



2022 FARMINGTON 1928 BUILDING COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

MARCH – APRIL 2022

Prepared for:

Farmington Ad Hoc 1928 Building Committee

Prepared by:

The Center for Research & Public Policy, Inc.



STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND OWNERSHIP

All of the analyses, findings and recommendations contained within this report are the exclusive property of the Farmington, Connecticut Ad Hoc Committee.

As required by the Code of Ethics of the National Council on Public Polls and the United States Privacy Act of 1974, The Center for Research and Public Policy maintains the anonymity of respondents to surveys the firm conducts. No information will be released that might, in any way, reveal the identity of the respondent.

Moreover, no information regarding these findings will be released without the written consent of an authorized representative of the Farmington, Connecticut Ad Hoc Committee.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Center for Research & Public Policy (CRPP) is pleased to present the results to a 2022 Farmington, Connecticut Community Survey for the Farmington Ad Hoc 1928 Building Committee. The survey was conducted to collect resident input regarding potential options for the historic 1928 Building, as well as the 1952 and 1978 Buildings. Ideas ranged from demolishing the buildings to keeping portions of the existing high school for other purposes.

The research study included 997 completed survey responses from Farmington and Unionville, Connecticut residents.

The survey was conducted March 14th – April 11th, 2022.

The survey included the following areas for investigation:

- Overall views on the disposition of the old/existing Farmington High School;
- Support or opposition in retaining 1928 Building;
- Potential uses of 1928 Building;
- Support or opposition in retaining 1952 and 1978 Buildings;
- Potential uses of 1952 and 1978 Buildings;
- Demographics.

Section 2 of this report discusses the Methodology used in the study, while Section 3 includes Highlights derived from an analysis of the quantitative research. Section 4 is a Summary of Findings from the survey.

Section 5 is an Appendix to the report containing the composite aggregate data, cross tabulations and the survey instrument employed.

METHODOLOGY

Using a quantitative research design, CRPP received 974 completed online and 23 hardcopy surveys among Farmington and Unionville, CT residents for a total combined 997 responses.

Survey input was provided by the Farmington, Connecticut Ad Hoc 1928 Building Committee.

Survey design is a careful, deliberative process to ensure fair, objective and balanced surveys. Staff members, with years of survey design experience, edit out any bias. Further, all scales used by CRPP (either numeric, such as one through ten, or wording such as strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree) are balanced evenly. Additionally, placement of questions is carefully accomplished so that order has minimal impact.

CRPP programmed the online survey instrument. Farmington and Unionville residents were encouraged to go to the online link and complete the survey.

An Every Door Direct Mailing (EDDM) was distributed along postal routes to 13,440 residences of Farmington and Unionville, Connecticut through the United States Post Office. Two hundred additional post cards were distributed around town. The survey link was also posted on various Farmington and Unionville websites and social media pages. Paper versions were also available at four locations within the community (Town Hall, Farmington Main Library, Barney Library and Unionville Community / Senior Center). The survey process was also covered by local press.

All surveys were completed between March 14th – April 11th, 2022.

Statistically, a sample of 997 completed surveys has an associated margin for error of +/- 3.05% at a 95% confidence level.

Results throughout this report are presented for composite data – all 997 cases.

Cross tabulations of data were developed and are included with this report. These compare core survey questions by demographic subgroups such as: age, number of years lived in Farmington, residents with /without children, voting registration status and gender.

Readers of this report should note that any survey is analogous to a snapshot in time and results are only reflective of the time in which the survey was undertaken. Should concerted public relations or information campaigns be undertaken during or shortly after the fielding of the survey, the results contained herein may be expected to change and should be, therefore, carefully interpreted and extrapolated.

Each qualified resident who lives in Farmington had an equal chance for participating in the study. Statistical random error, however, can never be eliminated but may be significantly reduced by increasing sample size.

ON OVERALL VIEW

Without knowing associated costs or many details about the retention or demolition of the old / existing Farmington High School (1928, 1952 and 1978 Buildings), almost three-quarters of respondents, 73.7%, expressed interest in retaining some of the buildings for needed space and municipal services.

Just one-fifth, 20.6%, suggested the old high school buildings should be torn down.

ON THE 1928 BUILDING

Support or Opposition

Still, without considering the costs yet, over three-quarters of respondents, 77.8%, strongly (54.7%) or somewhat supported (23.1%) retaining the 1928 Building. Just under one-fifth, 19.8%, somewhat (6.7%) or strongly opposed (13.1%) the idea of retaining the building.

