

**Hays Public Library
Expansion Project Survey**



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The staff of **The Docking Institute of Public Affairs** and its **University Center for Survey Research** is dedicated to serving the people of Kansas. If you have any questions, comments, or need assistance, do not hesitate to call one of our staff.

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Hays Public Library Expansion Project Survey

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Prepared for

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Hays Public Library Expansion Project Survey

Executive Summary

The Hays Public Library contracted the Docking Institute of Public Affairs to conduct a telephone survey of at least 400 adult residents of the City of Hays.

The objectives of this research project include:

- Assess the general level of support for a hypothetical expansion project of the Hays Public Library.
- Assess the level of support for an extension of the current ½ cent Hays City pool tax to fund the hypothetical expansion project.
- Determine how respondents feel about keeping the library in downtown Hays.
- Determine how important it is for the library to provide more space for Hays history and genealogy.
- Determine the importance of providing space for public computers.
- Determine the importance of providing study and activity space for teenagers.

From the analysis of survey results, Docking Institute scientists found that:

- \$ Seventy-nine percent of the respondents suggested that they would be in favor of expanding the current library building, rather than constructing a new building.
- \$ Seventy percent support extending the pool sales tax to pay for the expansion.
- \$ Eight-two percent indicated that they felt it is “very important” or “somewhat important” to keep the library in downtown Hays.
- \$ Seventy-four percent suggested that it is “very important” or “somewhat important” to provide more space for local history and genealogy.
- \$ Eighty-two percent indicating that it is “very important” or “somewhat important” to provide space for public computers.
- \$ Eighty-five percent suggested it is “very important” or “somewhat important” for the library to provide study and activity space for teenagers.

Methodology

Between October 30, 2000, and November 10, 2000, the Docking Institute's University Center for Survey Research conducted a survey of a representative sample of Hays residents. A random sampling technique was utilized to generate the telephone numbers, and the survey was conducted using a Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. The CATI system allows interviewers to code survey information into a computer database as the interviewers administer a questionnaire to a respondent. A total of 509 households were successfully contacted after up to six call attempts. In 432 of these households a resident agreed to complete the survey. This represents a response rate of 84.8%.

Using a 95% confidence interval, the results from the survey of households with children have a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$. In other words, given 100 different random samples of 381 Hays households with children, only 5% of the time would the total results obtained from the sample population vary by more than $\pm 5\%$ from the results that would be obtained if the total population of households with children were surveyed (assuming no response bias). Importantly, the margin of error for subgroups is higher. Any statistics for subgroups with less than 40 to 50 respondents are primarily suggestive.

