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# **RESULTS OF SURVEY ON CARTER STREET RECREATION CENTER EXPANSION 14621 NEIGHBORHOOD**

Prepared for:

**United Neighborhood Centers of Greater Rochester Foundation**

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## SUMMARY

The United Neighborhood Centers of Greater Rochester (UNCGR) Foundation is a not-for-profit entity established to raise funds for the construction/renovation of neighborhood centers. The last project scheduled for completion is the possible expansion of the Carter Street Recreation Center into a more comprehensive neighborhood center offering expanded services and programs to residents of the 14621 community.

Before any final decisions are made, the UNCGR Foundation was interested in learning how 14621 community residents feel about the possible expansion, and wanted to learn what types of programs and services residents need and desire. In order to answer these questions, the Foundation asked CGR to survey local residents of the 14621 neighborhood, and to present the objective findings from the survey.

Overall, the survey results indicate substantial support in the community for the expansion of the Carter Street Recreation Center. Among all 612 respondents who answered the question regarding support of the expanded Center if it allowed for expanded services, 67.2% answered yes, 17.5% said they were unsure, and 15.4% answered no. The ratio of respondents answering yes, compared to those answering no, was 4.4 to 1.0.

Respondents who live in close proximity to the Center location were less favorable towards the expansion than those living further away. Among those who live in close proximity to the site, 47.6% were in favor of the expansion, compared to 72.2% of those living further away. However, even among those living close to the

center, the ratio of favorable responses to non-favorable responses was 1.5 to 1.0 (compared to 6.5 to 1.0 among those further away). In both cases, the support clearly outweighs the concerns.

Overall, it appears that support for the Center cuts across race, age, income, and other demographic categories. While concerns about the proposed Center expansion exist, they are not strong enough to overcome the strong interest of residents of all types in seeing the expansion move forward.

## **Contributing Staff**

Sarah Boyce Fasick was the primary analyst and author of this report. Ken Borowiak assisted with data entry and analysis.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the staff of the Genesee Settlement House for their help and guidance throughout the project. Thanks also to the City of Rochester for their leadership in implementing the project and help in the logistics of survey administration.

We thank the UNCGR Foundation for their support of the project, and their recognition of the importance of neighborhood input for a project such as this.

Finally, we would like to extend a special thank you to all residents who took the time to complete the survey and return it so that their voices could be heard.

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## INTRODUCTION

The United Neighborhood Centers of Greater Rochester (UNCGR) Foundation is a not-for-profit entity established to raise funds for the construction/renovation of neighborhood centers. The last project scheduled for completion is the possible expansion of the Carter Street Recreation Center into a more comprehensive neighborhood center offering expanded services and programs to residents of the 14621 community.

Before any final decisions are made, the UNCGR Foundation was interested in learning how 14621 community residents feel about the possible expansion, and wanted to learn what types of programs and services residents need and desire. In order to answer these questions, the Foundation asked CGR (The Center for Governmental Research) to survey local residents of the 14621 neighborhood, and to present the objective findings from the survey.

## STUDY APPROACH

CGR designed a survey to address the issues surrounding the possible Carter Street Recreation Center expansion. Survey reviewers included representatives from Genesee Settlement House, City of Rochester, and the UNCGR Foundation. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A. The survey was anonymous.

The City of Rochester generated about 8,000 surveys and mailed them to addressees in the northern and eastern portions of the 14621 zip code area on September 1, 2000. Surveys were returned to a post office box at the City of Rochester, and were then forwarded, unopened, to CGR for analysis. While we initially set a cut-off date of September 12<sup>th</sup> for returned surveys, CGR accepted surveys returned through Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, which allowed respondents nearly two weeks to complete and mail back the surveys in the postage paid envelope.

Out of a total of about 8,000 surveys, over 1,000 were returned unopened due to incorrect addresses, vacancies, or other reasons for inability to deliver the mail. A total of 651 completed surveys were returned and all were included in the analysis.

The 651 returned surveys represent nearly a 10% response rate, which is a typical rate for this type of survey. With a sample size of 651, all results in this analysis are statistically valid within a confidence interval (margin of error) of +/- 4%. For example, with 67.2% of the sample responding that they are in favor of the Center expansion as stated in the summary section, we can say that the “true” value of that estimate is between 63.2% and 71.2% with 95% confidence that the value is *not* due simply to chance.

