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[CE SBAC] Feedback

1 message

Scott Mazuzan <mazuzan@outlook.com>

Thu, Feb 15, 2024 at 4:58 PM

To: "cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org" <cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org>

Thank you for your hard work preparing the informational fliers about the design options. I especially appreciate the dollars/cents summary printed over each PDF on the [overview](#) page, allowing taxpayers to compare what they can expect as an ROI for \$40, \$100, or \$150 per month.

In recent meetings I have heard a chorus of public feedback (met with agreement from several committee members) about the importance of long-term context in comparing these options. I was disappointed to see any reference to building lifespan or future capital outlay eliminated from the fliers. A crucial question most people will ask: "How many years of reliable infrastructure can I reasonably expect from these dollars?"

Please allow me to share some feedback, from the perspective of a member of the public.

1) I've heard several times that it is too complicated to compute or convey the lifetime cost of any given option in a usable or understandable way. Yet we have hired professionals (Harriman) who *did* prepare lifetime cost estimates and building lifespan estimates. These experts have said that their methodology is industry standard and common practice for similar projects. The committee asserts that they do not need to work with communication professionals - yet bemoan the complication of conveying data that has been handed to us by professionals. If you don't like the future value dollars, select an appropriate discount rate and feed it to us in 2024 dollars. Eliminating the data altogether strips the options of crucial context. Please consider resolving and including this data in the next iteration.

2) Expected building lifespan is an **essential** variable. Whether or not you include the high school, this information **needs** to be provided to taxpayers so that we can understand the return on our investment. I know there is some question on the inclusion of the HS in these estimates, and that some scenarios do not include any investment to the HS. In either case, a consistent approach should be identified, hopefully with Harriman's input, towards the goal of inclusion of this information for our consideration. Please consider providing expected building lifespan in subsequent iterations.

3) Your chair has stated repeatedly how "simple" this dilemma is: what will it cost? While I understand that many taxpayers are focused on the impact to their budget, such a characterization is tone deaf at best and condescending at worst. This is a nuanced problem that results from decades of prior decision making. We have a wide array of options in front of us - each with their own pros/cons, sub-variations, and special considerations. Flattening this into a simple "what'll it cost me" framework reinforces the narrative that this decision is **only** about the taxpayer's expense, while discounting the meaningful context around educational needs, municipal debt service/creditworthiness, and making necessary (but painful) investments in our infrastructure. As the communication subcommittee, I would expect your charge to include the thoughtful communication of such nuance to taxpayers. I urge to reconsider the use of such characterization during public meetings.

Thank you for your time,

Scott

he/him
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