

# Community Survey

Prepared for:  
The Groton School Facility  
Initiative Task Force  
July 2015



- The Center for Research & Public Policy (CRPP) is pleased to present the results of a Groton community survey on behalf of the Groton School Facility Initiative Task Force. The survey was conducted among residents of Groton including the City of Groton, the Town, Groton Long Point & Noank, Mystic and the Naval Base area.
- The survey was designed to collect input on public school facilities in town.
- The research included a comprehensive telephone survey. CRPP, working together with Task Force members and representatives of Milone & MacBroom, Inc., designed the survey instrument to be used when calling Groton residents.
- This report summarizes information collected from telephone surveys conducted June 9 – 25, 2015.

# Introduction

The survey instrument employed in the Community Survey included the following areas for investigation:

- Current quality of life living in Groton, Connecticut;
- Awareness of the School Facilities Initiative Task Force and their efforts;
- Levels of interest in the planning process for the School Facility Initiative's Groton 2020 Plan;
- Support or opposition to The Groton 2020 Plan;
- Perceptions held regarding varied school facility options, issues, investments;
- Impact of varied Plan details/characteristics on support or opposition;
- Support for the Plan at various increased property tax levels;
- Sources for information about Groton schools; and
- Demographics.

# Introduction

- Using a quantitative research design, CRPP completed 386 interviews among Groton residents.
- All telephone interviews were conducted June 9 - 25, 2015. Residents were contacted between 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. weekdays and 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on the weekend.
- Survey input was provided by Task Force officials and representatives of Milone & MacBroom, Inc.
- Survey design at CRPP 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. And, placement of questions is carefully accomplished so that order has minimal impact.

# Methodology

- CRPP utilized a super random digit telephone sample. This process allows randomization of numbers, which equalizes the probability of qualified respondents being included in the sampling frame. A mixed access sample was utilized that included both cell phone and landline numbers.
- Respondents qualified for the survey if they confirmed they were registered to vote in Groton and were at least 18 years of age or older.
- Training of telephone researchers and pre-test of the survey instrument occurred on June 8-9, 2015.
- The facets of the study included: sample design, survey design, pre-test, computer programming, fielding, coding, editing, verification, validation and logic checks, computer analysis, analysis, and report writing.

# Methodology

- CRPP maintained a 70% completion rate on all calls made during the Community Survey. And, a high completion rate, many times indicates an interest in the topic.
- Statistically, a sample of 386 surveys represents a margin for error of  $\pm 4.96\%$  at a 95% confidence level.
- In theory, a sample of Groton residents will differ no more than  $\pm 4.96\%$  than if all users were contacted and included in the survey. That is, if random probability sampling procedures were reiterated over and over again, sample results may be expected to approximate the large population values within plus or minus 4.96% -- 95 out of 100 times.

## Methodology

**A large majority of Groton residents surveyed, 80.6%, reported being very or somewhat satisfied with the community as a “place to live”.**



# On Quality of Life

**Nearly three-quarters, 70.7%, reported their current standard of living -- compared to two years ago -- as "good" or "no movement, but good".**



