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# Appendix

Questionnaire and Cover Letter
Write-In Comments
Map of Target Area
SPSSPC+ Computer Printouts (one copy)
Introduction

In the Fall of 2013, Jen Olds, Community Development Specialist for the Southeast Nebraska Development District, inquired about services related to conducting a community needs assessment survey from the Center for Rural Research & Development (CRRD) in the College of Business & Technology at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. The CRRD’s Director, Shawn Kaskie provided information to Ms. Olds, who later explained the surveying process to the City Council of Nebraska City during the October 2013 session. Working closely with the Citizen’s Advisory Committee, a questionnaire was finalized, followed by the logistics for distribution in November 2013. The City provided a list of all households to be surveyed within a specified neighborhood within the city limits. The results may be used to apply for a Community Development Block Grant as this federal program requires a high level of public participation regarding plans for public investment on infrastructure developments.

Methodology

The questionnaire was divided into several areas of interest including: 1) Community Services - including the appearance and condition of public infrastructure, 2) Recreational Facilities, 3) Public Infrastructure Projects Needed, 4) Housing, 5) Employment, 6) Demographics, 7) Daycare, and 8) Communications. Survey packets were mailed through the UNK Post Office’s bulk rate system using a list of households provided by the City on Friday, November 1st. The packets included the survey, cover letter, an optional raffle ticket, and a self-addressed-return postage paid envelope. An additional 20 surveys were translated, printed in Spanish, and made available for residents at the City office. Ms. Olds collaborated with a local translator to ensure the question meaning was accurate. Since many survey packets did not arrive at households until a few days before the due date published in the cover letter, a second press release informed residents that a Nov. 15 due date was acceptable. All surveys collected by November 22, 2013, 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 good. Of the 787 surveys mailed to residential addresses within the Census Block Group, questionnaires were returned from 220, an overall response rate of 28.8%. See Appendix for a map of the area included in this study.
Results

Demographics

Slightly more women than men participated in the survey with 53% women and nearly 47% men. Over half of the respondents were married, while another 34% were single, and 11% were widowed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

Age of respondent

Chart 1

Q. 59
n=213

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-24</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximately 44% of respondents that have moved to the community in the last 5 years cited the main reason was a job and 35% cited the small town atmosphere as their reason.

How many years have you lived in Nebraska City?

Chart 2

Q.57
n=216

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>more than 20</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less than 1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over 2/3 of the respondents were of typical working age, or 19-64, while 33% were 65 or older. The largest single age group of respondents were those between 55 and 64 with 22%.

Fifty-five percent of the respondents (118 of the 216 who answered the question) have lived in Nebraska City for 20 or more years. Eight percent reported living in Nebraska City for 16-20 years and the remaining 5-year ranges were divided fairly equally with an additional 9 living in Nebraska City less than a year.

Reason for moving to Nebraska City, if within the last 5 years

Chart 3

Q. 58
n=57

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small town atmosphere</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good housing</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nearly all the respondents answered the question about their level of education. Almost ninety-three percent of all respondents had at least a high school education. Nearly 60% had taken at least some college and 31% percent had a college degree or graduate degree.

Education Completed

Chart 4

Q. 60
n=213

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A majority of neighborhood residents, 60%, were positive when asked how they feel about Nebraska City as a whole. Using a five point scale of Very Positive=1 to Very Negative=5, the mean was 2.33, or on the positive side of the neutral score of 3. Only about 10% of respondents, or 21 people, reported negative feelings about the community as a whole. Residents without children were more positive about the community in general.

Historical ratings (statewide) 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 table 4 above shows the most common types of positive and negative comments.

**Community**

This section of the survey asked residents to rate the adequacy of 14 community aspects using the following scale: Excellent=1, Good=2, Fair=3, Poor=4. Over 96% of respondents’ rated Nebraska City’s rescue squad and fire protection as “Excellent” or “Good” as compared to only 25% for recycling programs.

As the age of the respondents increased, so did the positive feelings they have toward neighborhood parks, the rescue squad, library hours, facilities and services and street lighting.

While all responses toward the adequacy of law enforcement were positive, those living in Nebraska City less than 5 years and 16-20 years tended to be more toward excellent than the other groups.
Males were slightly more satisfied with the storm sewer systems than females, married persons, and those with at least some college felt less positive about the adequacy of recycling programs. Residents living in apartments were more moderate about the adequacy of recycling programs compared to the generally negative perceptions residents living in houses, mobile homes, or assisted-living facilities.

The community also rated the appearance or condition of eight items. The downtown, highway entrances and residential areas are rated between “Excellent” and “Good” with their mean scores of 1.99, 2.16, and 2.34, respectively. The condition of the neighborhood streets and summer rec facilities are closer to a “Fair” appearance/condition. Neighborhood sidewalks, vacant houses/lots and the condition of the Memorial Building were rated fair to poor, with mean scores of 2.96, 3.07 and 3.31, respectively.