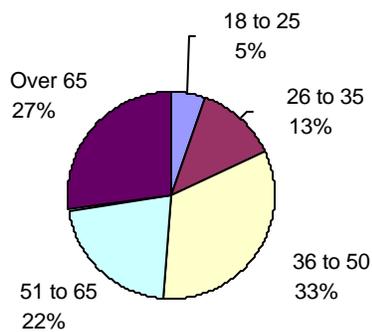
The analysis below begins with an overview of the demographics of the population that responded to the survey. This is followed by a presentation of results regarding the possible expansion of the Carter Street Recreation Center. Detailed data tables are included in Appendix B.

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Of the 651 responses, 623 individuals indicated their age bracket. The largest response group was aged 36 to 50 (33.1%), followed by those over 65 (27.1%) (Table 1). Relatively few in the youngest age group responded (5.3% were aged 18 to 25).

***Most respondents were aged 36 to 50 (33%) or were over 65 (27%).***

**Survey Respondents by Age Category**



***Nearly two-thirds of respondents live in an adult-only household, with no children under the age of 18 (64%)***

More than half of the respondents are white/Caucasian (53.4%), while 27.6% are black/African American and 13.4% are Hispanic/Latino.

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents live in an adult-only household, with no children under the age of 18 (64.2%). The majority of the remaining respondents live in a two-parent household with children under age 18 (18.8%) or in a single-parent household with children under age 18 (15.0%).

Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they are employed full-time (48.6%), while 39.3% were not employed or retired, and the remaining respondents were employed part-time.

Reported income levels varied substantially, with 21.1% of respondents reporting a household income of less than \$10,000, and 29.2% reporting an income of \$35,000 or more.

Most respondents indicated that they are homeowners (61.9%), while 36.5% are renters, and 1.6% live with others.

Approximately one-fifth of the respondents (20.6%) lived in an area immediately surrounding the Carter Center expansion site. These respondents lived within three to five blocks or less of the Center site. The remaining 79.4% lived within the 14621 targeted neighborhood, but lived further from the site.

For more details on the demographics of survey respondents, see the Tables in Appendix B.

## **SURVEY RESPONSES REGARDING THE PROPOSED CENTER EXPANSION**

This section provides a summary of the aggregate findings of all respondents regarding their views on the proposed Carter Street Recreation Center expansion. A subsequent section will provide breakdowns of this data by subsets of respondents (proximity to Center site, age, etc.).

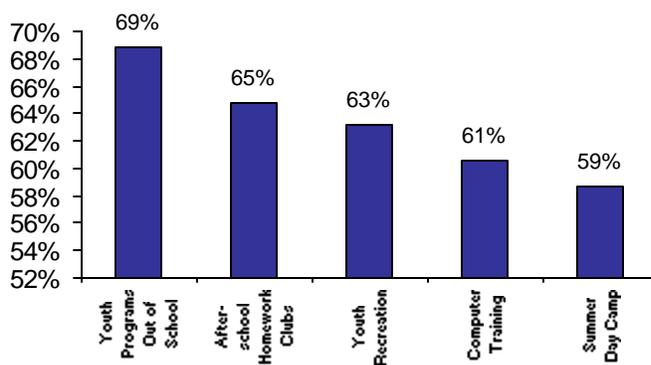
## Perceived Need for Services in the Neighborhood

***Services pertaining to youth are popular among respondents.***

This section analyzes the survey results pertaining to services needed in the 14621 area and which might be offered at the proposed expanded Carter Recreation Center. Respondents were asked which of 26 listed services they think are needed in the neighborhood. Respondents were asked to select as many services as they thought were needed.

Of the services listed, those most in favor were youth programs during out-of-school hours (68.9%), after-school homework clubs (64.7%), youth recreation (63.2%), computer training (60.6%), summer day camp (58.7%) and youth employment services (57.9%) (Table 2). A common feature among these services is that they are directed towards the younger community, whether recreational or educational.

