





Town of Dunstable - June 24, 2024

UNION SCHOOL BUILDING

REHABILITATION AND REUSE PLAN

Prepared by the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments
through the District Local Technical Assistance Program and
Spencer Preservation Group

Town of Dunstable Union Building School Rehabilitation and Reuse Plan

Acknowledgements

This plan was prepared by the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), the Regional Planning Agency serving the Towns of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Pepperell, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, Westford, and the City of Lowell. This work was supported by a NMCOG District Local Technical Assistance grant funded by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC).

This plan would not be possible without the support of the Town of Dunstable Union Building Rehabilitation Committee and the Town of Dunstable Town Administrator's office.

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Executive Summary

A. Introduction

The Dunstable Union Building Rehabilitation Committee, acting through the Town Administrator, requested assistance from Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) to identify a viable re-use for the Union Building and potential funding sources for rehabilitation. The Town also released a Request for Proposals (RFP) and chose Spencer Preservation Group for architectural and planning services to coordinate closely with NMCOG and complete an adaptive reuse feasibility study and restoration plan for the building.

This report details the results of that study. The overwhelming takeaway from community members, both at public workshops and through a survey with nearly 200 responses, is that the Union Building is a beloved structure that should be preserved. In addition, using the building for a mix of community-focused uses and private revenue-generating uses is ideal. This study notes several cases of other historical buildings in Massachusetts that were renovated and adaptively reused for this sort of mix and shares the lessons those cases impart. Finally, the team's analysis concludes that the Union Building is still very structurally sound, but exterior improvements should be made as soon as possible to avoid cost escalation and further degradation to critical features.

B. About the Union Building

Located in Dunstable Town Center, the Union Building was built in 1895 and operated as a community school from 1896 through the early 1960s. Since then, the building served as an accessory building to the Swallow Union School, providing auxiliary classroom and childcare space, yet also sitting vacant periodically.

Now nearing 130 years old, the Union Building both significantly contributes to the historic nature of Dunstable Town Center and shows its years due to deferred maintenance. The building is in need of critical preventive maintenance to preserve the exterior, upgrades to interior systems and materials to adapt it for productive reuse, and accessibility improvements to allow visitors of all ages and abilities to access the building.

Through a collaborative public process, the Union Building Rehabilitation and Reuse Plan evaluated the building's ideal ownership structure (town- or privately-owned), viable and productive potential future uses of the building, associated costs for renovation, and possible funding and grant sources for renovation and maintenance of the building.

Key facts about the Union Building include:

- The building features two above-ground stories and a basement.
- Each of the four classrooms (two on each story) is 624 square feet.
- The basement is not considered usable for the purposes of this report.

C. Key Findings

As part of this report, the project team developed a study of existing conditions, undertook two public workshops to gather input along with facilitating a survey with over 190 responses, developed case studies of key alternatives, and created programmatic capital cost estimates for interior and exterior renovations that would meet the needs of those alternatives. Key findings include:

- The building is structurally sound with evidence of prior successful stabilization work, namely by roof framing reinforcement in the attic.
- Accessibility could be created through a side entrance and Limited Use Limited Application Elevator (LULA) in the vestibule, allowing access from grade to both main and upper levels.
- Participants in the public engagement process overwhelmingly preferred preservation of the Union Building as a Town-owned property, however there was no preference as to whether the Town or a private or non-profit organization managed the building.
- Participants also overwhelmingly preferred future use of the building as space for creative, cultural, non-profit, or community-serving uses.
- This report draws a distinction between uses participants wished to see in Town Center as whole compared to uses that could feasibly be hosted within the building after adaptation sensitive to the building's historic architecture.

This report also includes detailed estimates of the cost of rehabilitating the exterior and interior. The interior rehabilitation would include repairs and alterations necessary for any use, broken into two phases: the first for general usability, accessibility, and regulatory compliance, and the second to upgrade heating, cooling, power, and lighting systems. All costs presented below are inflated to 2025.

Table 1: Summary of Capital Cost Estimates

Phase	Elements	Architecture & Engineering	Construction	Contingency	Total
Exterior	Repointing masonry; replace or repair trim, pediments, moldings, and selective siding; repair fascia and soffit; replace section of roofing; strip lead-containing paint and repaint; restore flagpole.	$128,344	$777,837	$77,784	$983,963
Interior Phase 1	Accessible entry, LULA lift, kitchenette, trimwork, new interior doors, replaster and paint walls and ceilings, toilet rooms, fire sprinkler system, power/lighting. New fire sprinkler exterior water service line cost not included in estimate.	$104,415	$696,102	$69,610	$870,128
Interior Phase 2	Additional suspended ceiling work, refinish hardwood floors, new heat pump system, additional power/lighting, renovation of lower level finishes.	$83,737	$558,246	$55,825	$697,807

D. Proposed Alternatives

Utilizing the key findings, the project team developed three feasible alternatives for the first floor and two feasible alternatives for the second floor. All first-floor alternatives are compatible with second-floor alternatives, and two first floor alternatives could be possible with one in each first-floor classroom. Although these alternatives are broadly feasible, a key factor in any alternative's feasibility is interest generated by a grassroots committee or outside nonprofit, potentially responding to a Request for Proposals (RFP) for lease and management of the space. Such an RFP would be released by the Town in the future.

First floor alternatives include:

- Membership-Based Space (a shared maker space with tools such as a laser cutter, 3D printer, and sewing machines and textile technology)
- Event Rental-Based Space (an empty box space with tables, chairs, and AV equipment available for rental for small meetings or parties)
- Youth, Daycare, or Community Center Space (a space with regular educational programming for youth and/or adults or childcare rented by a nonprofit or business)

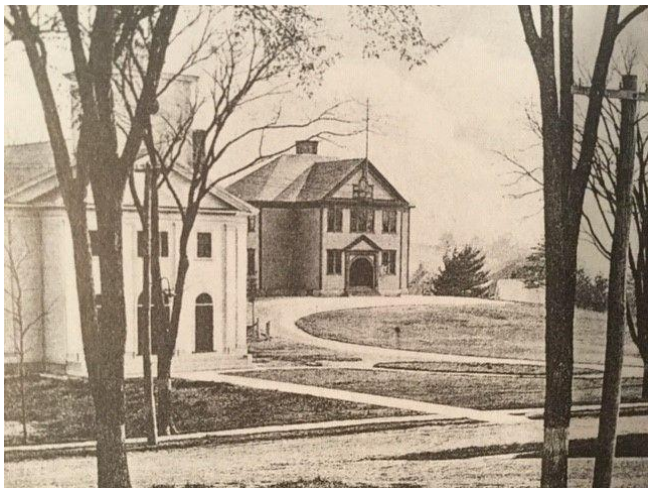
Second floor alternatives include:

- Private artist studios
- Private or shared office space

CHAPTER 1
Existing Conditions

A. What is the Union Building?

The Union School Building, more commonly known as the **Union Building**, is an "extremely important" building in the historic character of Dunstable Town Center.[1] More than that, it is a beloved symbol of the town, embodying the transformation of Dunstable from a settlement to a town, symbolizing Dunstable's commitment to education, and integrated into the federally recognized **Dunstable Center Historic District**.

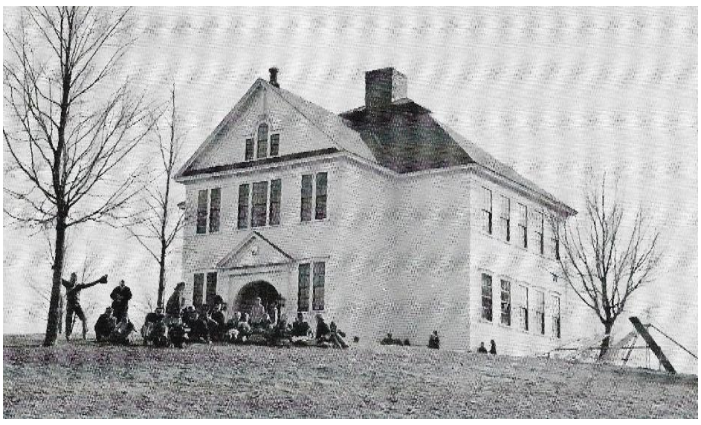


Undated Historic Photo, documenting the original two-tone color scheme.

The future of the Union Building is at a crossroads, as the Town is acquiring the building and property after it was declared surplus by the Groton-Dunstable School District due to the completion of the Florence Roche Elementary School. It is an incredible asset, but also has several challenges such as its proximity to the Swallow Union School, relatively small size, and limited parking availability during the school day. This report explores the feasibility of various new uses for the purposes of planning and fundraising.

The Union Building was designed by Warren L. Floyd in the Classical Revival style and constructed in 1895 behind the 1831 Evangelical Congregational Church. It represented a union of five separate school districts, hence its name. The school was built with two classrooms on each floor, situated symmetrically so they could be heated by a central source.

At first, several classes met simultaneously on each floor of the Union Building, and from 1896 to 1908, it housed the Dunstable Public Library on its first floor. When a 1910 fire destroyed Evangelical Congregational Church, the church was rebuilt to the east to allow the Union Building greater visibility. It was replaced by a village green in front of the school, which was eventually partially replaced by a parking lot.



Undated Historic Photo, documenting the over-painted original colors.

By 1962, the Swallow Union Elementary School was built to make room for Dunstable's growing population. The school district built a connection between the original Union Building and

[1] National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Dunstable Center Historic District, 2018

the new Swallow Union School via a small structure with a staircase. Further additions were made to the Swallow Union School in 1980 and 1995. However, because it is sited on a downhill slope, the Swallow Union School and subsequent additions have minimal visibility from either Main or Pleasant streets. Most recently, the Union Building housed Groton-Dunstable district school programs and other children's activities.

In 2018, the Union Building was included as a contributing property to the new Dunstable Center Historic District. In addition to the Union Building, the district has many significant buildings from the late 1700s and early 1800s styles such as Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Victorian, and Colonial Revival.

B. What is the Union Building Rehabilitation Committee and the goals of this Report?

The **Union Building Rehabilitation Committee** was created in early 2023 by the Dunstable Select Board and tasked with making recommendations on the rehabilitation and restoration of the Union Building. Key recommendations include establishing a long-term plan and strategic actions for the building's restoration and rehabilitation, identifying desired future uses of the building to reactivate it as a central feature of Town Center, estimating costs of restoration and adaptation for those uses, and creating a plan to advance the rehabilitation and restoration of the building based on its future use and funding availability. The Committee is tasked with reviewing all existing studies and documents as well as identifying and determining funding availability.

The Committee has a total of seven members, including a member of the Select Board, one representative from the GDRSD, one person with experience in either residential or commercial development, one member with a background in finance, and three community members.

Shortly after its formation, the Committee, through the Office of the Town Administrator, requested assistance from Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) to:

- Review all existing studies and documents developed in association with the building and its condition,
- Recommend a rehabilitation approach (phased or one project),
- Identify a viable re-use(s) for the building, and
- Identify funding sources for the project.

The Town also released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for architectural or planning services to coordinate closely with NMCOG and assist with this planning, including an adaptive reuse feasibility study and restoration plan for the building. Spencer Preservation Group was chosen for this role.

C. Union Building and the Master Plan

The 2018 Dunstable Master Plan mentions the Union Building by name only in its listing of historic buildings in Dunstable, list of completed CPA projects, and the history of Dunstable. However, several

goals of the Master Plan should guide the re-use of the Union Building. In addition to broad goals, the Master Plan lists many specific actions. These goals and actions are listed in Appendix 1.

In summary, a common theme throughout the Master Plan is the preservation of historic buildings, increasing pride in historic buildings and cultural resources, and utilizing historic buildings and other resources to make Dunstable a historic and agricultural destination.

The Master Plan suggests several community uses and economic development goals that the Union Building could possibly advance:

- Housing for elderly, young families and low- and moderate-income households;
- A Senior Center or community room space;
- A museum space for both exhibits and historic records;
- A space nurturing small arts and crafts businesses;
- A space for local food businesses; and/or
- A way to attract cafes, farm-to-table restaurants, country stores, antique shops, and artist lofts to Town Center.

As noted in this report, not all of these uses are feasible for this location, but all were considered and evaluated by the Union Building Rehabilitation Committee, NMCOG, and Spencer Preservation Group. Potentially feasible uses that are supported by the Master Plan were included in the Public Survey (See Chapter 2).

D. Character-Defining Features

Every old building has a distinctive identity and character. Character-defining features are the significant observable and experiential aspects of a building that define its architectural power and personality. These are the features that should be retained in any restoration or rehabilitation scheme in order to protect the building's historic integrity and to maintain eligibility for preservation grant funding, rehabilitation tax credits, and protections afforded to historic properties.

Character-defining elements include the overall shape of the building and its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details and interior spaces and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment. They are critically important considerations whenever building work is contemplated. Inappropriate changes to historic features can undermine the historical and architectural significance of the building, sometimes irreparably.

This survey of the Union Building in Dunstable identifies the features that contribute to the unique character of the building and its site. The bulleted items listed in this section should be considered defining historic elements of the building and changes to them should be made only after careful consideration. They are consistent with the character defining features described in the September 20, 2018, National Register Nomination Form for the Dunstable Center Historic District, with the Union Building as a Contributing Building.

1. Exterior Features

Setting: *The topography, population density and other influences that are noteworthy to the property.*

- Located on a deeply set-back parcel from Main Street, abutting the Congregation Church property (another *Contributing Building*).
- Sited on the east side of the parcel, with open landscape to the west, creating an intentional viewshed from Main Street.

Shape: *The form of the building. The massing that gives the initial visual impression of the structure.*

- Church massing creates a strong Classical-revival picturesque silhouette.
- 2 ½-story square plan with hipped roof and deep pedimented front pavilion.
- Wide, central chimney, flanked by (non-original) ventilation hoods.

Roof and Roof Features: *Typically, the most dominant element of a building. Often the element that most informs the shape of the building.*

- Square hipped roof.
- Wide rectangular chimney, flanked by (non-original) copper ventilation hoods.
- Deep gable roof at unbroken pedimented front pavilion.
- Closed (mitered) slate hips and open slate valleys.
- Simple clean eaves absent of gutters.
    - *Note: half-round gutter hangers and corrugated round downspout hangers are present but are likely not original based on historic photos.*
- Narrow gable roof at entrance pediment.