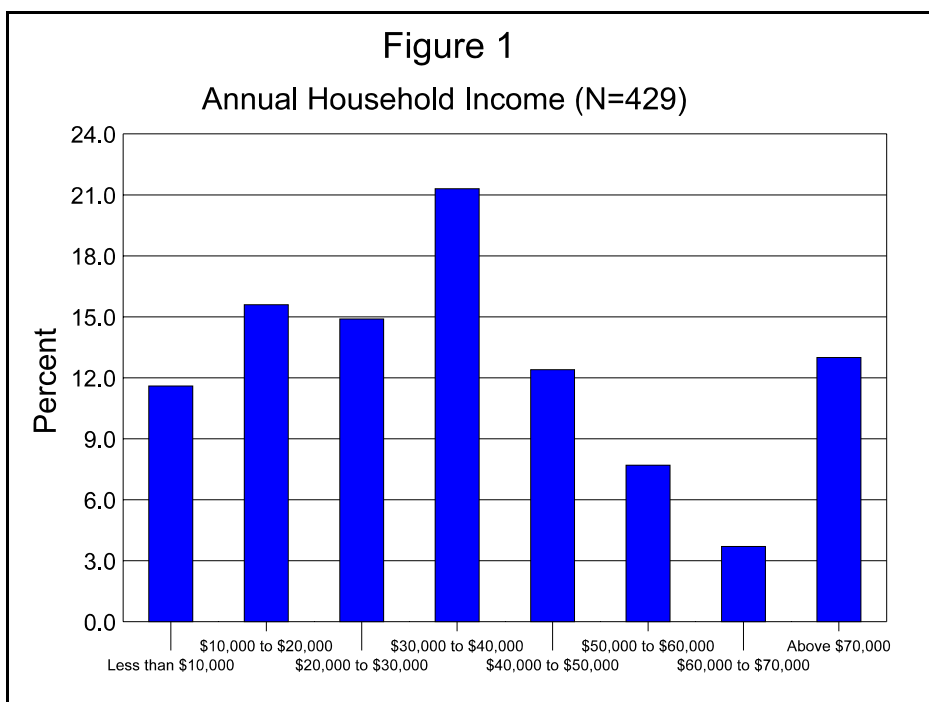
Survey Instrument

Hays Public Library and Docking Institute personnel agreed upon the survey items used, with the former identifying the study objectives and the latter developing items that were valid, reliable, and unbiased. Question wording and design of the survey instrument are the property of the Docking Institute and may not be used for additional surveys without written permission from the Director of the Docking Institute of Public Affairs.

In addition to questions pertinent to the Hays Public Library, the survey instrument included questions for a project called RURAL (Rural Underpinnings for Resiliency And Linkages). The RURAL questions dealt with school and community issues, and it was determined by Docking Institute, Hays Public Library, and RURAL personnel that the two surveys could be successfully merged. The Appendix presents the relevant questions from the survey instrument.

Sample Demographics

About half (49.3%) of the respondents were female, and almost 40% had school-age children (including elementary, middle, and/or high school). Five percent of the respondents indicated that they also had pre-school-age children. Most (about 27%) had some college experience, while another 23% completed college.



Household income distribution is shown in Figure 1. Among those who answered this question, the income category representing the largest percentage of respondents (almost 22%) was the \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year group. The second largest income category (almost 16%) was the \$10,000 to \$20,000 group. About 15% of the respondents reported having household

incomes between \$20,000 and \$30,000, while 13% reported household incomes over \$70,000.

The number of years lived in Hays ranged from less than one year to 59 years. The reported average (mean) number of years lived in Hays was 20, while the modal response (the answer most often selected) was 1 year, and 8.1%.

The Expansion Project

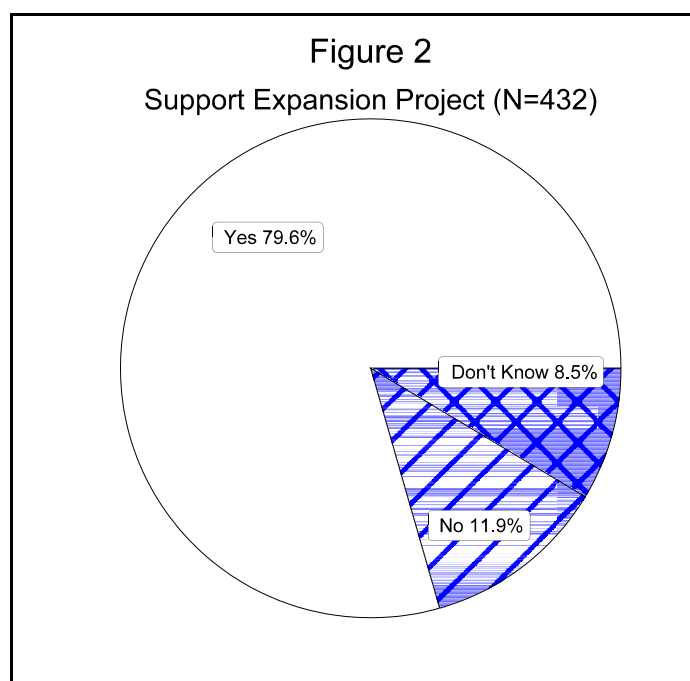
As noted previously, the Docking Institute surveyed 432 residents of Hays. The portion of the survey addressing the Hays Public Library began with the following statement:

The library is outgrowing its current location and is considering expanding its present building rather than constructing a new building.

A series of questions was then asked about the expansion project. The first question was simply:

Q28 Would you be in favor of an expansion project?

Answer options were “YES,” “NO,” and “Don’t Know.” A “No Response” option was not offered to respondents, but this “answer” was recorded by interviewers



if appropriate. The charts in this report do not provide the “No Response” responses, however, as only three respondents gave no response to one of the library-related questions.