**Most Needed Services in 14621 Neighborhood**



The next set of services that received a large proportion of votes were employment training for adults (55.9%), family support services (55.7%), tutoring high risk high school dropouts (55.6%), tutoring elementary and middle school students (54.7%), family activities (51.9%), providing a safe haven for women and children (50.2%) and parenting classes (50.1%). These services also have a direct and indirect impact upon the youth of the community. Of the 26 services listed in the survey, the 13 aforementioned services were the only ones that received votes from more than 50% of the respondents.

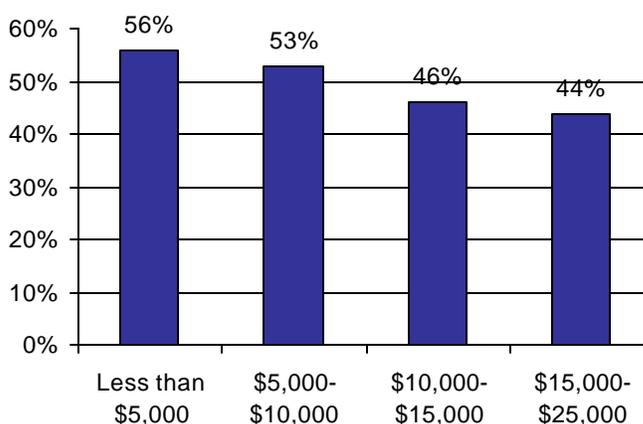
Services that were viewed as needed by between 40% and 50% of the respondents included counseling (49.3%), leadership training for youths (48.9%), adult disabilities services (44.9%), early childhood development programs (44.3%) and rent or mortgage assistance (43.4%).

***Less popular services included photography classes, middle school service coordinator, and youth entrepreneurial training.***

The remaining services received less than 40% support by the respondents. They were: youth disabilities services (39.8%), adult social daycare (37.9%), truancy services (36.6%), leadership training for adults (34.9%), kindergarten enhancement (34.9%), youth entrepreneurial training (34.6%), middle school coordinator (31.1%) and photography classes (17.1%).

For some of the services listed on the survey, it is useful to look beyond the overall percentage of those supporting the service. One such service is rent or mortgage assistance, which 43.4% of all respondents favored. One might expect that this assistance would be more likely favored by those with low income. Of those respondents whose income is less than \$25,000, 48% cited a need for housing assistance, compared to 43.4% of all respondents. The chart below shows that as the level of income increases, the support for rent or mortgage assistance decreases.

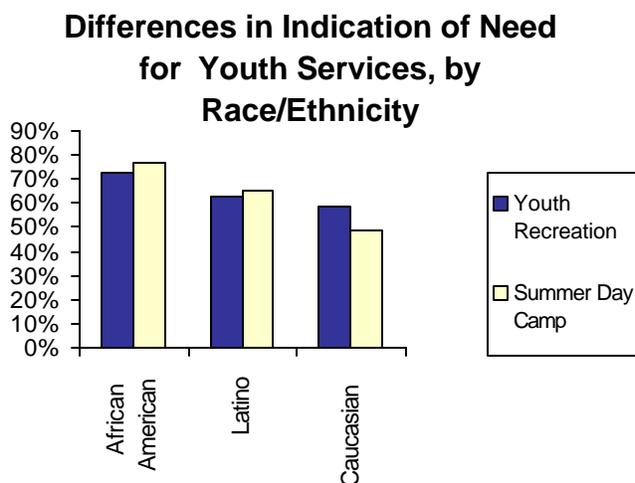
**Support for Rent or Mortgage Assistance, by Income Level**



More than half of all respondents expressed a need for family activities (51.9%). Of those family units that have children at home, 62% were in favor of such family activities.