Openings: *Windows and doors. These often reflect the hallmark features of specific architectural styles.*

- Generally symmetrical window and door placement.
- Generous height double-hung windows at upper level, narrower at front pavilion.
- Modest height double-hung windows at main level, narrower at front pavilion.
- "Palladian-esque" double-hung windows centered in the front pavilion pediment.
- Basement windows set within foundation, tight to sill plate.
- Double stile-and-rail doors with lite set within the entrance pavilion.
- Entry door sidelights and transomlite.
- Rear access doors, not aligned to the window grid.

Trim and Secondary Features: *Casings at windows and doors, moldings, cornices, watertables and other additive features.*

- Classical motifs expressed through trimwork: pilastered cornerboards supporting faux-architrave and frieze at eaves; rakes at the unbroken pediment of the front pavilion; denticulated, unbroken entry pediment with pilastered entablature.
- Paneled arch entry portal to beadboard-lined portico.
- Clapboard siding, absent of watertable trim at foundation sill plate.
- Deep window sills with brackets below aligned with mullions.
- Pedimented head casings at main level windows.
- Arched head casing trim at "Palladian-esque" windows.
- Circular, architectural flagpole support within main pediment.
- Lightbox(?) within entrance pediment, likely not original.

Materials: *The visible kit of parts that comprise the exterior envelope of the building.*

- Copper valleys and ridge caps.
- Brick chimney.
- Copper ventilation hoods.
- Slate shingle roofs.
- Wood trim.
- Wood clapboard siding.
- Wood sash (originally). Presently aluminum.
- Granite stone foundation.
- Wood doors.
- Wood beadboard portico walls/ceiling.

2. Interior Features

Individual Spaces: *Individual spaces that are character-defining.*

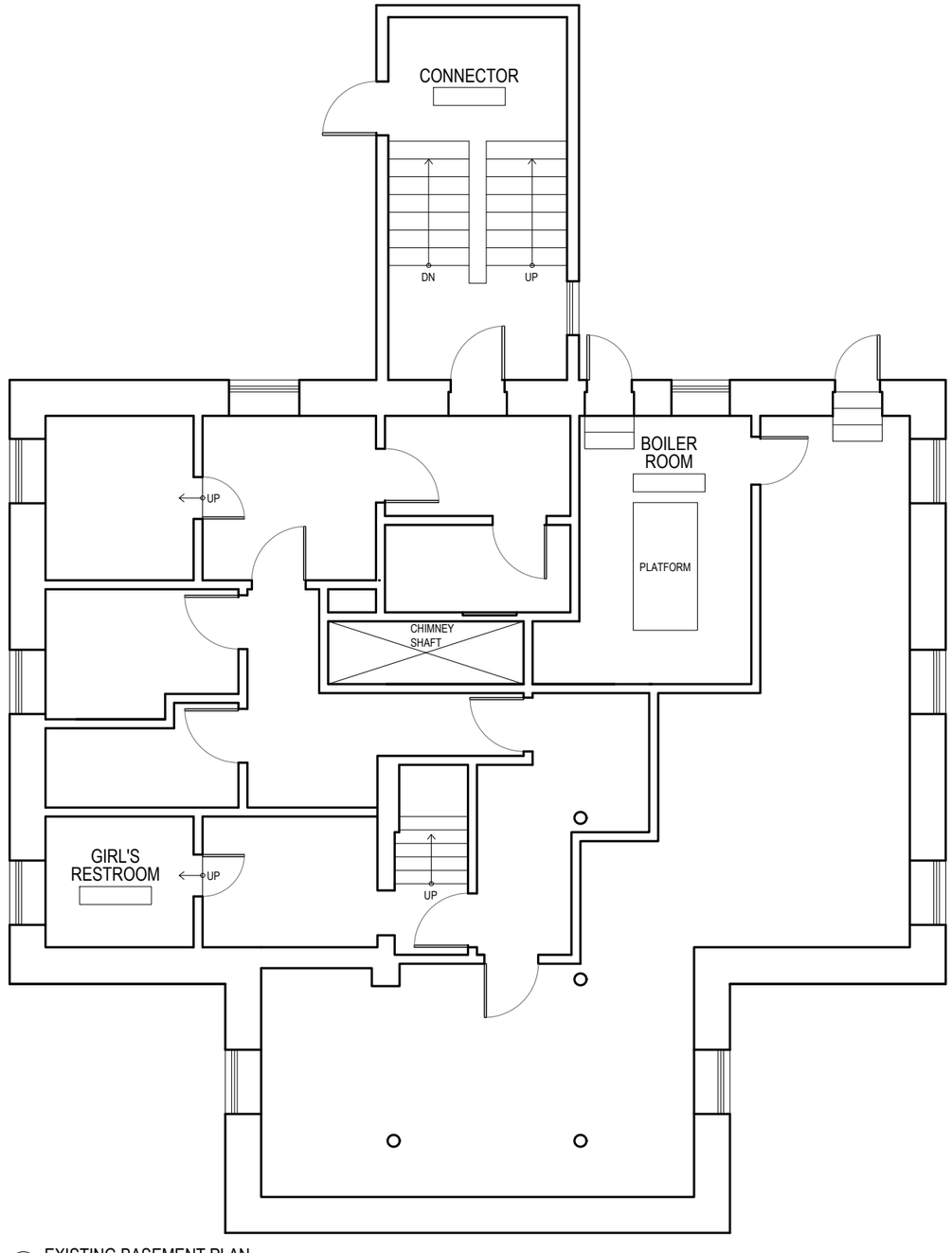
- Entrance Vestibule within the Pavilion, open to primary staircase in the main body.
- 1:2 Ratio "classrooms" flanking the stair on each level.
- Generous storage rooms within the Pavilion serving each classroom.

Features and Details: *Notable characteristics of the interior spaces*

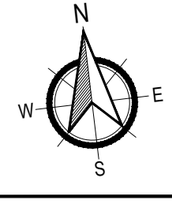
- Plaster wall and ceiling finishes.
- Wooden door casing millwork, profiled and with plinth/corner blocks.
- Wooden window casing millwork similar to doors.
- Wooden decorative staircase newels.
- Closed stringer staircase (unconfirmed if original).
- Hardwood floors throughout.
- Double-hung wood sash windows.
- High ceilings, approx. 10-ft (presently lowered by hung panels).
- Open, unpartitioned classrooms.

E. Existing Conditions Drawings

The following pages comprise existing conditions drawings (floor plans, roof plan, and exterior elevations) of the Union Building, derived from hand-measurements and photographs. They were used as the basis for this team's conditions assessment of the exterior and interior, and in the preparation of proposed building-use schemes.



1 EXISTING BASEMENT PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"



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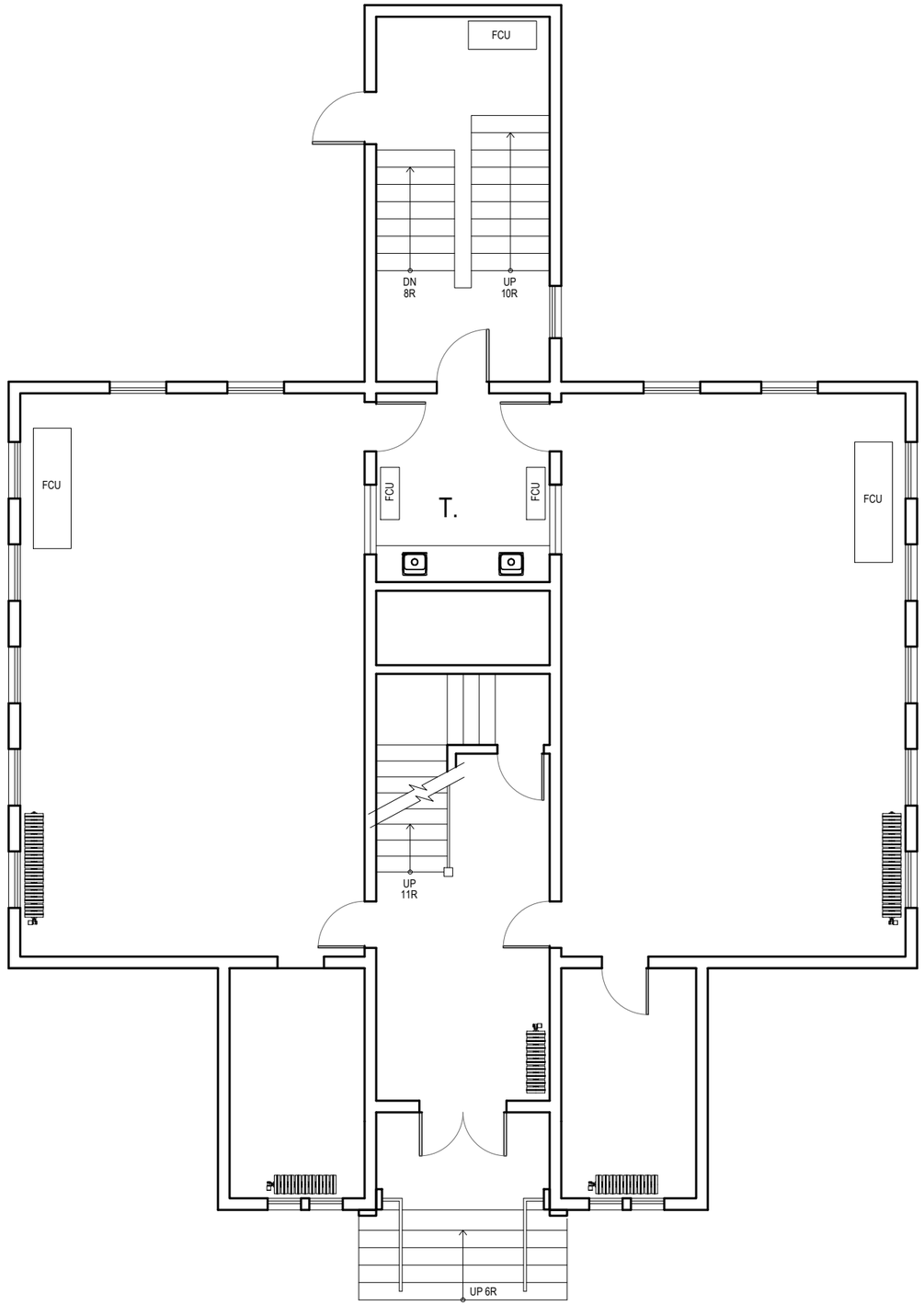
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1 EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN
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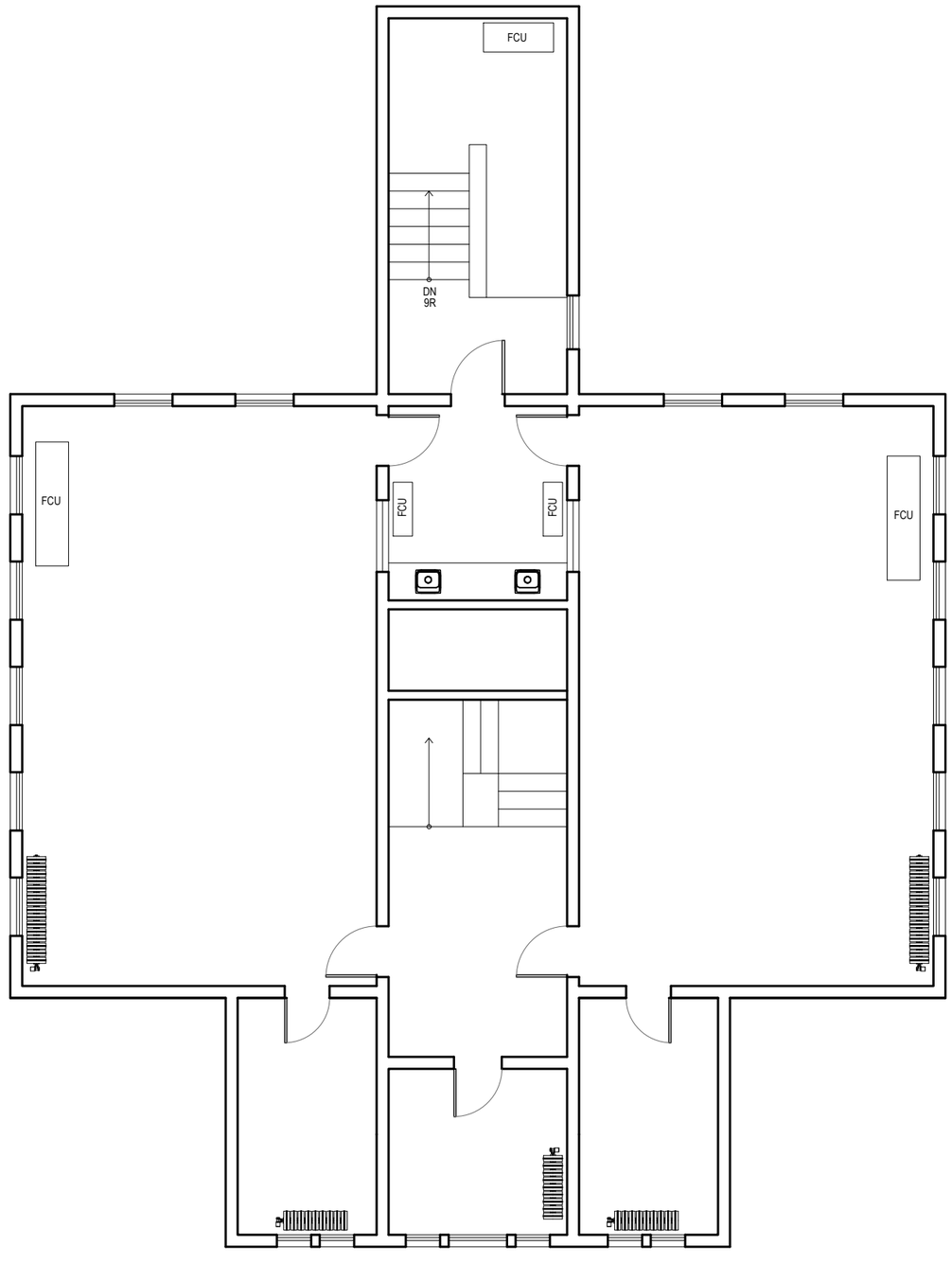
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FIRST FLOOR PLAN