Support for retaining the 1928 Building drops slightly to almost two-thirds, 65.6%, when the estimated \$9.8 million cost to renovate and preserve the 1928 Building was explained to respondents.

However, with the suggestion of the potential for Federal Government American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to pay a portion of the renovation / repurposing of the 1928 Building, support of retaining the building rises to just over three-quarters, 75.6%, for those who strongly (55.0%) or somewhat support (20.6%) the retention of the building.

Respondents who somewhat or strongly opposed retaining the 1928 Building, even with the potential for ARPA funds to pay a portion of the renovation / repurpose costs, reported the following top reasons for their position:

- Not willing to pay more in taxes – 67.3%
- It is not sentimental to me – 62.4%
- Can be used for more outdoor recreational space – 51.8%
- No need for additional town buildings – 37.2%

Potential Use

Regardless of support or opposition for retaining the 1928 Building, respondents indicated potential uses of the building from a list of three options could be:

- Community use – 64.0%
- Relocating the Social Services Department and the Recreation Department – 58.5%
- Relocating the Probate Court – 36.8%

Respondents were provided an opportunity to suggest other / additional potential uses of the 1928 Building in an open-ended response question. Results are provided in the Summary of Findings section of this report.

ON THE 1952 AND 1978 BUILDINGS

Without considering the needs or costs associated with the renovation or repurposing of the 1952 and 1978 Buildings yet, respondents suggested the following:

- We should look at retaining these buildings (1952 and 1978) in order to retain the gyms and add recreational programs, senior services, storage space, etc. – 56.9%
- These additional buildings should be demolished, with the exception of the 1928 Building – 21.7%
- All buildings should be demolished, including the 1928 Building – 13.8%

Support or Opposition

With the suggestion of the potential for Federal Government American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds to pay a portion of the renovation / repurposing of the 1952 and 1978 Buildings, support of retaining the buildings came from just over three-fifths of respondents, 61.8%, for those who strongly (34.4%) or somewhat support (27.4%) the retention of the buildings.

Just over one-fifth of respondents, 20.2%, strongly opposed the retention of these buildings with ARPA funds.

Potential Use

Regardless of support or opposition for retaining the 1952 and 1978 Buildings, respondents indicated top potential uses of the building from a list of several options could be:

- Keeping the gyms and creating a recreational center – 64.8%
- Community use – 50.7%
- Relocating the Social Service Department and Recreation Department – 38.3%

Respondents were provided an opportunity to suggest other / additional potential uses of the 1952 and 1978 Buildings in an open-ended response question. Results are provided in the Summary of Findings section of this report.

4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Readers are reminded that the narrative throughout this report refers to composite aggregate data – **997 residents**. Text, tables and graphs throughout this report present these composite results.

Respondents were provided with the following background information about process and potential dispositions for existing Farmington High School buildings:



This graphic above displays the current/existing High School. Over the next two years, the new High School will be built in the parking lot to the right of this graphic / to the right of the red 2003 section.

2003 Building: (long building in red on the right side of the graphic): Will be kept intact for student lockers and the Board of Education Central Office, as approved at the June 3, 2021 referendum.

1928 // 1952 and 1978 Buildings:

In January 2021, the Town Council established an Ad Hoc 1928 Building Committee to make recommendations to the Town Council on the next steps concerning the 1928 building. As part of the charge, the ad-hoc committee conducted a high-level needs assessment on space needs in Town and if they could be satisfied by the 1928 building.

Through the Ad-Hoc Committee’s discussions, more needs were evaluated, including recreational space needs (i.e. the potential to keep the existing gym), social services, municipal offices, and storage. The descriptions below are potential uses the Ad- Hoc Committee discussed:

- 1928 Building (green building at bottom of the graphic): This is the original Farmington High School. It may be torn down or could be used to relocate the Probate Court (a regional court) or the Social Services Department and Recreation Department.
- 1952 and 1978 Buildings in addition to the 1928 Building (purple and orange buildings adjoining the 1928 Building): May be retained to keep other town, recreational and storage services.

OVERALL VIEW

Respondents were asked, without knowing associated costs or many details, which of the provided options best reflected their view regarding the old / existing Farmington High School.