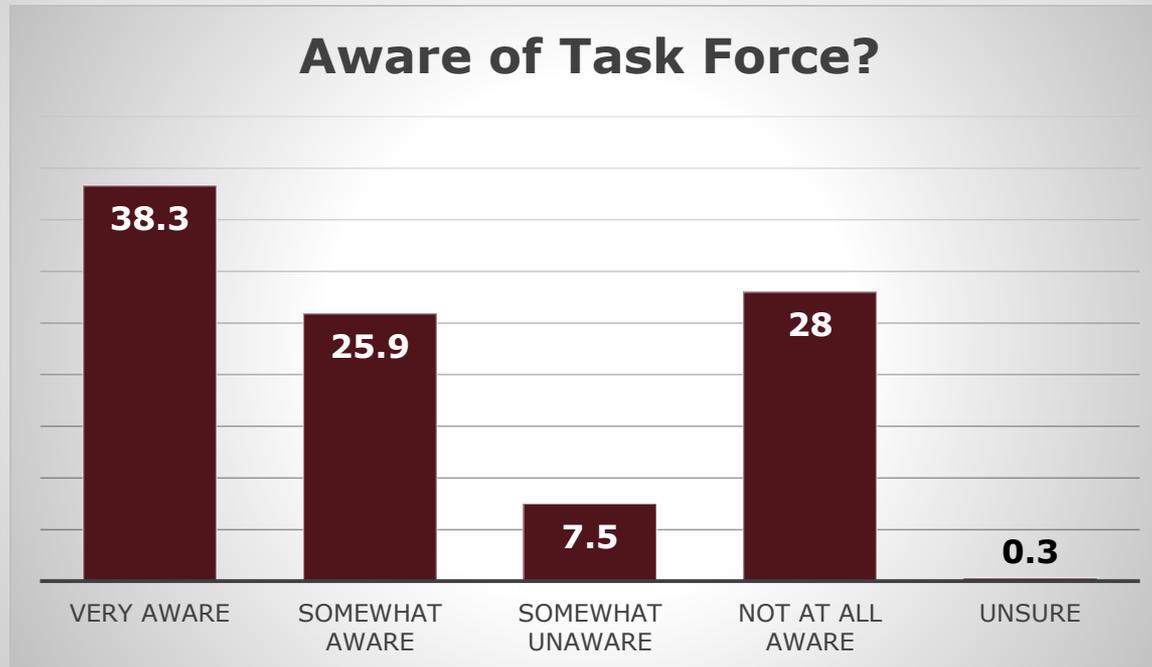
# On Quality of Life

**Respondents provided the Groton Public Schools a fair overall rating. Just 42.2% rated the schools positively using a scale of one to ten. Another 25.9% provided poor or very poor ratings. The remainder were either neutral in their ratings or were unsure. When “don’t know” respondents were removed from the data, the positive rating moved to 47.5%.**

Rating Groton Public Schools	Very Good & Good	Very Poor & Poor	Unsure
With “Don’t knows”	42.2	25.9	11.1
Without “Don’t knows”	47.5	29.2	---

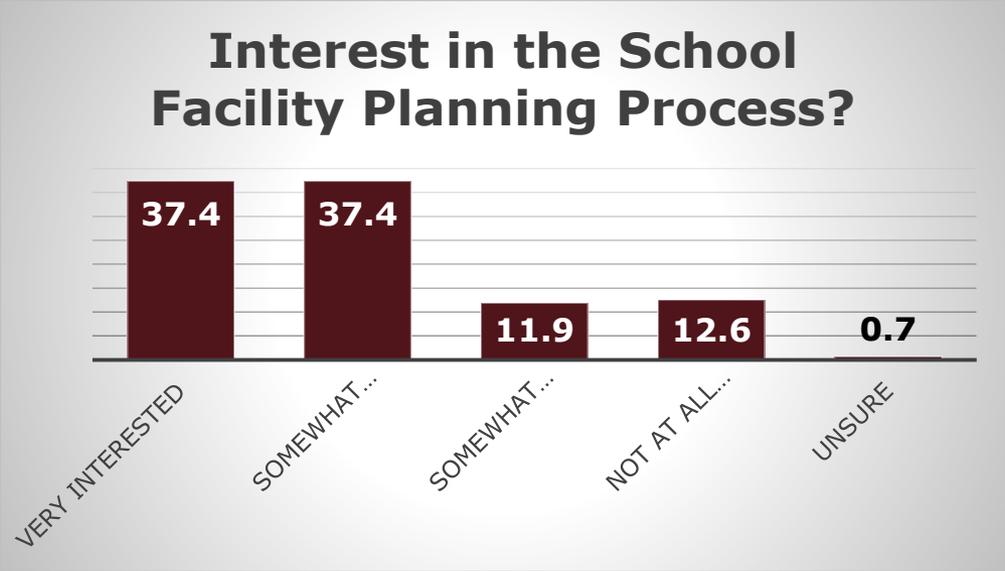
## **On Quality of Life**

**Nearly two-thirds of all respondents, 64.2%, reported being very or somewhat aware that a group of appointed Groton residents called the “School Facilities Initiative Task Force” has been at work on a plan to upgrade and modernize school facilities in town.**