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1 EXISTING SECOND FLOOR PLAN
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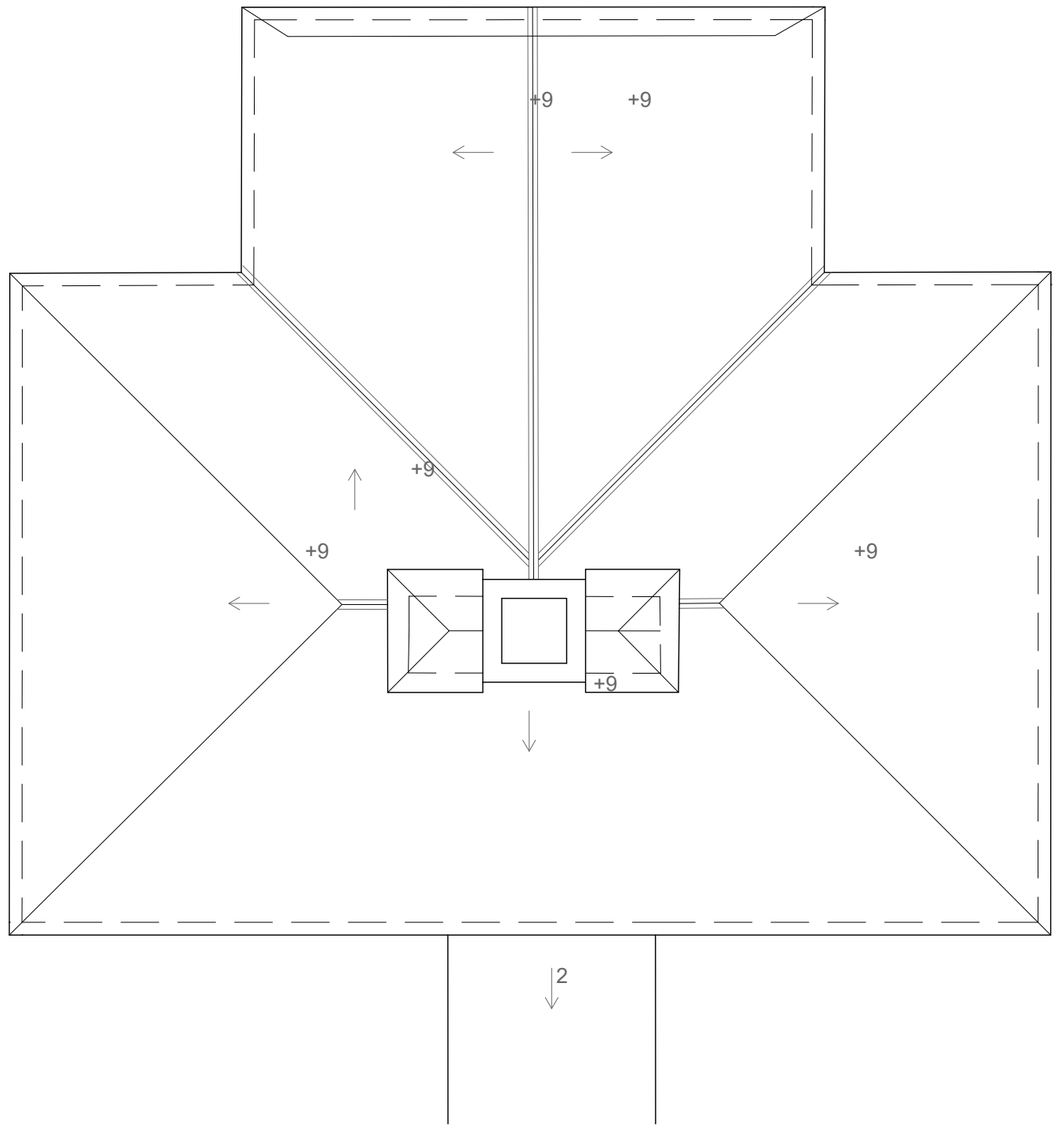
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1 EXISTING ROOF PLAN
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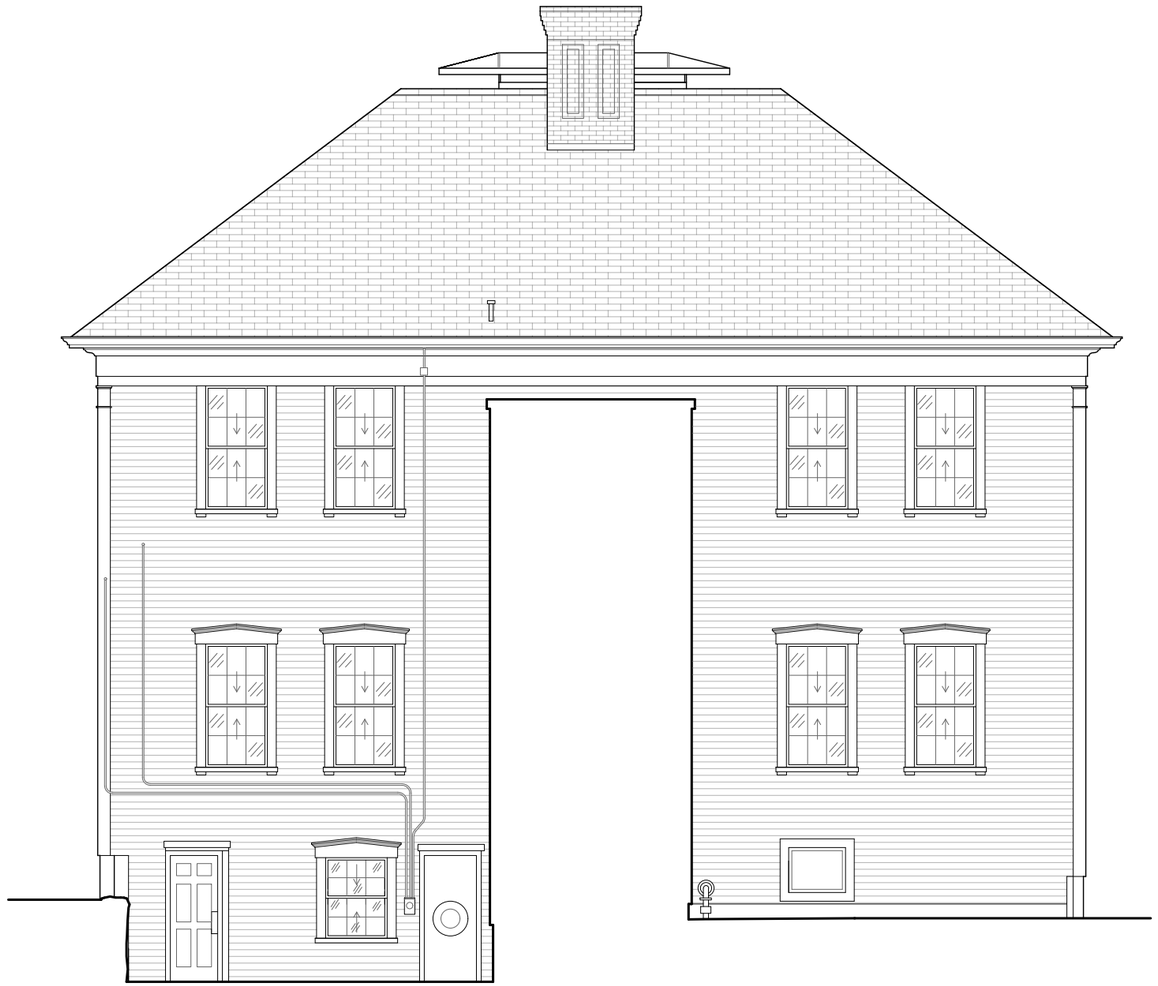
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EX-203

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PLOT SIZE: ANSI A (8.50 x 11.00 Inches) | PLOT STYLE: — | PLOT DATE: 4/19/2024 4:27 PM | PLOTTER: None



1 EXISTING WEST ELEVATION
1/8" = 1'-0"

Spencer Preservation Group
PRESERVATION ARCHITECTS
41 Valley Road | Suite 211
Nahant, MA 01908
(617) 227-2675
www.SpencerPreservationGroup.com

PREPARED FOR:

PROJECT: #2109

UNION SCHOOL BUILDING

522 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827

OUTPUT:
LINEWEIGHT CHECK
COLOR CHECK
SHEET CHECK: ANSI B 11"x17"
TRANSPARENCY CHECK
PRINT SIZE CHECK: FULL SIZE SET MEASURES 1"

STATUS:

01	APR 10, 2024	NEW
		OLD

SEAL:

NOT FOR PERMITTING REVIEW NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

TITLE:
EXISTING CONDITIONS
WEST ELEVATION

SHEET:
EX-204

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PLOT SIZE: ANSI A (8.500 x 11.00 Inches) | PLOT STYLE: ---- | PLOT DATE: 4/19/2024 4:27 PM | PLOTTER: None

F. Architectural Analysis

1. Exterior Assessment

In 2021, Spencer Preservation Group was engaged by the Town of Dunstable to prepare a conditions assessment of the building envelope, including prioritized treatment recommendations for its restoration. While the report is a detailed standalone document, a summary is provided here to address both exterior envelope work and related accessibility improvements.

1.1. Roofing and Rainwater Control

Slate shingles appear in good condition and require selective replacement where cracked or missing. The brick chimney mortar is deteriorated and should be repointed, while inspecting the copper ventilators flanking each side for damage. The cornice along the unbroken pediment in the pavilion is covered with aged asphalt shingles and should be replaced with copper. Extant gutter brackets and downspout straps should be removed, as the generous eaves appear to adequately shed water.



Image 1.03: Slates which are missing more than a quarter of their surface area should be replaced.



Image 1.04: The wide brick chimney exhibits partial repointing, but requires a full campaign.



Image 1.06: Asphalt shingles at the horizontal cornice above the entry are delaminating and severely worn

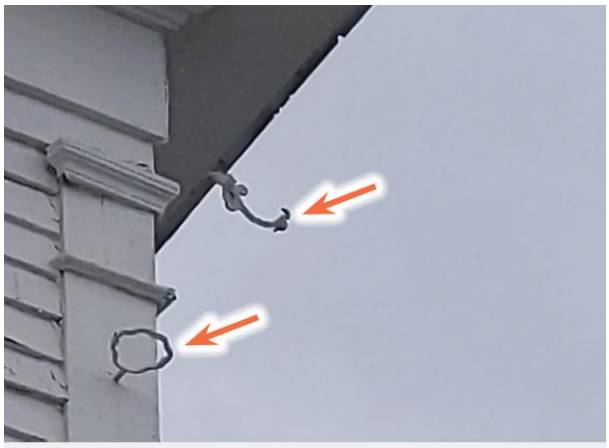


Image 1.07: Evidence of former half-round gutters and round corrugated downspouts are easily seen.

1.2. Walls, Siding, and Trim

Before paint is removed, a historic paint analysis should be conducted to determine any original paint colors at multiple sites (siding vs trim). Using safe lead-management practices, completely strip, contain, and dispose of paint throughout the building. All woodwork should be repainted using approved historic colors and a high quality, oil-based alkyd primer with water-based latex topcoats. Damaged and missing woodwork elements (cornerboards, rakes, etc.) should be selectively replaced or repaired, and loose wood moldings should be refastened. Stair handrails should be re-coated/painted. Consider re-introducing the missing historic flagpole in the pediment.



Image 2.02: Missing clapboards are infrequent but obvious, and should be replaced.



Image 2.04: Tongue-and-groove board sheathing is visible beneath the clapboards.



Image 2.05: The many layers of lead paint should be professionally analyzed to determine historic (and appropriate) colors.



Image 2.10: Deteriorated cornerboards and skirts may require repair or selective replacement before repainting.



Image 2.11: Loose or missing trim should be refastened after making any repairs.

1.3. Openings, Windows, and Doors

The deteriorated Palladian window in the pediment, including trim, sash, glazing, and hardware should be restored. Metal and missing boiler room doors should be replaced at the rear elevation. Inappropriately colored doors should be repainted and damaged window-related trim should be selectively replaced. To allow access for a Limited-Use/Limited-Application (LULA) elevator in the main lobby, a new opening in the east elevation of the front pavilion should be created by eliminating the basement window and cutting a new opening in the monolithic foundation for at-grade entry. The sill plate, wall, and floor structure should be re-framed to allow half-level entry at grade.



Image 3.01: Sage-green doors are protected by the alcove, but need a new coat of (appropriately colored) paint.



Image 3.02: The iconic Palladian window on the front facade requires complete restoration.



Image 3.06: Missing trim and an awkward selection of doors should all be replaced.



1.4. Foundation and Grade:

The monolithic granite foundation and coarse stone retaining wall should be repointed at the west elevation. The basement window should be infilled at the east elevation of the pavilion and a new doorway should be cut into granite for LULA entrance. A new accessible entry approach should be re-graded/re-landscaped as required.



Image 4.02: Long, slender blocks of granite support the building's wood frame. Corners should be repointed.



Image 4.04: A coarse stone retaining wall at the rear is in need of basic repointing.

2. Exterior Restoration Cost Opinion

The 2021 exterior assessment report evaluated the condition of the building envelope and used construction data on similar firm projects to develop a prioritized cost opinion for treatments in restoration and grant-planning. Spencer Preservation Group has refined the cost opinion to account for inflation/escalation from 2021, projected to 2025, for a combined envelope restoration total of **$983,963**, much of which considers the safe management/abatement of lead paint. Accessibility improvements, which are largely interior-focused, are evaluated in a subsequent section.