Almost three-quarters of respondents, 73.7%, indicated they should look at retaining some of these buildings for needed space and municipal services, while one-fifth of respondents, 20.6%, indicated the buildings should be torn down.

Results are displayed in the following table.

OVERALL VIEW	PERCENT
These old High School buildings should be torn down (with the exception of the 2003 Building)	20.6
We should look at retaining some of these buildings for needed space and municipal services.	73.7
Unsure / Don't know	5.7

THE 1928 BUILDING

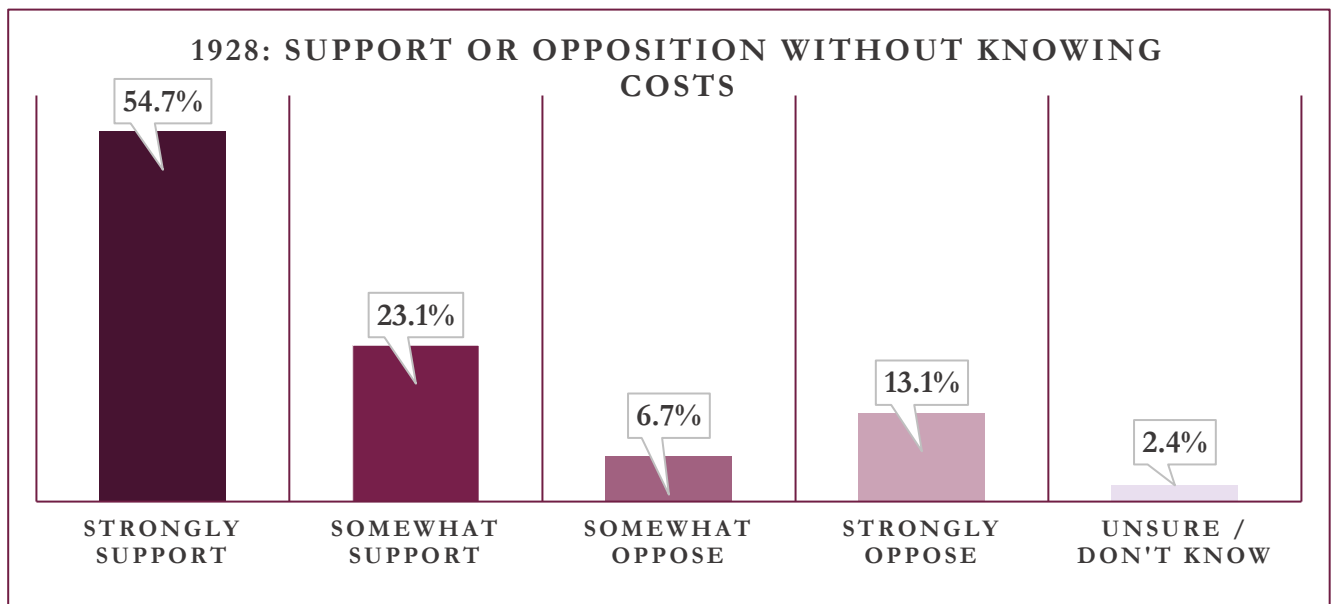
Support or Opposition

Respondents were informed this section of the survey would include questions specifically about the future and potential use of the historic, original Farmington High School – the 1928 Building (green building).