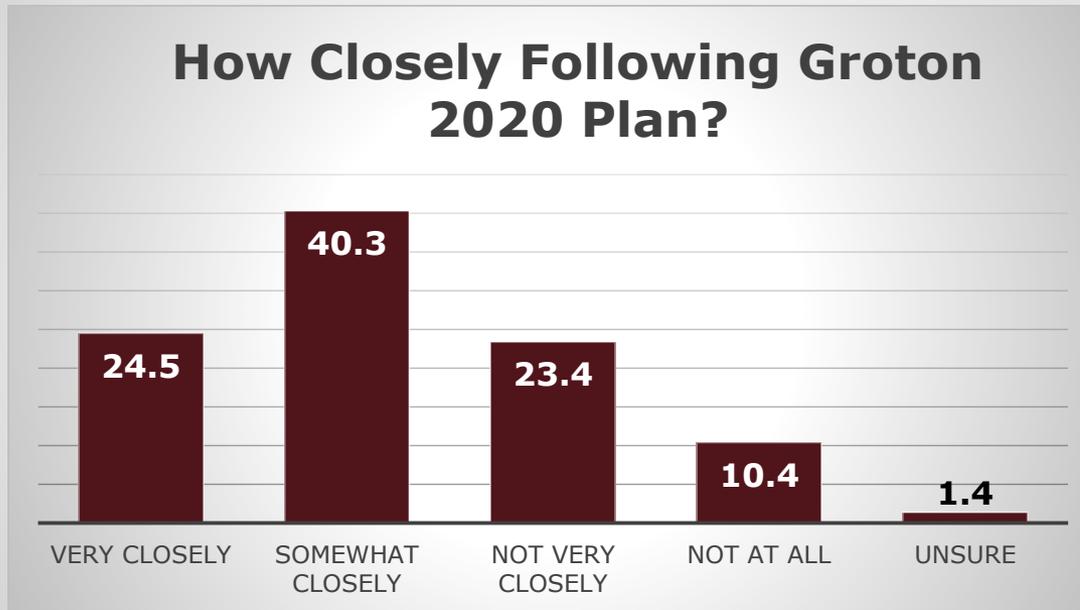
**On Awareness**

Interest in the planning process for the “School Facility Initiative’s Groton 2020 Plan” is strong. Three-quarters, 74.8%, suggested they are very or somewhat interested in the plan for upgrades and modernization of school facilities in town.



# On Interest

**Further, 64.7%, indicated they are following the planning process very or somewhat closely. Just 10.4% suggested “not at all closely”.**