Residents living in the community less than 5 years and 16-20 years were more positive about the appearance of downtown than 11-15 year and over 20 year residents. The older residents felt the condition of the summer recreation facilities was more satisfactory than the younger groups.

Most of those surveyed felt the condition of the Memorial Building was fair to poor with the lower marks coming from those over 45 and those that have lived in Nebraska City more than 6 years. The condition of the neighborhood streets was given fair marks with more positive feelings from males and those who have lived in Nebraska City 16-20 years.

Respondents over 55 and those living in Nebraska City 1-10 years felt better about the condition of the summer recreation facilities than those less than one and slightly better than those over 10 years.

Residents were asked if there was an adequate supply of recreational facilities and programs for the size of the city for different age groups using categories of 1=Definitely, 2=Probably, 3=Probably Not, and 4=Definitely Not. The four choices for the items were averaged to arrive at an overall rating for each statement. A majority of the respondents agree that there is definitely not and probably not enough activities for senior citizens, adults, and junior-senior high age. The 2.83 mean calculated for supply of senior citizens’ recreation was the highest of all groups.
indicating there may be a need for more organized senior activities. Those with more education felt slightly less confident about the need for additional senior recreation facilities and programs. Single, widowed and female respondents felt there was probably not enough recreation for adults.

The 35-54 year olds felt stronger about the lack of recreation for junior-senior high age, as well as those who have lived in Nebraska City more than 20 years. Equally high are the numbers of residents who agree that there is an adequate supply of recreational facilities and programs for elementary and preschool. As years of education increased, so did the satisfaction with the amount of recreational facilities and programs available for the elementary. While all groups, with the exception of the 85+ group, felt there was a sufficient amount of recreation for preschoolers, the 55-84 year olds were most positive with means just over 2.0, which signifies they feel there is probably an adequate supply of recreation for preschoolers. A higher percent of males versus females also felt there were enough opportunities for preschool recreation.

The community project gaining the most interest from the residents is sidewalk construction with a mean of 2.06. The middle 4 projects rating “Probably” include renovation of the Memorial Building, hike and bike trails, street paving and improving park accessibility. The water main replacement mean was 2.67 closer to the “Probably Not”. Residents over 75 and those who moved to Nebraska City for the small town atmosphere were the most supportive of renovation of the Memorial Building to a multi-use community building. The issue of improving park accessibility was equally divided.
Residents were then asked to select their top 2 neighborhood priority projects. Sidewalk construction and renovating the Memorial Building were again the top 2 choices with water main replacement less of a priority than the other projects.

**Housing**

Questions 34 through 39 addressed the following: What housing types are needed in Nebraska City?

The responses were similar for the various housing types. The most needed type of housing is affordable housing for middle-income families, followed closely by housing for low-income families. Retirement housing followed in the “probably” range, then houses to rent and apartments.

Questions 40-44 were directed toward housing. Over 80% of the respondents reside in a house with 15% in apartments and the remainder in public or assisted living and mobile homes.

Seventy percent own their homes.

Of the 208 residents who answered question 42 “Does your home meet the needs of the disabled?” 150 answered “no.”
Cross tabs

Fifty-six percent of the 207 respondents reported they spend over 1/3 of their income towards housing. Housing is described as rent/mortgage plus utilities.

The Nebraska City residents were then asked to rate the condition of their residence. Of the 212 that answered, 125 or 59% answered that their residence is in good condition, needing less than $5,000 in repairs. Seventy-five reported their residence needed $5,001 to $25,000 in repairs and five percent need more than $25,000 in repairs.

When home-owners were asked if they would accept cost-sharing assistance to complete their home’s rehabilitation, half of the respondents said they definitely and probably would and half said probably not and definitely not. Thirty-four residents/households reported that their homes need repairs, they are spending more than 1/3 of their income on housing and would probably or definitely be willing to apply for cost sharing assistance.

Of the 57 renters, over 70% stated their home met their needs, but 23 would prefer to own.

Over 75% of the Nebraska City residents who rent are currently satisfied that their
rental meets their needs. Half of those that rent prefer to rent. The top 2 barriers to home ownership are lack of down payment, lack of alternative housing, followed closely by their credit rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If down payment is a barrier, would you be interested in a government-backed loan that requires no down payment?</th>
<th>Chart 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employment**

Using the Excellent=1, Good=2, Fair=3 and Poor=4, the Nebraska City residents gave the availability of job opportunities and the quality of job opportunities a mean rating of 3.05 and 3.14, respectively. The number of jobs available was poorly perceived by residents in the study as only around one quarter of those responding felt prospects were good. An even smaller margin felt similarly about the quality of jobs available in the general community.