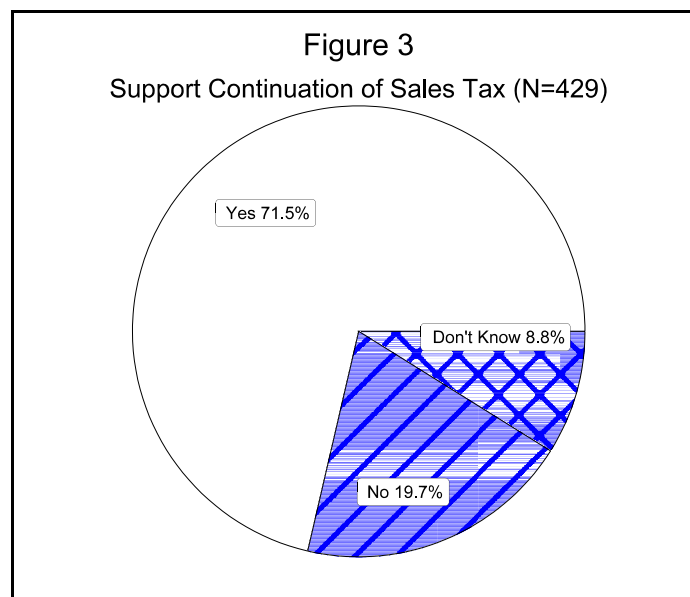
Figure 2 provides the responses to Q28 “Would you be in favor of an expansion project?”. As can be seen in the pie chart, a majority of respondents (79.6%) suggested that they would be in favor of expanding the current library building, rather than constructing a new building. Almost 12% did not favor an expansion project over a new building, and almost 9% were unsure.

Sales Tax

As a follow-up to the expansion question, respondents were asked:

Q29 To pay for the library expansion, would you be willing to have the current ½ cent Hays City pool sales tax extended for eighteen months past its current expiration of October 2001?

Responses to this question are shown in Figure 3. More than 70% of the respondents indicated that they would be willing to extend the Hays City pool sales tax to cover the costs of a library expansion. However, a large number (almost 20%) of respondents suggested that they do not want the sales tax extended past its current expiration date. A similar percentage of people (almost 9%) were unsure about the expansion project and the sales tax. On the other hand, 70% of the respondents were in favor of both the expansion project and the continuing the sales tax to pay for the expansion.



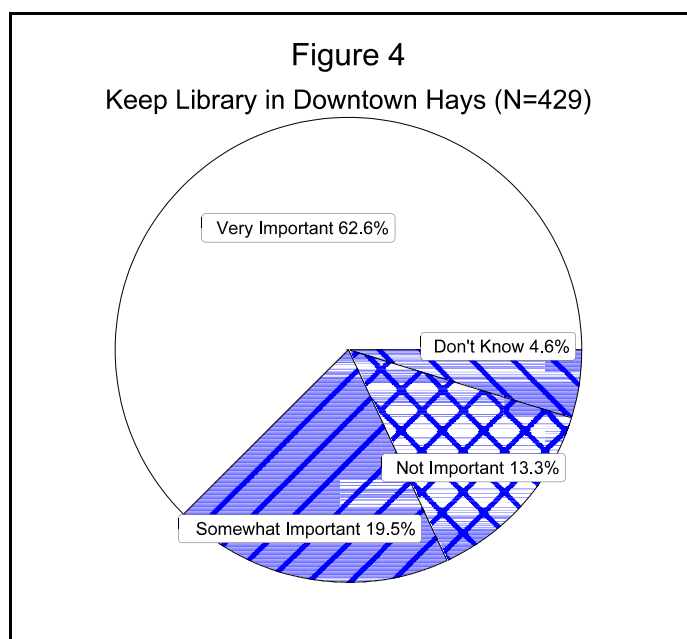
It should be noted, however, that these high levels of support (for the expansion of the library and/or the continuation of the sales tax to pay for the expansion) might not hold up if residents of Hays were actually presented with the option to have the sales tax continued. The current ½ cent sales tax is expected to expire in a little less than a year from now. As such, the continuance of the tax might not seem as relevant to respondents or be as salient an issue for respondents as might be the case when the issue is closer at hand. Additionally, while we are confident that the responses to this survey approximate the attitudes of the general public, this confidence is not boundless. Should the continuance of the sales tax be evaluated via a referendum, only the opinions of registered voters would be evaluated. Respondents to the current research project included a random sample of Hays residents (some of whom, presumably, are registered voters and some of whom are not registered voters). This public opinion survey cannot substitute for a ballot.

Keep the Library in Downtown Hays

The Docking Institute also asked respondents for their opinions about the location of the library. Specifically, respondents were asked:

Q30 Do you think it is “very important,” somewhat important,” or “not at all important” to keep the library in downtown Hays?

