

2020 Swissvale Borough Facilities Survey

The Swissvale Borough Council is looking to determine the future of the borough facilities, specifically Administration, Public Works, and Police. Many options were considered, including a significant “Facilities Report” which was created and collected by Clyde Wilhelm (<http://www.swissvaleborough.com/government/facilities-report.aspx>). Borough Council wanted to seek input from residents regarding their opinions on some of the options presented in the report, as well as provide space if any resident had other suggestions for appropriate locations for municipal buildings.

This survey was assembled to provide an asynchronous avenue for residents to submit their opinion. The purpose of the questionnaire was to help council understand the priority that residents would place on location and cost for new facilities, and utilization of the existing borough building.

The survey was completed by 86 residents of the community, below are the results of their responses.

Q1: Please rank the following factors which are under consideration in the development of borough facilities, in order of personal importance.

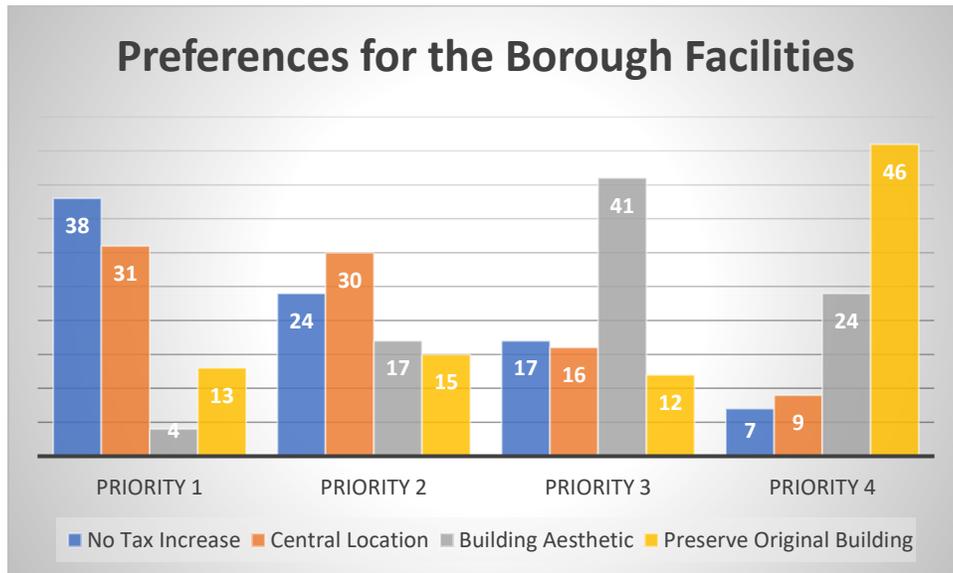


Chart 1.1

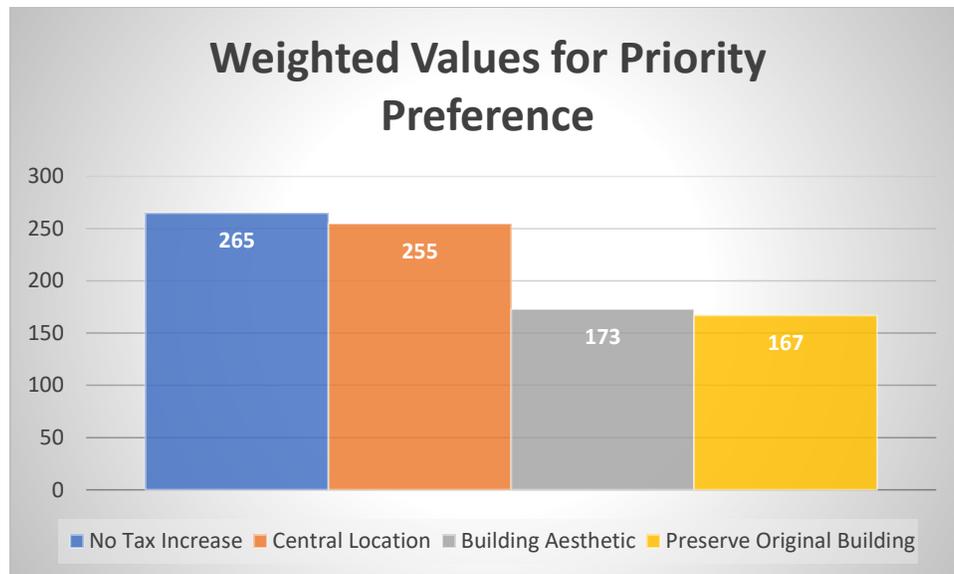


Chart 1.2

Analysis:

This data is displayed two different ways. Chart 1.1 presents the data as it came in directly from the survey. Each displays the number of votes for each ranked priority as given by residents. As such, the highest number of votes per rank were (1) “Overall cost/No tax increase,” (2) “Centralized location,” (3) “Aesthetic of building,” and (4) “Preservation of original borough building.”

