Community Needs Assessment Survey Cairo, NE May, 2012

By Shawn Kaskie
Director

Center for Rural Research & Development

University of Nebraska at Kearney
West Center, Room 125E
1917 West 24th Street
Kearney, NE 68849
Phone: (308) 865-8135
Email: kaskiesc@unk.edu
Web site: www.unk.edu/crrd

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Introduction

In the Fall of 2011, Steve Stebbing, Economic Development Committee Chairman for the Village of Cairo, attended a meeting of the Nebraska Development Networks group in Cairo. During this meeting, he learned about the Center for Rural Research & Development (CRRD) and services related to conducting a community needs assessment survey. The CRRD's Director, Shawn Kaskie met with Stebbing and Village Board President, Bill Heger, in January 2012 to explain the surveying process and to compile questions appropriate for the community's needs. The questionnaire was finalized as were the logistics for its delivery and pickup in March 2012. The City provided a list of all households to be surveyed within the city limits.

Methodology

The questionnaire was divided into six areas of interest including: 1) Community, 2) Community/Recreational Facilities, 3) Education, 4) Business & Economic Development, 5) Housing, and 6) Demographics. Surveys were mailed using the US Post Office's Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) system that delivered one mailer to every residential address (PO Box holders and rural addresses included) within the 68824 ZIP Code. This system provided a significant cost savings to the Village. The mailers included the survey, cover letter from the Mayor of Cairo and a self-addressed, return postage paid envelopes and were given to the local Post Office on April 18, 2012. An additional 64 mailers had to be assembled and mailed the following week due to a count discrepancy between the local Post Office and the EDDM website system. A memo was included with these mailers to apologize for the delay and instructing the recipients to please return their surveys as soon as they could or by May 11, 2012. Two (2) drop box locations were available at the Village/City Hall and Pathway Bank in Cairo in addition to the provided business reply envelopes. All surveys collected by May 16th were electronically scanned and included in the data analyzed and presented in this report. A copy of the questionnaire and cover letter may be found in the Appendix.

The response rate for the questionnaire was excellent. Of the 587 surveys mailed to residential addresses within the 68824 ZIP Code, questionnaires were returned from 205, an overall response rate of 34.9%.

Table 1 Calculated Response Rate

Response Rate Calculation	Number of Surveys
Total Residential Addresses*	587
Less Vacancies*	n/a
Total Mailing	587
Total Returned	205
Response Rate	34.9%

**Utilized the US Post Office's EDDM (Every Door Direct Mailing), survey delivered to every known residential address in the Cairo ZIP Code 68824*

Results

Demographics

More women than men participated in the survey and nearly 25% were completed jointly.

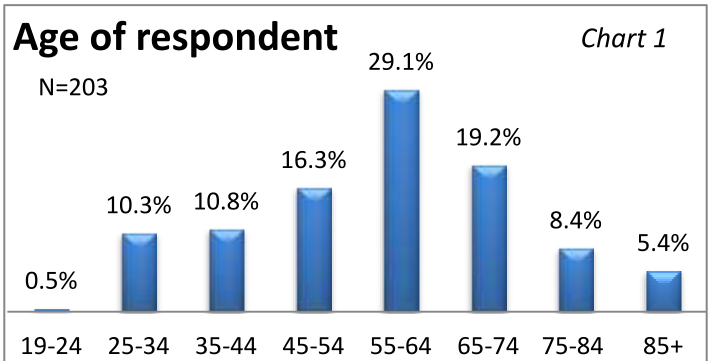
Married couples represented the majority of respondents (77.6%) and widows comprised another 10.2%. Those who were single or divorced represented totaled 22 or 10.7% and another 3 respondents or 1.5% classified themselves as "other".

Table 2

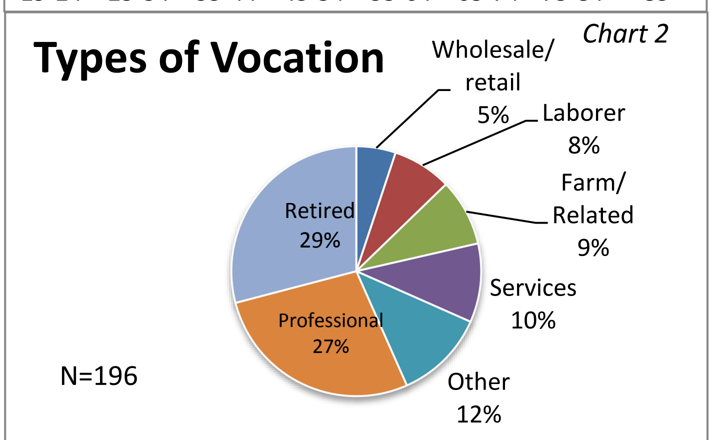
Respondent Gender	Count	%
Female	90	44.1
Male	64	31.4
Joint	50	24.5

Table 3

Marital Status	Count	%
Married	159	77.6%
Widowed	21	10.2%
Divorced	16	7.8%
Single	6	2.9%
Other	3	1.5%

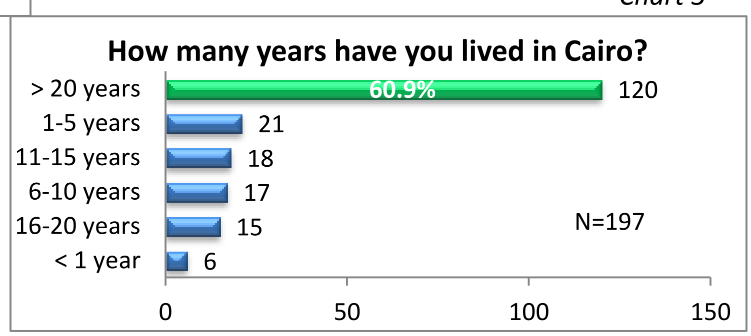


The largest single age group of respondents are those between the ages of 55 and 64 with 29.1%. However, when grouped together, 64.6% of the respondents were aged 45-74 and 62.1% of the respondents were over the age of 55.



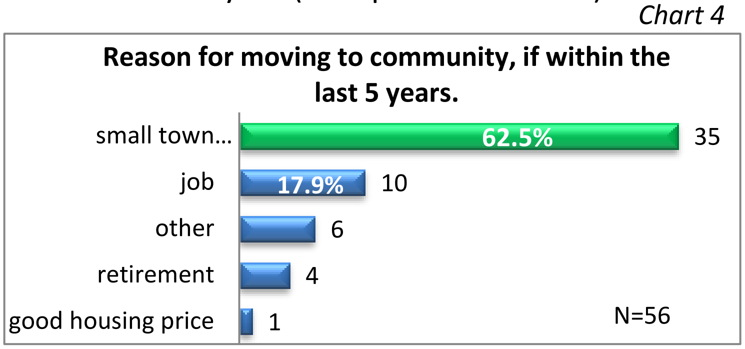
Twenty-nine percent of the households listed themselves as retired and the next largest group of respondents was professionals (27.6%). Wholesale/retail workers, those employed in the service industry, made up another 15.3% while laborers and those in the farming or related industry represented 16.4%.