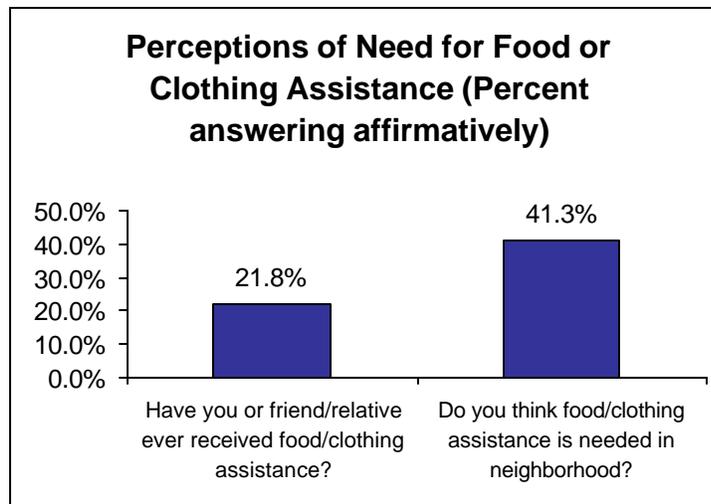
Computer training received a relatively large proportion of positive responses. The 60.6% support rate was the fourth highest among all listed services. However, support was unevenly spread among race/ethnicity groups. For African-Americans and Latinos, 79% and 74%, respectively, saw a need for computer training, compared to 48% of Caucasians.

There were some youth services that exhibited significant differences between racial/ethnic groups. African Americans showed strong support for youth recreation (73%) and summer day camp activities (77%). The chart below indicates that African Americans expressed a greater need for these services than did Latinos or Whites.



## Need for Food or Clothing Services

Among the 591 respondents who answered the question, 21.8% indicated that they themselves or someone they know has received food or clothing assistance in their neighborhood (Table 3). Further, among 606 respondents, 41.3% indicated that they believe food or clothing assistance is needed in the neighborhood, while only 17.3% indicated that it is not needed (41.4% were not sure).



Among those persons who reported they or someone they know had received food or clothing assistance, the survey provided a space for these individuals to name the source of the assistance. The most prevalent sources of named assistance were Social Services and St. Andrew's (17 each), churches in general and the Salvation Army (9 each), and the House of Mercy (6). In total, 31 sources of food or clothing assistance were named by survey respondents (see Appendix C for full listing).

## Need for Senior Citizen Services

Among the 603 respondents who answered the question about services for Seniors, 57.5% indicated that there is a "special need for expanded services or programs for Seniors in the community." While 32.8% indicated that they were not sure if such services were needed, only 9.6% stated that these services were not needed (Table 3).

## Current Use of Carter Street Recreation Center

When asked how often they currently use the Carter Street Recreation Center, only 5.7% of the 612 respondents to this question indicated that they use the Center frequently, while 16.5% use it occasionally (Table 4).

***More than three-quarters of respondents (78%) never use the Carter Street Recreation Center.***

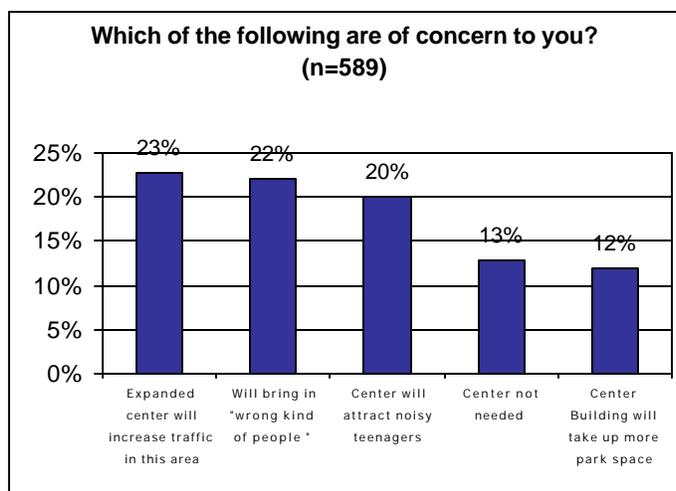
Utilization of the Center appears to be slightly higher among younger people. When asked how often their children use the Center, 13.6% of the 325 respondents indicated that their children use the Center frequently, while 18.6% said their children use it occasionally, and 67.7% said that their children never use the Center.

## Concerns About the Possible Carter Street Center Expansion

**About one-quarter of respondents (26%) had concerns about the center; almost half (49%) had no concerns.**

Among the 597 respondents who answered the question, about one-quarter had one or more concerns about the possible expansion of the center (26.3%), while another quarter (25.1%) were unsure, and nearly one-half (48.6%) had no concerns (Table 5).

