are able to assist Mandarin-speaking patrons not only with its standard services but also with the college application process.

The Recreation Department is exploring the addition of programs of special interest to Asian residents – Bollywood Dancing, ping pong, badminton and cricket. The challenges to their introduction include limited facilities, outdoors and indoors.

From 2006 to 2013, Lexington Public Schools almost doubled the number of full-time equivalent instructors in the English Language Learner Program (ELLP) as the number of ELLP students, primarily of

Asian origin, rose by 82 percent. As the ELLP has grown, its leaders have come to recognize that the program would benefit from having native speakers as well as a psychiatrist/psychologist and a social worker to assist with cultural transition issues. In addition, the ELLP leadership would like to have access to native-speaking medical personnel, because it believes that health issues can impede learning.

The Lexington Public Schools are also trying to increase from 4.3% the percentage of teachers who are of Asian ancestry. In this effort, they are challenged by a very limited pool of candidates. To add to the challenge, the pool is effectively reduced because some candidates prefer to teach in urban schools, because these schools are regarded as offering a more interesting environment. Yet another challenge is that some candidates do not perceive Lexington to be sufficiently diverse – despite the evidence presented in this report.

Detailed Findings

The tables below provide the details for each department or program.

Table 6 – Current and planned services and challenges in the Fire Department. John Wilson, Chief

<p>Current services stimulated by growth of Asian population</p>	<p>Laminated list of translators. Fire trucks and EMS vehicles now carry a laminated card with list of translators who are available by phone. Multi-language translators are often called first.</p> <p>Assistant Chief position created to oversee training. The position was created in 2013 and filled through promotion. The current focus is certification training for EMS.</p> <p>Membership, Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts. The association maintains an information database. Members use it to exchange information and tips regarding communication with non-English speakers.</p>
<p>Planned Services</p>	<p>Cultural diversity training. Assistant Chief will oversee cultural diversity training for staff, which is especially needed by inspection officers who visit residents routinely. Residents may be distrustful, and officers must put them at ease.</p>
<p>Challenges/ Needs</p>	<p>Emergency information forms. Accessible, filled-in emergency forms are critical for handling medical and other emergencies when the person cannot communicate. Bilingual individuals with good handwriting are needed to enter the information for non-English speakers.</p> <p>Flash cards. When real-time translation is not available, a set of flash cards with English and Mandarin text and pictures could assist with communication.</p> <p>Coordination with Police, Health and Human Services Departments. Hold monthly coordination meetings to discuss current issues, including those dealing with Asian communities.</p>

Table 7 - Current and planned services and challenges in the Police Department. Mark Corr, Chief

<p>Current Services stimulated by growth of Asian population</p>	<p>National translation service. The Department subscribes to a translation service available by phone that facilitates communication with non-English speakers.</p> <p>Domestic Violence Service Network. When appropriate, the police can involve this Concord-based organization, which has Asian language speakers.</p> <p>On-site diversity training. Local Asian residents provide training on Chinese, Hindu, and Muslim cultures--including detailed questions and answers--to officers and staff.</p> <p>Work with Fire and Human Services Departments. The police identify at-risk elders who need medical and other services.</p> <p>Mandarin speaker. The department has one Mandarin-speaking officer. He serves Lexington residents, and the department can exchange his services with neighboring towns for the services of officers with fluency in other languages.</p>
<p>Planned Services</p>	<p>Hiring. To broaden department diversity the department plans to hire more officers with Asian language skills.</p>
<p>Challenges/ Needs</p>	<p>Civil Service. To keep pace with the rapidly growing Asian community, more diversity within the police department is a critical need. The Massachusetts civil service system puts tight constraints on Lexington’s ability to diversify. Recent requests for a list of candidates with Mandarin language have not produced results.</p> <p>Reducing fear and distrust. Asian residents, like all residents, need to be willing to call the Police and to accept Police as a positive resource. Many Asian residents come from regions where involving police is avoided at all costs. Putting them at ease with the Lexington police staff and practices is a continuing challenge.</p> <p>Coordination with Fire, Health and Human Services Departments. Hold monthly coordination meetings to discuss current issues, including those dealing with Asian communities.</p> <p>More opportunities to meet. The police department eagerly seeks as many chances as possible--events, meetings, house gatherings--to meet with people in small or large groups to talk, to answer questions, and to socialize.</p>

Table 8 - Current and planned services and challenges in the Human Services Department. Charlotte Rodgers, Director

<p>Current services stimulated by growth of Asian population</p>	<p>Evergreen Support Group (Elderly Chinese). Twice monthly, the Senior Center hosts about 50 participants. Many reside in Lexington Housing Authority villages, live on small government payments, and depend, in part, on the food pantry, which is strongly supported by CAAL. Evergreen Support Group organizes Chinese New Year festivities where they perform and invite other performers.</p> <p>Classes targeted at Asian residents. English as Second Language (ESL) and Citizenship classes (offered to all).</p> <p>Lunches. Occasional Chinese or Indian menu.</p> <p>Program translation. Senior Center program is translated into Mandarin – hourly stipend is available for these services.</p> <p>ID cards. Recent intern created ID cards for seniors in Greeley Village.</p> <p>Response to pedestrian fatalities on Worthen Road.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking lights installed at intersection of Worthen Road and Bedford Street • Cross-walk installed near Stop & Shop through a collaboration with the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee • Human Services Department collaborated on a pedestrian safety training program held at Greeley Village
<p>Planned Services</p>	<p>Pedestrian safety training. Joint program with Police Department in English and Mandarin.</p>
<p>Challenges/Needs</p>	<p>Mandarin-speaking outreach/social worker. Department would like to hire a staff member with these qualifications.</p> <p>Coordination with Police, Fire and Health Departments. Hold monthly coordination meetings to discuss current issues, including those dealing with Asian communities.</p>