Chart 3



Nearly 61% of the respondents (120 of the 197 who answered this question) have lived in Cairo for 20 or more years. The other 77 respondents were divided fairly equally among the remaining 5-year ranges with the exception of those only having lived in Cairo less than one year (6 respondents or 3%).

Chart 4



Approximately eighty percent of respondents that have moved to the community in the last 5 years cited the main reason was for the small town atmosphere (35 of 56 respondents) or for a job (10 respondents).

Nearly all respondents answered the question about their level of education. Ninety-nine percent of all respondents (196) had at least a high school education. Seventy percent (139) had taken at least some college and 65 respondents or nearly 33% percent had a college degree or graduate degree.

Chart 5

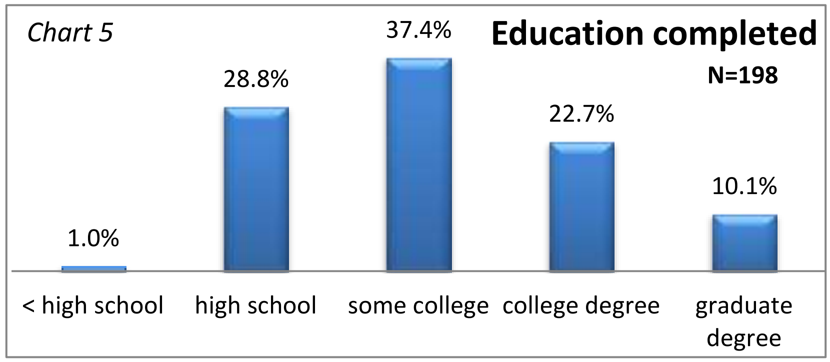
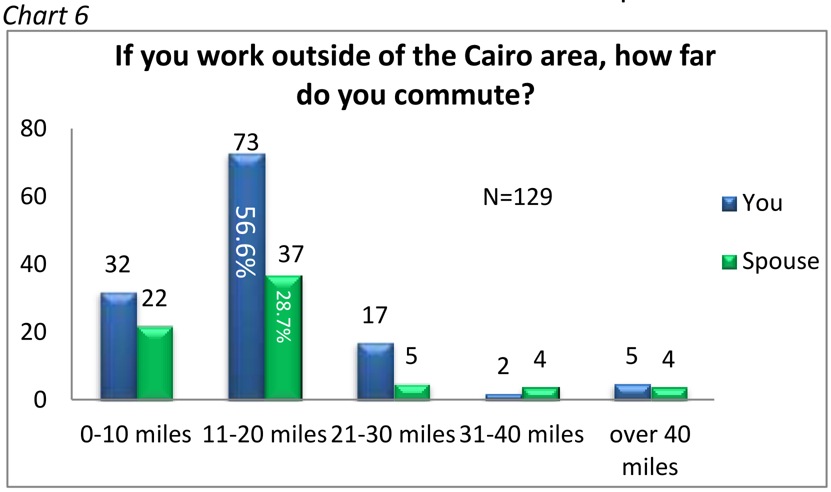


Table 4

Do you live:	Frequency	Valid Percent
Outside the city limits	62	32.0%
Within the city limits	132	68.0%
N=	194	

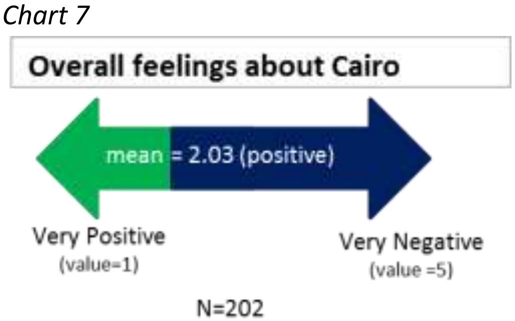
When asked if they lived within or outside of the city limits, sixty-eight percent (68%) do live within the city limits. One hundred ninety-four (194) of the 205 surveys returned had answered this question-a good representation of the Cairo population.

Chart 6



One hundred twenty-nine (129) answers were recorded for Question #9: If you work outside the Cairo area, how far do you commute to work? Slightly more than eighty-one percent (81.4% or 105) of those answering about their own experience, commute up to 20 miles and 45.8% reported that their spouse commuted up to 20 miles. Between 5% and 6% of the respondents and/or spouses commute more than 31 miles to work.

Chart 7



Residents were positive when asked how they feel about Cairo (using a five point scale of Very Positive=1 to Very Negative=5). The resulting mean for Cairo (2.03) was more positive than over half of the 40 communities that our Center has asked this question in last 15 years.

Historical ratings for this question were as high as 1.55 and as low as 2.69. A complete list of reasons why respondents felt the way they did is available in the Appendix, but the table on the right shows the most common types of positive and negative comments.

Table 5

Feelings about Cairo: Theme-based Content Analysis of supporting comments (some respondents offered multiple	Frequency	% out of 118 write-ins
Positive comments re: good community, nice people, good place to raise a family, etc	59	50.0%
Other positive comments: various	5	4.2%
Negative comments re: Need updates & improvements	20	16.9%
Negative comments re: vacant properties	9	7.6%
Negative comments re: taxes	5	4.2%
Negative comments re: cliquish, not welcoming to newcomers	3	2.5%

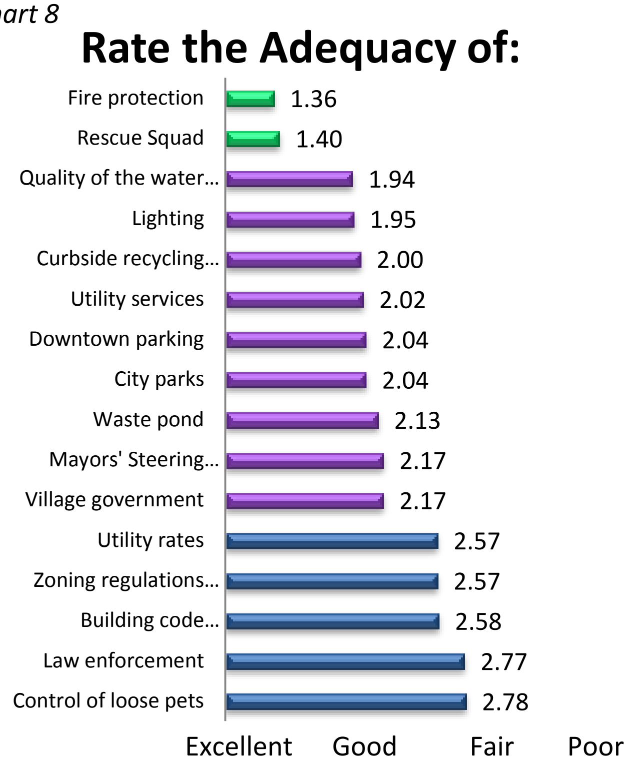
Several demographic characteristics were analyzed to determine if there were differences in the above rating. Statistically significant differences (at the 95% level of confidence) were found for two groups, 1) Income level and 2) Household size. Within those two groups, households with incomes above $60,000 and below $45,100 were slightly more positive than married couples in the middle incomes groups. A larger household size was slightly correlated to more positive ratings as well.