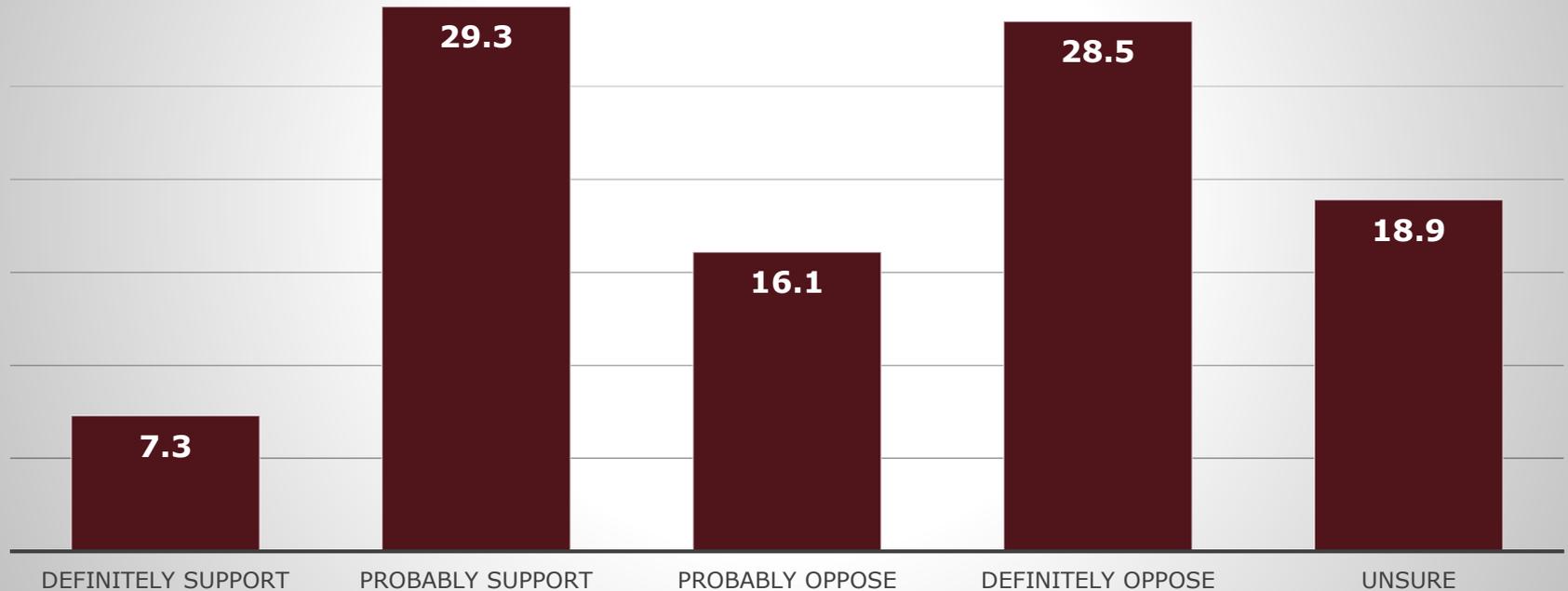
**On Interest**

**Once researchers introduced the Groton 2020 Plan to respondents, each was asked how they might vote in a referendum “held today” on the Plan. Just over one-third, 36.5%, indicated they would definitely or probably support the Plan while 44.6% noted they would probably or definitely oppose the Plan as they understand it. A significant percentage, 18.9%, were unsure or didn’t know.**

**When “don’t know” respondents are removed from the data, 45.0% would likely support the Plan while 55.0% would likely oppose the Plan.**

## **On the Plan: Ballot I**

## Support or Oppose the Plan?



# On the Plan: Ballot I

**Reasons offered by those opposed to the Plan included (in declining order by frequency of mention): taxes already too high / the cost, don't need it / a waste, renovate / don't build – maintain the current buildings / not needed, fix administration problems first, schools already were upgraded / they closed schools and no details / not necessarily opposed but need more information.**

**On the Plan: Ballot I**

<b>Reasons for Opposition</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Taxes already too high / the cost	21.7
Don't need it / a waste	18.0
Renovate / Don't build – Maintain the current buildings / not needed	11.8
Fix administration problems first	6.8
Schools already were upgraded / they closed schools	6.2
No details / not necessarily opposed but need more information	5.6
Plan will funnel too many kids in to too few schools	3.0
Plan calls for closing schools / merging schools	3.0
Buildings don't educate – teachers do	2.4
Don't like the sites proposed	2.4
Believe in smaller schools	2.4

## **On the Plan: Ballot I**

**Reasons offered by those in support of the Plan included (in declining order): outdated facilities are in bad shape / need upgrade / modernize aging buildings, well thought out Plan / right thing to do / trust them, quality education is important, improves education system, and consolidating centralizing is good.**