When asked about some specific types of possible concerns, the most frequently mentioned concerns included increased traffic (22.8%), bringing in “the wrong kind of people” (22.1%), and attracting noisy teenagers (20.0%). Less common concerns included the Center being unneeded in the neighborhood (12.9%), and the building taking up more park space (11.9%).



The survey allowed respondents to write-in additional concerns they might have about the possible expansion. The most prevalent written comments were socially-oriented problems such as the concern that the expansion might bring more crime or drugs to the area (12 respondents), and concerns about the influence of older children on younger children (7 respondents). Others were concerned about programming issues. Seven respondents indicated concern about the level of supervision or management that would be available, and five were concerned that the added programming would be only recreational in nature. Finally, some respondents were concerned about procedural or policy issues. Eight respondents were concerned that they had never heard of the expansion proposal, or felt that more neighborhood input was needed. In addition, four respondents felt the Center should be left as is, four respondents asked how we

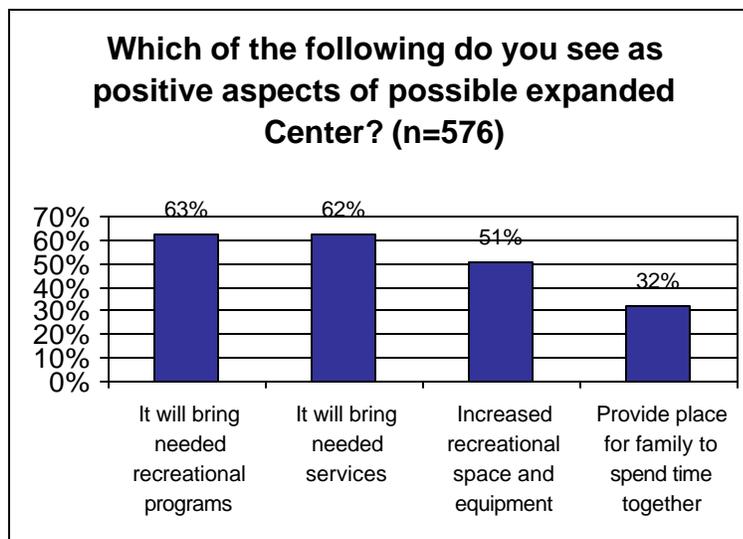
can get residents to take advantage of the Center, and four respondents asked if the expansion decision would be based on survey results. For a full list of written concerns, see Appendix D.

## Positive Aspects of Possible Carter Street Center Expansion

***60% see the expansion as a positive addition to the neighborhood.***

When asked if the possible Carter Street Center expansion would be a positive addition to the neighborhood, 60.3% of the 620 respondents said yes, 22.4% were unsure, and 17.3% said no (Table 6).

When asked about some specific positive aspects, the most popular responses were bringing needed recreational programs (62.5% of those who answered that question) and bringing needed services (62.3%). In addition, 51.0% cited increased recreational space and equipment, and nearly one-third stated the provision of a location for their family to spend time together (31.9%).



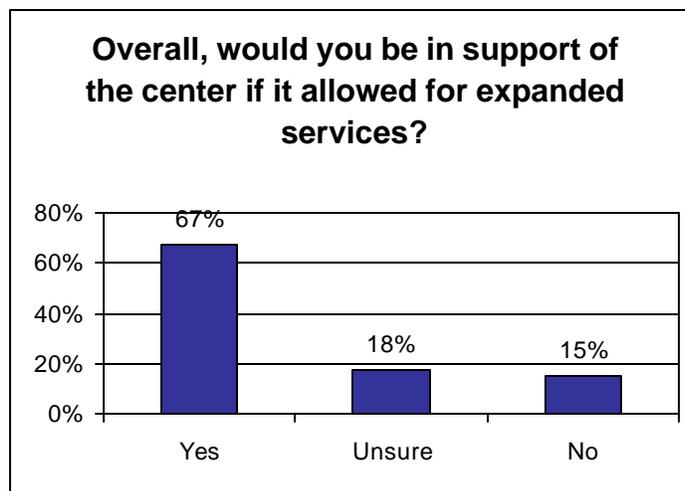
Some respondents wrote in their own additional thoughts on positive aspects of the expansion. The most frequently cited positive was that the expansion would provide positive influences for youth (16 respondents). Seven respondents simply indicated that “we need the center,” and six responded that “it will bring more services.” Five respondents thought that the expansion of the Center might help to get drugs out of the neighborhood, four felt that it would be a good place to get kids off the streets, four

felt that the additional services could target all people from infants through Seniors, and four respondents hoped that a Senior Center would be included in the expansion. See Appendix D for a full list of written positives.