Responses to this question are shown in Figure 4. As with the previous questions, the frequency of the “Don’t Know” answer option is presented. A clear majority (about 82%) of the respondents indicated that they felt it was “very important” or “somewhat important” to keep the library in the downtown Hays area. Less than 20% said that it was “not at all important” or that they did not know if they wanted to keep the library downtown.



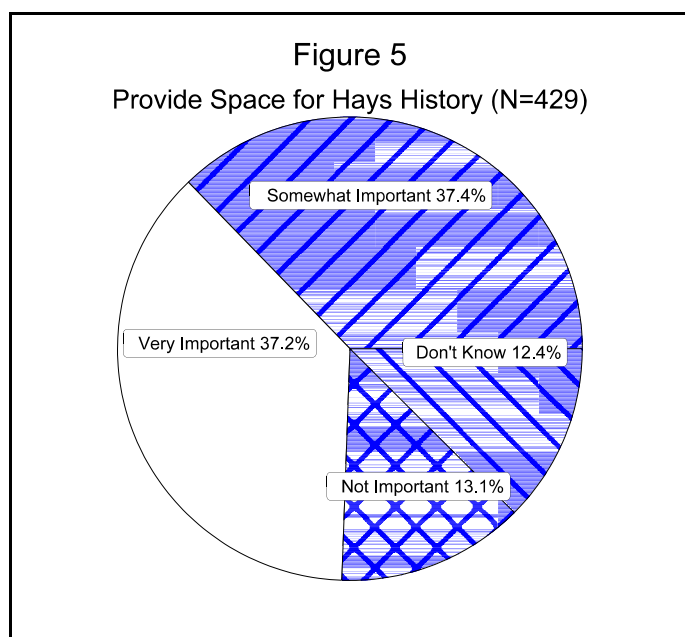
Provide More Space for Hays History and Genealogy

The Hays Public Library was also interested to know whether respondents wanted more space in the library for local history and genealogy.

As such, respondents were asked:

- Q31 Is it “very important,” somewhat important,” or “not at all important” to provide more space for Hays history and genealogy?

Responses to this question are shown in Figure 5. Respondents clearly support the idea of providing more space for local history and genealogy (with 37% suggesting that this is “very important” and 37% suggesting that this is “somewhat important”). Additionally, nearly equal percentages indicated “Don’t Know” (12.4%) and “Not at all Important” (13.1%).

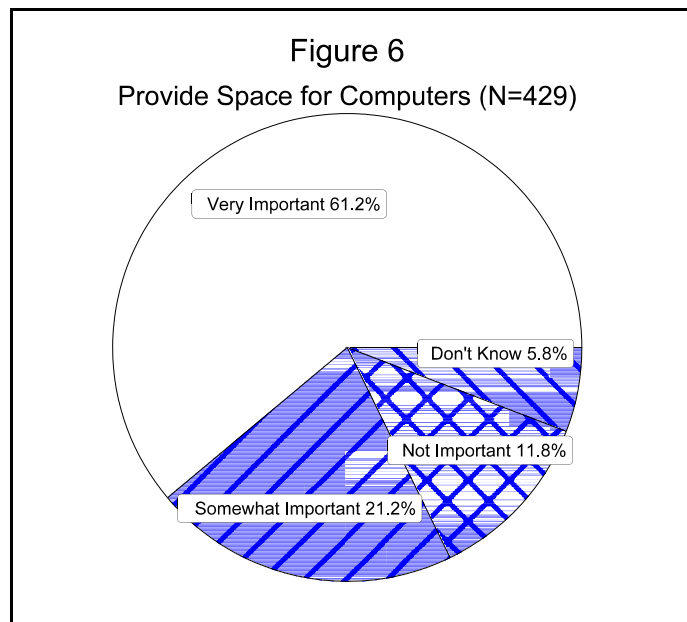


Provide Space for Public Computers

Respondents were also asked if they thought it was “very important,” “somewhat important,” or “not at all important” for the library to:

Q32 . . . provide more space for public computers?

Responses to this question are shown in Figure 6. Respondents clearly support the idea of providing more space for computers, with 61% indicating that this is “very important” and other 21% indicating that this is “somewhat important.”