April 2024

DIV. 01 - *GENERAL REQUIREMENTS*		REMARKS
Project management, supervision,	$5,000	
Temporary Facilities, access, disposal	$20,000	
SUBTOTAL	**$25,000**	

DIV. 04 - *MASONRY*		REMARKS
Repointing of Brick Chimney and Foundation	$10,000	
SUBTOTAL	**$10,000**	

DIV. 06 - *WOOD, PLASTICS, AND COMPOSITES*		REMARKS
Replace door pediments South elevation	$6,000	
Replace missing mouldings	$5,000	
Fascia and soffit repairs	$30,000	
Epoxy consolidation repairs of wood trim and mouldings	$4,500	
Replacement of deteriorated wood trim and mouldings	$8,500	
Selectively replace wood siding	$1,600	
Clapboard work at window head pediments	$7,600	
SUBTOTAL	**$63,200**	

DIV. 07 - *THERMAL AND MOISTURE PROTECTION*		REMARKS
Replacement of broken and missing slate	$3,000	
Head flashing at window and door head pediments	$25,500	
Replace roofing at horizontal cornice of front pediment	$20,000	
SUBTOTAL	**$48,500**	

DIV. 08 - OPENINGS		
Restore tri-part window in façade pediment include replacing missing window	$8,000	
SUBTOTAL	**$8,000**	

DIV. 09 - *FINISHES*		REMARKS
Strip and dispose of lead-containing paint. Prim, and paint all woodwork.	$375,000	
SUBTOTAL	**$375,000**	

DIV. 10 - *SPECIALTIES*		REMARKS
Restore original flagpole	$6,000	
SUBTOTAL	**$6,000**	

SUBTOTAL	**$535,700**
General Conditions: +	$53,570
HARD COST SUBTOTAL	**$589,270**
Overhead + Profit: +	$58,927
CONSTRUCTION COST SUBTOTAL	**$648,197**
Contingency: +	$64,820
Architecture/Engineering Fees: +	$106,953
GRAND TOTAL	**$819,969**
Inflationary escalation from 12.2021 to 2025	**$163,994**
COMBINED TOTAL	**$983,963**

3. Interior Assessment

3.1. Floors, Stairs, and Transitions

There are hardwood floors on the main and upper levels, the latter in slightly better condition. The wood appears to be intact and able to be refinished. Wood thresholds at doorways appear acccessiblity-compliant and intact – any thresholds that are too tall, or without an appropriate beveled-edge should be modified or replaced.





The entry vestibule appears to be covered in vinyl-composition tile (VCT), presumably over the same hardwood flooring. The VCT should be removed and the underlying wood floor refinished (if possible) or replaced if marred by the tile. Artificial (non-wood) baseboard mouldings line each hardwood floor at the wall (VCT or rubber, likely the former) and would do well to be replaced with an appropriate wood base.





The main stair in the entry vestibule has undergone changes, one being the elimination of balusters (presumed) and change from an “open” stringer to “closed” by panelizing the handrails; the other being metal and vinyl covers on the stair treads themselves, presumably to stave off replacement of deteiorated or cracked treads and nosings. At a minimum, the tread covers would do well to be removed and the woodwork restored. At most, the panelized handrails could be brought back to their original state of balusters if exploratory investigation suggests there were any.



3.2. Walls, Windows, and Doors

Walls throughout are finished with plaster, and in fair or good condition with minimal buldging, cracking, or damage. The plaster may not be original, as the wall plane is further out than expected when seen next to door casings (the surfaces are nearly flush). This may be due to a layer of wallboard with veneer plaster attached to the original lathe-and-plaster walls. The most historically-faithful pursuit would be to remove the wallboard and veneer plaster and repair or replace the underlying lathe-and-plaster system with new wallboard and veneer plaster to bring the wall back to its original plane. However, the good condition of the veneer plaster makes this difficult to justify. Where wall-mounted switches and fixtures are removed, the plaster should be patched and painted as part of an overall repainting campaign throughout the interior.




Windows are largely aluminum replacements with simulated divided lites and in working order. Although replacement windows are seldom preferred over original wood sash, these aluminum replacements appear well-proportioned and sympathetic to what would be the original configuration. Interior window casings are intact with no obvious sign of damage. Missing wood aprons below the interior stool (sill) are obvious and leave the windows feeling a bit unbalanced – new ones should be installed to correct the imblance. The obscured top-portion of windows are addressed in a subsequent section.




Original doors are long-gone, instead replaced with veneered “classroom” style doors with kickplate and vision lites. While functional, the doors and hardware are out of character for the building’s typology and should preferably be replaced with more traditional stile-and-rail wood doors, with centered lites if

warranted and appropriate. Door casings are in similar condition to windows, with corner- and plinth-blocks in good condition.





3.3. Ceilings and Lighting

Plaster ceilings at roughy original height remain in the entry vesitbule, upper level hall, and classroom storage rooms. The ceiling plane is presumably furred-out similar to the walls as a means to avoid removing lathe-and-plaster, instead adhered wallboard and veneer plaster directly to the original wall finish. That said, the ceilings exhibit more deflection and cracking than the walls, especially in the entry vestibule and storage rooms, where wallboard joints appear cracked. The attachment of wallboard should be evaluated during repairs and if firmly attached, the cracked joints retaped/plastered and feathered. If not secure, the ceiling should be re-plastered with new board substrate. Whereever else plaster is damaged, it should be selectively patched before finishes are repainted.




In all main and upper level classroom spaces, the ceiling has been dropped with hung 2×4 tile. The tile is in good condition, though not particularly aesthetic, with no sign of discoloration, staining, leaking, or other damage. There are no conceled ducts or other systems between the hung tile and the plaster ceiling above, suggesting that the tile was hung to accommodate standard 2×4 light fixtures. The dropped ceiling otherwise reduces natural daylight from the windows by interuppting the upper sash at its mid-point.




Beyond this reduction in daylight, the hung tile negatively impacts the historic character of the classroom spaces, and would do well to be removed, with the ceiling finish treated appropriate and new period-appropriate light fixtures installed. Elsewhere in the building, surface-mounted 2×4 fluorescent light fixtures should be similarly replaced with period-appropriate fixtures.

3.4. Systems and Equipment

The building neither equipped with a fire monitoring system (fire alarm) or fire suppression system (sprinklers). By changing the building occupancy classification (use) to “A” Assembly, both will be required to conform to building codes for new construction. This would require running new supply lines underground on the site, perhaps from the existing adjacent school, and installing feeds throughout the interior spaces.

The electrical service appears to be 200A on the main panel, which feeds a second, nearby sub-panel. For light to moderate building use, this appears to be adequate, and may be so for future program as part of the long-term rehabilitation.

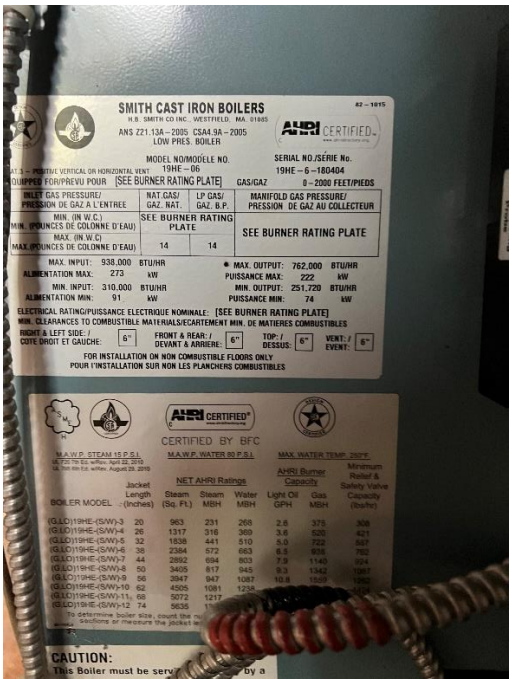




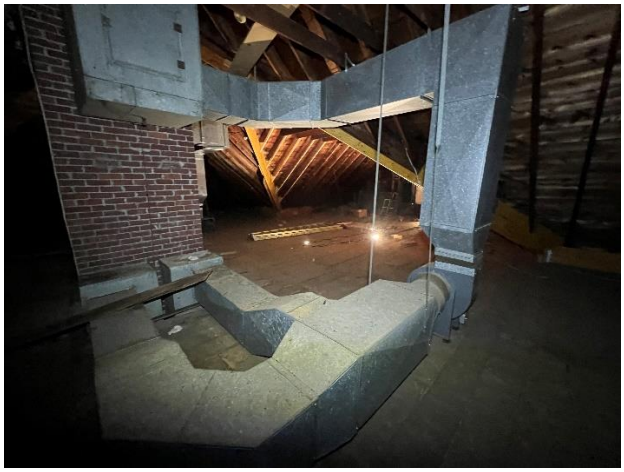


The building is heated with a commercial gas-fired boiler in the basement, supplying forced hot water to standing radiators throughout each level. The boiler appears to have had regular inspections in years past, and be in fair condition, along with the radiators and supply/return lines. However replacement may be warranted as part of a comprehensive building rehabilitation project.





A force-air ventilation system runs through the continuous, central chimney space to supply and return air corresponding to each rooftop ventilator flanking the chimney. It doesn't appear as though cooling is provided as part of the ventilation system. A comprehensive rehabilitation project should consider utilizing the chase for new ductwork to carry cooled and heated air into each space, supplied by a heat-pump in lieu of basement boiler. The rooftop ventilators could be re-used, along with the genrous attic space. At-grade heatpumps could be located in a descrete location at the rear of the building.





3.5. Lower Level

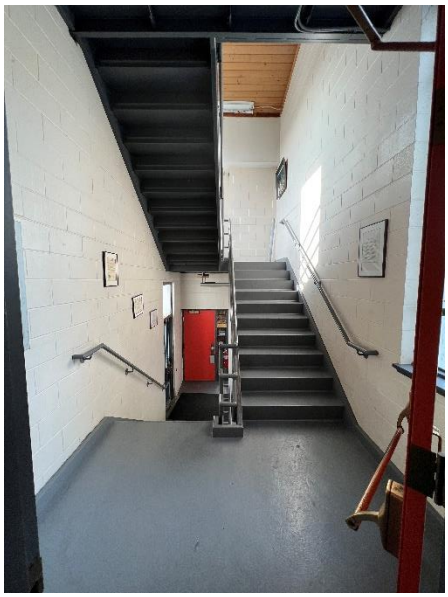
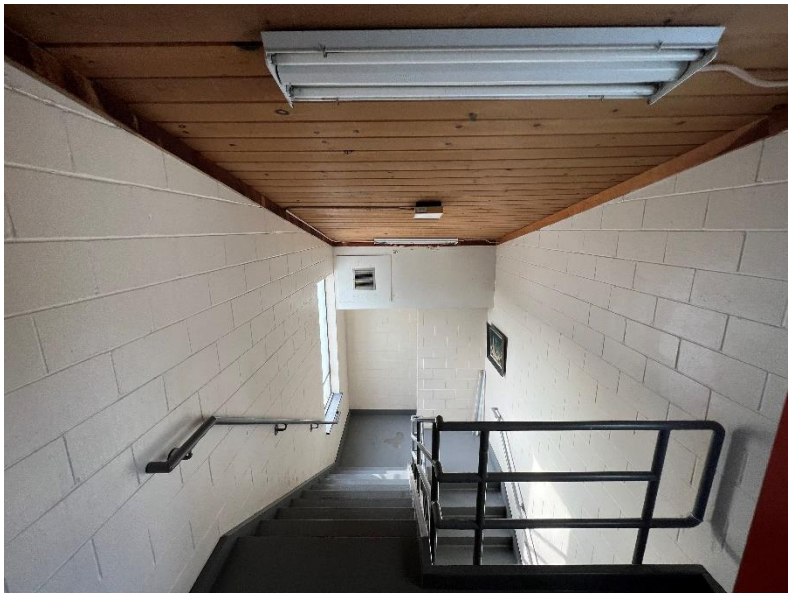
The lower level/basement has long been used as a storage/mechanical space, and it is understood to likely continue as such (and not for public access). Ceilings are aged and deteriorated hung tile, in need of full replacement or removal. Walls are a combination of finished gypsum wallboard and unfinished metal studs; the former which could be patched and painted, the latter of which could be finished or removed/reconfigured entirely. Floors are similar VCT to the main level and in poor condition, requiring total replacement. Two abandoned school bathrooms for girls and boys are unsalvageable and site atop a 6-in raised floor (above the rest of the lower floor level). Beyond a full renovation to these spaces, the floors would need to be demolished and lowered to allow access – which could be a considerable and unwieldly cost depending on their construction. Limited "refreshing" of the interior finishes for continued storage use have been considered in the phase 2 interior work.





3.6. Connector Addition

When the Swallow Elementary School was constructed behind and adjacent to the Union Building, a narrow, multi-story fire-rated connector was built to provide a second means of egress for the historic structure. The connector was built with concrete block walls and metal stairs, with structure and finishes all in good condition. The connector continues to provide a safe means of egress for all levels of the building and should remain in its current state.

With the advent of the Union Building changing use from a controlled access, ancillary space for the elementary school to a new private- or community-function, the need for student safety is critical, as the connector bridges both buildings and serves as an additional means of egress for at least the school library. The doors to the school in the connector appear to be solid-core doors with vision panel and safety-glass sidelight. To preserve one-way access out from the school-controlled spaces, door hardware or locksets should be replaced accordingly. Based on the ultimate use of the Union Building and the determination of the Swallow Elementary School, the sidelights could also be removed and blocked-on, or additionally the solid wood doors be replaced with steel, including, or excluding vision light.




G. Regulatory Analysis

This section of the report briefly describes the applicability of the 9th edition of the Massachusetts State Building Code (2015 International Existing Building Code – with Massachusetts Amendments) and architectural access regulations (521 CMR Regulations of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board, or MAAB).

The Commonwealth adopted the 9th Edition of the Massachusetts State Building Code (2015 International Existing Building Code – with Massachusetts Amendments in this case for an existing building), on October 20, 2017. The code went into effect, as of January 1, 2018.

