

Farmington High School Community Survey
Ad Hoc Committee
Survey Results:
*Findings & Recommendations
of the Committee*

(Reference: Summary Document dated November 27, 2018)

- **Thank** the survey ad hoc committee members & the town staff – summer, winter
- **Thank** the facility & financial ad hoc committee for flexibility – (scheduling this meeting):
 - allowed us to spend more time time looking at the data
 - determine what we felt most important to present
 - have this presentation reflect input from the whole committee
- My presentation will have some overlap, but will focus on:
 - what the committee felt were the “big ideas” or takeaways from the survey results (we separated them into findings & recommendations)
 - and I’m also including **observations from the consultant**
- We plan to include the consultant in our joint presentation to the Town Council
- We’ll do our best to answer any & all questions, but those that are too technical for us, we can discuss with the consultant & get back with an answer
- Refer to the “Summary” document dated Nov 27th (make note of questions for end)

Introduction Summary

- The Center for Research and Public Policy (CRPP) was selected by the Survey Committee from five firms that responded to our RFP
- Over the course of several meetings, the Survey Ad Hoc Committee provided input for formulating survey questions (and sought feedback from the facility & financial ad hoc committee), and CRPP staff edited out bias - ***probably 4-5 iterations***
- The survey was designed by CRPP using a careful, deliberative process to ensure a fair, objective and balanced survey - ***balancing scaled answers, wording & placement of questions, etc.***
- Results are based on 400 completed telephone surveys conducted among Farmington residents between October 17-25, 2018.

Introduction Summary – cont.

SAMPLING:

- Each qualified Farmington resident had an equal chance for participating in the study:
 - CRPP employed “random digit dialing” of both **listed & unlisted** phone numbers and a “mixed access” sample of both **cell & landline** phone numbers.
 - CRPP utilized measures to **ensure no significant over- or under-representation** of geographic or demographic groups
- The sample of 400 surveys had an associated margin for error of +/- 4.85% at a 95% confidence interval.

Committee Findings

High Quality of Life:

- Nearly all residents (99.3%) said their quality of life was very good or good.

Satisfaction with Town services and Farmington Public Schools:

- Over 85% rated the quality of town services as positive (**good-very good, 7-10**)
- Over 80% rated the quality of the public schools as positive (good-very good, 7-10)

The main ways people get information about the school system and Town:

- Friends/Family/Neighbors/Co-workers (**informal network**)
- Local Newspapers: Printed (**surprising – Valley Press? Hartford Courant?**)
- Farmington Town newsletter * **people are reading what comes from Town Hall**
- Of those who use **social media**, **Facebook** is the most popular (not surprising)

Committee Findings

AWARENESS:

Residents are aware of the needs of the FHS facility as outlined in the Statement of Needs:

- About two-thirds of respondents were aware of most of the needs of the high school facility
- Respondents were most aware of the needs for:
 - school safety and security upgrades (68%)
 - required roof repairs (67.5%), and
 - increased space to accommodate students and educational needs (67.3%)
- **At least 59% of respondents were aware of all of the needs – not a lot of fluctuation**

Committee Findings

SUPPORT:

KEY – The survey found that there is support for a project:

- 83% agreed that an updated and upgraded high school facility is important to **maintaining home property values**

Support for project, by cost/tax impact (survey used figures that went through the town's Director of Finance, based on the financial model created out of the facility & financial committee)

- **About a 50/50 split @ \$135M / \$511 annual tax increase)**
- **A bit better, but not much @ \$125M / \$435 annual tax increase)**
- **Moves to just over 60% @ \$100M / \$348 annual tax increase)**
- **Nearly 75% support a project of \$75M / \$261 annual tax increase)**

Nearly three quarters of respondents support a project that accomplishes more than the minimum requirements

There was significantly less interest in a renovation where the minimum required updates are accomplished (15.5%)

- The lead consultant did provide the survey committee with some feedback, made some observations –

Those are included here, then we'll take a look at the **survey committee's** recommendations

- The survey committee did approach the creation of the survey questions with a priority on looking forward, not back on the negativity of the 2017 referendum because we felt that wasn't necessary in looking at how to move forward, but there were some data that do help us analyze what happened with the 2017 referendum, that was highlighted in the consultant's observations:

Consultant Observations

Findings:

- The opposition identified and turned out their **voters (based on level of support in survey, compared to referendum results)**
- The opposition prevailed with their messages (**Taken from open-ended questions - examples: cost too high, that the new plan would create the most expensive new high school in the state/nation, only one option was considered**)
- Residents felt that the options were not presented in the process leading up to the vote
- 41% said they were unsure of what the total cost was in 2017
- Residents felt rushed, pushed into the vote

Recommendations:

- Marketing/communication must focus on 4-5 messages (**choose main messages, stick to those**)
- The survey found **that there is significant awareness of the needs for the high school facility in community (2/3), but we should aim to increase awareness to 75-80%**

Committee Recommendations

Focused, clear, and concise communication is necessary to build support of a project.

- **Understand how people get their information**
 - **Friends/family/neighbors/co-workers** is how most of those surveyed get their information – **importance of informal networks**
- **Encourage more public participation**
 - **Just over half think public participation was sought** in the planning process
 - **Need to get people inside the FHS facility** (increased **support**, **awareness** of needs, and **understanding** of project proposal for those that have been in the facility recently)
- **Show the public how the committee arrived at the proposed project**
 - **Under 60% said they had enough information** to make an informed decision
 - **17.5% said they would definitely support a project** if they know a **detailed plan with on-going updates on proposal and process**

- **Communicate the required vs. desired upgrades**
 - 88% of those surveyed agreed that **these should be differentiated** in public communication
- **Communicate the facility project cost - needs to done earlier & more clearly – different timeline**
 - Clearly articulate & justify the price of the project (show residents what they are getting, distinguish between required vs. desired needs)
 - 41% of those surveyed do not recall/know the price of the last project
 - 52% of those that opposed the project believe the price was overblown, costly, excessive, etc.

A new building committee would benefit from using the survey results throughout their process – focus on different questions/data depending on the task at hand.

Questions & Answers / Discussion