**Survey Takeaways**

* Clearly the levy was divisive and very emotional for folks on both sides
* There seem to be a desire to build a state of the art showcase middle/high school, but the cost tradeoffs did not seem to be well articulated (if done.)
* The lack of addressing MLS issues was a large concern for both proponents and opponents of the levy plan
* There seemed to be a feeling that many resident's concerns were not addressed
* The focus on new layouts and structures that used good parts of YSHS/MMS was attractive to many...but emphasis on new construction
* No clearly defined maintenance plan for the new or old buildings were articulated to the public
  + Sustainment is critical to any building and the plan (and costs) need to be baked into the plan
* HVAC at both schools are concerning
* The recent increase in taxes due to water treatment and fire station hit right before the vote for the new facilities

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This set includes info from personal meetings as well as the survey

* Attitudes have not changed a lot since a year ago.
* Some generational splitting: young parents generally want & support better schools, even when they feel financial pressure. Some older, retired people stated that schools are no longer/ never were a priority for them. I heard frequently "this is an aging community" as an explanation for why we can't support upgrades to our schools, & maybe can't support our own school system anymore.
* Financial pressure/ affordability is #1 concern. There are widely differing individual thresholds.
  + eg: one woman told me she can't afford to spend another penny on the schools; they are fine the way they are now. She owns 4 homes, her own plus 3 rentals that she uses to "pay her mortgage" (she is also employed full time as a nurse). She stated she is already close to losing money on her rentals and would definitely have to raise the rent if another levy passed.
  + Another woman, adamantly in opposition to the 2018 levy told me she can't afford it because "she's not rich", stating she is a retired WSU professor (not only an educator, but a public employee with a good salary & retirement package by most standards).
  + Another woman who opposed the levy saying she couldn't afford it travels out of the country on package tours to remote natural areas a couple times a year.
  + Another sponsors a young immigrant child to go to the Antioch School, but vocally opposed the levy.
  + Some people said they would have to leave the community if another levy passed.
  + Yet one Home Inc (Community Land Trust) resident said if she runs into financial trouble, her mortgage can be re-negotiated & felt that Home Inc has her back. She was & is a levy supporter.
* Schools/ facilities/ levy issue remains very emotional. Some people feel they will be forced out of town. Some people feel children/ education/ schools are not their problem/ priority. Some young parents feel betrayed by baby boomer generation. One grandmother doesn't want YS to turn into a retirement community "like Sun City, AZ".
* Many in the opposition group expressed lack of trust in the school board and those"pushing this levy". People felt lied to. The process felt dishonest, not inclusive. The brochure about wiring and other problems at the HS that was prepared by a paid PR company was perceived as "slick" and deceitful.
* Distrust of outsiders. Distrust of the state assessment, old cronies just feeding the construction industry. People want independent assessment, factual, and safety focused. They want local workers/ local expertise. They don't want any money wasted on PR/ promotional material.
* a small but vocal minority question openly whether YS can support its own independent school district. Talk of consolidation I haven't heard since the 1980s. One woman, an older, retired, single woman without children shared that in the small town in Ohio where she grew up, the schools were consolidated after she graduated. "The heart kind of went out of the town", she said quietly. Others pointed out that real estate values would decline, perhaps drastically, if we consolidated.
* continued environmental concerns with creating landfill waste by tearing down & rebuilding.

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Strengths:

* Listening to some community input
* Information was available

Weaknesses:

* **Expense/cost (came up MANY times)**
* Not listening or not listening with sincerity  (came up a lot)
* Not addressing maintenance
* Not using competing bids or second assessments
* Exaggerated claims (came up a lot)
* Not having an overall/comprehensive plan for all phases/maintenance including allowing for teacher salary increases

How to change/improve:

* Prioritized assessment of problems
* Multiyear remodeling plan (comprehensive)
* Scale it down
* Sell land to finance
* Coordinate with Village Council and Township leadership
* Look at needs vs. affordability

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1. Strengths of Facility Plan

* Lots of “none” answers
* Revenue through both property and income taxes
* Progressive ideas; space for PBL
* All on one campus…debate over which location
* Listened to the community – many indicated this
* Open spaces with outdoor connections
* New construction vs. renovation
* Safety addressed
* Special needs updates addressed

1. Biggest Weaknesses

* Expensive – stated over and over again in many different ways
* Misleading flyer/info – again stated many times
* Long term need for identified maintenance
* Used out-of-town consultant not in touch with YS
* Second levy for Mills Lawn would be forthcoming in the near future
* Lack of trust – often repeated and emphasized as a strong negative; too much guilt laid on Villagers if not supporting levy
* Address both buildings needs at one time
* Possible use of Midwest not outlined
* Renovation vs. demolition; more cost effective

1. Changes/differences to encourage yes vote

* Outline a menu of design options; both for one or two campuses; comprehensive plan
* Don’t use impending doom threat; less heavy-handed tactics
* Prioritize assessment of properties
* Use a multi-year approach for funding
* Honesty – emphasized often
* Combining with other districts
* Need to distance from previous levies (fire station)
* Reduce/reuse/recycle
* Do not design for specific educational method (PBL)

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* What strengths and positives do we need to maintain?

         Some flexibility

         What pitfalls do we need to avoid?