The purpose of the building code is to:

- establish minimum requirements to safeguard public health, safety and welfare;
- provide life safety from fire and other hazards to building occupants;
- protect the building from loss or damage due to fire or other environmental events; and
- provide safety to fire fighters and emergency responders during emergency operations.

In general, existing buildings are not required to retroactively conform to the current building code, except where existing health and safety conditions are considered hazardous by the local building official.

The International Building Code for new construction (IBC) would be referenced for any substantial renovation of the existing building, or if a new addition was contemplated. In the case of the Dunstable Union Building, the proposed Change of Occupancy Classification will require that much of the new work will reference the IBC. Existing buildings are governed by the International Building Code for Existing Construction (IBCEC).

1. Change of Occupancy

The present Use and Occupancy Classification is E, Educational. A proposed change of use to allow public assembly would change the Classification to A-3 Assembly, or possibly to B, Business.

All work and building systems (electrical, plumbing, fire alarm, etc.) within the area of Alterations will need to conform to the building code for new construction (IBC). The change of occupancy to Assembly Use will also require that the building be equipped with an automatic sprinkler system. It should be noted that the gross square footage of the building exceeds 7,500 square feet and therefore alterations might also trigger the requirement for sprinkler under M.G.L. c148 s26G, depending on the Fire Department's judgement on water availability.

The IBCEC divides work on existing buildings into "Repairs" and "Alterations." "Repairs" are considered in-kind replacements of existing materials and systems and would be considered as guidelines for building maintenance. "Alterations" are categorized into three (3) levels depending upon the amount and scale of work involved.

Most recommendations for work to be undertaken at the Union Building would be considered a blend of **Repairs and Alterations**. Generally speaking, the Code requires any **Repair or Alteration** work to maintain or improve the life safety of the building. Basically, no condition should be made less code compliant than before work started. An example of a Repair item would be the patching or partial replacement of a damaged wood cornice and gutter assembly.

The proposed interior work scope would largely fall under the category **Level 3 Alteration. Level 3 Alterations** are those where the work area exceeds 50 percent of the building area. Within the work area, there are a number of requirements that will need to be addressed, such as:

- Fire alarm system is required.
- Sprinkler system is required.
- Existing electrical wiring must be upgraded if it does not comply with NFPA 70.
- Natural or mechanical ventilation must be provided in accordance with the International Mechanical Code.
- Means of Egress and Accessibility elements must be provided within the work area.
- Adding seismic force resisting elements.

Level 3 Alterations are permitted without requiring the entire building to comply with energy requirements of the *International Energy Conservation Code*.

APPLICABLE CODES & STANDARDS (MODEL CODE BASIS)

International Existing Building Code (IEBC)

Base Volume (2015 International Building Code with Massachusetts Amendments)

Massachusetts State Building code (780 CMR), Ninth Edition, Base Volume (2015 International Building Code with Massachusetts Amendments)

Energy Conservation (780 CMR 13.00)

Massachusetts Board of State Examiners of Plumbers and Gas Fitters Regulations (248 CMR)

Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code (527 CMR 1.00 – 2012 NFPA 1: Fire Code with amendments)

Massachusetts Electrical Code (527 CMR 12.00 – 2014 NFPA 70: National Electrical Code with amendments)

Massachusetts Architectural Access Board Regulations – MAAB - (521 CMR)

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Massachusetts Plumbing Code (248 CMR – 2014)

2. Rules And Regulations of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB)

Architectural access regulations in Massachusetts (521 CMR) are written to encourage making buildings and spaces barrier free to persons with physical or mental disabilities.

Note that the Union Building is not required to retroactively outfit its facility for Universal Access. However, there are several "triggers" where work done will need to in-corporate accessibility. Note that the guidelines below describe a minimum standard. Exceeding these requirements is at the discretion of the owner.

Generally speaking, all new work including construction, reconstruction, alterations, re-modeling, additions, and changes in use should conform to the access regulations. This means all additions, reconstruction, remodeling, and alterations or repairs to existing public buildings or facilities which require a building permit.

If the building permit value of the work being performed amounts to less than 30% of the assessed building value and less than $100,000, only new work or renovated spaces would be required to comply. The Town of Dunstable tax assessment is $2,987,500 so the 30% threshold would be $896,250.

If the work value is under 30% of the assessed building value, but over $100,000, the work must be made accessible and both an accessible entrance and rest room are required.

If the value of the work to be done is determined to be greater than 30% of the "full and fair cash value" of the building, which is $896,250, then the entire facility would have to be made fully accessible. If spaces cannot be made accessible, a variance may be sought to allow their continued use by the public, or for exemption for certain uses.

Whether performed alone or in combination with each other, the following types of alterations are not subject to 521 CMR 3.3.1 and do not count towards the 30% trigger. When performing exempted work, a memo stating the exempted work and its costs must be filed with the permit application or a separate building permit must be obtained. Exceptions not counting towards the 30% trigger are:

- Alteration work which is limited solely to electrical, mechanical, or plumbing systems, to abatement of hazardous materials, or to retrofit of automatic sprinklers, and does not involve the alteration of any elements or spaces required to be accessible under 521 CMR.
- Roof replacement or repair, window repair or replacement, repointing and masonry repair work.
- Work relating to septic system repairs, site utilities and landscaping.

However, if the above work alone or in concert with additional work exceeds the 30% trigger, then it is as if the work is not exempted. Note that the cost of work is tracked over a three-year span, so phased projects may be cumulative.

The scope of the proposed work would trigger full compliance with the applicable MAAB regulations. In a use of the building wherein public use is proposed for the second floor, an elevator would be required. Should public use of the second floor be desired, elevator access would be required but that service

could be provided via a platform lift device or a Limited Use/Limited Access (LULA). This would be permitted as the Union Building is an existing building of 2 stories with less than 3000 square feet per floor.

The summary below identifies some basic information about the Union Building and how it relates to current building code requirements. The review should be used as a guide when contemplating building renovations.

3. Code Summary

3.1. Work Area and Classification of Work

1. Existing building to be repaired or altered: 2 stories plus basement
   a. 1st Floor = 1979 NSF +/- (Proposed work area = 1979 NSF)
   b. 2nd Floor = 1543 NSF +/- (Proposed work area = 2031 NSF)
   c. Basement = 1952 NSF +/- (Proposed work area = 1952 NSF)
   c. TOTAL SF = 5,962 NSF +/-

2. It is important to note that the Union Building is a contributing structure to a National Register District, which qualifies it under the definition of "historic building" under the IEBC. As such, there are exceptions to the building code, described in IEBC, 2015 Edition, Chapter 12, "Historic Buildings," that apply to the present uses and characteristics of the building.

For Historic Buildings, the IEBC provides the opportunity for the Architect to prepare a report for review by the code official, wherein alternative compliance options that provide an equivalent level of safety can be presented when compliance with provisions of the code would be damaging to contributing historic features of the building. Some of the features that typically come under review in these reports are the effect of door sizes and swings, placement of exit signs, fire enclosures, and stairs. Section 1206 provides the option for conforming to structural floor loading by limiting occupancy rather than requiring reinforcement of existing framing.

3.2. Occupancy Classification

1. Present Occupancy – Education, E
2. Proposed Occupancy – Assembly, A-3

3.3. Minimum Construction Type- Classification VB

1. The Union Building most closely resembles Construction Classification VB, with exterior and interior wood stud bearing walls, and dimension lumber floor framing.

3.4. Fire Resistance Ratings:

1. The Type V classification rates the structural frame, interior and exterior bearing walls, non-bearing walls, floor and roof construction has having a 0-hour fire resistance rating.

3.5. Means of Egress:

1. There are currently 2 means of egress from each floor. One is at the semi-enclosed main stair at the center of the building, and one is a newer enclosed stair at the rear of the building.
2. The capacity of the existing exits is calculated as follows (see IBC Section 1005):
   Each stair: width = 48 inches.
   Capacity = 48 inches divided by .3 inch per person = 160 persons times 2 equals 320 total capacity for each floor, for egress calculations.

   Exit doors: exit doors for the means of egress are 36" wide. Their capacity therefore is 36 inches divided by .2 inches per person = 180 persons times 2 for each space equals 360 capacity for each floor.

   For this analysis, the lower number of occupants rules over the higher. Therefore, the egress capacity of each floor equals 320.

3.6. Massachusetts Plumbing Code (248 CMR)

1. Proposed Occupancy Count (Table 1004.1.1 Max. Floor Area Allowances):
   a. Designated each floor Assembly Use spaces:
      1) Assembly occupancy: 1,248 nsf / 15 nsf / person = 84 persons (based on loose tables and chairs)
2. Plumbing Fixture Counts

Proposed Occupants (Each floor Assembly use):	**84 persons**
@ 50%F / 50%M:	**42** Female
	42 Male
Fixture Calculations based on Assembly Use:	
Toilets Required, Female @ 1 per 50:	**1** required
Toilets Provided, Female:	***1** provided*
Toilets Required, Male @ 1 per 100:	**1** required
Toilets/Urinals Provided, Male:	***1** provided*
Lavatories Required, M / F @ 1 per 200:	**1** required per gender
Lavatories Provided, Female:	1 required, ***1** provided*
Lavatories Provided, Male:	1 required, ***1** provided*

CHAPTER 2
Public Input

Public input on the Union Building School Rehabilitation and Reuse Plan consisted of two public input meeting sessions and an online survey. Public input is only one component of the decision-making process, but it is vital for directing the focus of the market feasibility analysis of various possible uses. This chapter is a summary of public input, and the report includes full descriptions of both Public Input sessions and the Public Survey in Appendix 2.

A. Public Workshop 1: Kick-off Workshop



Dunstable Town Hall, site of public workshops.

The **"What is the Future of the Union Building" Kick-off Workshop** took place at Dunstable Town Hall at 6:00pm on October 26th, 2023, with a Hybrid Zoom option. 32 people attended in total. NMCOG gave a brief presentation on the history of the Union Building and an overview of the planning process and strategies for obtaining public input. Spencer Preservation Group gave the second presentation, covering a review of the Union Building's floor plan and a report on its exterior renovation.

Attendees were divided into four separate groups to brainstorm and vote on different future uses of the building. Overall, the community expressed a desire to preserve the building as they consider it to be a key fixture of the Town Center. There was significant support for uses that incorporated the history of the building, such as a space for the Historical Society, a recreation of an old classroom, or a museum. Other uses related to arts and community meetings also had a high level of support. Attendees also expressed interest in the idea of splitting uses, with private uses such as art studios and offices on the top floor and the basement and public uses on the first floor. Attendees voiced local needs for additional meeting spaces, commercial kitchens, public art spaces, and a senior center space.

B. Public Survey

To ascertain broader community support for potential uses of the building, the Town administered a **public survey** partially based on the results kick-off workshop and on the goals of the Master Plan from December 15, 2023, to January 16, 2024. When asked what respondents think Dunstable Town Center needs most, the most popular response at 54% was an arts and culture space. The second-most popular response at 46% was a space for youth. When asked about private and public use options, 51% of respondents supported a restaurant as a private use, while the top responses for public uses were a youth-focused space for after-school activities (60%) and a performing arts-focused space for both children and adults (55%). The top five uses respondents most wanted to see in the Union Building were a fitness and/or dance studios, a youth-focused space for after-school activities, a performing arts-focused space for all ages, a multipurpose area for private rentals, and a restaurant. If the Union Building were to split uses, with the second floor used as a private space, support for second-floor office space and art studios was almost equal.

When asked about funding sources for necessary improvements, 80% of respondents expressed support for the uses of state historic or cultural grants, 70% expressed support of using Community Preservation Act funds, and 66% of respondents supported using private funding from a buyer or nonprofit. With regard to the Town selling the building for one of the possible uses, 46% of respondents supported this outcome, 38% opposed it, and 16% answered maybe, with top conditions being control over the safety of users, control over access to the school, and that the use is beneficial to residents.

The top concerns respondents wanted considered when rehabilitating the Union Building were the security and safety of students, the desire to preserve the building, and a use compatible with the building's limited parking.



Word cloud of most common words used in response to open question about considerations, concerns, and thoughts.

C. Public Workshop 2: Summary Results Workshop

The **"What is the Future of the Union Building" Survey Results Workshop** took place at Dunstable Town Hall at 6:00pm on February 8th, 2024, with a Hybrid Zoom option. Forty people attended in total. Facilitators tasked attendees with sharing the benefits and challenges they saw about each option, asking questions, providing examples of successful operations of the proposed uses, and naming any community members and organizations that may be interested in running or using the space for any of the proposed uses.

Though there was considerable interest in locating a full-size commercial restaurant in Town Center, many expressed concern about the overall size of the space, the limited availability of parking, and the cost of refitting the space for an entirely new use—constraints noted by Spencer Preservation Group in their exploration of the physical and financial requirements for preferred uses. Several local artists and event planners expressed an interest in using the space as a venue for workshops, photography, and catering. Ultimately, most residents expressed interest in business and management plans for each of the use options to determine which one would be the most cost-effective.

D. Public Input Conclusions

Apart from the desire to preserve the building, residents are open-minded about the new use for the Union Building. There is most support for uses that are flexible, easy to implement, and at least partially accessible to the public. It is mostly agreed upon that a commercial restaurant, while a desired use for the Town Center, is unlikely to be a feasible use of the Union Building space. When it comes to funding the restoration and rehabilitation project itself, residents are open to various sources, be those state historic or cultural grants, Community Preservation Act funds, and private funding from buyers or nonprofits, as long as the Town is not exclusively covering the costs.

Residents deeply care about the new use of the Union Building's long-term success in tandem with the exercise of fiscal constraint by the Town. Therefore, they state great interest in seeing which uses are the most cost-effective. More flexible uses that require less equipment and refitting of the space are likely to meet this requirement.

CHAPTER 3
Alternative Analysis

This section summarizes the first- and second-floor alternatives that were explored and prioritized. The alternatives are listed in no particular order, as each alternative is considered equally feasible if an appropriate Town department was able to operate the alternative internally or separate group was found to operate the alternative via a Request for Proposals (RFP).