Table 9 - Current and planned services and challenges in the Health Department. Gerard Cody, Director

<p>Current services stimulated by growth of Asian population</p>	<p>Communicable disease case investigation. Disease prevention documents are available in a variety of languages. Case workers from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health may provide translation services for disease tracking purposes.</p> <p>Health Fair. The Lexington Health Division participates in an annual Health Fair at the Lexington Chinese Bible Church. Influenza vaccinations are available along with other health education documents on various topics including but not limited to diabetes prevention, TB, West Nile Virus (WNV), Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and Lyme Disease. A translator is available during the health fair and documents are provided in Mandarin.</p> <p>Health Education Programs. Programs on a variety of topics including but not limited to insect vectors (Lyme disease, WNV and EEE) are available in various languages. A Mandarin translator was available for two of the eight seminars that were offered about disease transmission by ticks and mosquitoes in 2013.</p> <p>Restaurant Worker education seminars. Conducted three times annually. Training videos available in Mandarin. Documents on the importance of hand washing, avoiding cross contamination during food preparation and other related topics are also available in Mandarin.</p> <p>Community Health Network Alliance (CHNA) Health Communities Survey. Available in Mandarin. Several residents completed the survey in Mandarin. Results were translated into English and were included in the survey results.</p>
<p>Planned Services</p>	<p>Health Education Programs in English and Mandarin. Topics include but are not limited to safe food preparation, diabetes prevention, TB, WNV, EEE and Lyme Disease. Through the CHNA grant the Health Department is working with partners to have an Alternative Health Faire, where non-traditional, often Eastern Medicine treatment modalities are emphasized.</p>
<p>Challenges/ Needs</p>	<p>Working with Mandarin-speaking residents. (1) Operating public influenza clinics and obtaining accurate health history information from the Mandarin-speaking resident wishing to get vaccinated. (2) Operating emergency shelters and obtaining accurate registration information from the Mandarin – speaking resident wishing to stay in the shelter.</p> <p>Coordination meetings. Health Division monthly meetings with Police, Fire and Human Services to discuss current issues, including those dealing with Asian communities.</p>

Table 10 - Current and planned services and challenges at Cary Memorial Library. Koren Stembridge, Director

<p>Current services stimulated by growth of Asian population</p>	<p>Chinese and Indian books and DVDs. Collection built with assistance from members of Chinese and Indian communities.</p> <p>Chinese newspapers.</p> <p>Chinese-speaking librarians. Two Mandarin-speaking members of the staff help to identify Chinese acquisitions, communicate with Mandarin speaking patrons and assist parents in navigating the college selection and application process.</p> <p>Conversational English for Chinese speakers. Led by English At Large, a Medford-based non-profit organization</p> <p>Indian wedding. For one day, the Library staged an Indian wedding.</p>
<p>Planned Services</p>	<p>Korean books. Selection and acquisition with assistance from John Lee of our Subcommittee.</p> <p>Indian films. Demand is growing.</p> <p>Chinese collection. Space being created to accommodate growth. Also seeking Chinese art.</p> <p>Used book store. Chinese language section to be added.</p>
<p>Challenges/ Needs</p>	<p>Strategic plan. Input sought from Chinese community</p> <p>Emergency information cards. Library wishes to assist Police and Fire Departments in distributing emergency information cards for residents with limited English capability.</p> <p>Asian culture programs. Suggestions sought for programs to help all residents learn about Asian cultures.</p>

Table 11 - Current and planned services and challenges in the Recreation Department. Karen Simmons, Director

<p>Current services stimulated by growth of Asian population</p>	<p>No programs specifically for Asian residents. Asian residents well represented among program participants and staff.</p>
<p>Planned Services</p>	<p>Bollywood dance/fitness class. Discussions with iDance Boston to provide the program</p>
<p>Challenges/ Needs</p>	<p>Facilities for sports popular with Asian residents. Ping pong tables are damaged by weather; need to be indoors. Existing competition for playing fields makes it difficult to add cricket. Possibility of badminton at High School. All programs need to be supported by fees because funding for programs and equipment does not come from taxes.</p> <p>Program suggestions. More input from Asian residents sought.</p>

Table 12 - Current and planned services and challenges in the Lexington Public Schools' English Language Learner Program (ELLP). Robyn Dowling-Grant, Coordinator

<p>Current Services stimulated by growth of Asian population</p>	<p>Assessment. English proficiency is initially assessed using the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)-ACCESS Placement Test for English Language Learners. Thereafter, students are assessed annually using ACCESS, WIDA’s assessment, currently used in 28 states.</p> <p>Instruction. Students receive daily lessons based on the WIDA standards which are aligned with the goals of the Common Core. Typically, students require one to three years in the ELLP to achieve the English proficiency required to succeed in the classroom.</p> <p>Students. In 2012, 374 students enrolled in ELLP, an 82% increase since 2006. 82% of the current students are in grades K-5th. 59 % are Asian language speakers. Of the 6663 students in the district, 21% (1400) indicated that English is not their first language. The first language for 7% is Mandarin or Cantonese; for 3% it is Korean; for 1% it is Hindi, Bengali, or Marathi; and for another 1% it is Japanese.</p> <p>Staff. In 2012, thirteen English as a Second Language (ESL) instructors served students in the Lexington schools (Bowman-2, Bridge-2, Estabrook-2, Harrington-1, Hastings-1, Clarke-1, Diamond-1, LHS-1, for a total of 11.45 FTEs. This represents an increase of 94% since 2006.</p>
<p>Planned Services</p>	<p>No enhancements currently planned.</p>
<p>Challenges/ Needs</p>	<p>Support for history and science studies. Students typically encounter problems with English in history and science classes. A particular focus of the program is to enhance the academic language necessary to comprehend content, especially as the content becomes more complex. Students often lack the background knowledge to place new learning in its proper context, especially in the areas of history and English/Language Arts, where cultural knowledge is central to understanding.</p> <p>Help with cultural transition. ELLP needs native speakers as well as a psychiatrist/psychologist and social worker to assist with cultural transition issues. It would also be beneficial to have access to native-speaking medical personnel, since health issues can impede learning.</p>