Table 6

Household Size/Income	Above Threshold	Below Threshold
1/$31,600	17	17
2/$36,099	58	23
3/$40,599	21	9
4/$45,099	20	7
5/$48,749	11	1
6/$52,349	2	1
7/$55,949	1	0
8+/$59,549	3	0
Total Households	133	58
Percent of Households	69.6%	30.4%
Percent of Persons	74.4%	25.6%

To determine eligibility for some types of federal funding, a random sample of respondents must answer two questions regarding income and household size. Income guideline amounts for households are supplied by federal sources for each county. *Even though this survey did not utilize the official random sampling procedures, it will give the community insight into the likelihood of Cairo's eligibility for future federal funding opportunities.* In looking at all 205 returned surveys, only 191 respondents answered BOTH Question #10 (Household Size) and Question #11 (Household Income)-both required when a community is preparing federal funding applications. Nearly 70% of the households and 74.4% of the persons in those households are <u>above</u> the federal threshold of eligibility. At least 51% of the respondents must be <u>below</u> the income threshold guidelines to apply for some types of funding. *Based on this survey, the Village of Cairo would NOT qualify for the federal Community Development Block Grant program.*

Chart 8



Community

The first portion of the Community section of the questionnaire asked residents to rate the adequacy of 16 community aspects using the following scale: Excellent=1, Good=2, Fair=3, or Poor=4. If respondents were unable to rate the statement, they could also check a "no opinion/ don't know" category. The four choices for the items were averaged to give an overall rating for each statement.

Cairo's fire protection and rescue squad were highly rated, with their mean scores about half-way between "Excellent" and "Good". Retired residents, those living in the community for more than a year, or those with less formal education were the most positive regarding the fire and rescue squad.

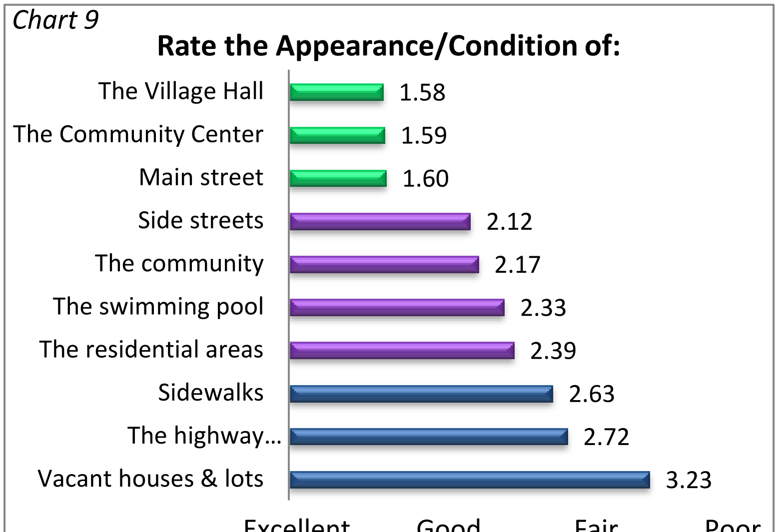
Quality of the water supply, lighting, curbside recycling program, utility services, downtown parking, city parks, the waste pond, Mayor's Community Development Steering Committee and Village government all received good ratings (means between 1.94 and 2.17). Families with less than 5 people were more positive than 35-44 year olds or residents living in town less than 10 years regarding the water quality.

Residents over age 65 or homes with less than 3 people were the most positive about the lighting in the community. Residents with longer commutes to work were more positive about the curbside recycling program than households living outside the city limits who may not have access to the service. Retired, older, widowers, or divorced households with less people in the home were more positive about the utility service than those living in the community less than a year.

Households with higher incomes were more positive about the downtown parking. Residents over 65 were the most positive about the adequacy of the city park system. Residents commuting less than 10 miles were the most positive about the waste pond. Higher income working professionals or older age groups were more positive about the Mayor's Steering Committee for Community Development and the Village Government than other vocations or income groups.

The utility rates, zoning regulation, building code and law enforcement, as well as control of loose pets, fell more into the average range (between "Good" & "Fair") with mean scores of 2.57 to 2.78. Retired or farm related working vocations were more positive about the utility rates than other groups. Residents commuting longer distances were less positive about zoning issues than those working in the community. Slightly more than half the men were satisfied with the law enforcement while less than half of women or households completing the survey jointly were satisfied. Residents living outside the city limits or households with income between $40,600 and $52,349 were the most tolerant of loose pets in the community.

Chart 9



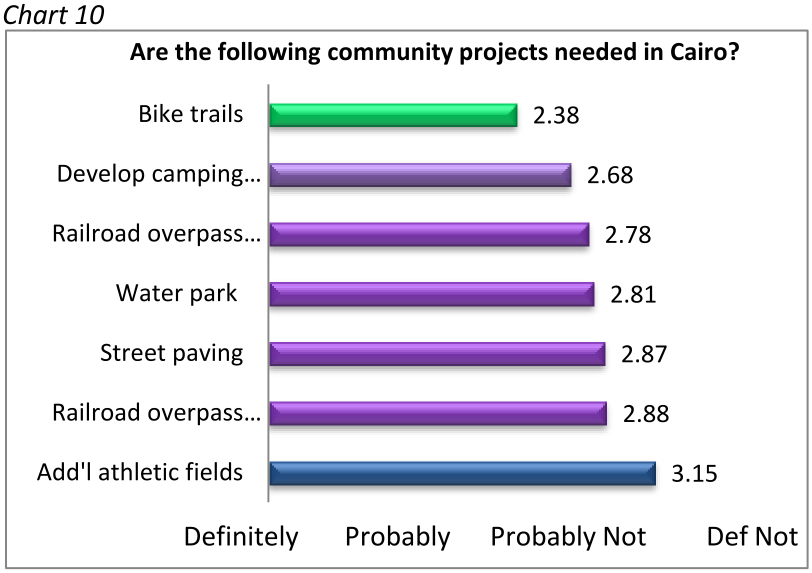
The community also rated the appearance or condition of 10 items. The Village Hall, Community Center and Main Street are rated between "Excellent" and "Good" with their mean scores of 1.58, 1.59 and 1.60 respectively. The condition of the side streets, the community (in general), the swimming pool and the residential areas in "good" condition while the sidewalks and highway entrances to town are closer to a "Fair" appearance/condition.

The appearance of vacant houses and lots in town are rated as “Fair” yet approaching “Poor” with a mean score of 3.23. Residents 45-54 years old and those over 65 were more positive about the Village Hall and Main St. than other age groups. Working professionals and retail workers were slightly more favorable about sidewalk conditions than other groups. Retired, farm/ag, and retail workers were slightly more favorable about the swimming pool conditions than other groups. Also noted were the demographic group of residents over 65 are more positive about pool conditions than household age groups and sizes likely to have kids in the home.