The first floor and second floor uses would largely be compatible with one another; through a master lease, an organization could rent the entire building from the town, then sublet the upper story uses to generate revenue that would be used both for a master lease and operation of a first-floor program. In addition, uses on the same floor can be mixed-and-matched, depending on the operator. For example, one classroom could be developed as an event rental space occasionally used for Community Center programs but also rented to outside uses, and another classroom could be developed as a permanent Maker Space use of that Community Center. Alternatively, the classroom uses could be the same, for example, both first floor classrooms could have different Maker Space activities.

Because the final determination of use mix may be determined by the business plan of the uses' operator, the start-up, operational, and revenue considerations for each alternative are listed in this section. The next section outlines the interior capital improvements that would need to be made to support any of the use alternatives listed in this section.

A. First Floor Use Alternatives

1. Membership-Based Space

The first alternative is to create a space that members who pay a monthly fee could use. In exchange, members would get access to the first-floor space, which may include lockers, shared tools, or other amenities. This space may attract "makers" of several types, such as crafters, photographers, artists, and other creative members of the community that would not occupy a full-time studio but would benefit from a specialized space. This space would not include heavy uses such as carpentry or metalworking, but could include such amenities such as 3D printers, sewing machines or other textile technology, laser cutters, or other low-impact tools that could be used by members or as part of workshops.



Weston Art & Innovation Center, retrieved from https://westonaic.org/

1.1. Operational Considerations and Costs

A precedent for this use is the Weston Art & Innovation Center, which is housed at the Old Weston Library. Although the 1899 building was initially proposed to be disposed of for a private use, Town Meeting ultimately approved making the Old Weston Library a branch of the Weston Public Library that is completely self-sustaining. While the Town continues maintaining the building through its capital budget, the Center generates its own revenue to pay for staff and programming. Renovations of older

library rooms into the Art & Innovation Center were funded by $4.5 million in Community Preservation Act funds.

The Center offers five-hour rentals for private events such as workshops for $450 in either of their Makerspaces. The Loft Makerspace includes tools for 3D printing, sewing, and photography. The Tool Shed Makerspace includes tools for painting, floral design, printmaking and laser cutting. Both spaces accommodate up to 25 people, have five to six worktables each, stools, and sinks. One full-time director and four part time staff manage the program, coordinate special events, provide training and support, market the program and work with interested users, and oversee and clean the area.

The Center generally pays instructors $50 an hour to teach workshops at the Maker space and can charge between $60 - $100 for workshops. The net revenue after paying instructors can be used for overhead. They hold 80-90 classes for roughly 600 people annually, including both youth and adults, but with a primary audience of adults and retired people.

Considerations include that personnel—either associated with the Town or a nonprofit which leases the space—would need to be retained for maintenance of equipment, handling of memberships, and if included, development of and management of classes. Initial start-up costs would include a locking mechanism that members could utilize when staff are not present, an online reservation system, furniture and fit-out, and tools available for the makers and/or workshops.

1.2. Revenue and Utilization Possibilities

The fees from classes mentioned above, space rental, and private donations fund the operations of the Weston Art & Innovation Center. Staff also apply for competitive grants to fund operations. Although they offer free memberships to use the space and tools when not in use by workshops, they have found low demand for this service. Their primary users are workshop and class participants.

While the survey did not include a makerspace/membership-based space as an option for the question “Which of the following uses might you or members of your household personally use?”, three attendees of the Survey Results Workshop indicated tentative interest in utilizing such a space.

Unless unique tools and training were provided as part of membership, there may be limited demand for a membership-based space in Dunstable—similarly to Weston’s lack of demand—due to the Town’s generally large homes that have space for private workshops or home-based offices. This type of space would also be ideal for small-group classes and programming for youth and adults, with class fees that could supplement revenue from members. This would require managing time with particular tools, potentially reserving time blocks of certain tools for classes and other time blocks for members. Another possible revenue source is renting bench space for members to store their personal tools and supplies.

If the Town wishes to pursue this option, it could explore the grassroots development of a nonprofit that could manage the program or discuss possibilities with town departments if operations were to be self-sustaining. It may also consider a more detailed survey to gauge interest in particular programs, tools, or membership that may support a grassroots nonprofit or an existing nonprofit outside Dunstable that might consider responding to an RFP. If after additional research, nonprofit management of this use is

desired, the final step would be to release an RFP for existing or new groups to lease the space for the proposed use or other uses.

2. Event Rental-Based Space

The second alternative is to create a space that individuals or groups who pay an hourly fee to rent the space for small events could use. The space would be offered in a relatively bare-bones state, although tables and chairs may be available. Users could range from individuals or groups looking for meeting space or special event and party space to groups running regular workshops or community events.

2.1. Operational Considerations and Costs

The precedent studied was Tyngsborough Old Town Hall, which includes a kitchen, a lower hall, and an upper hall with a stage. The space also includes tables and chairs that can be set up in many configurations. The kitchen includes a refrigerator, freezer, full oven and stove, and an industrial sink that caterers can utilize. Finally, a media system is available, which includes a soundboard, speakers, wireless microphones, and a projector.



Tyngsborough Old Town Hall upper hall, retrieved from https://www.tyngsboroughma.gov/195/Old-Town-Hall

The Town's Recreation Department manages the space. The Town reports that maintaining this program takes roughly 10 hours a week, which is largely undertaken by a part-time member of Town staff who only works when there is a rental of the building. This staff member, called a "host," opens and locks the building and communicates with users to troubleshoot problems. Other work includes managing rentals, maintenance and occasional cleaning, and active marketing of the space. The Town reports that marketing needs were high in the first two years, but after the availability of the space was established online and through word-of-mouth, marketing requirements are now lower.

The space is self-managed, and users are responsible for set up, take down, and clean-up. The Town reports that although communication of the space's limited services is critical, it has worked well with few problems.

Similar precedents studied included multipurpose rental space as part of a larger program. These precedents advised consideration of a keyfob or keypad entry system allowing users to enter the space without the need for staff to be present. They also recommend a policy that users must set up before use and clean the space after its use to reduce custodial needs, although this makes it difficult to reserve uses back-to-back as there is limited time to inspect the space prior to the next use. They also recommend an automated online reservation system. This may increase start-up costs but reduce ongoing staff demand.

The precedents studied included both spaces with and without kitchens or stages. The availability of a catering kitchen and/or stage expands potential uses, but also adds complications for maintenance and management. These elements are not universally required by events, however a kitchenette area to

brew coffee and prepare small snacks or similar is generally considered necessary for an event rental space. In addition, the Town should consider amenities such as a projector, tables, coat room, and similar amenities for full utilization of the space.

Notably, parking issues for event space were also studied among precedent cases. An event space use may have higher parking demands that would need to be properly managed through clear instructions on which areas are allowed for parking, as designing parking for peak use is a cost-prohibitive consideration. Tyngsborough Old Town Hall, for example, has no parking on-site. There are 150 parking spaces at the nearby meeting house and other adjacent locations that meet the needs of the site. However, communication of the parking plan to users and their guests is critical.

Even though Tyngsborough Old Town Hall comes close to utilization capacity many times of the year charging market rates, the fees received do not fully offset the costs of maintaining the building's major systems such as elevator, HVAC, and other major systems. As it is a resource for town functions during the day (see section 2.2 below), Tyngsborough includes these items in its budget.

Similarly to other uses, this alternative would have start-up costs besides the building rehabilitation discussed in the next session. These costs may include a locking system that renters could use without staff present, an online booking system, A/V amenities discussed above, and if desired, cabinets for display of historical artifacts within the event space.

2.2. Revenue and Utilization Possibilities

Tyngsborough Old Town Hall's fee structure includes a base fee of $300 for four hours for residents and local businesses and $400 for nonresidents, with $50 for each additional hour for either group. Nonprofit organizations may rent the facilities for $35 an hour, and recurring events may pay $50 per hour for the lower hall. In addition, media equipment may be rented for $100. The kitchen is also available at an extra cost.

There is a high demand for this type of meeting space in nearby Tyngsborough, with the space often utilized for business meetings, baby and bridal showers, birthday parties, family reunions, and similar events. The Town reports there are two to four rentals of the space every weekend. Some precedents also utilize the walls of their meeting space for art exhibits. The space can then be used for an artist reception with each new show.

The Union Building is considerably smaller than Tyngsborough Old Town Hall and does not have a stage. It might therefore only support a smaller fee or a smaller amount of utilization. However, several of the event types most often seen by Tyngsborough and other peers would fit the building. In addition, this use of the building would allow municipal departments to use the Union Building to during weekdays. In Tyngsborough, the building is utilized by the town's library, fire department, police department, board of health, and others for events, meetings, and programming.

In Dunstable, 29% of respondents to the Union Building survey indicated that they or members of their family might use a multipurpose area for private rentals. This was lower than most other uses, tied for lowest with senior-focused space and above historical museum space. NMCOG reached out to youth groups to determine if they might rent the space. Only the scouting organizations were able to be

reached, who indicated that they were provided space through their sponsor organization, and therefore would have no immediate need for space unless their sponsor organization changed.

Finally, use as an event space may be compatible with another desired use of the building, unlike the other two alternatives: a display case of historical artifacts unique to Dunstable within the program space. This alternative could also feature art showcases. Although art or a historical display case may fit within other alternatives, they are less compatible with community center, daycare, or makerspace uses.

3. Youth, Daycare, or Community Center Space

The final alternative is to fit out and rent the first-floor space to an existing or new organization that would run youth or community programming, either during the day or after school and on weekends. The organization would be a respondent to a Request for Proposals (RFP) created by the Town and may absorb some of the costs to fit out the Union Building to meet its mission. This program could be a daycare or a community center with regular youth and/or adult classes, although daycares require additional considerations due to State licensing requirements for all-day care.

3.1. Operational Considerations and Costs

The precedent studied was the Prescott Community Center in Groton, Massachusetts. This is a large former high school (27,000 square feet of usable space)[2] that is now leased by the Friends of Prescott, Inc. for the Prescott School Community Center. The space includes nine rental units, three classrooms, a gymnasium, a multipurpose space in the former cafeteria, and several offices. The rental units are occupied by a mix of entrepreneurs and artists, the classrooms are utilized for educational programming and rental, and the offices are utilized for rental as well.



Prescott Community Center classroom space, retrieved from https://prescottscc.org/room-rentals/

The Friends of Prescott, Inc., lease the building from the Town of Groton for $20,000 annually plus 5% of revenue, not counting private donations. The organization is responsible for day-to-day maintenance, including landscaping, snow removal, and fit-out. Tenants pay for their own fit-out. Friends of Prescott, Inc., also markets and manages the rental spaces, educational programs, and special events. The Town is responsible for larger maintenance and capital improvements such as HVAC maintenance and roof replacement. The funds the Town raises from the Center's master lease partially offset these maintenance costs.

The Prescott Community Center employs several part-time staff, including a custodian, an office manager, and a registrar in addition to an Executive Director. However, a volunteer committee fills a key

[2] A Strategic Blueprint for Prescott School, Municipal Building Committee for Prescott School, 2016

role: the selection of classes and workshops and the recruitment of teachers for those workshops. The Center provides keyfob entry to tenants and teachers for weekend programs, as staff do not come on weekends. Staff at the Center noted that this has not created any problems except when renters use multipurpose rooms back-to-back, as there is no staff capacity to inspect the space between users.

The creation of the center involved sweat equity, including a committee that raised funds and developed a nonprofit to start programs at the Center. The Center believes that without this early volunteer engagement, along with a unified vision for the space among the members of the volunteer committee, the Center would not have started or had its current level of success. Other organizations with similar models to the Prescott Center have not all seen its level of success.

Notably, the Prescott School is currently evaluating remodeling its bathrooms to provide a gender-neutral or caregiver space. The town should carefully consider bathroom configuration in the restoration of the Union School to meet the needs of potential users. In addition, because of the involvement of youth, the Prescott school conducts a name-based criminal record check (CORI) on all teachers. This has generally not created any concerns or problems.

3.2. Revenue and Utilization Possibilities

Prescott Community Center's revenue is obtained in roughly equal proportions from its tenants, program fees, and private donations. Rental rates range from $650 monthly for its smallest room, $900 monthly average for a classroom-sized space, and $1,290 for its largest room, all inclusive of utilities. There are currently no vacancies. In addition, it leases a 12'x18' office for $550 monthly. In addition, it operates a shared office space for users which need an office to receive clients or hold small conferences for $12 hourly.

For its educational program, the Center offered 150 youth classes and 350 adult or general classes. These generally range from $30 to $50 plus materials. The fees cover teacher stipends and the general operation of the Center. Although the Center became licensed for an after-school program, it had to cancel its proposed program due to lack of interest. A potential barrier may have been that children could not be bussed directly from the school to the Center, whereas the proximity of the Swallow Union School may make this a more viable option in Dunstable.

Finally, the Center hosts events in coordination with Grotonfest and similar townwide celebrations, supplementing its regular classes and programs. This both creates support for the Center and provides additional foot traffic that the Center can convert to participants in classes and regular programs. During most larger events, the parking lot is closed and attendees park in nearby locations.

The colocation of artist and creative tenants and educational space has been beneficial to Prescott Community Center, as customers of the tenants enliven the space. One tenant operates a gift shop, which provides a stream of clients that see the other offerings of the Prescott Community Center and make return visits. In addition, the Prescott Community Center serves as the Groton Visitor Center, which adds responsibility but also adds additional foot traffic.

NMCOG interviewed the Twomey Center of the Groton-Dunstable school district to understand the demand of their youth and adult programs. Before- and after-school youth programs are undertaken at the Swallow Union school, while adult programs are only undertaken in the Town of Groton. Youth

programs include sports clubs, craft clubs, a music program, and a language program, among other children's enrichment programs. The Twomey Center reported good utilization of the youth programs, and that usually there are no waitlists—for programs that hit capacity, the Twomey Center strives to start a duplicate program to capture the overflow. It reports that adult programs are underutilized, as vendors often have minimum participation numbers that cannot be met. Given that the Twomey Center only offers these programs in Groton, this could be an opportunity area for a community center in Dunstable.