Table 13 - Current and planned services and Lexington Public Schools' Human Resources. Robert Harris, Assistant Superintendent

<p>Current actions stimulated by growth of Asian population</p>	<p>Asian teachers and staff. The Lexington Public Schools (LPS) have been actively seeking to hire teachers and staff with Asian ancestry. As of September 2013, 29 of 677 teachers (4.3%) are of Asian ancestry. Of the total staff of LPS, 57 of 1572 (3.6%) are of Asian ancestry. Staff members of Asian ancestry represent the largest minority group within the school's staff</p> <p>Recruitment. Teachers are recruited using a variety of channels, including an annual job fair co-sponsored with Metro communities with demographics similar to Lexington's, e.g., Carlisle, Concord, Lincoln, Sudbury, Wellesley and Weston. The overall attendance ranges from 200 to 300, but turnout of Asian candidates has been very low.</p> <p>Recently hired Asian teachers. 2011-12: 2; 2012-13: 3; 2013-14: 5.</p>
<p>Planned actions</p>	<p>Increase diversity. Continue to seek more teachers and staff of Asian ancestry using the current channels. A Diversity Task Force, including a representative from the Chinese community, provides advice and guidance.</p>
<p>Challenges/Needs</p>	<p>Small candidate pool. The proportion of students pursuing a graduate program in education is low. At Boston College, a highly regarded source, only 24 of last year's class of 357 (6.7%) were of Asian ancestry.</p> <p>Competition for graduates. Many graduates prefer urban schools or schools with easy commuter access. Some perceive Lexington, despite its large Asian population, as not sufficiently diverse. Finally, some regard urban schools as providing a more challenging – and, perhaps, fulfilling – opportunity than an affluent community such as Lexington.</p>

Steps taken by Massachusetts communities to increase inclusion

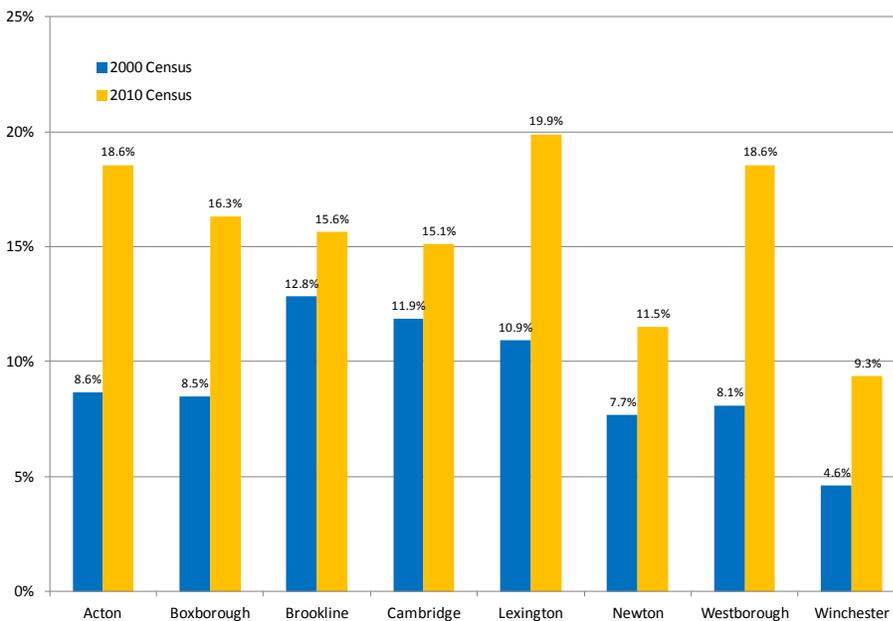
Subcommittee charge

Assess steps taken by Massachusetts communities that have experienced significant demographic changes in recent years. Determine what worked and what did not, and what could be applied in Lexington.

Methodology

The Subcommittee initially selected six communities with large and growing Asian populations: Acton, Boxborough, Brookline, Cambridge, Newton and Westborough. **Figure 18** shows the percentage of residents of Asian ancestry residing in these communities in 2000 and 2010. Lexington data are included for comparison. Winchester was added later when we learned that members of Winchester's Chinese community had contacted CAAL to learn about the steps it had taken to promote civic participation. Although Lexington had the largest percentage in 2010, the Asian population grew more rapidly in Acton, Boxborough, Westborough and Winchester.

Figure 18 - Percentage of residents with Asian ancestry in several communities in the Greater Boston area



Source: US Census Bureau

To learn about possible steps being taken in the original six communities to increase the diversity on their boards and committees, the Subcommittee asked Town Manager Carl Valente to write to his peers – town managers and town administrators – with the request to provide the Subcommittee Chair with contact information for groups charged with missions similar to ours. Only one Town Manager responded. He reported that his community had not performed any studies along the lines that we were undertaking. Before concluding that none of the other communities had launched initiatives

similar to Lexington’s, we contacted leaders of the League of Women Voters (LWV) in these communities. To learn about activities in Newton, two members of the Subcommittee interviewed Greer Swiston, a Newton Alderman of Chinese origin. Finally, we visited the communities’ web sites to estimate the number of Asian residents serving on boards and committees. Our estimates are based on surnames only.