The survey asked several questions using categories of 1=Definitely, 2=Probably, 3=Probably Not, and 4=Definitely Not. If, respondents were unable to rate the statement, they could also check a “don’t know/no opinion” category. The four choices for the items were averaged to arrive at an overall rating for each statement.

The community project gaining the most interest from the residents is the development of a bike trail with a mean of 2.38, which is closer to a rating of “Probably” but not showing a strong level of support. The middle 5 projects rate closer to “Probably Not” and include camping facilities, railroad overpasses for cars and pedestrians, a water park, and street paving projects. Additional athletic fields are probably not needed according to the survey respondents. Residents with more formal education, 35-44 year-olds, and homes with 3 or more people were the most supportive of bike trail development.

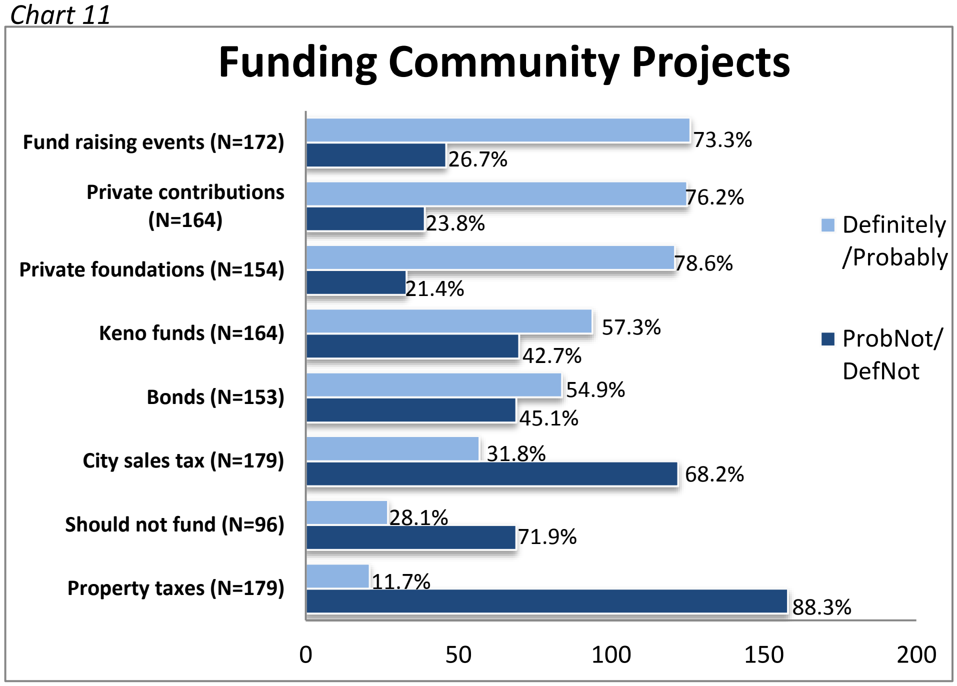
Chart 10



Men were nearly equally divided about a need for camping while women or those filling it out jointly were not.   While most respondents did not see a need for athletic fields, the issue was more divided in 5-6 person homes. Those with less formal education, 25-54 year-olds, and homes with 5-6 persons were fairly divided about the need for a water park, but other groups did not see a need.

Questions 34 through 41 addressed the following: If the Village were to decide to take on any of the above community projects and IF partial funding could be acquired from state and federal sources, then how should Cairo fund is share?

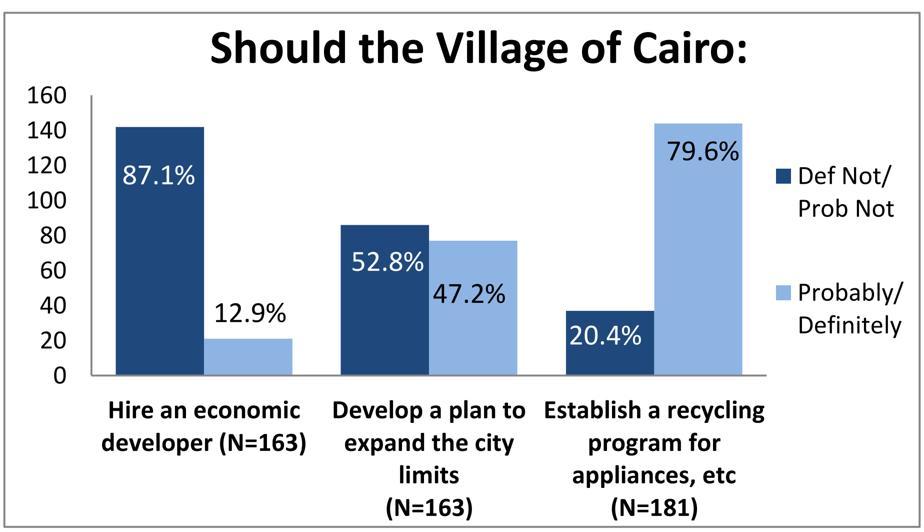
Chart 11



The top three funding choices were Community-wide fund-raising events (126 of 172), Private contributions (125 of 164) and Private foundation funds (121 of 154). The least popular method of funding, with 158 of 179 rating it "Probably" or "Definitely Not" was through the use of property taxes. Question #41 asked if any of the projects warranted fundraising, but the wording may have confused some respondents so the results should be ignored.

Two- to five-person homes were the most positive about community fundraising events. Those with some college, age 25-34, or living here less than 5 years were more supportive of private contributions than other groups. The use of foundations for fundraising was most supported by those living in the community 1-10 and 16-20 years, residents with at least some college education, and age groups under 64. Residents living in town 6-10 years were the most supportive of Keno, but those living here more than 20 years were nearly split on the issue. Men were more supportive of bonds than those filling it out jointly.

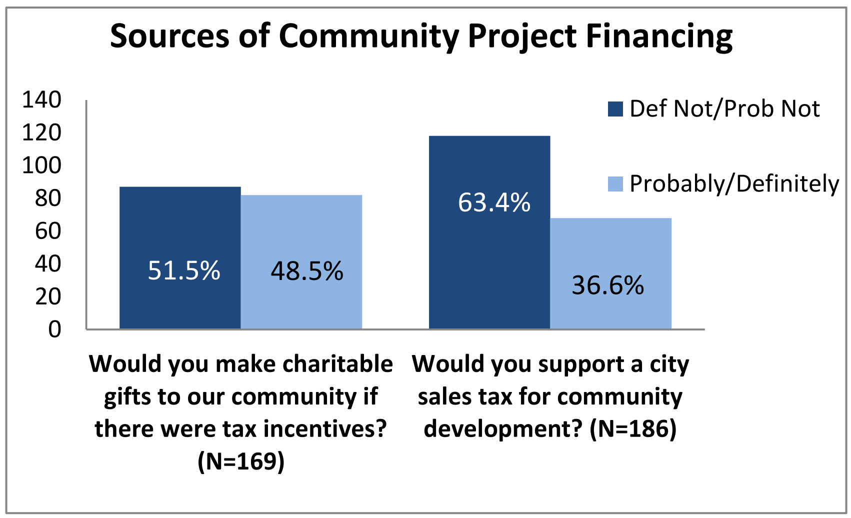
Chart 12



Question #42 in the survey asked if residents thought the Village of Cairo should hire an economic developer and 142 replied "Probably or Definitely Not" while only 21 said "Probably or Definitely". Younger, larger families, living in the community for less time were more supportive of the position than other groups. There was not as much of a consensus of whether or not the Village should develop a plan to expand the city limits. Seventy-seven (77) thought Cairo should "Definitely or Probably" do so, yet 86 felt that they "Probably or Definitely Shouldn't". Newer residents in town were more supportive of expansion than those living here most of their life. The last question, "Should Cairo establish a recycling program for appliances, paint, oil, tires, etc?" received the most support with 144 of the 181 respondents indicating that the Village "Definitely or Probably Should". Older age groups were the most supportive of a recycling program.

