

## Executive Summary: Iowa City Senior Center Facilities Plan Public Input Survey Results, December 2020

The Iowa City Senior Center (The Center) opened in 1981 in the historic post office building, which was built in 1904 and expanded in 1931. Since that time, The Center has been committed to creating opportunities to support wellness, social connections, community engagement, and lifelong learning for a diverse and growing older adult population. Many consider it to be a gem. To continue its long-term preservation and sustainability, a master plan process began in early 2020. The Iowa City architecture firm, Rohrbach Associates, was contracted to complete an Americans with Disability Act (ADA) study and develop concept plans. This was done to improve the stability of the interior and exterior of the building, improve usability and safety of interior spaces, and preserve the Senior Center for many years to come. Participant input regarding possible floor plan changes were gathered via an electronic survey in November 2020. The following is a synthesis and summary of the survey.

At the time of the survey, most respondents lived in Iowa City and were 71-80 years old. Almost all respondents participated at The Center, attended two to three times a week, and entered the building via the skywalk. Respondents attend mainly because of the classes/programs, as well as the social and fitness opportunities.

Some of the top areas of importance selected were *Public Art* and *Better Signage and wayfinding*. Areas of importance for programming were *Game and card game playing spaces*, *Kitchen area for cooking programs and classes*, and *Appointment and health services*. Many respondents agreed features for mobility and accessibility should be incorporated. More space is needed for classroom and education use, fitness – for cardio equipment and studio, and computer access. Top spaces needing improvements were *Develop exterior space*, *Renew Building Finishes*, and *Furniture*.

Most respondents liked *Alternate 3* plan the best from the consultant's presentation. Combining comments from all three plans, most seemed to like grouping activities by floor level. They also liked having staff offices located near each other.

With the Ground Level, most respondents noted the importance of increasing the capacity and number of spaces for fitness activities. Many did not want the cardio and weight rooms combined, nor did they like the locker placement in *Alternate 2*.

For Level 1, respondents were positive about the current lobby being used as a lounge. Others liked the idea of opening the wall between the existing lobby and elevator lobby to create a *Coffee Grab + Go* in *Alternative 1*. They also liked putting it near the kitchen in *Alternative 2*.

Level 2 comments supported the possibility of increasing floor space by building into currently unused, open-air space. *Alternative 2* had the most positive comments. *Alternative 3's* *Public Meeting Space/Pod* had the most negative comments.

In *Level 3*, respondents generally appreciated the classroom layouts, including the art room. Concerns were raised regarding narrowing the hallway, blocking natural light, and noise transference into classrooms. There were many positive comments about the addition of a reception area.

Regarding relocating the main entrance to Washington St., respondents shared more positive comments than negative. The outdoor area was very well accepted, especially Alternative 3. Additionally, respondents suggested the need for shade and an enclosed area to use while waiting for their rides.

They supported environment goals, ranking *Adaptive Space Use* as the top priority, followed by *Waste reduction*. The most comments related to solar panels, improving windows, and having an energy efficient HVAC.

Regarding The Center staff, the majority of respondents said it was *Very important* to have access to the staff for assistance. Over half reported the staff did not need to be more visible. They have appreciated the access to and friendliness of the staff.

These results will be presented to participants and stakeholders of The Center and to Rohrbach Associates. Once the plan is finalized, renovation costs will be paid via \$1,925,000 from the City's Capital Improvement Program, fundraising, and other potential revenue streams, such as grants. During this process, some plans may be altered or removed due to unexpected expenses. Throughout renovations, what are anticipated to take place over the next 5 years, The Center will maintain its devotion to enhancing participants' lives.