Findings

Table 14 summarizes our findings. Several of the communities have elected Asian residents to town-wide bodies. None of these communities, however, has launched an initiative comparable to the one undertaken by our Subcommittee to identify barriers to participation and to recommend steps that could be taken to increase civic participation.

Table 14 - Civic participation in select communities with substantial Asian populations

Community	<i>Representation by Asian residents on elected bodies September 2013</i>	<i>Initiative(s) with potential to increase civic participation by Asian residents</i>	<i>Initiatives undertaken by Asian residents to increase their civic participation</i>
Acton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 elected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Selectmen voted to permit non-citizens to serve on Town committees and boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese language school has programs for all ages; includes forums in English on topics such as how to deal with the Town
Boxborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 elected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No initiatives identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No initiatives identified
Brookline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 total • 3 elected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LWV has a program on how to run for Town Meeting; not targeted at Asian residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No initiatives identified
Cambridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly 5 • 1 elected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No initiatives identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No initiatives identified
Newton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 elected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrated Asian culture with program in March 2013 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No initiatives identified
Westborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1, possibly 2 • None elected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No activity as of December 2012 reported by Town Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No initiatives identified
Winchester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 elected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winchester Multicultural Network sponsored a conference entitled “Winchester in Transition.” It included a segment on demographics “How is the Face of Winchester Changing?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese association in contact with CAAL regarding steps taken by CAAL to increase civic participation of Chinese residents

Recommendations

Recommendations regarding reducing barriers to civic participation by Asian residents

The Subcommittee's position on civic participation

We believe that civic participation needs to be viewed both from the perspective of Lexington's Asian communities and from the perspective of the Town as a whole.

From the perspective of the Asian communities, greater participation would ensure that the views of Asian residents are more likely to be understood and acted upon, and their cultures and norms better appreciated. It would also foster a more welcoming environment, and help Asian residents to feel comfortable living in Lexington.

From the perspective of the Town as a whole, greater participation should improve mutual understanding and avoid potential polarization between the non-Asian population and the Asian communities. It would also enrich the Town through the injection of the skills, experiences, cultures and traditions of its Asian residents.

Why we believe that civic participation by Asian residents can be increased

Earlier, we described several barriers to civic participation perceived by our interview subjects: demographics ("young and busy" and few older residents), culture, lack of awareness of the workings of Town government, language, and perceived lack of welcome in the PTA and PTO boards. However, we have data and information that suggest that barriers can be reduced and civic participation increased, perhaps substantially. Below, we present evidence to support our optimism.

Demographics

Although we have argued that **Figure 17**, showing the age profile for Asian residents, provides a demographic explanation for low participation, we expect the profile will evolve towards higher ages as the residents grow older and younger ones arrive. Of course, the evolution of the age profile is based on the assumption that many of the families will remain in Lexington after their children graduate from high school or college. Two factors support the assumption: First, because most Chinese and Indian residents are US citizens, they are likely to remain in this country. Second, because many of the families have two working parents, both in good positions, they may remain in Lexington because moving may not be an attractive option.

Evidence to support the assumption that the age profile will shift is based on a comparison of age profiles for 2000 and 2010, described in **Appendix G** – Evidence that Asian residents are staying on in Lexington after their children leave home. The analysis reveals that residents over the age of 45 represent the fastest growing segment of Lexington's Asian population. The analysis is consistent with anecdotal evidence provided by a real estate associate with extensive dealings with Chinese residents and by Chinese and Indian members of the Subcommittee. Their experiences suggest that Asian residents remain in Lexington after their children graduate from high school and college, and that their decisions to move from Lexington are based on the same considerations as their non-Asian counterparts.

Culture

Two trends support our optimism on this front. First, as demonstrated in **Table 3**, participation on PTA and PTO boards, which provides an introduction to civic affairs, is already much greater than it is on the Town's boards and committees. Most interview subjects report enjoying serving on the PTA/O boards and making new friends. Their experience and the networks they establish could motivate them to become involved in Town boards and committees despite the fact that, as shown in **Table 5**, women currently constitute the majority of Asian residents serving on PTA/O boards, whereas it is primarily Asian male residents who now serve on Town boards and committees. Second, as previously noted, CAAL and IAL have launched initiatives to encourage greater civic participation on the part of their members. Success by residents of Chinese ancestry in the 2012 elections is likely to encourage further efforts in subsequent elections and could create more role models.

English language skills of Asian residents

Admittedly, there is little that can be done about this issue in the short term. However, improvements are likely to follow the evolving demographics.

Lack of awareness (of the workings of Town government) and perceived lack of welcome on the PTA and PTO boards

We believe that these two barriers could be substantially reduced. Below, we explain how.

Recommendations for the Board of Selectmen, the Town Manager and the Town Moderator; for the PTAs and PTOs; and for CAAL and IAL

Further growth in civic participation can be achieved through the actions of Lexington Town bodies and organizations ("pull") along with complementary initiatives by the Asian communities ("push"). Our recommendations are based on: (1) the views of the interview subjects regarding the barriers to greater participation, (2) their suggestions for steps to be taken by Town leaders and by CAAL and IAL, and (3) the Subcommittee's own insights. We classify our recommendations into short-term (ST) and long-term (LT) categories. The former could be implemented by December 2014, while the latter could be in place by December 2015.