**On the Plan: Ballot I**

<b>Reasons for Support</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Outdated facilities are in bad shape / need upgrade / modernize / aging	39.1
Well thought out Plan / right thing to do / trust them	22.7
Quality education is important	13.6
Improves education system	7.3
Consolidating is good / centralizing is good	7.3
Must reinvest in schools and move forward	2.7
Current racial imbalance	1.8
I work in the system and know	1.8
Because other towns have magnet schools	0.9
Better than separate schools	0.9
Low interest rates today	0.9
Population increases	0.9

## **On the Plan: Ballot I**

**Resident survey respondents were presented with a number of statements and asked if they strongly agreed, somewhat agreed, somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed.**

**There exists significant agreement (strongly/somewhat) among residents in a number of areas...**

- Pre-K education in Groton is important – 83.2%**
- In general, I'm a supporter of modernizing Groton Public School facilities – 75.1%**

## **On Perceptions**

**More moderate but strong agreement was found in other areas...**

- **Land at any closed schools should become playing fields – 64.0%**
- **Education quality is impacted by facility quality – 62.2%**
- **Improved school facilities will impact economic development – 61.1%**

**On Perceptions**

## **Majorities agreed with the following...**

- **The long term fix offered by the Plan makes more sense than short term repairs – 54.1%**
- **Groton schools were never properly maintained – 53.9%**
- **In-town Magnet Schools should be included in any Plan – 53.4%**

## **And, some statements met agreement that was short of a majority...**

- **Surrounding towns are surpassing Groton in quality of education – 46.9%**
- **Groton needs more playing fields – 40.2%**

# **On Perceptions**

**Some specific characteristics of the Groton 2020 Plan are more likely than others to move respondents to support the effort. These characteristics are displayed here with the associated percentage of respondents who suggest each makes them “more likely” to support passage of the Groton 2020 Plan in a referendum. “Don’t know” respondents were removed from the data.**

- The Groton 2020 Plan addresses buildings over 60 years old – 56.7%**
- Helps eliminate the State mandated redistricting for racial imbalance – 50.7%**
- Plan includes in-Town Magnet Schools – 46.5%**
- \$2.5 million dollars are sent to surrounding Town Magnet schools for attending Groton students – 41.4%**
- Plan includes new construction over renovation – 38.5%**
- The Plan includes a combined middle school and high school campus – 35.4%**
- The Plan increases the amount of playing fields in town – 33.5%**

## **On Vote Impact**

<b>Characteristics of Groton School Systems</b>	<b>More Likely</b>	<b>Less Likely</b>	<b>No Difference</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>More Likely (w/o DK's)</b>
<b>The Groton 2020 Plan addresses five schools that are, on average, 60 years old</b>	<b>51.3</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>56.7</b>
<b>It helps eliminate State mandated redistricting to address racial imbalance</b>	<b>45.6</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>50.7</b>
<b>If the plan included in-town magnet schools</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>46.5</b>