## Overall Vote

***Two-thirds of all respondents (67%) indicated that overall, they would support the Carter Street Center if it allowed for expanded services.***

When asked to state whether, overall, they would be in favor of an expanded Center if it allowed for expanded services, 612 respondents answered the question, and 67.2% said yes, 17.5% were unsure, and 15.4% said no.



## CROSS TABULATIONS

In order to get a sense of whether persons with different demographic or geographic characteristics answered survey questions differently, CGR analyzed the three key questions<sup>1</sup> in terms of the respondents' proximity to the Carter Street

<sup>1</sup> Do you have any concerns about the proposed Center? Do you see the expanded Center as a positive addition to the neighborhood? Overall, would you be in favor of the Center if it allowed for expanded services?

## Differences by Proximity to Center

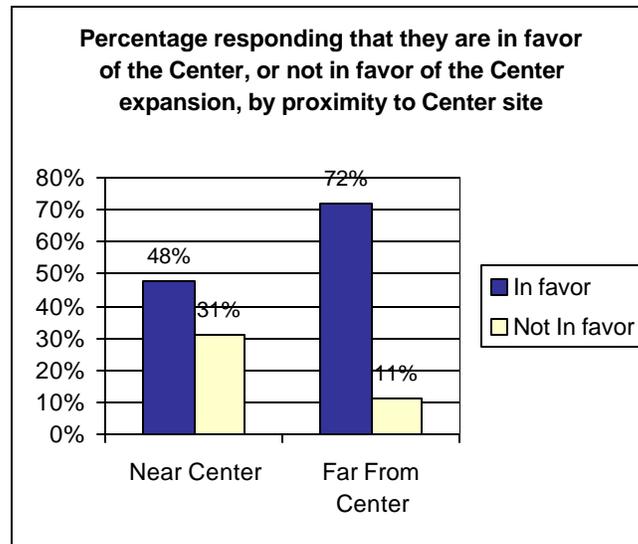
Recreation Center site, age, race/ethnicity, family structure, employment status, home ownership status, and income.

As shown in Table 7, those individuals living near the site were more likely to have reported concerns about the Center (42.7%) than those who lived further away (22.0%), compared with an overall rate of concerns of 26%. Among those concerns listed on the survey, those in close proximity were about twice as likely to check each of the individual concerns than those who live further away.

Nonetheless, among those who live near the site, 38.8% see the expansion as a positive addition to the neighborhood, compared to 32.6% who do not see it as a positive addition. This compares to 66.0% of those who live further away who indicated that the expansion is a positive addition, versus 13.2% who responded that it is not a positive addition. For comparison, 60.3% of all respondents see the expansion as positive, while 17.3% do not. When asked about specific positives, those in close proximity were consistently less likely to check the individual positive points when compared to those who live further away.

***48% of those living near the center are in favor of it (31% are not in favor), while 72% of those living further away are in favor (and 11% are not in favor).***

When asked whether, overall, they would be in favor of the center, nearly half of those living in close proximity said yes (47.6%) compared to nearly three-quarters of those living further away (72.2%), and compared to 67.2% overall. Even though those living close to the Center were less likely to be in favor of expanding it, more of those nearby residents reported being in favor of expansion than were opposed.