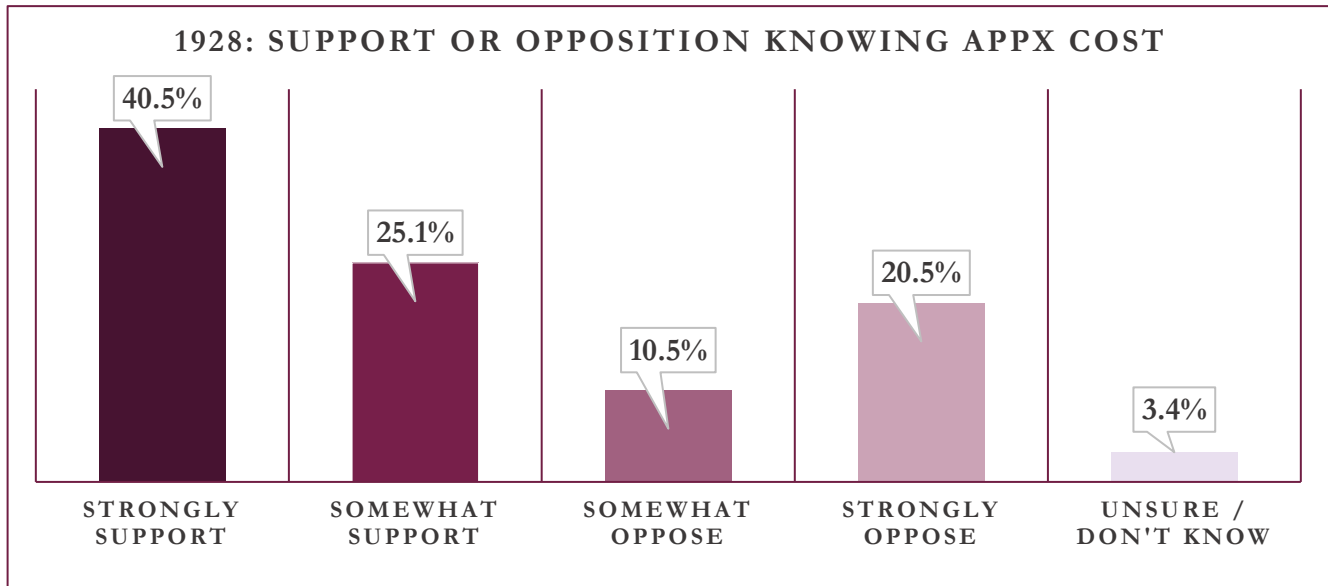
Respondents were asked, without considering the renovation costs to potentially relocate the municipal and social services in the 1928 Building, how strongly they support or oppose retaining (keeping) the 1928 Building. Over three-quarters of respondents, 77.8%, indicated they would strongly (54.7%) or somewhat (23.1%) support (23.1%) retaining the 1928 building without knowing the costs.

Results are displayed in the following graph.



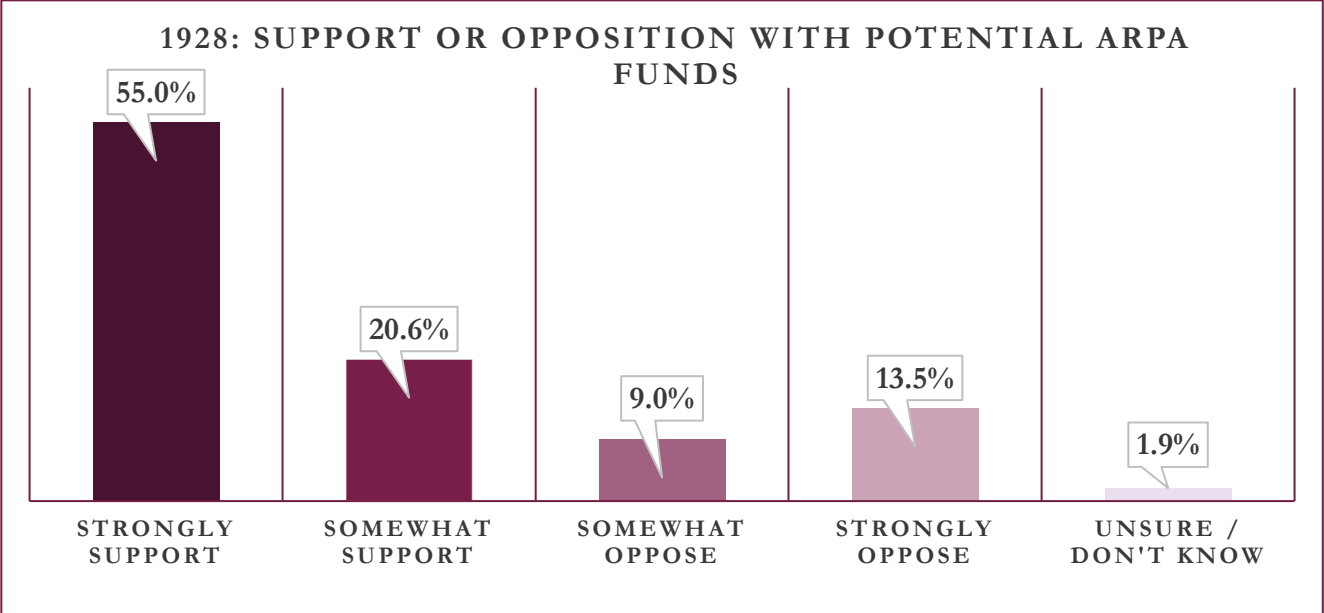
Respondents were informed that a 2021 estimate to renovate and preserve the old, original 1928 Farmington High School Building to house municipal and social services, as well as community space, is approximately \$9.8 million dollars and that the cost may impact property taxes. Respondents were asked, knowing the estimated cost, how strongly they support or oppose retaining (keeping) the 1928 Building. Almost two-thirds of respondents, 65.6%, indicated they would strongly (40.5%) or somewhat support (25.1%) keeping the building while knowing the cost and impact.