Recommendations for the Board of Selectmen

- Continue to promote inclusion of Asian residents through events such as "Diversity Day" and symposia on the immigrant experience, perhaps in collaboration with PTAs and PTOs as well as local groups such as the League of Women Voters and the Chamber of Commerce.
- Strengthen communications with CAAL and IAL beyond attendance at cultural events such as Diwali and Chinese New Year: Institute candid discussions of how to more rapidly and effectively integrate members of the Asian communities into the fabric of the Town. (ST)

Recommendations for officials with the authority to appoint board and committee members – the Board of Selectmen, the Town Manager and the Town Moderator

Modify the management of committees under their purview:

- Request that each committee clearly describe its mission; list the skills and experiences required (e.g., knowledge of finance, ability to effectively research topics of importance to the committee, ability to produce reports); and describe what is expected of committee members (e.g., attendance, responsiveness, active participation in discussions). (ST)
- Identify pathways to encourage short-term participation (e.g., on projects) that would allow residents with appropriate skills to contribute and to gain exposure to the way the Town operates. (LT)
- Develop a more open process for committees to publicize their work and to recruit residents with the skills the committees require. Currently, the process appears to be based primarily on inviting people from the personal networks of committee members or members of sponsoring bodies. (LT)

Recommendations for the leaders of PTAs and PTOs

- Establish communications with leaders of CAAL and IAL with the objective of identifying steps to encourage a larger percentage of parents of Asian ancestry to participate on PTA /O boards. (ST)
- Within each school, ask Asian board members for their advice on how to be more welcoming to Asian parents, and request their assistance in recruiting more Asian parents to serve on PTA/O boards. (ST)
- Establish a collaboration with CAAL and IAL leaders to:
 - Identify the causes of the perception that some Asian residents do not feel welcomed on PTA/O boards. (LT)
 - Implement steps that would eliminate the above perception and increase the participation of Asian parents. (LT)

Recommendations for CAAL and IAL

- Continue to encourage participation in Town and School affairs by identifying and communicating opportunities to serve, providing information on how the Town works (e.g., a mini Citizens’ Academy) and how PTAs and PTOs operate, by identifying potential candidates within the community and by mobilizing support. (ST)
- Strengthen communications with Town and School leaders, and use these channels to promote greater participation by Asian residents. (ST)

Other recommendations

For the Police, Fire, Health and Human Services Departments

As we have learned, Town departments face two categories of challenges in working with some Asian residents: The first is that a small number of elderly residents speak English poorly or not at all (please see **Figure 7**,

Figure 8 and **Figure 9**). As a consequence, emergency situations may give rise to an extra level of risk for Town staff and for the resident. The second concerns cultural norms such as those described by the Fire and Police Chiefs and listed in **Table 7** and **Table 8**.

Accordingly, we endorse the suggestion for a monthly coordination meeting of the Police, Fire, Health, and Human Services Departments. In addition, we recommend that, twice a year, these meetings include representatives from the boards of CAAL and IAL.

For the 2020 Vision Committee

We recommend that the Lexington 2020 Vision Committee continue to monitor and report on demographic trends and civic participation by Asian residents. In addition, we recommend that it investigate the experiences in other US communities, with larger percentages of Asian residents and demographics similar to Lexington's.

For the Town Clerk

In light of the rapid growth in the number of Asian residents, Lexington needs more timely and complete data (than provided by the Census Bureau's decennial census) to monitor changes in its demographics and to gauge demand for services. We therefore recommend that racial origin and country of origin be added to the Town's annual census. To ensure consistency with Census Bureau data, the Town should use the wording employed by the Census Bureau and exclude college students not living in Lexington from its count.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, we thank the 36 residents who consented to be interviewed, told us about their experiences in serving in a large variety of volunteer bodies and organizations, and shared with us their opinions regarding the barriers to greater civic engagement faced by residents of Asian ancestry. We earnestly hope that this report will lead to the lowering of those barriers.

We also thank the following for enlightening us regarding their work and how it bears on Lexington's Asian residents: Sheila Butts (Assistant Director, Recreation Department), Gerard Cody (Director, Health Department), Mark Corr (Chief, Police Department), Robyn Dowling-Grant (ELLP Coordinator, Lexington Public Schools), Robert Harris (Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources, Lexington Public Schools), Charlotte Rodgers (Director, Human Services), Karen Simmons (Director, Recreation Department), Koren Stembridge (Director, Cary Memorial Library), Hua Wang (CAAL/CTF), and John Wilson (Chief, Fire Department).

Marian Cohen, a member of the 2020 Vision Committee who earlier served on the Demographic Change Task Force, provided invaluable help with the creation of the interview guide and process, and helped to train us in conducting the interviews.

Leslie Zales, Chair of the PTA/O Presidents' Council, cheerfully and patiently served as our contact with the PTA/O presidents, who, in turn, provided lists of potential interview subjects.

Diamond Hayes, a Sales Associate with William Raveis, spoke at our November 2012 meeting and provided us with her analysis of the impact on demographic change on Lexington's real estate market and with her insights on the factors that attracted Asian residents to Lexington.

Town Manager Carl Valente introduced the Subcommittee to his peers in several communities with large Asian populations so that we could learn about any actions they are taking to integrate them into the fabric of these communities.

Candy McLaughlin, Assistant to the Town Manager, guided us on Town protocol helped us to obtain the data on Lexington's boards and committees in a format that permitted the relatively painless creation of their age profiles.

Lisa Maguire, Administrative Assistant in the Town Clerk's Office, provided us with data and technical advice that enabled us to create the age profiles for Lexington's elected officials and committee members.

Alexandra Barker, Data Dissemination Specialist in the U.S. Census Bureau enthusiastically guided us to the data needed to assemble much of the demographic foundation for this report.

Members of Lexington's 2020 Vision Committee helped us through their constant encouragement and stimulating comments and suggestions.

Finally, we thank Marian Cohen, Ben Esty (former member of the Demographic Change Task Force), Fernando Quezada (Chair of Lexington's 2020 Vision Committee) and Leslie Zales for their insightful comments on a draft of this report.