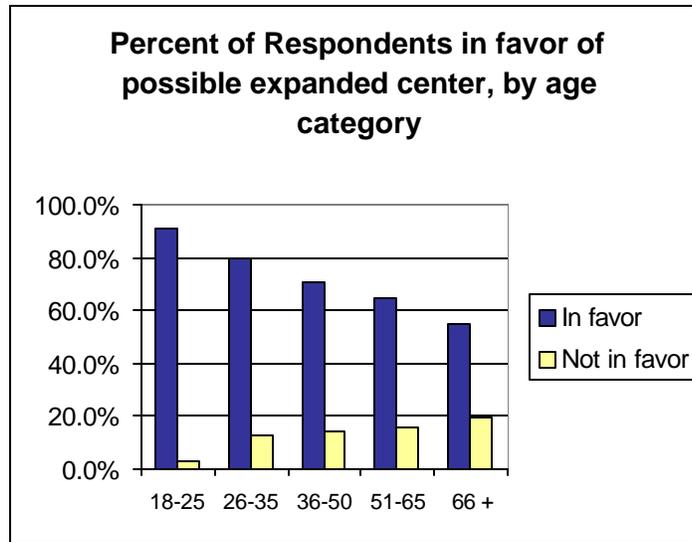


## Differences by Age Category

***91% of those aged 18 to 25 are in favor of the Center expansion, compared to 55% of those 66+; more than half of those in all age groups favor expansion***

Results indicate that older persons are somewhat less supportive of the Center expansion than younger persons. While the persons with the highest likelihood of concerns were those aged 26 to 35 (32.9%) (Table 8), the proportions of those who see the Center expansion as a positive addition to the community, and who express overall support for expanding the Center decrease steadily with age (Tables 9 and 10).

As shown in the following graph, while 90.9% of those aged 18 to 25 would be in favor of the center expansion, only 54.7% of those aged 66 and older feel the same way (Table 10). Nonetheless, it is important to note that even among the oldest age category, those in favor of the center (54.7%) outnumber those not in favor (19.3%) by a ratio of almost 3:1.



## Differences by Race and Ethnicity

***More than half of respondents in all race/ethnicity categories were in favor of the Center expansion.***

Blacks and Hispanics (78.8% each) were more likely than whites (48.6%) to see the Center expansion as a positive addition to the community (Table 9). All three groups were about equally likely to have concerns about the expansion (20.6% to 27.3%) (Table 8). As shown in Table 10, when asked to state whether, overall, they would be in favor of an expanded center, black respondents were most likely to respond favorably (86.4%), followed by Hispanics (80.8%), and by whites (55.0%). While white respondents were less likely than other racial/ethnic groups to be in favor of the center expansion, it is important to point out that more than half of white respondents were indeed in favor. Further, among the white population, those in favor (55%) outnumbered those whites not in favor (18.8%) by nearly 3 to 1.

## Differences by Family Structure

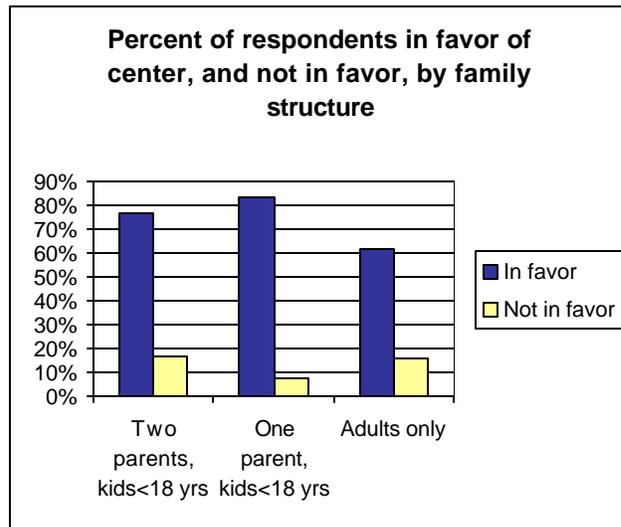
The 14621 neighborhood, like all neighborhoods, is home to a variety of family structures. Some families have two parents living at home with children under 18, while others have single-parent homes with children under 18. Still other families are adults only, while a very small number of respondents live in homes with foster parents, guardians, or a relative other than a parent living with children under age 18. CGR evaluated these different family structures to determine whether support for the Center expansion varies by type of family.

As shown in Table 8 through 10, when asked whether they have concerns about the Center, those families with two parents and

**Respondents in all types of family structures support the Center expansion strongly.**

children under 18 were the most likely to have concerns (30.0%). However, among all family structures, the percentage of respondents *without* concerns substantially outnumbered the percentage of respondents with concerns. When asked whether the expansion would be a positive addition to the community, single parents were most likely to respond affirmatively (81.3%), while families with adults only were least likely to be positive (55.4%). Nonetheless, those who see the expansion as a positive addition outnumbered those who disagree in every category.