Finally, the study also included correspondence with the Roudenbush Community Center in Westford, Massachusetts. The Roudenbush Center offers similar programming to the Prescott Community Center and like the Prescott Center leases its building from the Town. However, it does not have permanent subtenants. Most community programs at the Roudenbush Center are provided by individuals and groups that rent space in the Roudenbush Center at a flat rate, with the majority of the Roudenbush's Center's revenue gained through childcare programs located across Westford. The Roudenbush Center also offers community market events, free family events, a gymnastics program, and room rentals for $45 per hour for a classroom-sized room and $75 per hour for the gymnasium. The Roudenbush Center partners with groups inside and outside Westford and would be happy to discuss options with the Union Building Rehabilitation Committee.

If the Town wishes to pursue this option, the Committee could identify or cultivate the grassroots development of a nonprofit that could manage the program similarly to the first alternative. It may also consider a more detailed survey to gauge interest in particular classes that may support a grassroots nonprofit or an existing nonprofit outside Dunstable that might consider responding to an RFP. If after additional research, nonprofit management of this use is desired, the last step would be to release an RFP for existing or new groups to lease the space for the proposed use or other uses.

B. Second Floor Use Alternatives

The two second-floor use alternatives would both be more private than the community-focused first floor uses. However, this would be a key generator of revenue, either as a primary lease for the Town if the Town were to operate the community use, or as a sublease for a community use master lessee to offset the cost of community programs and the rent it would pay to the Town for the use of the building.

1. Artist Studios

This alternative is to rent out the second floor for four artist workspaces, separating each second-floor classroom into two spaces which could feature movable dividers in case two units are rented to a single, larger use.

1.1. Operational Considerations and Costs

Rental of the upper stories would require marketing, tenant selection and screening, inspection, collection of rent, maintenance of common areas such as bathrooms, and property management including lease condition enforcement and eviction when necessary. This may be accomplished directly by the Town or through a property management company that would take a fee from the rent collected.

An important element for art studios is creative community. This requires multiple studios to be in proximity. Opportunities to host shows or open studios help create community as well. The upper story classrooms could each be divided into two sections for four small studios to create this community and maximize rents for the space.

1.2. Revenue and Utilization Possibilities

The Union Building Rehabilitation Committee completed research on art studios, which range from $12-$25 annually per square foot, inclusive of all utilities. Rental space at nearby Lowell's Western Avenue Studios starts at $12 per square foot, while similar space in Maynard rents as $25 per square foot. The committee has estimated that the market in Dunstable could bear $18 to $22 per square foot, inclusive of utilities. Many studio spaces currently have a wait list, indicating an unmet demand for art studio space.

2. Private or Shared Office

This alternative is to rent the second-floor spaces as private offices. Each classroom would be rented as a single office space or as space for coworking with shared amenities.

2.1. Operational Considerations and Costs

Similarly to art studio space, office rental of the upper stories would require marketing, tenant selection and screening, inspection, collection of rent, maintenance of common areas such as bathrooms, and property management including lease condition enforcement and eviction when necessary. This may be accomplished directly by the Town or through a property management company that would take a fee from the rent collected.

If the space were rented as coworking space, additional start-up and operational costs might include the purchase and maintenance of shared office equipment and services such as copiers/printers, broadband subscription, and furniture.

2.2. Revenue and Utilization Possibilities

Coworking space leases can range from $100 to $500 a month, although the upper end of that range usually includes a key metropolitan location and innovative amenities. 2023 Boston average annual rent ranges from $42 annually per square foot for Class C to $73 per square foot for Class A and A+.[3] However, a smaller market such as Dunstable should anticipate a lower per square foot rent, similar to the art studio rent range. The range of $18 to $22 per square foot lines up with what peers such as Prescott Community Center receive for their small office spaces.

[3] Boston Office Rent Price & Sales Report, https://www.commercialcafe.com/office-market-trends/us/ma/boston/

CHAPTER 4
Capital Improvement Recommendations

The future reuse of the Union Building continues its past record of service to the Town of Dunstable. Long witness to scores of children with their teachers in a comfortable classroom environment, and lately used for after school programs and tutoring, the Union School is now poised for its next life of services.

The generously sized former classrooms, illuminated by large windows, are easily adaptable for the new uses envisioned in the community outreach meetings and refined in the Alternative Analysis. These classrooms could accommodate daycare, after school programs, historical display cases, fitness and exercise, meeting and lectures, artist workspace, gallery displays, and other elements in the Alternative Analysis. Based on the successful proposal, one or more of the alternative uses would be accommodated in the four large rooms, two on each floor of some 600 square feet each.

With the handsome woodwork, plaster walls, and wood floors, a fresh coat of paint and floor finishing (lite screening and varnish) will refresh the interior appearance. Some of the ceilings feature suspended acoustical tiles set in metal frames with inset fluorescent lights. Often the tile ceilings fall below the head of the windows. While functional, it is not attractive and could be easily remedied by removing the suspended tile ceilings and returning to using the plastered ceilings still intact above the tiles. At the same time, the fluorescent tube fixtures should be replaced with LED fixtures in keeping with the character of the building. The cracks seen in walls and ceilings can be treated and spackled in advance of painting. In other words, the interior finishes are in fairly good shape and can be renovated with a relatively light touch,

The most serious necessary internal investments are in access and infrastructure. At the façade pavilions, we propose providing universal access on the west side, reached by a new walkway from parking and existing sidewalk to new entrance at grade. From the new lobby, a Limited-Use/Limited-Application Elevator (LULA) would provide access via approximately four foot rise up to the first-floor level and then to the second floor. A LULA is appropriate for this location due to its compact size, activity level of the building, and cost. Should access to the lower level be considered, it may be possible to add a lower stop using the same door side as the main- and upper-level lobbies, provided no structural or head-height clearances impede such access. Additionally, LULA access to the lower level, and by extension making the lower level a publicly-accessible space would require the whole floor to be made accessible. At the first-floor level in the façade pavilion, a handicapped accessible toilet would be provided as well as a kitchenette. A new unisex restroom would also be provided on the first floor. Emergency egress would continue to be provided with the rear stairway. The direct connection from this rear stairway to the Swallow Union School would be closed off. For the second floor, two accessible restrooms can be provided in the façade pavilions along with a kitchenette. Assuming use of this floor for artists rentals, we propose an artist clean-up area with sinks.

Infrastructure improvements include the building code mandated fire suppression system with related fire detection and addressable panel. This system is required by code both due to the size of the building with level of alteration and the change of Use. Given the recent use of the building interior as classroom space for elementary school children, it is likely that interior lead and other hazmat remediation has already been taken place, augmented by the replacement windows (which would eliminate

contaminated glazing compounds). Should an interior childcare/daycare program be implemented, supplemental regulatory analysis to determine detailed, state-mandated requirements must be considered. Examples include indoor and outdoor activity space per child, required amenities (lunch refrigeration needs, etc.), and other needs such as formal environmental testing of interior materials and surfaces. Such an analysis is beyond the scope of this report.

Upgrading the electrical service will be required for the LULA, HVAC, and new restrooms and kitchenettes. Similarly, water and sanitary lines will be needed along with plumbing for the new restrooms and kitchenettes.

While there is an existing boiler and hot water heating, it would be wise to consider replacing it with heat pumps providing heat and air conditioning.

A. Proposed Interior Rehab Drawings

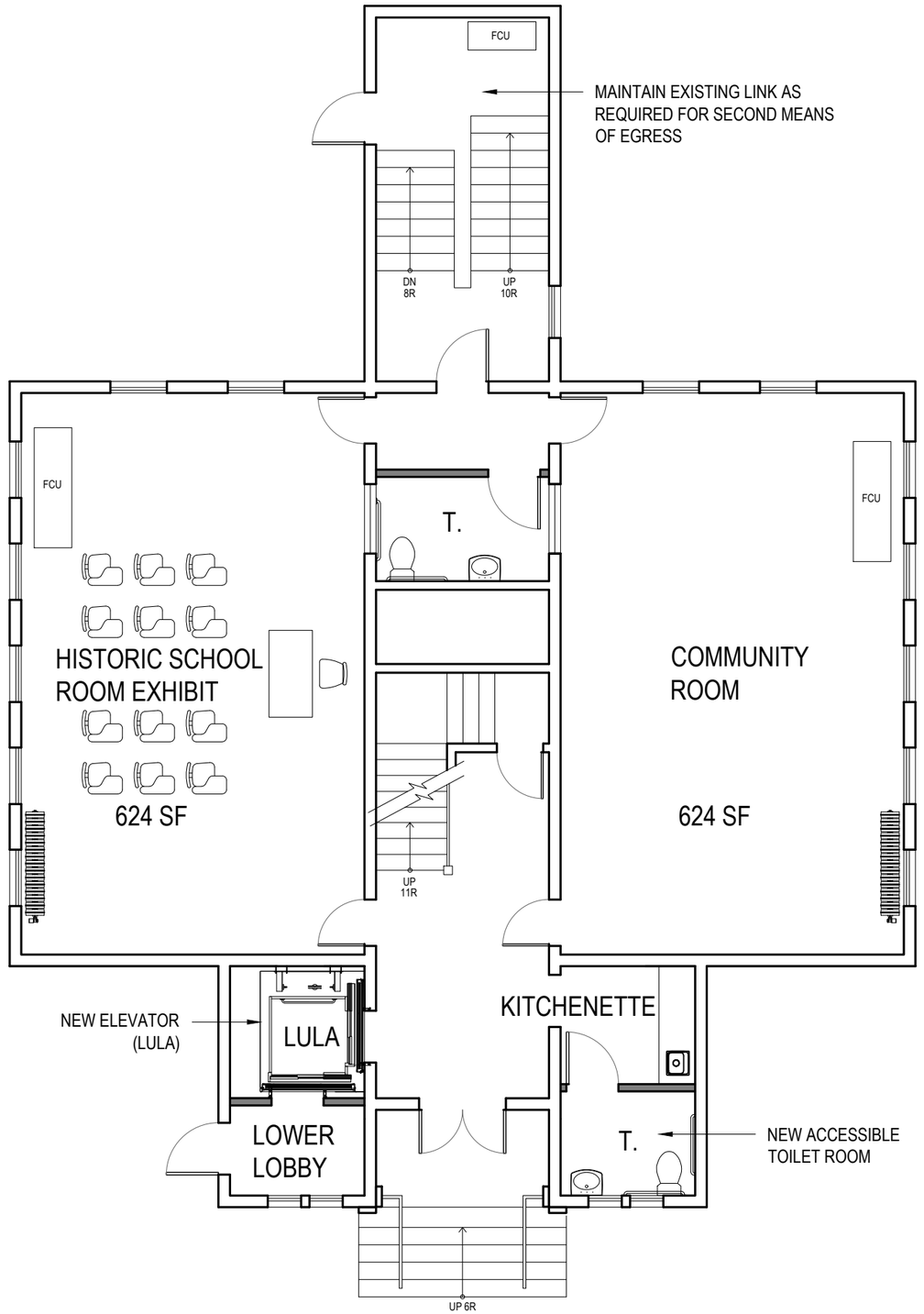
The following drawings reflect conceptual designs for the alternatives discussed in the previous section. The Town should consider these as proof-of-concepts, because as described in the previous section, uses could be mixed and matched in different combinations. Option A and Option B are just two examples of the many ways the space could be organized.

Option A: Reflects public or community room uses on the main level: particularly a multi-use historic school room exhibit in the West classroom, and community room or membership-based space in the East classroom. The front Pavilion makes use of former storage rooms by converting them to a LULA (elevator) and accessible toilet/kitchenette. A second accessible toilet is in the center by the chimney stack. The upper level incorporates artists rental space and similar accessible toilet/kitchenette spaces in the pavilion and center portion.

Option B: Reflects a daycare use on the main level in both West and East classroom spaces. Private office spaces are located on the upper level and can be reconfigured to suit tenants' needs.

In all use cases, a new accessible entry is required by introducing a new doorway into the West elevation of the front Pavilion. The doorway allows access to a new half-level interior vestibule and elevator/LULA to the main and upper floor levels.

If desired, extending the LULA into the lower level would generate little or no impact to the main and upper levels, provided no structural or height impedances are found in the framing. The lower levels would remain unchanged, save for a "refresh" of interior finishes for continued storage/mechanical space.