Appendix A – Subcommittee Charter (Adopted by vote of the Lexington 2020 Vision Committee on February 10, 2012)

Background

The report of the Demographic Change Task Force (DCTF), issued in March of 2010, contained two sets of recommendations. One was aimed at developing a deeper understanding of the growth of population of Asian origin and increasing its participation in Town boards and committees; the other was concerned with trends in the Town's older population.

Since the report was issued, the 2020 Vision Committee has met with representatives of the Chinese American Association of Lexington and Indian Americans of Lexington and Town Department Managers have been asked to consider how to respond to the data and recommendations presented in the report. But no other steps have been taken in response to the recommendations.

The 2020 Vision Committee now wishes to set up a subcommittee to address the recommendations of the DCTF with respect to the Asian-American population in Lexington. Its charge, timeline and membership are presented below.

Charge

The subcommittee will:

1. Assess the steps taken by Town Departments to ensure that services, including emergency services, are effectively delivered to Town residents who do not speak English or speak it poorly.
2. Investigate the factors that attract Asian-Americans to Lexington; estimate the proportion of Asian Americans who move to Lexington with the intention of living here indefinitely and those who are temporary residents.
3. Identify any barriers that currently limit the participation of Town's Asian-American population in its government, boards, associations, and committees; propose and facilitate steps to making them welcome on these bodies and comfortable in participating on them.
4. Develop ideas regarding activities or events that will increase the community's inclusion of Asian-Americans residing here.
5. Assess steps taken by Massachusetts communities that have experienced significant demographic changes in recent years. Determine what worked and what did not, and what could be applied in Lexington.

Timeline

The work of the subcommittee is to be completed by December 31, 2013. Interim reports are to be presented to the 2020 Vision Committee at two-month intervals.

Subcommittee membership (total membership to be nine)

- 3, including the chair, from the 2020 Vision Committee
- 2-4 from the Asian-American community
- 2-3 from PTAs

Appendix B – Background data collection sheet

Name: _____

1. Experience on boards or committees

Lexington experience (Please list most recent first)

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Dates served</i>

Experience prior to living in Lexington (Please list most recent first)

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Dates served</i>

2. Personal data (For each question, please check the response most appropriate for you.)

- What is your ethnic origin? Chinese Indian Korean Japanese
Other Please specify _____
- Were you born in the U.S.A.? Yes No
- If you were born elsewhere, how many years have you lived in the USA? ____
- How many years have you lived in Lexington? ____
- What is the language currently spoken in your home? _____
- Do you have any children? Yes No
- If yes, how many are currently in Lexington Public Schools? ____ How many have graduated from Lexington Public Schools? ____
- How many generations of your family live in Lexington? ____
- Are you a member of CAAL? Yes No
- Are you a member of IAL? Yes No
- Are you a member of the CAAL or IAL board? Yes No
- What is the highest level of education that you have achieved? _____
- What is your occupation? _____
- What is your sex? Male Female
- What is your age? Under 40 40 – 65 Over 65

Appendix C – Interview Guide for those who are serving or have served on elected bodies or committees

Name: _____ Interviewer: _____

Date of interview: _____

3. First experience in obtaining the town board or committee position

- Were you invited to join the board or committee?
 - If “yes,” by whom?
 - If “no,” what prompted you to seek the position?

 - Did you have any concerns about accepting/seeking the position as a member of an Asian group?
 - If the response is “no,” go to next question.
 - If the response is “yes,” ask: What were your concerns?

 - What steps did you take to obtain the position?
 - Probe for details because the interview subject may be proud of the steps that he or she took
 - If the response includes involvement of the Chinese, Indian or Korean community, probe for details

4. Experience in serving on the town board or committee

What did you enjoy most about serving on the board/committee?

- If any of these experiences are related to ethnic origin, ask for specific examples
- Did you encounter any problems while serving on the board/committee? If the response is not related to ethnic origin, move to the next section
 - If the response appears to be related to ethnic origin, probe for details (communications, left out of decision making, other)

- What steps did you take to deal with the problem encountered

5. Assessment

- Would you say that you, personally, benefited from serving on this board/committee?
 - If “yes,” ask in what way(s)?

- Would you say that the board/committee benefited from your participation?
 - If “yes,” ask in what way(s)?

- Would you say that your participation in Town affairs had an effect on the Chinese/Indian/Korean community?
 - If “yes,” ask in what way(s)?

- Those of us studying participation of Asian-Americans in Town affairs noticed that there aren’t many Chinese/Indian/Korean residents serving on the Town’s boards and committees.
 - Why do you think this may be so?

 - Is underrepresentation, by their proportion of our Lexington population, by Asians on Town boards and committees something that you view as problematic? If “yes”, in what way(s) do you think this is a problem?

 - If “yes”, ask the following questions:
 - Have you encouraged other members of your community to participate on this board or committee or other boards and committees? Yes

 - If “yes”, what is the typical response that you receive?

 - Should the Chinese/Indian/Korean community encourage greater participation on Town boards and committees? If yes, what steps or actions could they take to encourage greater participation?
 - Should the leaders of Town boards and committees encourage greater participation of the Chinese/Indian/Korean residents? If yes, what steps or actions could they take?

- **Only for those who no longer serve on a board or committee:** I notice that you are no longer active on a Town board or committee. Would you please tell me why?
 - If no comments made that pertain to Asian ancestry, probe: Did your ethnic origin play a role in your decision to end your participation?

 - If “yes”, what role did it play?