Two additional funding questions were addressed asking if the Cairo community would make charitable gifts to the Village if there were tax incentives available and whether or not they would support a city sales tax for community development. Interest in making charitable contributions was fairly even with 82 indicating that they would "Definitely or Probably" would make contributions and another 87 said they "Probably or Definitely would not" make contributions. Newer residents with higher incomes were more supportive of the tax incentives. Support for a city sales tax was low with 118 saying they "Probably or Definitely would not" and only 68 "Definitely or Probably" would. Households with less than 3 people were the least supportive, while familes with 3-5 people or income between $36,100-$40,599 and over $56,000 were almost equally split on the issue.

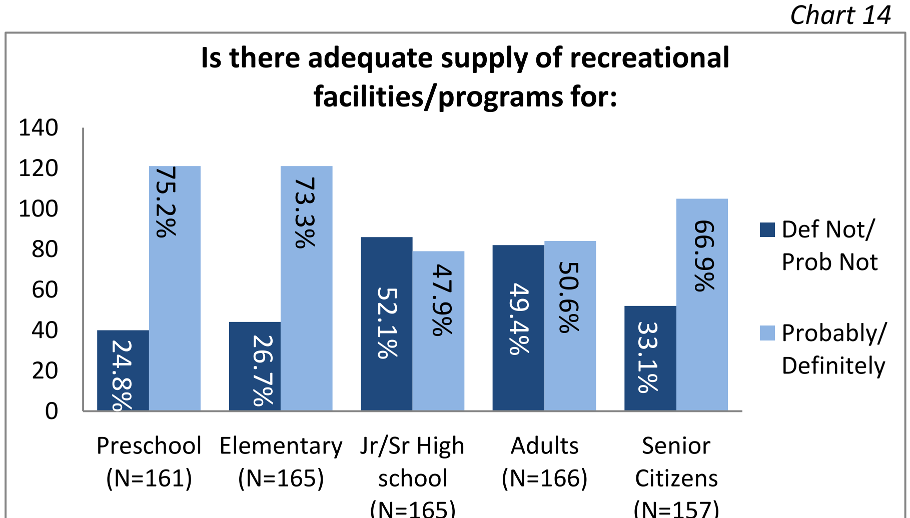
Chart 13



Community/Recreational Facilities

The survey again used the categories of 1=Definitely, 2=Probably, 3=Probably Not, and 4=Definitely Not to rate various aspects of the community's recreational facilities. If respondents were unable to rate the statement, they could also check a "don't know/no opinion" category. In regards to Preschool and Elementary School age children, the respondents felt that there was

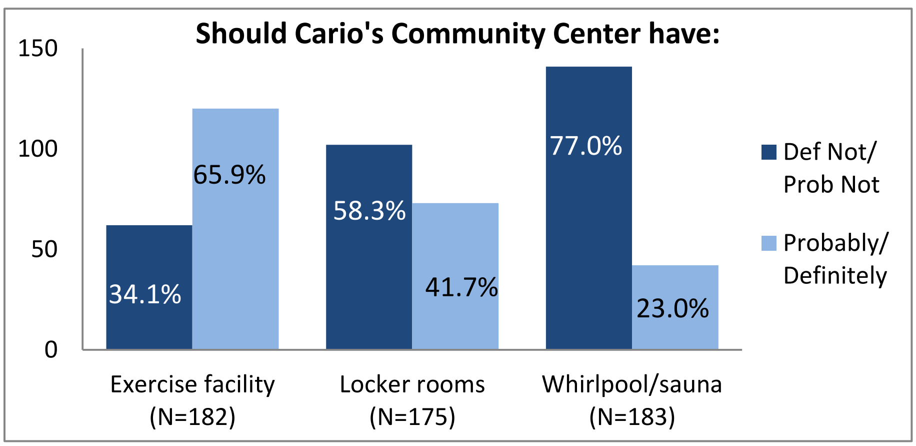
Chart 14



an adequate supply of recreational facilities/programs with 121 responses of "Definitely or Probably" and a mean score of 2.14 and 2.17 respectively. Older age groups and those commuting less than 30 miles were the most confident in the adequacy of the supply of pre-school programs and facilities. Residents were less confident in the adequacy of facilities for Senior Citizens (2.31), but did rate it better than a median score of 2.5. The results seem to indicate that the age groups with the most inadequate supply of facilities and programs are the Jr/Sr High School age and Adults. However the mean scores (2.6 and 2.55 respectively) and the frequency counts indicate that the respondents are fairly evenly split on the question.

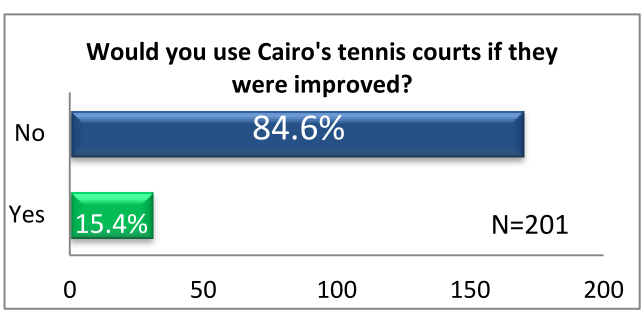
In regards to Cairo's Community Center, input was requested as to whether or not the facility should have the following amenities: Exercise facility with strength & conditioning equipment, locker rooms, and/or a whirlpool/sauna. The results show that the Community Center should "Probably" have an exercise facility with the strength & conditioning equipment as indicated by the mean score of 2.09. The locker rooms (mean score of 2.62) and whirlpool/sauna (mean score of 2.97) are probably not needed according to the respondents of this survey. When looking at the frequency counts, the exercise facility received twice as many ratings of "Definitely or Probably" as compared to "Probably or Definitely Not" and the Whirlpool/Sauna showed more than three times as many "votes" against the need for this amenity as was received in favor of it.

Chart 15



Residents age 19-64 or homes with 4 or 5 people were more than twice as supportive of excericse facilities within the Community Center than other groups. Residents with a college degree, homes with 4 or more people, those living here less than 5 years, or between age 35-44 were slightly more positive about the locker rooms than other groups.