Results are displayed in the following graph.



Respondents were told there exists the potential for Federal Government American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to pay a portion of the renovation / repurpose of the 1928 Building. Respondents were asked, if these funds are designated to help pay for a portion of this project to help reduce any resulting property tax increases, which of the following best reflects their position on retaining (keeping) the 1928 Building. Just over three-quarters of respondents, 75.6%, indicated they would strongly (55.0%) or somewhat support (20.6%) keeping the building with designated ARPA funds to pay for a portion.

Results are displayed in the following graph.



Respondents that somewhat or strongly opposed retaining the 1928 Building with the potential for ARPA funds to pay a portion of the renovation / repurpose costs were asked why they would oppose it. Leading reasons were: not willing to pay more in taxes (67.3%), it is not sentimental to me (62.4%), and it can be used for more outdoor recreational space (51.8%).

Multiple responses were accepted. Results are in the table below in declining order.

REASONS OPPOSED TO KEEPING 1928 BUILDING	PERCENT OF CASES
Not willing to pay more in taxes	67.3
It is not sentimental to me	62.4
Property can be used for more outdoor recreational space	51.8
No need for additional town buildings	37.2
Other: _____	18.6
Not enough interest in the process	4.9

Other responses included: Buildings in poor condition/ inefficient / old; question tax implications to renovate / maintain over time; rebuild new, long-lasting building for less expensive; building currently not accessible; no architectural / historical value; waste of money / use money for other uses; question need for space; no clear future plan / depends on use.

Potential Uses

Respondents were offered potential uses of the 1928 Building whether they supported or opposed retaining the building. The two leading potential uses were community space (64.0%) and relocating the social services and recreation department (58.5%).

Multiple responses were accepted. Results are in the table below in declining order.

POTENTIAL USES OF 1928 BUILDING	PERCENT OF CASES
Community use (meeting space, event space, non-profit use, art and business incubator, etc.)	64.0
Relocating the Social Services Department and the Recreation Department	58.5
Relocating the Probate Court (a regional court)	36.8
None of these	14.0
Unsure / Don't know	8.2

In an open-ended, optional formatted question, respondents were provided an opportunity to provide other uses they believe should be considered specifically for the 1928 Building. The most frequently named responses are presented in the following table in declining order.

OPEN END: POTENTIAL USES OF 1928 BUILDING	PERCENT OF CASES
Locate Town Hall / Town Services	10.7
Recreation Use	8.0
Continuing Education / Adult Education	7.7
Museum / Record / Artifact Storage	7.4
Community Programs and Events	6.1
Youth / Teen Center	6.1
Arts Center	5.5
Pre-school	3.4
Board of Education Building	3.1
Housing (Senior / Low Income)	3.1
Elderly services	2.5
Swimming Pool	2.5
Meeting Rooms / Conference Center	2.5
Social Services / Counseling	2.1
Food Pantry / Community Kitchen	2.1
Boys and Girl Scouts	1.8
Rental Space / Income Generator	1.8
Student Education / Tutoring	1.5
Library	1.2
Small Club Meetings	0.9
Non-profit Use	0.9
Town Election Space	0.9
Farmer's Market / Café	0.6
Theater	0.6
General Storage	0.6
Safety / Emergency Building	0.6
Computer Center	0.6
General Public Use	0.3
Grounds / Maintenance Building	0.3
Hold for Future Needs	0.3
Animal Shelter	0.3
Police Use	0.3

THE 1952 AND 1978 BUILDINGS

Respondents were informed this section of the survey would include questions specifically about the future and potential uses of the 1952 Building (adjoining orange building) and 1978 Building (adjoining purple building) that adjoin the 1928 Building



Respondents were reminded that the 1952 and the 1978 Buildings were mentioned at the beginning of the survey as potentially being retained to keep the existing gyms, more public recreation programming, senior services, or storage space.