Appendix D – Interview guide for those who are serving or who have served on PTAs, PTOs and LexFun

Name: _____ Interviewer: _____

Date of interview: _____

3. First experience in obtaining the committee position

- Were you invited to join the committee?
 - If “yes,” by whom?
 - If “no,” what prompted you to seek the position?
 - Did you have any concerns about accepting/seeking the position as a member of an Asian group?
 - If the response is “no,” go to next question.
 - If the response is “yes,” ask: What were your concerns?
 - What steps did you take to obtain the position?
 - Probe for details because the interview subject may be proud of the steps that he or she took
 - If the response includes involvement of the Chinese, Indian or Korean community, probe for details

4. Experience in serving on the committee

- What did you enjoy most about serving on the committee?
 - If any of these experiences are related to ethnic origin, ask for specific examples
- Did you encounter any problems while serving on the board/committee? If the response is not related to ethnic origin, move to the next section
 - If the response appears to be related to ethnic origin, probe for details (communications, left out of decision making, other)
- What steps did you take to deal with the problem encountered

5. Assessment

- Would you say that you, personally, benefited from serving on this committee?
 - If “yes,” ask in what way(s)?

- Would you say that the committee benefited from your participation?
 - If “yes,” ask in what way(s)?

- Would you say that your participation in school affairs had an effect on the Chinese/Indian/Korean community?
 - If “yes,” ask in what way(s)?

- Those of us studying participation of Asian-Americans in Town affairs noticed that there aren’t many Chinese/Indian/Korean residents serving on the Town’s boards and committees.
 - Why do you think this may be so?

 - Is underrepresentation, by their proportion of our Lexington population, by Asians on Town boards and committees something that you view as problematic? If “yes”, in what way(s) do you think this is a problem?

 - If “yes”, ask the following questions:
 - Have you encouraged other members of your community to participate on this board or committee or other boards and committees?

 - If “yes”, what is the typical response that you receive?

 - Should the Chinese/Indian/Korean community encourage greater participation on Town boards and committees? If yes, what steps or actions could they take to encourage greater participation?
 - Should the leaders of Town boards and committees encourage greater participation of the Chinese/Indian/Korean residents? If yes, what steps or actions could they take?

- Would you consider serving as the president of your PTA/PTO?
- Would you consider serving on a Town board or committee?
-
- **Only for those who no longer serve on a board or committee:** I notice that you are no longer active on a committee. Would you please tell me why?
 - If no comments made that pertain to Asian ancestry, probe: Did your ethnic origin play a role in your decision to end your participation?
 - If “yes”, what role did it play?

Appendix E – Letter of consent

Date _____

Name/Address _____

Dear Name,

I am writing to you on behalf of Lexington’s 20/20 Vision Committee’s Subcommittee on Demographic Change (“subcommittee”). It is charged with exploring the participation of the Town’s Asian-American residents in Town government (e.g. , committees, boards, associations) and in other volunteer activities (e.g. PTAs, Lexington Educational Foundation). And we need your help.

One way the subcommittee wishes to gather this information is to interview current and former members of these volunteer bodies because they can speak from direct experience. Since you currently serve as a member of the XXX, we would like to interview you.

To that end, we would like to set up a 30- to 45-minute session with you, at your convenience, with YYY, one of the members of the subcommittee. The interview includes questions regarding your initial decision to participate in Town affairs, your experience on your first committee, and your perspective regarding participation by other members of the Chinese/Indian/Korean community. Prior to the interview, YYY will ask you to provide some demographic data, (e.g., your birthplace, years of residence in Lexington as well as the names of the bodies that you now serve on or have served on).

To ensure your privacy, any information or opinions you provide will remain strictly confidential. I will be the only one with access to the raw data.

After conducting about 20-30 interviews, the subcommittee will analyze the data and publish its report. The document will present statistics on the interviewees’ responses and will offer recommendations. To add richness and detail to the report, the subcommittee may want to quote some of the interviewees, and to attribute the quote to them by name. Before doing so, we will seek your permission.

I sincerely hope that you will agree to the interview. Before conducting it, YYY will ask you to sign two copies of this letter, signifying your agreement with the interview terms. One will be for you, and the subcommittee will keep the other.

Yours truly,



Dan Krupka
Chair, Subcommittee on Demographic Change

I have read this letter, understand it and consent to its terms and conditions.