         Asking for levy the community/village cannot afford; figure out a budget

         \*\*Primary concern; addressing affordability for widest range

         Regardless of upcoming village expenses; current increases in effect for x number of years

         Fixed income, young families, limited income = process needs to avoid non-inclusiveness

         Future population needs

         Addressing needs in both buildings

         Assess what needs be replaced, what can be renovated, added onto, refitted, redesigned

         Not addressing maintenance in any/all changes;

         Build into cost; or PI levy?

         Creating waste and resource use as well as associated damaging environmental impacts

         Not having prioritized assessment of needs

         Uninvolved School Board

         Focusing excessively on PBL needs (flexibility for future possible educational shifts)

         Rushing through a plan without careful deliberation, planning

         Holding community meetings during which concerns are not adequately addressed – or afterwards if not during

         Misinformation

         Getting into the weeds about decisions/opinions on topics out of our purview

         Opinions important BUT need focus on realities in district

         NEEDS v WANTS

         Getting into arguments; being defensive

         Need stay flexible

         Not addressing/answering questions/concerns; ensuring all concerns addressed in some fashion when possible

         What questions or misinformation we must address?

         My concern here is revisiting bitterness and issues or challenges this task force has no involvement in; in some cases information was provided when survey responses said it was not, but past situations are in the past. How we choose to move forward, clearly and transparently, is key. The survey responses yielded valuable information. Let's take what we can work with to inform our process moving forward.

**A couple task force members made Recommendations**

* The community won't support all new buildings...the cost would be too great and the lack of a growing student base makes that investment risky
* Much of both schools are structurally sound and functional, but:
  + HVAC is a serious deficiency in both schools
  + The temporary buildings at MLS and MMS have passed their useful lives
  + Food service and locations need to be addressed
  + Tornado safety plans and options seem inadequate for both schools
* I believe an analysis of alternatives needs to be accomplished, which looks at the key requirements for the schools facilities and see if they can be addressed by non-material solutions or if they need to be addressed with repair, renovation, or new construction
* Whatever the Task Force moves forward with, significant community outreach/involvement/input will be required

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* Create a comprehensive plan that includes both campuses:
* MLS, McKinney & YSHS
* Having a local, independent building inspection / assessment, and making it fully available to the public. What is the expected life span of existing structures/ HVAC?
* Renovating instead of rebuilding, (even if it costs more?)
* Focus on HVAC & plumbing
* MLS needs updated school-wide cooling system. Renovated bathrooms & plumbing , esp in the older section. Get rid of the trailers. Build a music room for band/orchestra with state of the art HVAC & sound proofing. Expand & upgrade the special needs area with more offices for therapists & Mr. Gudgel. Expand wood working area & maker spaces.
* YSHS needs new, secure entrance. Needs additional exits for upper floors. Screens on windows. Upgrade outdoor spaces with landscaping, picnic tables, benches, native tree/shrub/flower plantings. Gymnasium needs to be fully air conditioned. New locker rooms. Renovate & enlarge front office space to include confidential offices for counselors, mental health workers, psychologist. Upgrade storage, esp for music room, which also needs PA access. Enlarge/ upgrade chemistry/ physics labs. New floors needed in hallways & classrooms in "tower". Enlarge/ renovate kitchen, lunch line space & cafeteria. Evaluate/ renovate lockers, issues around lockers. Upgrade electrical system, needs more outlets.
* Have as much of this work done by local, non-state affiliated contractors & workers as possible.
* Some have suggested offering the community a "menu" of improvements, from least to most costly options & get feedback.
* Some have suggested a "pay-as-you-go" plan to avoid paying huge amounts of interest. eg: as levy money comes in, do one renovation a year, or every few years as money becomes available. (Is this allowable? Question for Dawn, school treasurer). In other words, save up for repairs.
* Consider a K-12 campus at the HS, which might save costs by sharing some resources, eg music room.
* Make the schools community spaces as much as possible, eg: Mills Lawn functions as village green/ park/ town square. Encourage community use. Tennis courts? Picnic tables? Band shell for outdoor summer concerts? It's known as "the playground", evenings/ weekends/ summers. Performance space shared with community? I think sharing with Antioch College & continuing to renovate their spaces (Foundry Theater, Kelly Hall) may work just as well. How can we bring the community into the schools? Literal & physical buy-in for an aging community, many of whom are not grandparents & may never have stepped inside one of the schools.
* Patiently educate & re-educate the community, utilizing the YS News & live community forums. Some are still calling for purchase of Antioch Midwest Bldg. Someone suggested the old Fels Bldg. Take these suggestions seriously & do cost / benefit analysis. Compare costs of renovating/ rebuilding, costs of local, independent builders, vs others, etc. What are the state requirements? What state money is available with what restrictions? How many kids are in YS schools? What are the costs & benefits of open enrollment? Provide some facts about neighboring school districts: taxation, property values, test scores, college entrance/ graduation rates, age of facilities, etc.
* Someone said "this is a process community". Do everything possible to engage as many from the community as possible in face-to-face discussions & information sessions, especially those who do not usually speak out. Go door-to-door? The affordability task force held four community forums in different locations (First Baptist Church, Library, John Bryan Center, & one more) that involved whole group & breaking into facilitated small groups. Let the feelings come out. Talk face to face with neighbors. Get as far away as possible from the ugliness & anonymity of social media.
* To me, this is the most important: communication, transparency, & willingness to compromise & find common ground. The community cannot be marketed to. The next plan cannot be sold to the community; it must come from them. The question is: what are we willing to pay for? It must be made clear what the costs of consolidation & losing our own schools would be to the community. What are the benefits of having our own school system? These must be spelled out.