Chart 16



Question #9 asked if the Cairo tennis courts were improved would you use them. Nearly eighty-five percent said "No" (170 of 201 responses). Homes with more than 3 persons or 34-44 year olds were the least negative about the use of tennis courts.

Chart 17

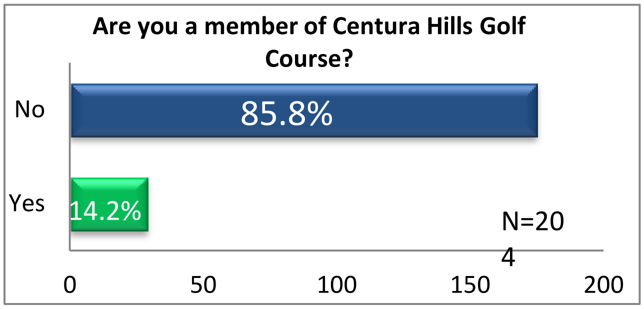


Chart 18

And when residents were asked if they were a member of the Centura Hills Golf Course, nearly eighty-six percent were not (175 of 204 respondents). Men, households with 2-3 people and those households with income over $48,750 were more likely to be members. One hundred ten of those who are not members say it is because they do not golf and another 57 say it is cost prohibitive for them.

Education

Cairo residents were asked to rate three aspects of education within the community using the scale of Excellent=1, Good=2, Fair=3, or Poor=4. If respondents were unable to rate the statement, they could also check a "no opinion/don't know" category.

Overall, the three aspects of education were rated positively with the majority of respondents rating the adequacy of school facilities (88%), local school curriculum (83%) and use of school facilities for community programs (53%) as "Good" to "Excellent".

Chart 19

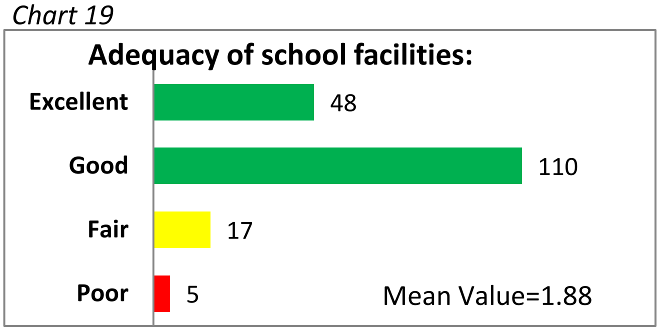


Chart 20

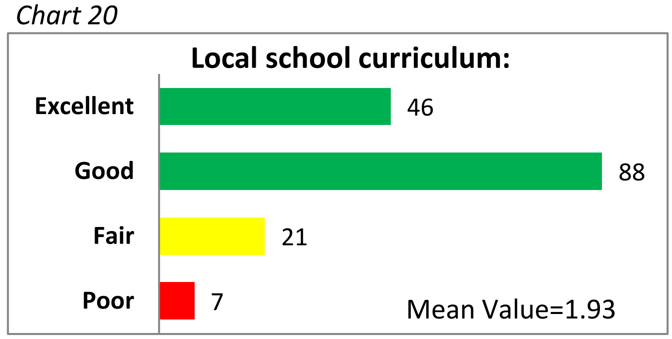
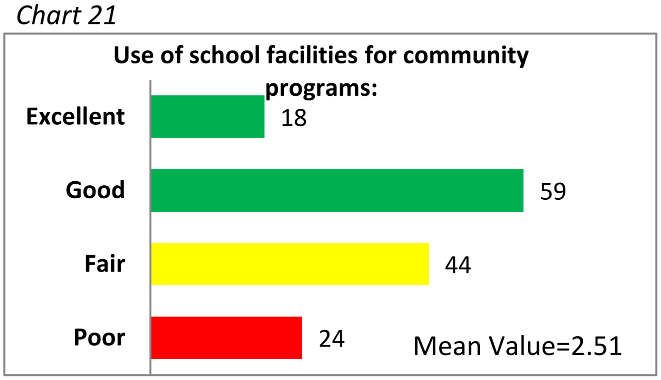


Chart 21

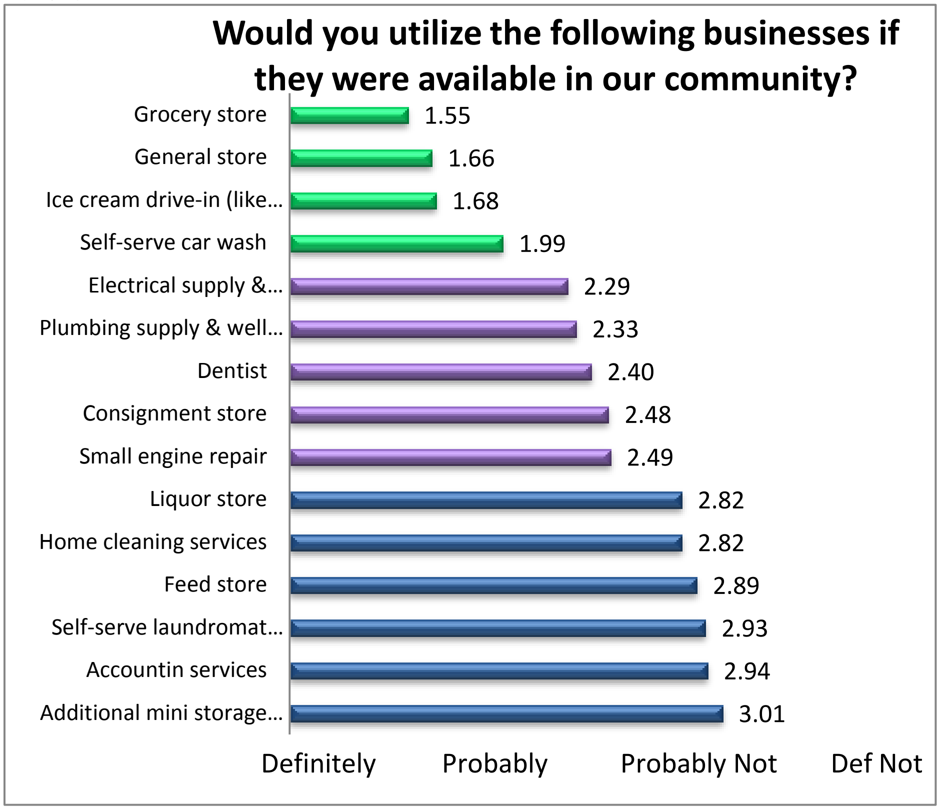


Retired residents over 65 or laborers were more positive about the adequacy of school facilities while those living in the community for more than 20 years, or commuting less than 20 miles were more evenly divided about the community's use of the school facilities. Larger families living in the community for more than a year rated the school curriculum most favorably.