Signature _____ Name _____ Date _____

Appendix F – Process for interviewers

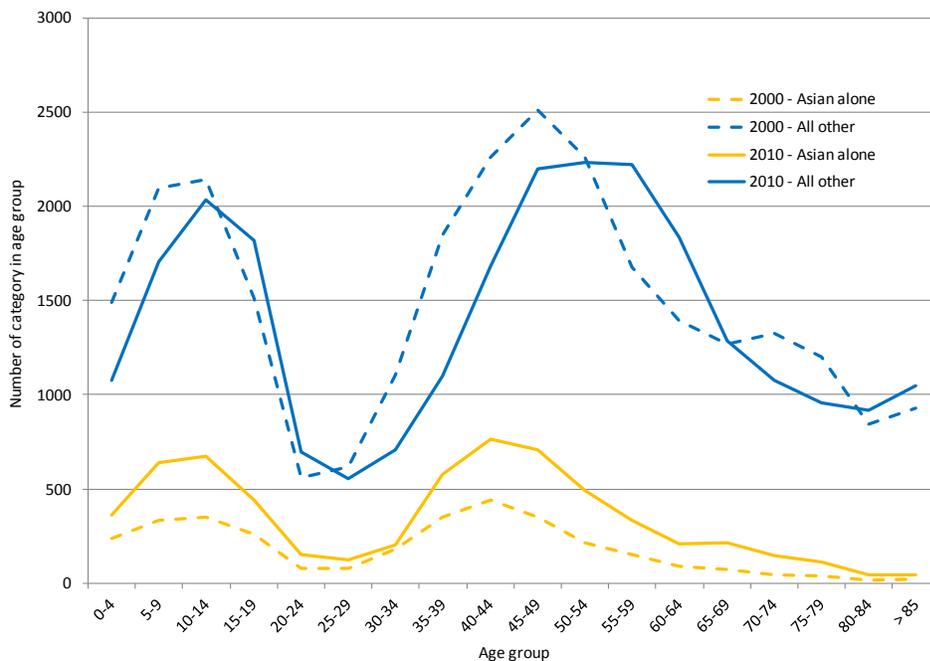
1. Contact interviewee
 - a. Explain objective (use confidentiality/consent letter as guide)
 - b. Describe interview process (use confidentiality/consent letter as guide)
 - c. After obtaining agreement, alert interviewee that Committee Chair will send the confidentiality/consent letter and that interviewer will send Part I of the interview (demographic information)
 - d. Request that interviewee return Part I to interviewer in advance of the interview
 - e. Arrange date/time/place for interview (The Library is very convenient as it has many small rooms suitable for interviews. They can be booked through the Reference Desk. Library number: 781-862-6288.
2. Ask Committee Chair to send the confidentiality/consent letter to interviewee. Please provide interviewee's email address.
3. Committee Chair sends confidentiality/consent letter to interviewee with request to hand it to interviewer at the interview
4. Review Part I before the interview
5. Conduct interview
 - a. Obtain signed confidentiality/consent letter
 - b. Fill in Part II. Enter responses below the questions. Handwritten is OK.
 - c. Request permission to follow up if necessary
6. Send thank you note to interviewee
7. Send a copy of the signed consent letter and the completed Parts I and II to Committee Chair

Appendix G – Evidence that Asian residents are staying on in Lexington after their children leave home

The age profiles shown in **Figure 5** and **Figure 17**, based on data from the 2010 census, show that Asian residents are younger than non-Asians and that there are relatively few Asian residents over the age of 55. This might be taken as evidence that residents move from Lexington very soon after their children leave home. However, Census Bureau data from 2000 and 2010, described below, suggests that the pool of older Asian residents is actually growing quite rapidly. However, the data do not allow us to demonstrate that they are staying on in the same proportions as non-Asian residents.

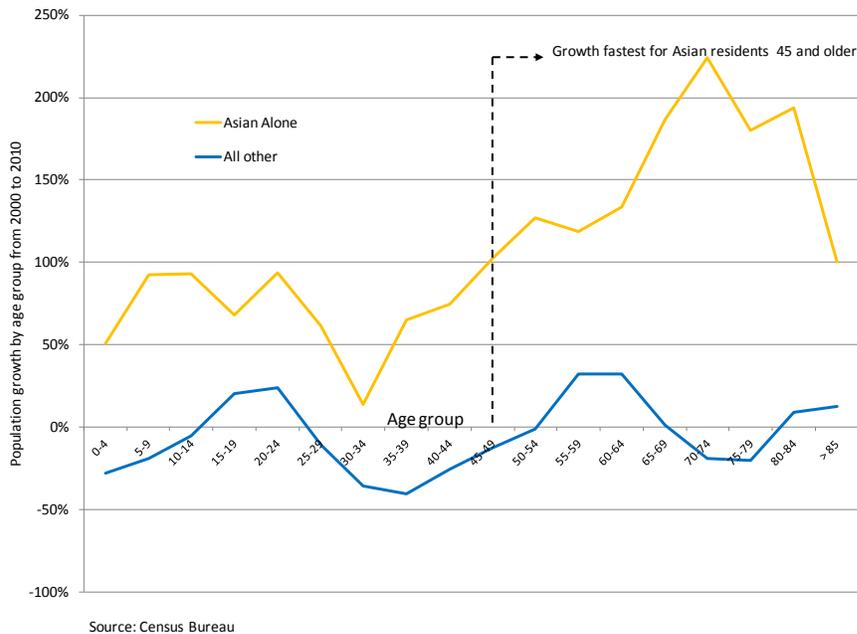
Figure G1 shows age profiles for “Asian alone” and “All other” for 2010 and 2000. In contrast to **Figure 5** and **Figure 17**, which show profiles based on percentages of the two categories, **Figure G1** shows the absolute numbers. The figure indicates that the number of Asian residents approximately doubled over this period and that the non-Asian population has dropped slightly and has grown older. To obtain more quantitative insight, we calculated the percentage difference between the 2010 and 2000 data by age group. **Figure G2** shows the results.

Figure G1 – Age profiles for “Asian alone” and “All other” for 2000 and 2010



Source: Census Bureau

Figure G2 – Percent population growth from 2000 to 2010 by age group for “Asian alone” and “All other”



The plot reveals that, from 2000 to 2010, the fastest growing segment of Lexington’s population consisted of Asian residents over the age of 45. The number in the 45-49 age group grew by 100%, while the number in the 65 – 84 range grew by approximately 200% (tripled). Meanwhile the non-Asian population grew slightly in the 15 – 24 and 55 – 64 age ranges, while dropping in the 25 – 54 age range.

It is unlikely that the increase in the number of older Asian residents can be attributed simply to immigration. Some of the increase does arise from the arrival of grandparents brought to Lexington to look after grandchildren. Most is likely to be the consequence of Asian residents choosing to remain in Lexington after their children leave home. If this trend continues, the number of candidates for Town boards and committees would continue to increase, not only reflecting the growth in the number Asian residents between the ages of 45 and 74 – the age group most prevalent on the Town’s boards and committees – but also because these Asian residents would speak English well, having worked in positions requiring effective communication in English. Moreover, after living in Lexington for 10 to 20 years they would have acquired some familiarity with how the Town operates, the issues it faces and – possibly – motivation to become involved.