Finally, when asked whether they would favor the center overall, all major family structure categories indicated overwhelming support (at least 60% in each category).



**Differences by Employment Status**

**Employment status is not related to support for the Center expansion.**

A substantial portion of respondents to this survey was not employed. This includes individuals who are unemployed as well as those who are retired. CGR examined differences of opinion by those who responded that they are employed full-time, part-time, or are not employed (see Tables 8-10).

Virtually no differences exist among the three employment status groups when asked if they have concerns about the center expansion (25% to 29%). Similarly, very little difference exists when asked if the Center expansion is a positive addition to the

community. While 55.3% of those who are unemployed see it as a positive addition, 63.4% of part-time employees and 63.5% of full-timers see the expansion as positive. Finally, the pattern holds among the three groups when asked if overall they would be in favor of the center. Full-time and part-time workers were most in support (70%), followed by those who were not employed (64.1%).

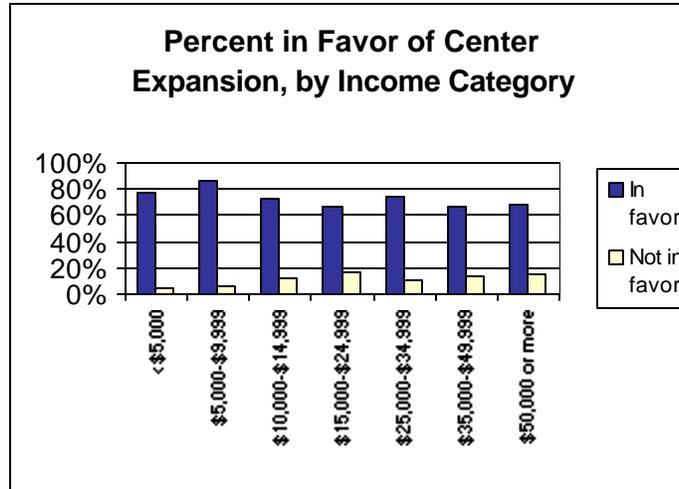
### Differences by Home Ownership Status

Homeowners were more likely than renters to have concerns (30.2% vs. 18.8%), were less likely to find the expansion a positive addition to the community (50.0% vs. 77.2%), and were less likely to respond that they are in favor of the center expansion overall (57.2% vs. 84.4%). In both cases, those in favor of the Center outnumber those not in favor of the expansion by substantial margins. Even among homeowners, those in favor outnumber those not in favor by a ratio of almost 3 to 1. Among renters, the ratio is much higher, at 20 to 1, and among the small number of respondents who live with others, the ratio is 3.5 to 1.

### Differences by Income Level

***At least 2/3 of the people at each income level are in favor of Center expansion.***

The percentage of respondents with concerns about the Center is fairly constant among those with incomes ranging from \$5,000 to \$49,999, with percentages ranging from 21.2% to 26.7%. The lowest and highest income categories are outliers. Among those with annual incomes of less than \$5,000, only 13.7% had concerns, while among those with incomes of \$50,000 or more, 31.1% had reported concerns. Again, however, among all income groups, those without concerns far outnumber those reporting concerns. In general, those who see the expansion as a positive addition to the community decrease somewhat as annual income rises, but in each income category, positive responses outnumber negatives by at least a 3:1 margin (Table 9). Finally, people within all income levels express strong overall support for Center expansion.



## CONCLUSION

This survey was sent to residents within the 14621 neighborhood in an attempt to identify the opinions of residents regarding the proposed expansion of the Carter Street Recreation Center. The survey addressed issues regarding needed services, asked about concerns regarding the center, positive aspects of an expanded Center, overall support for the Center, and demographic information to make the analysis more comprehensive.

The results of the survey indicate that residents are clearly in favor of the proposed Center expansion by a margin of 4.4 to 1.0. While these results vary somewhat across demographic characteristics such as age, proximity to center, race, income, and family structure, the results across all subcategories indicate strong support for the proposed expansion.