Business & Economic Development

This section of the survey asked residents to rate how likely they would utilize 15 different types of businesses if they were available in the community. The survey used the categories of 1=Definitely, 2=Probably, 3=Probably Not, and 4=Definitely Not for the rating scale. If respondents were unable to rate the statement, they could also check a "don't know/no opinion" category. The four choices for the items were averaged to arrive at an overall rating for each statement and are shown on the chart included here.

Chart 22



The most popular businesses with mean ratings between "Definitely" and "Probably" include a grocery store (1.55), a general store (1.66), an ice cream drive-in (1.68, similar to Dairy Queen) and a self-serve car wash (1.99). Those that rated between "Probably" and "Probably Not" were electrical supply & services, plumbing supply & well drilling, a dentist, consignment store and small engine repair shop. The remaining business types rated closer to "Probably Not" with mean ratings between 2.82 for a liquor store to 3.01 for additional mini storage units.

Table 7

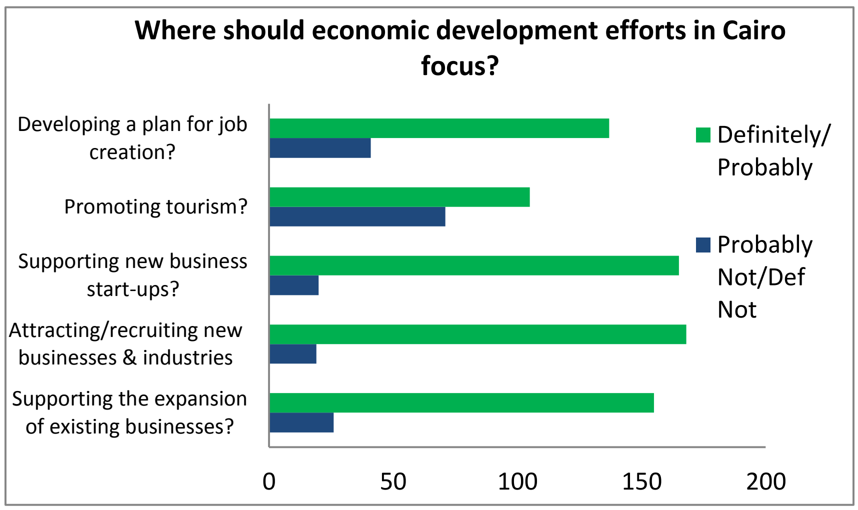
Types of businesses to be attracted/recruited to the area: Theme-based Content Analysis of supporting comments (some respondents offered multiple businesses)	Frequency	% out of 140 write-ins
Grocery/General Store	45	32.1%
Fast food/restaurant/café/Ice Cream	24	17.1%
Anything/Any kind	15	10.7%
Ag related-small repair-hardware	12	8.6%
Car wash	9	6.4%
Fitness/Recreation	8	5.7%
Health/Doctor/Dentist	7	5.0%
Light Industrial-Service	7	5.0%
Other: Other retail (5), Lodging (3), Call Center (1), Elderly housing (1)	10	a

Although the majority of households reported they would use a grocery, general, small engine, dental, and consignment store, there we no statistically significant (p<.05) differences in the types of people responding to these questions. Female respondents reported more interest in an ice cream shop than men. Households with higher incomes or 25-44 year-olds reported more interest in a self-serve car wash. Retired professionals who have lived in Cairo longer reported more interest in an electric supply and services business than other groups. Farm related workers, homes with 1-2 persons, or older age groups reported more interest in plumbing supply and services.

Older respondents were less supportive of liquor stores than households with longer commutes or higher incomes. Retired widowers reported being more likely to use cleaning services than respondents less than 65 years of age. Long distance commuters were less interested in a feed store than farmers or short distance commuters. Respondents that were married or had less formal education were less interested in a self-serve laundromat than divorced, widowed, or those commuting longer distances to work. Larger families were the least supportive of additional mini-storage units.

The next few questions (Q#16-Q#21) asked where economic development efforts in Cairo should focus. Most respondents are in favor of the economic development efforts presented in the survey. Attracting/recruiting new businesses & industries to the area (mean value of 1.67) and supporting new business start-ups (mean value of 1.7) led the list of the economic development efforts.

Chart 23



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Light Industrial-Service	7	5.0%
Other: Other retail (5), Lodging (3), Call Center (1), Elderly housing (1)	10	a

The results from Questions 1-15 support the list of business written in as answers to Question #18 with a grocery store or general store leading the way. In addition to the grocery store and general store, respondents also listed (24 total answers) the need for food service businesses which included fast-food chains, restaurants, cafés and ice cream. Another 15 answers revealed a desire for “anything” or “any kind” of new business. These three categories account for nearly 60% of the write-in answers. The complete content analysis is included in the appendix and summarized in Table 7.

Respondents commuting over 11 miles to work were the most supportive of supporting new business startups. Older residents were more supportive of tourism development efforts than higher income groups. Respondents with a high school education or less were the most supportive of developing a plan for job creation.

Question #22 asked if residents had made retail Internet purchases in the last 3 months and Question #23 requested an estimated value of those purchases. One hundred four of the 200 respondents had made internet purchases (52%) and the average value of those purchases fell somewhere between$50 and $500.

Chart 24

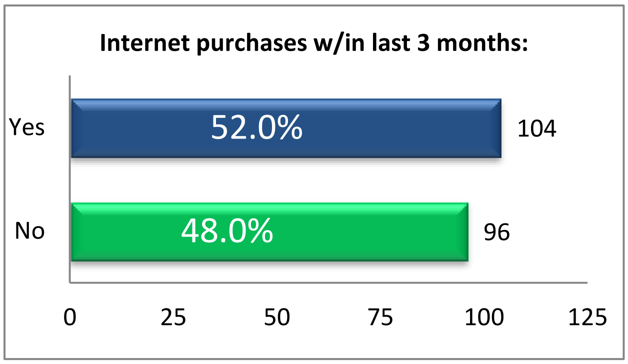
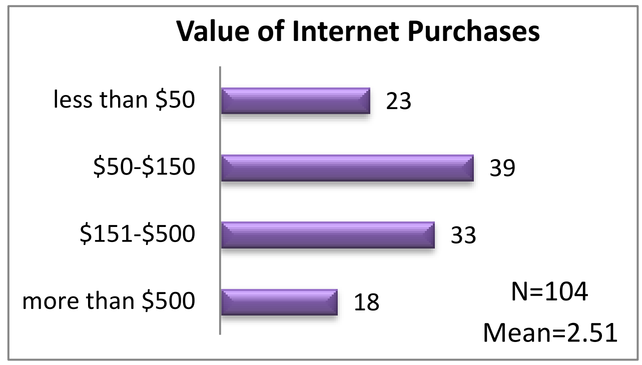