Respondents were asked, without knowing the renovation needs or costs of these two buildings, which of the following best reflected their view regarding these additional buildings. Over one-half of respondents, 56.9%, indicated they should look at retaining these buildings while just over one-fifth indicated, 21.7%, indicated the additional buildings should be demolished, with the exception of the 1928 Building.

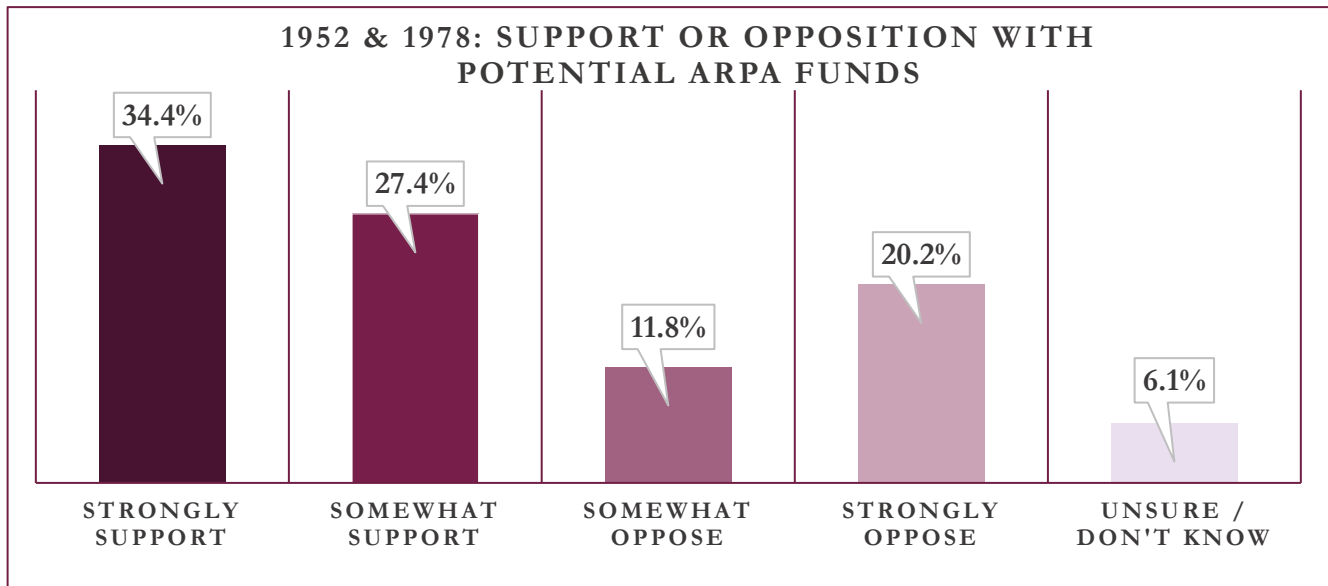
Results are displayed in the following table.

VIEW ON 1952 AND 1978 BUILDINGS	PERCENT
We should look at retaining these buildings (1952 and 1978) in order to retain the gyms and add recreational programs, senior services, storage space, etc.	56.9
These additional buildings should be demolished, <u>with the exception</u> of the 1928 Building	21.7
All buildings should be demolished, <u>including</u> the 1928 Building	13.8
Unsure / Don't know	7.6

Support or Opposition

Respondents were told there, again, exists the potential for Federal Government American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to pay a portion of the renovation / repurpose of the 1952 and 1978 Buildings (in addition to the 1928 Building). Respondents were asked if these funds are designated to help pay for a portion of this project to help reduce any resulting property tax increases, which of the following best reflects their position on retaining (keeping) the additional buildings. Just over three-fifths of respondents, 61.8%, indicated they strongly (34.4%) or somewhat supported (27.4%) retaining the additional buildings.

Results are displayed in the following graph.



Potential Uses

Respondents were offered potential uses of the 1952 and 1978 Buildings whether they supported or opposed retaining the building. Leading potential uses of the additional buildings included: keeping the gyms and creating a recreational center (64.8%) and community use (50.7%).

Multiple responses were accepted. Results are in the table below in declining order.