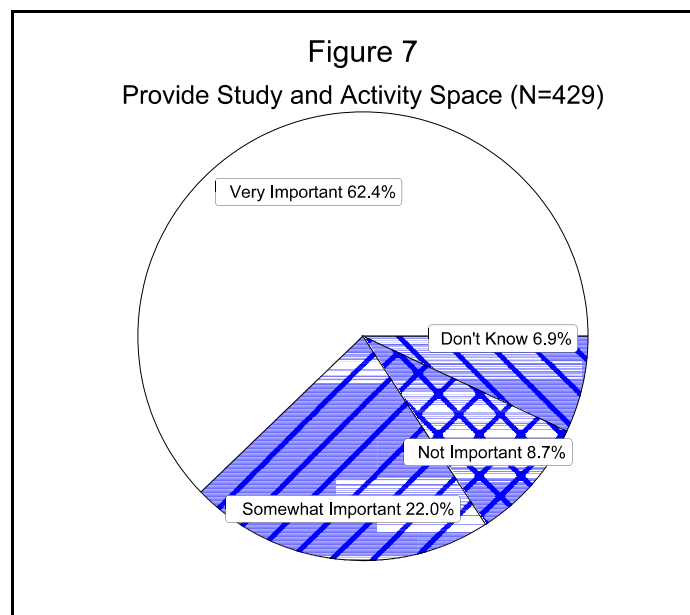


Provide More Study and Activity Space for Teenagers

The last library-related question in the survey asked respondents if they felt it was “very important,” “somewhat important,” or “not at all important” for the library to:

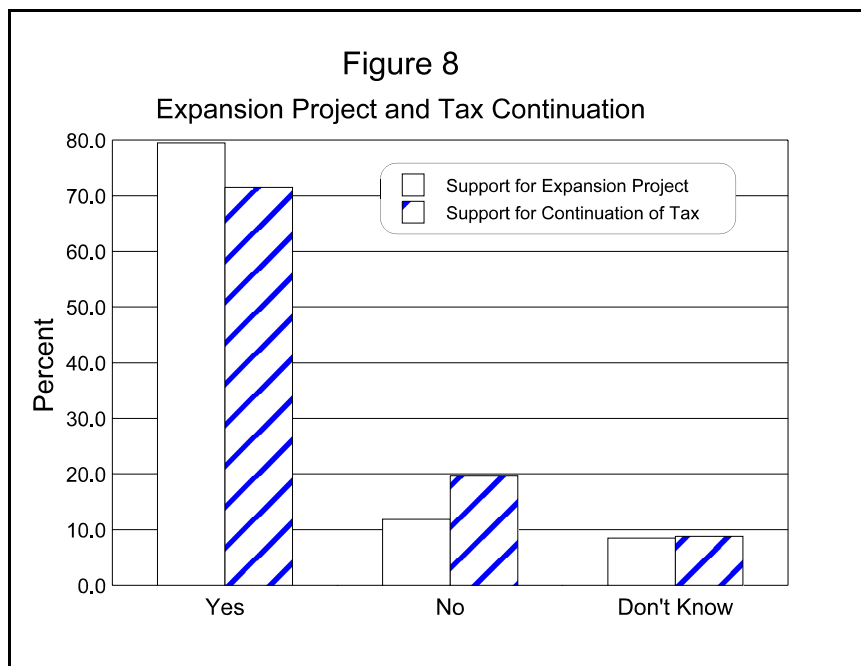
Q32 . . . provide more study and activity space for teenagers?

Responses to this question are shown in Figure 7. Again, we find strong support for this idea. Almost 85% of the respondents suggested that they think that it is “very important” or “somewhat important” for the library to provide study and activity space for the teenage population.