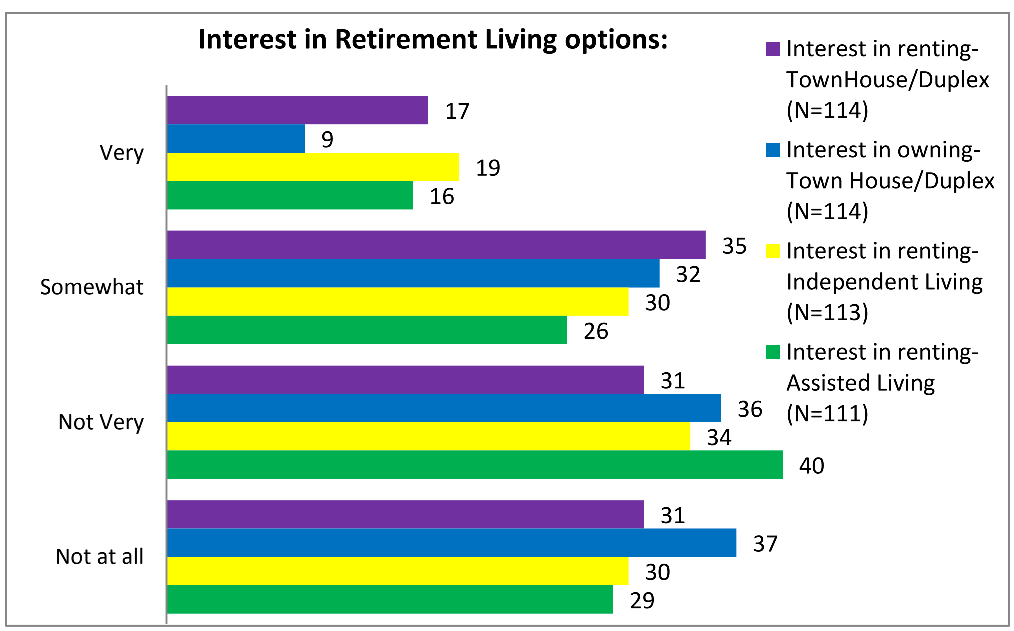
Chart 25



Housing-(For those age 55 and older only)

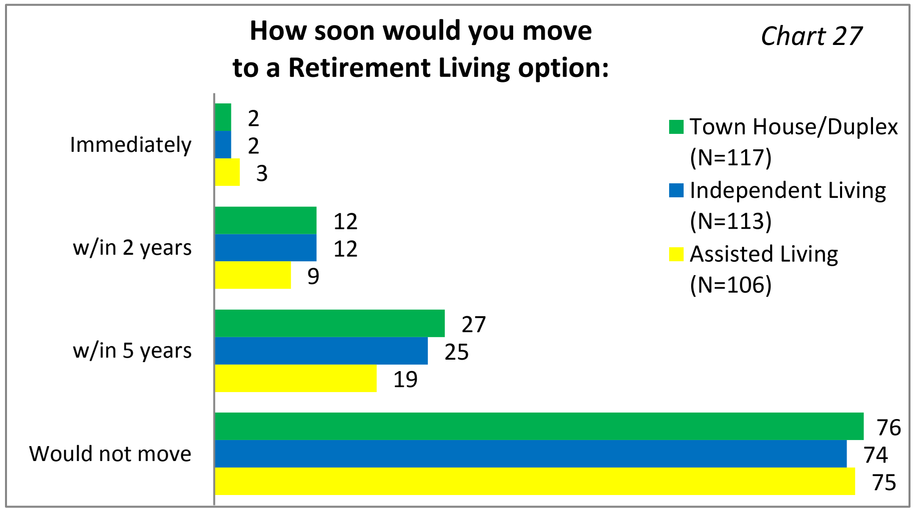
The last series of questions were introduced with the following: As people reach retirement age and their needs change, they often consider moving to a different type of housing. Interest in three types of retirement housing were evaluated in the survey using the scale of 1=Very, 2=Somewhat, 3=Not Very, 4=Not at All. If respondents were unable to rate the statement, they could also check a "Not Sure" category.

Chart 26



Questions #1-3 described a Town House/Duplex option with 1 or 2 bedroom units with full kitchens, maintenance of exterior grounds and garages. Of the 114 that answered, 52 were "Very" or "Somewhat" interested in renting this type of unit while 41 were "Very" or "Somewhat" interested in buying this type of unit. Fourteen (14 or 12%) would be interested in moving to this type of unit within 2 years.

Questions #4 & 5 described an Independent Living option which would provide housing and additional services such as 2 meals daily, light housekeeping and weekly transportation for shopping and doctor visits. Of the 113 that answered, 49 were “Very” or “Somewhat” interested in renting this type of unit, yet only 14 would be interested in moving within the next 2 years. The last option, an Assisted Living facility would have an individual room with a bathroom, all meals and limited on-site assistance with medications. Thirty-two respondents (28.8%) would be “Very” or “Somewhat” interested in renting a unit and 12 of them (11.3%) would be ready to move within 2 years.



Conclusions

Demographic Strengths

- People moving to the community for jobs In the region and the small town atmosphere
- Residents overall feel very positive about the community

Demographic Challenges

- Overrepresentation from:
  - Age 55-74
  - Female & Married
  - Incomes over $60,000
- Do not qualify for Federal Block Grant
- A significant number of commuters
- Perceptions of
  - "Cliquishness" among the residents

Community Strengths

- Good ratings for the adequacy of:
  - Fire protection
  - Rescue squad
  - Water quality
  - Lighting
  - Curbside Recycling
  - Utility Services
  - Downtown Parking
  - City Parks
  - Waste Pond
- Good ratings for the general appearance or condition of the:
  - Village Hall
  - Community Center
  - Main St.

Community Challenges

- Negative ratings for
  - Control of loose pets
  - Law enforcement
  - Building and zoning code enforcement
- Negative ratings for the general condition or appearance of:
  - Vacant houses and lots
  - Residential sidewalks
  - Highway entrances
- The supply of recreational facilities/ programs for junior/senior high students and adults
- Differences in feelings about Cairo by lower income households
- Low support for public funding of community development projects

Community/Recreational Facility Strengths

- Adequacy of programs/facilities for senior citizens

Community/Recreational Facility Challenges

- The supply of recreational facilities/ programs for junior/senior high students and adults
- Lack of support to fund projects such as an exercise facility
- Lack of residents with an interest in golf to support the course
- Lack of residents with an interest in tennis to support redevelopment

Conclusions (continued)

Education Strengths

- Positve perceptions about supply of programs, facilities, and curriculum for school system

Education Challenges

- Slightly more than half feel the school facilities could be shared with community more
- Ratings are skewed to households that likely do not currently have kids in the school system

Business & Economic Development Strengths

- Strong support for providing assistance to:
    - New business start-up
    - Attraction/recruiting of new business
    - Expansion of existing business
- Strong support for stores including:
    - Grocery
    - General/hardware
    - Ice-cream
    - Self-service car wash

Business & Economic Development Challenges

- Lack of support of public funding for business development initiatives
- Less support for other stores/services including:
    - Mini-storage
    - Accounting
    - Feed store
    - Self-service Laundromat
    - Home cleaning
    - Liquor

55+ Housing Strengths

- A few dozen residents may be interested in various options related to retirement housing

55+ Housing Challenges

- Demand for new retirement housing is not urgent