POTENTIAL USES OF 1952 AND 1978 BUILDINGS	PERCENT OF CASES
Keeping the gyms and creating a recreational center	64.8
Community use (meeting space, event space, non-profit use, art and business incubator, etc.)	50.7
Relocating the Social Services Department and the Recreation Department	38.3
Relocating non-senior recreational programs from Senior Center to provide more senior programming	37.2
Relocating the Town Hall (allowing for potential recreational fields in existing Town Hall space, as keeping the additional buildings would lose the field that is slated to go in that space on the new Farmington High School site plan)	35.0
Relocating the Probate Court (A regional court)	24.9
Space for additional Town storage	19.7
None of these	18.0

In an open-ended, optional formatted question, respondents were provided an opportunity to provide other uses they believe should be considered specifically for 1952 and 1978 Buildings in addition to the 1928 Building. The most frequently named responses are presented in the following table in declining order.

OPEN END: POTENTIAL USES OF 1952 AND 1978 BUILDINGS	PERCENT OF CASES
Recreation Services	11.0
Pool	5.5
Locate Town Hall / Town Services	3.3
Continuing Education	2.2
Daycare / Preschool	2.2
Historic Use / Museum / Land Records	2.2
Theatre / Performance Center	2.2
Senior / Adult Care Facility	1.7
Boy and Girl Scouts	1.7
Board of Education / Superintendent	1.7
Public Use / Community Space	1.7
Co-working / Business Incubator	1.1
Event Space	1.1
Youth Center / Events	1.1
Rental Spaces	1.1
Emergency Use	0.6
Integrative Playground	0.6
Community Kitchen / Garden	0.6
Police	0.6
Club Use	0.6
Café	0.6
Student Education / Use	0.6
Housing	0.6

IN CLOSING

Respondents were asked to take the opportunity to note anything not covered in this survey regarding the renovation and repurpose process and that they would like to convey to the Town Council’s Ad-Hoc 1928 Building Committee. Verbatim responses are provided in the appendix to this report.

RESIDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

REGISTERED TO VOTE IN FARMINGTON	PERCENT
Yes	96.7
No	2.1
Unsure / Don't know	1.2

YEARS LIVED IN FARMINGTON	PERCENT
Less than 10 years	20.1
10 to 24 years	35.3
25 years or more	44.4
Unsure / Don't know	0.2
AVERAGE	26.7 Average

AGE	PERCENT
18 to 24	1.9
25 to 34	4.1
35 to 44	20.5
45 to 54	24.2
55 to 64	20.4
65 or older	25.8
Refused	3.2

ON CHILDREN	PERCENT
No children	12.8
Have children not yet of school age (pre-school or younger)	4.6
Have children of school age currently attending Farmington schools	36.0
Have children of school age not attending Farmington schools (private school, etc.)	2.2
Have children who started in the Farmington schools but left for private or other schools	2.3
Have older (over 18) children who attended Farmington schools in the past	40.8
Have older (over 18) children who did not attend Farmington schools (such as didn't live in Farmington / attended private)	7.1
Unsure / Don't know / Refused	2.2

Identify as...	PERCENT
Male	33.5
Female	60.7
Non-binary	0.2
Prefer not to answer	5.4
Prefer to self-describe	0.2

5 APPENDIX

INTERPRETATION OF AGGREGATE RESULTS

The computer processed data for this survey are presented in the following frequency distributions. It is important to note that the wordings of the variable labels and value labels in the computer-processed data are largely abbreviated descriptions of the Questionnaire items and available response categories.

The frequency distributions include the category or response for the question items. Responses deemed not appropriate for classification have been grouped together under the “Other” code.

Each frequency distribution includes the absolute observed occurrence of each response (i.e. the total number of cases in each category). Immediately adjacent to the right of the column of absolute frequencies is the column of relative frequencies. These are the percentages of cases falling in each category response, including those cases designated as missing data. To the right of the relative frequency column is the adjusted frequency distribution column that contains the relative frequencies based on the legitimate (i.e. non-missing) cases. That is, the total base for the adjusted frequency distribution excludes the missing data. For many Questionnaire items, the relative frequencies and the adjusted frequencies will be nearly the same. However, some items that elicit a sizable number of missing data will produce quite substantial percentage differences between the two columns of frequencies. The careful analyst will cautiously consider both distributions.

The last column of data within the frequency distribution is the cumulative frequency distribution (Cum Freq.). This column is simply an adjusted frequency distribution of the sum of all previous categories of response and the current category of response. Its primary usefulness is to gauge some ordered or ranked meaning.