There were no statistically significant correlations with major demographic areas and job opportunities.

Thirty percent of the respondents would need to be offered a starting wage of $16.00 or higher to accept a job in Nebraska City, while 21% and 17% would accept $12.50 or $10.50, respectively. There are 26% who would be willing to make $9.50 or $10.50 per hour and another 26% who would require $11.50 or $12.50. Renters feeling positive about the community reported a willingness to accept moderate wages or higher, $13.50 an hour or more. Residents living in the community more than 11 years with positive feelings about the community desired the highest
starting wages, $16 an hour or more. Single (unmarried) residents feeling positive about the community reported a willingness to accept moderate wages or higher, $13.50 an hour or more. Women reporting they had positive feelings about the community stated a willingness to accept less wage than men, beginning at $10.50 an hour or more.

**Daycare**

About 12% or 24 of the respondents have children in daycare. Residents were also asked to rate the difficulty in finding quality child care. Seventy percent responded that it was very difficult and somewhat difficult. Thirty percent reported it was not very difficult or not difficult at all.

Residents were also asked what time of day child care is needed. Sixty three percent of the 46 who responded said 6 am to 4 pm, while 21% said they need child care from 3 pm to 11pm and 15% reported they needed overnight care. Sixteen residents with kids under age 12 reported needing childcare from 6am to 4pm, more than half of this group was single mothers. Four residents reported a need from 3-11pm, and 3 mentioned overnight. Residents with a high school education or less reported the highest need for child care from 3-11pm. Over 90% of residents with kids under age 12, or 26 people, reported difficulty finding childcare. Of these more than 2/3 reported the strongest need from 6am-4pm.

**Communications**

The last section of the survey questioned residents about their forms of communications. Sixty-four percent, or 135 of the 211 who responded, reported they do have a landline telephone.

Almost 23% of the households that responded reported they do not have a computer, while 37%, or 78 of the 211 said they have one computer.
Question 68 asked what type of internet service each household subscribed to. Two-thirds of the households subscribe to either cable or DSL while one-quarter of the homes are without any internet service.

When asked how subscribers feel about their internet service, the majority stated the speed, price and support were fair. Using the scale Excellent=1, Good=2, Fair=3 and Poor=4, residents rated their service and the resulting means were 2.93 for satisfaction with price, 2.62 for satisfaction with speed, and 2.67 for satisfaction with support. Those all lie in the good to fair range. The highest dissatisfaction was with internet pricing with 25% rating it poor and 47% rating it fair, leaving only 27% stating it is excellent or good.
## Conclusions

### Demographic Strengths
- People moving to the community for jobs and the small town atmosphere are generally positive

### Demographic Challenges
- Overrepresentation from:
  - Ages over 55
- More than half spend over 1/3 of income on housing

### Community Strengths
- Good ratings for the adequacy of:
  - Fire protection
  - Rescue squad
  - Library
  - Utility Services
  - City Parks
- Good ratings for the general appearance or condition of the:
  - Downtown
  - Highway entrances
  - Residential Areas

### Community Challenges
- Negative ratings for:
  - Recycling
  - Truck & RV Parking
  - Building and zoning code enforcement
- Negative ratings for the general condition or appearance of:
  - Vacant houses and lots
  - Residential sidewalks
  - Memorial building
  - Streets

### Community/Recreational Facility Strengths
- Adequacy of programs/facilities for Elementary and pre-school

### Community/Recreational Facility Challenges
- The supply of recreational facilities/Programs for sr. citizens, adults, and junior/senior high students
## Conclusions (continued)

### Housing Strengths
- More than 70% of neighborhood residents reported they are happy homeowners.
- Over ¾ of renters claimed their home currently meets their needs.
- Nearly 2/3 of residents claim their home was in good repair.
- About half of the residents, 162, claimed they would apply for cost share assisted in improve their home; but only 34 of this group reported spending more an 1/3 of their income on housing; a common criteria for eligibility.

### Housing Challenges
- Most people felt that nearly all types of housing was need in the community, but middle and low income were rated as the strongest needs, widowers & women currently living in apartments or assisted living recorded the highest needs.
- The biggest reported barrier to home ownership was lack down of payment, 71%, with 60% mentioning credit as an issue, but only about 1/3 were willing and eligible for a government backed loan.

### Daycare Strengths
- Positive general perceptions about supply of Daycare.

### Daycare Challenges
- More than 90% of respondent with kids under 12 reported a need for daycare.

### Business & Economic Development Strengths
- Strong support for providing assistance to:
  - Attraction of new business/jobs.

### Business & Economic Development Challenges
- General perception there is need for more job opportunities.

### Communication Strengths
- About ¾ reported using the internet, happy with speed and support, most people have at least one computer.
- 2/3 have landline.

### Communication Challenges
- Less satisfaction with price.