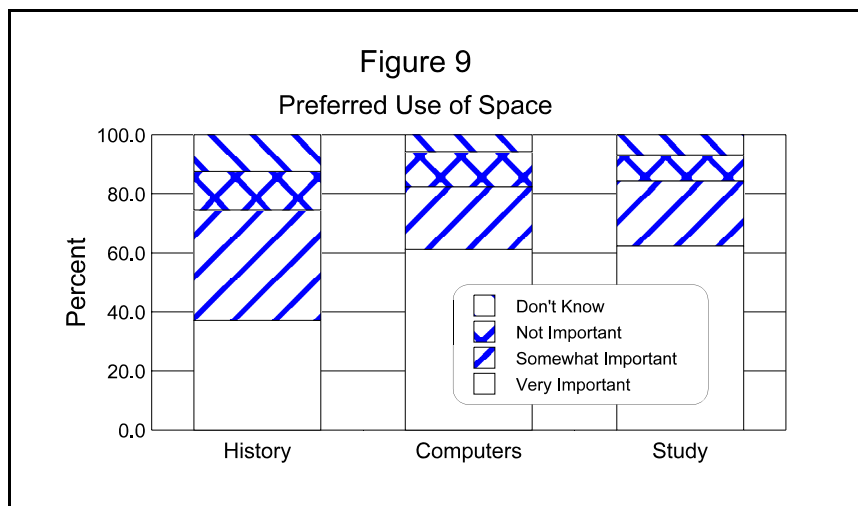
Summary

Of the 432 respondents to this survey, most indicated support for the expansion project when contrasted with the construction of a new building. Furthermore, most of the respondents suggested that they support the idea of extending the current ½ cent Hays City pool tax for 18 additional months past its current expiration date of October 2001, to pay for the hypothetical expansion project. Almost 80% of the respondents indicated support for the expansion project (as opposed to new construction), and about 70% indicated support for the continuation of the sales tax. Almost twice as many respondents, however, suggested that they did not want the current tax extended as did those who did not support the expansion project (about 12% *do not* support the hypothetical expansion project, but about 20% *do not*



support the hypothetical tax continuation). This is shown in Figure 8.

Respondents also expressed more support for some types of expansion space uses than others. As can be seen in Figure 9 (on the next page), about 80% of the respondents suggested that they thought it was “very important” or “somewhat important” to provide space for all three uses (history, computers, and studying). However, more respondents suggested that space for computers and studying was “very important” (about 60% for each) than for Hays history and genealogy (about 40%). Furthermore, about 9% of the respondents suggested that providing study and activity space teenagers was “not at all important.” This frequency is lower than the “not at all important” frequencies for the other two questions. Specifically, the “not at all important” category for providing space for Hays history and genealogy received 13% support, while the “not at all important” category for providing space for computers received almost 12% support.



APPENDIX

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Now, I will ask some questions on behalf of the Hays Public Library.

The library is outgrowing its current location and is considering expanding its present building, rather than constructing a new building.

Q28 Would you be in favor of an expansion project?

- | | |
|-------|---------------|
| 1 YES | 8 Don't Know |
| 2 NO | 9 No Response |

Q29 To pay for the library expansion, would you be willing to have the current 1/2 cent Hays City pool sales tax extended for eighteen months past its current expiration of October 2001?

- | | |
|-------|---------------|
| 1 YES | 8 Don't Know |
| 2 NO | 9 No Response |

Q30 Do you think it is "very important," "somewhat important," or "not at all important" to keep the library in downtown Hays?

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1 VERY IMPORTANT | 8 Don't Know |
| 2 SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT | 9 No Response |
| 3 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT | |

Q31 Is it "very important," "somewhat important," or "not at all important" to provide more space for Hays history and genealogy?

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1 VERY IMPORTANT | 8 Don't Know |
| 2 SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT | 9 No Response |
| 3 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT | |

Q32 How about providing space for public computers?

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1 VERY IMPORTANT | 8 Don't Know |
| 2 SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT | 9 No Response |
| 3 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT | |

Q33 How about providing more study and activity space for teenagers?

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1 VERY IMPORTANT | 8 Don't Know |
| 2 SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT | 9 No Response |
| 3 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT | |

Finally, I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

Do you have children who are....

[1 YES 2 NO 8 DK 9 NR]

Q34 Preschool age

Q35 Elementary school age

Q36 Middle School age

Q37 High School age

Q38 What is the highest level of education you completed?

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1 up to the eighth grade | 8 Don't Know |
| 2 some high school | 9 No Response |
| 3 high school graduate | |
| 4 vocational school | |
| 5 some college | |
| 6 college graduate | |
| 7 graduate degree | |

Q39 How many years have you lived in Ellis County?

[IF LESS THAN ONE, RECORD AS "1", 99 NO RESPONSE]

Q40 Was your total family income for the last year above or below

\$30,000?

[IF BELOW \$30,000 READ....]

- 1 Was the total income less than \$10,000,
- 2 Or between \$10,000 and \$20,000,
- 3 Or between \$20,000 and \$30,000

[IF ABOVE \$30,000 READ....]

- 4 Was the income between \$30,000 and \$40,000,
- 5 Or between \$40,000 and \$50,000,
- 6 Or between \$50,000 and \$60,000,
- 7 Or between \$60,000 and \$70,000,
- 8 Or was it over \$70,000?
- 9 No Response/Refused to Answer

Okay, that is all the questions I have. Thank you very much for your help with this survey. [HANG UP]

Q41 Was the respondent...

- 1 FEMALE
- 2 MALE