# **On Vote Impact**

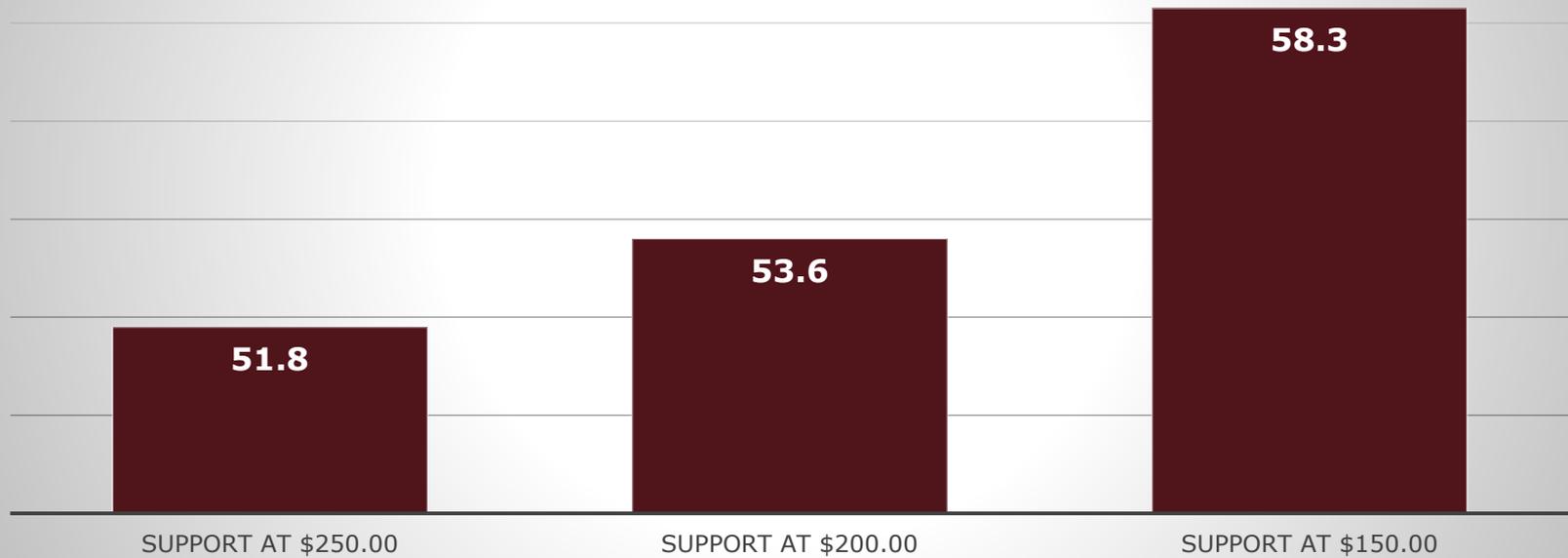
<b>Characteristics of Groton School Systems</b>	<b>More Likely</b>	<b>Less Likely</b>	<b>No Difference</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>More Likely (w/o DK's)</b>
If the plan includes new construction instead of renovation	<b>36.0</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>38.5</b>
If you knew that \$2.5 million dollars annually is sent from Groton to surrounding town Magnet schools where Groton students are attending	<b>36.0</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>41.4</b>
If the plan included a combined middle school and high school campus	<b>33.4</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>35.4</b>
If the plan increased the amount of playing fields in Groton for public use	<b>32.1</b>	<b>29.0</b>	<b>34.7</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>33.5</b>

# On Vote Impact

- **Following the deliberation allowed by the survey, respondents were asked again to report their own support or opposition to the Groton 2020 Plan if a referendum was to be held “today”. In this question, the average increased annual property tax was named by researchers.**
- **At an average annual property tax increase of \$250.00, 51.8% would support the Plan.**
- **At an average annual property tax increase of \$200.00, 53.6% would support the Plan.**
- **At an average annual property tax increase of \$150.00, 58.3% would support the Plan.**

## **Deliberative Poll**

## Plan Support at \$250, \$200 & \$150



# Deliberative Poll

- **Primary sources for information about the Groton Public Schools included local print newspapers, friends/family/neighbors/co-workers, directly from the schools, TV and the internet / websites.**
- **Over one-half of all respondents, 54.9%, indicated they use Facebook while 8.3% use Twitter and 4.4% are using Instagram. Two-fifths, 41.5%, suggested they don't use social media.**

## **On Communication**

- Taxes at: \$250, \$200, \$150
- A long term fix
- 60 Year Old, outdated facilities that need modernization
- Quality is tied to modernization
- Pre-K is incorporated in Plan
- Solves racial imbalance
- Plan includes magnet schools

## **Messages that Resonate**

- New construction
- Combining HS & MS
- Land for fields/open space
- Being surpassed by surrounding towns
- Sending \$ out of Groton
- And, other arguments

## **Messages to Avoid**

- Males with the facts/deliberation facts
- <20 year residents
- 18-44 year olds
- Have children in non-Groton schools or attended in the past

## **The Targets?**



**Thanks for the Opportunity  
to Present**