Additionally, Chart 1.2 allows each of the options to be considered against one another. For this graphic, each priority was given a weighted value. For each response, the highest priority was worth 4 “points” declining incrementally until the lowest priority was worth 1 “point.” The totals were then tabulated for comparison. The order of options is the same as in Chart 1.1, but this allows for better direct comparison of the results.

The main concern for residents was the overall cost of the project, and their desire to not have taxes raised. This is understandable in a community which has seen school district taxes rise regularly in the last few years. But by weighting the results, we can see that just as important to the overall cost is the centrality of the borough facilities.

Q2: One option would be to put the Public Works Garage at Les Getz Memorial Park (Site 3 on report). This would include storing of construction equipment, sanitation vehicles, and offices at this location. The structure would sit between the baseball fields and slopes heading towards the river. Would you be in favor of this option?

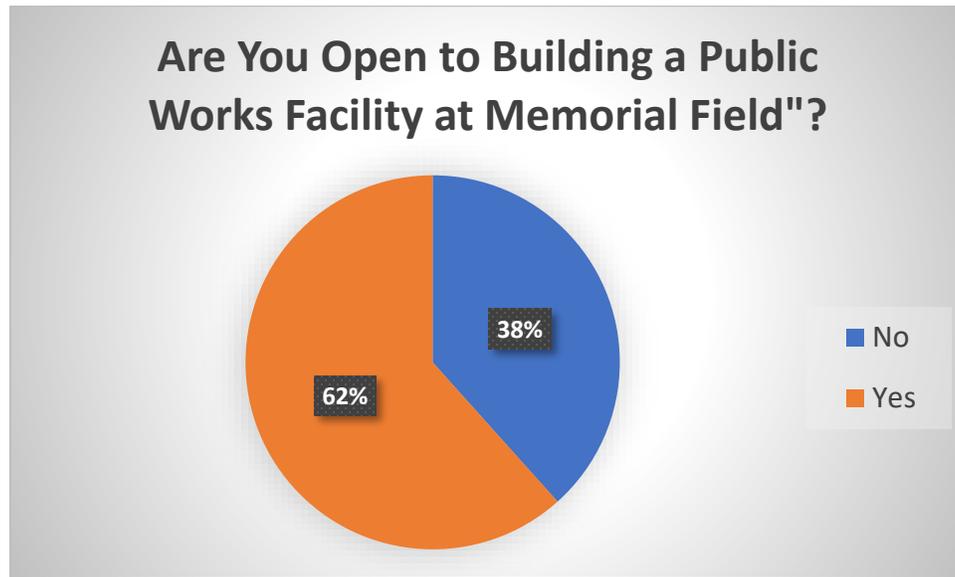


Chart 2.1

Analysis:

One of the current plans involves building the Department of Public Works garage behind the ball fields at Les Getz Memorial Park. Over the last year, many residents have utilized public comment to communicate their desire to keep the parks as green space. This has often revolved around building a storage container for the Borough's salt pile but also included facilities which would increase traffic for borough trucks and other sanitation vehicles.

Sixty-two percent of respondents were open to the construction of Public Works facilities at Memorial Park.

Q3: In a borough of our size, we are limited in our property options. If we want to avoid building at Memorial Park, it may require construction that would cost the borough more, which could lead to increased taxes. In that event, which would you rather see happen?

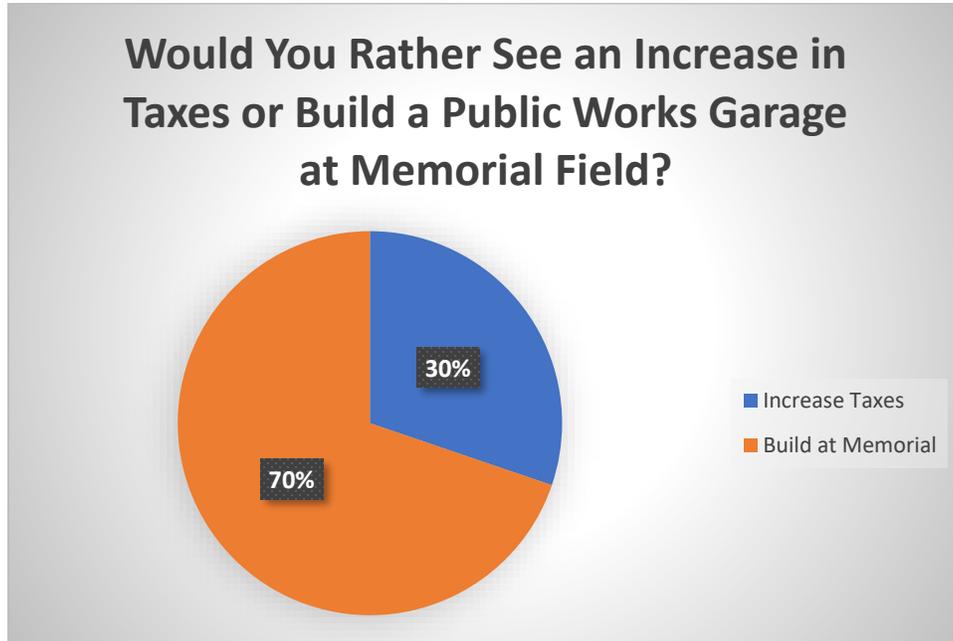


Chart 3.1

Analysis:

This question was meant to help decipher how strongly residents felt about particular issues. If the options were between increasing taxes or building at Memorial Park, which would residents prefer to see occur? While these are not the only two options before council, the data from this question was helpful to understand.

As would be expected, the number of people who would be satisfied with building at Memorial Park increased if it meant that taxes would not be increased. Seven people (21%) of those who did not want to build at Memorial would be open to that option to keep the cost of the project down. Thirty percent of respondents continued in their desire to preserve the green spaces of the Borough.

Q4: In a borough of our size, we are limited in our property options. There are properties which might be cost effective for adaptive reuse, but as a result the borough would become a landlord. In that situation would you rather see increased taxes for new construction, or a business paying rent to the borough?

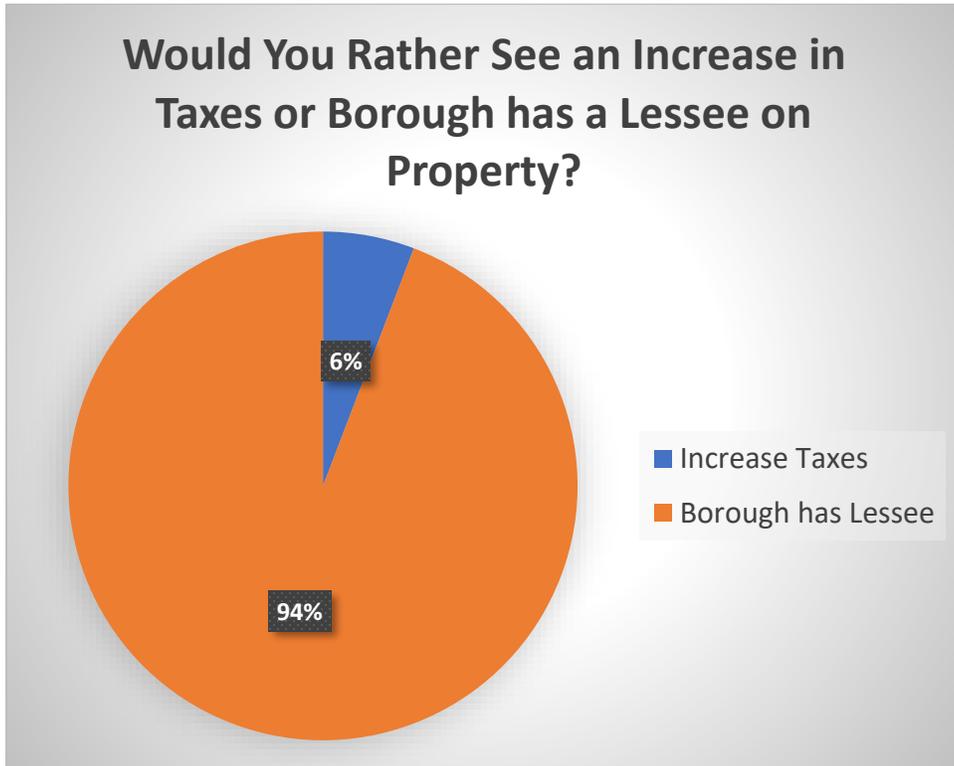


Chart 4.1

Analysis:

A previous iteration of the plan proposed by Clyde Wilhelm in 2019 involved the Borough purchasing a property that carried a lessee with it. The Borough would then have relocated said business and served as a landlord for the business. The purpose of this question was to determine how the public felt about an arrangement such as this. An overwhelming number of respondents felt that if it kept costs at a minimum, this would be an acceptable arrangement.

Q5: Additional Suggestions

Analysis:

The final questions provided space for residents to provide feedback regarding other locations that could be used. Each site will be listed as bullet points without any additional commentary. Some of these sites are included in the Facilities Report prepared by Clyde Wilhelm.

- Municipal lot on Noble St.
- LGAR home site on Woodstock Ave.
- St. Anselm School (aka Word of God School) on McClure Ave.
- Collingwood Park on Collingwood Ave.

A few residents chimed in that the borough should use properties that it already owns.

One respondent requested that the borough seriously consider environmentally responsible options and investigate grants that might offset the costs of a green building or renovation.