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Opinion Survey 1974

An Opinion Survey

JOPLIN, MISSOURI

July 22 - 24, 1974

Central Surveys, Inc. Shenandoah, Iowa

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on a total of 350 personal interviews with adult permanent residents of Joplin, Missouri. All interviews were made at respondents' homes by members of Central Surveys' full-time interviewing staff from July 22 through July 24, 1974.

Replies to some survey questions may add to more than 100 percent due to multiple answers. Also, percentages may occasionally total slightly more or slightly less than 100 due to rounding to whole numbers.

Interviews were made in 13 precincts which together have voted very much as the entire city voted in several municipal elections. The actual "yes" vote in the sampled precincts is compared below with the total city-wide vote in three elections:

	% "Yes" Vote	
Election:	Entire City	Sampled Precincts
December 9, 1969 - City sales tax	53.5%	54.5%
April 7, 1970 - Continue with urban renewal	44.0%	44.7%
December 21, 1971 - Neighborhood Development program	62.3%	65.5%

Interviews were allocated to the various sampled precincts in proportion to the number of votes cast in each precinct. The sampled precincts and number of interviews in each are shown on the next page.

Distribution of Interviews

Precinct	Number of Interviews
10	28
13	30
19	16
5	13
21	39
22	12
2	28
N24	42
E25	28
11	28
16	25
18	17
W25	44
Total	350

SURVEY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, percentages shown here are based on the total sample of 350 interviews.

Q. 1: About how long have you lived here in Joplin?

(Only those with at least 6 months' residence were interviewed.)

5 years or less	23%
Over 5 to 15 years	18
Over 15 years	59

Q. 2: Taking everything into consideration, would you rather live in a town of this size, a larger one, or a smaller one?

A town of this size	83%
A larger one	3
A smaller one	11
No opinion	3

Q. 3: What do you like most about living in Joplin?

It's my home, friends are here, I was born here, I know everyone here, I like the people, friendly people, etc.	31%
Not too large, easy to get around, everything is convenient, I like the size, etc.	26
Shopping facilities, shopping centers, the Mall, etc.	10
Recreation, things to do, close to the lakes, fishing, boating, parks, camping, etc.	6
Schools, the school system, the college	5
Lack of crime, safe streets, reduced crime rate, not much violence, etc.	3
The climate, the weather, the region	3
Nonspecific answers - I like it in general, it's a wonderful place to live, etc.	4
Miscellaneous specific answers	15
Nothing, don't like it here	5
No opinion	13

Q. 4: How about the housing situation here - are there enough houses, or is there a shortage of houses?

There are enough houses	37%
A shortage of houses	34
No opinion, not certain	29

Q. 5: Are there enough apartments for all who want them, or is there a shortage of apartments?

Enough apartments	41%
A shortage of apartments	26
No opinion, not certain	33

Q. 6: Are your school buildings adequate, or do you need more or larger school buildings?

School buildings are adequate	61%
Need more or larger school buildings	23
No opinion, not certain	16

Q. 7: What kind of a job would you say is being done here in Joplin in each of the following respects - a good job, about an average job, or a poor job?

	Good Job	About Average	Poor Job	No Opinion
	(Percentages read across)			
Street maintenance	18%	44	36	2
City parks	65%	23	6	6
Police protection	62%	30	6	2
Fire protection	84%	13	*	3
Airport facilities	60%	20	3	17
Ambulance service	57%	16	6	21

*Less than ½ of 1 percent.

Q. 8: What things are most needed in the downtown business district?

More stores, new stores, retail stores, department stores, tenants for empty buildings, etc.	34%
More customers, shoppers, more business	17
Free parking, get rid of parking meters	12
Better parking facilities, more parking places, it should be easier to park, etc.	9
A civic center, community center	3
New buildings, old buildings should be remodeled, some new office buildings, etc.	3
Get rid of the Mall, fewer Malls, the Mall is hurting downtown	3
It can't be saved, shut it down and clear it out, nothing will help the downtown area	3
It's all right now, nothing in particular is needed	1
Miscellaneous specific answers	6
Don't know, no opinion	23

Q. 9: What two or three projects do you think are most needed to make this a better city in which to live, work, and raise a family?

A civic center, community center, convention center	20%
More jobs, more industry, better paying jobs	16
Recreational facilities, parks, playgrounds, swimming pool, more for the kids to do	13
Better streets, street maintenance, fix the chuck holes, etc.	5
Better schools, new school buildings, etc.	3
Better shopping facilities, new stores, etc.	1
Better housing, more housing	1
Miscellaneous specific answers - bus service, clean up the downtown area, control dope, better sewers, a better library, improved street lighting, etc.	17
Don't know, no opinion	37

Q.10: (I heard) (Someone said) (I read) that there will be a vote here on about 5 million dollars in city bonds to build a new civic center. If they built it at a location suitable to you, would you vote for, or against this proposal?

Would vote for proposal	68%
Against proposal	20
No opinion	12

Q.10a: Why would you be <u>for</u> the proposal?

Percent favoring proposal	(68%)
Present facilities are inadequate, Memorial Hall is too small, too crowded, not safe, there's not enough space here for conventions, etc.	20%
It would bring in money to the city, help business, bring in conventions who would spend money, help Joplin grow, etc.	18
It would improve our recreational facilities, bring in entertainment, etc.	11
It would provide things for young people to do, be good for kids, keep kids off the streets, etc.	10
Cultural benefits, plays, concerts, etc.	5
Sports benefits, hockey, tournaments, etc.	3
It would help the downtown area, stop the deterioration of the downtown area, attract business downtown, etc.	2
Miscellaneous specific answers	2
Nonspecific - I think it's a good idea, it will help the city, etc.	7

Q.10a: Why would you be <u>against</u> the proposal?

Percent opposing proposal	(20%)
It would cost too much, raise my taxes, Joplin is spending too much already, etc.	11%
Present facilities are adequate, Memorial Hall is O.K., etc.	5
Only a few people will benefit, I'd never use it, it wouldn't help me, etc.	3
They should spend that money for other uses - to improve streets, improve schools, help poor people, etc.	2
Don't like proposed locations	1
Miscellaneous specific reasons	3
Don't know why, nonspecific	*

*Less than ½ of 1 percent.

Q.11: (I heard) (Someone said) there are several locations being considered for the civic center. If they were to build one, where would you rather have it?

Downtown	37%
Dover Hill, Landreth Park, near the Bible College, North Main, etc.	25
Range Line, the Mall, North Park Mall, near motels, etc.	17
Miscellaneous other locations	1
Wherever they want it, it makes no difference	6
Opposed to all proposed locations	1
No opinion, not certain	14

Q.12: Is there any location you would probably vote against? What location?

Downtown	16%
Dover Hill, Landreth Park, etc.	16
Range Line, the North Park Mall, etc.	15
Miscellaneous other locations	1
No, no difference, oppose or favor all of the proposed locations	51
No opinion, not certain	5

Q.13: Are there plenty of jobs here for all who want them, or not?

Yes, plenty of jobs	52%
No, not enough jobs	31
No opinion	17

Q.14: Would you like to have more industry in Joplin, or do you prefer to keep it about the way it is now?

Like to have more industry	79%
Prefer to keep it as it is	17
No opinion	4

Q.15: Do your city streets need any major improvement, or will a small amount of work each year be sufficient?

Streets need major improvements	56%
Small amount of work will suffice	37
No opinion	7

Q.16: Do you think city taxes such as property and real estate taxes are higher here, or lower than in similar size communities around here?

Taxes are higher here	15%
Lower here	17
About the same as other towns	26
Don't know	42