1 PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN - OPTION A
1/8" = 1'-0"

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PREPARED FOR:

PROJECT: #2109

UNION SCHOOL BUILDING

522 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827

OUTPUT:
LINEWEIGHT CHECK
COLOR CHECK
SHEET CHECK: ANSI B 11"x17"
TRANSPARENCY CHECK
PRINT SIZE CHECK: FULL SIZE SET MEASURES 1"

STATUS:

01	APR 10, 2024	NEW
		OLD

SEAL:

NOT FOR PERMITTING
REVIEW
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

TITLE:

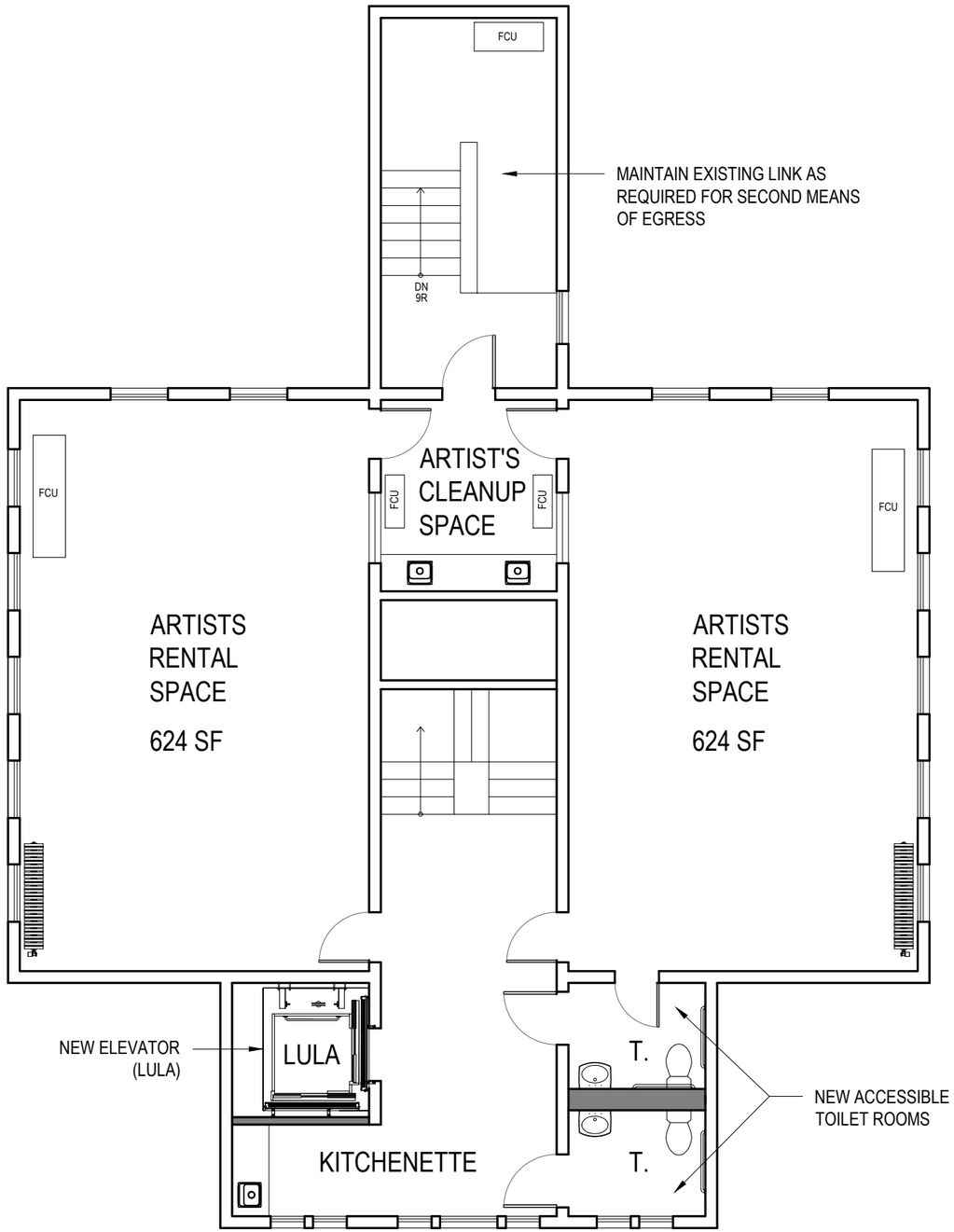
PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN - OPTION 'A'

SHEET:

A- 102

PLOT SIZE: ANSI A (8.50 x 11.00 Inches) | PLOT STYLE: — | PLOT DATE: 4/10/2024 2:34 PM | PLOTTER: None

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1 PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR PLAN - OPTION A
1/8" = 1'-0"

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PREPARED FOR:

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UNION SCHOOL BUILDING

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OUTPUT:
LINEWEIGHT CHECK
COLOR CHECK
SHEET CHECK
TRANSPARENCY CHECK
PRINT SIZE CHECK
FULL SIZE SET MEASURES 1"

STATUS:

01	APR 10, 2024	NEW
		OLD

SEAL:

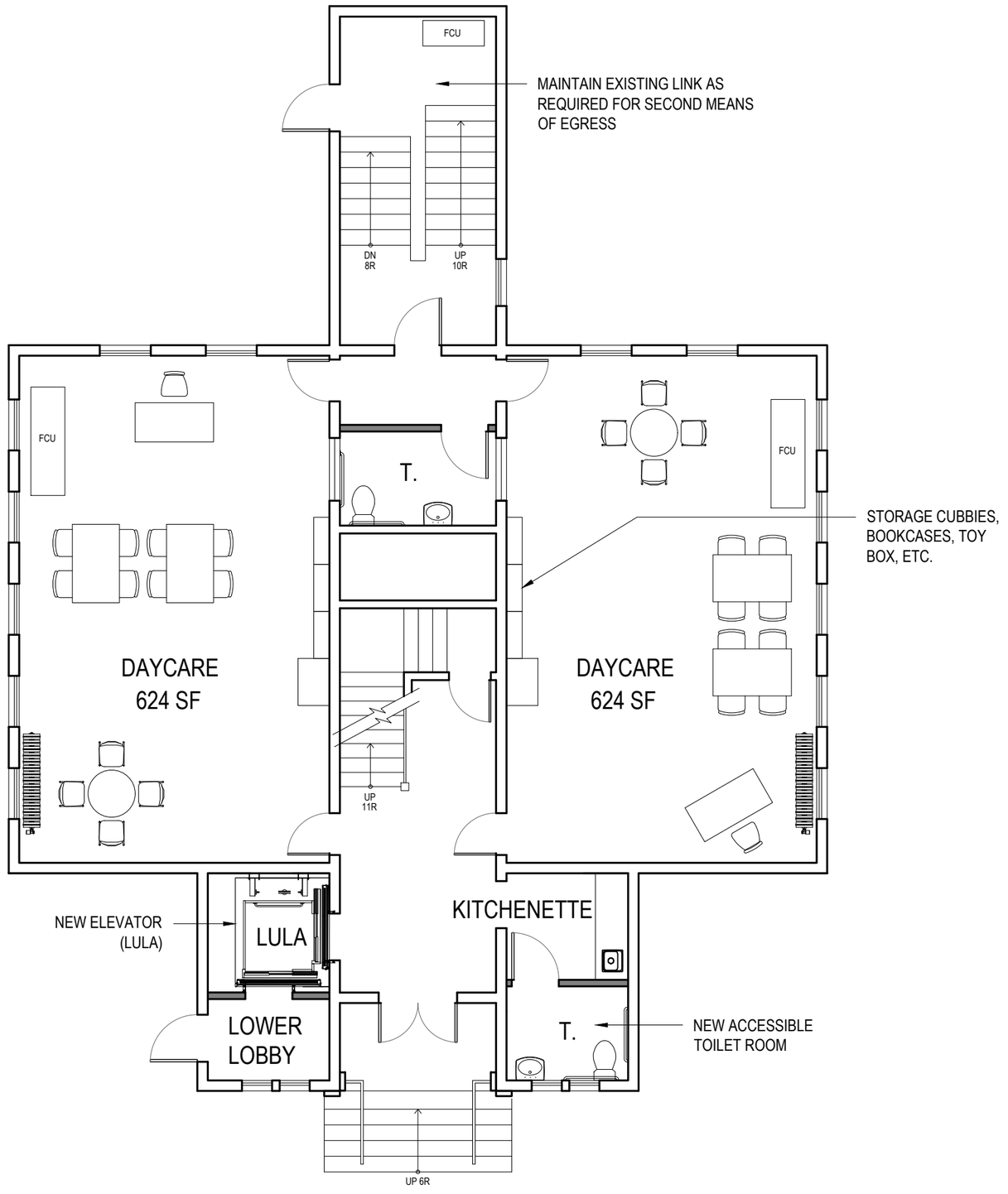
NOT FOR PERMITTING
REVIEW
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

TITLE:
PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR PLAN - OPTION 'A'

SHEET:
A-103

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PLOT SIZE: ANSI-A (8.50 x 11.00 Inches) | PLOT STYLE: — | PLOT DATE: 4/10/2024 2:23 PM | PLOTTER: None



1 PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN - OPTION B
1/8" = 1'-0"

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PREPARED FOR:

PROJECT: #2109

UNION SCHOOL BUILDING

522 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827

OUTPUT:
LINEWEIGHT CHECK
COLOR CHECK
SHEET CHECK ANSI B 11"x17"
TRANSPARENCY CHECK
PRINT SIZE CHECK FULL SIZE SET MEASURES 1"

STATUS:

01	APR 10, 2024	NEW
		OLD

SEAL:

NOT FOR PERMITTING REVIEW NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

TITLE:

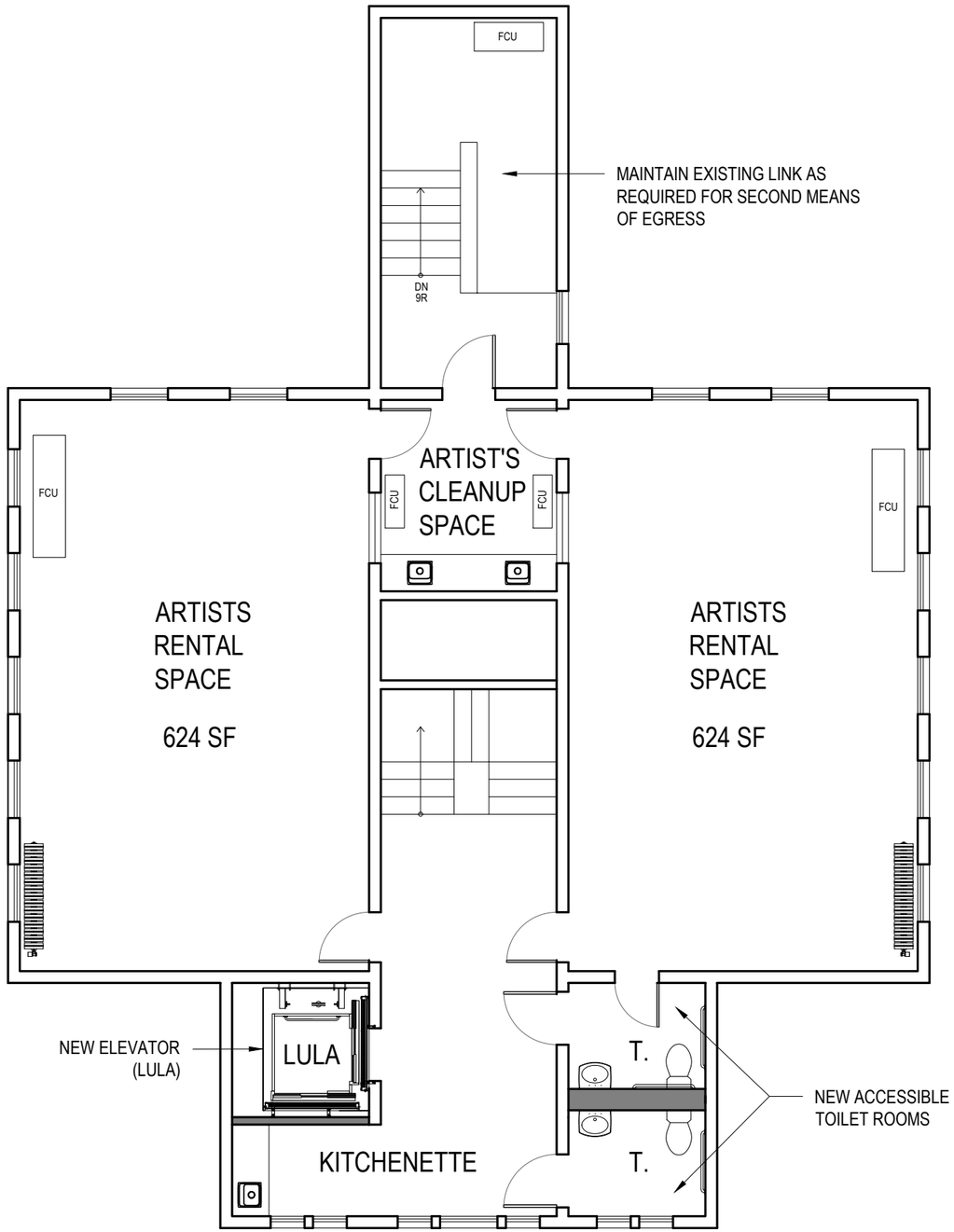
PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN - OPTION 'B'

SHEET:

A- 104

© 2021 Spencer Preservation Group, Inc.

PLOT SIZE: ANSI A (8.5in x 11.00 inches) | PLOT STYLE: — | PLOT DATE: 4/10/2024 2:34 PM | PLOTTER: None



1 PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR PLAN - OPTION B
1/8" = 1'-0"

Spencer Preservation Group
PRESERVATION ARCHITECTS
41 Valley Road | Suite 211
Nahant, MA 01908
(617) 227-2675
www.SpencerPreservationGroup.com

PREPARED FOR:

PROJECT: #2109

UNION SCHOOL BUILDING

522 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827

OUTPUT:
LINEWEIGHT CHECK
COLOR CHECK
SHEET CHECK
TRANSPARENCY CHECK
PRINT SIZE CHECK
FULL SIZE SET MEASURES 1"

STATUS:

01	APR 10, 2024	NEW
		OLD

SEAL:

NOT FOR PERMITTING
REVIEW
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

TITLE:
PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR PLAN - OPTION 'B'

SHEET:
A-105

PLOT SIZE: ANSI-A (8.50 x 11.00 Inches) | PLOT STYLE: — | PLOT DATE: 4/10/2024 2:23 PM | PLOTTER: None

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1 PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION - NEW ACCESSIBLE ENTRY
1/8" = 1'-0"

Spencer Preservation Group
PRESERVATION ARCHITECTS
41 Valley Road | Suite 211
Nahant, MA 01908
(617) 227-2675
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PREPARED FOR:

PROJECT: #2109

UNION SCHOOL BUILDING

522 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827

OUTPUT:
LINEWEIGHT CHECK
COLOR CHECK
SHEET CHECK: ANSI D 11"x17"
TRANSPARENCY CHECK
PRINT SIZE CHECK: FULL SIZE SET MEASURES 1"

STATUS:

		NEW
		OLD
01		APR 10, 2024

SEAL:

NOT FOR PERMITTING
REVIEW
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

TITLE:
PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION

SHEET:
A-202

© 2021 Spencer Preservation Group, Inc.

PLOT SIZE: ANSI A (8.5X11.00 Inches) | PLOT STYLE: ---- | PLOT DATE: 4/10/2024 2:34 PM | PLOTTER: None

B. Interior Restoration Cost Opinion

Improvements needed to the interior are classified separately from the exterior envelope, as they would likely be phased individually. Recommended treatments for accessibility/interior work are focused on 4 priorities:

1. **Historically appropriate improvements to finishes and features.**
2. **Building Code upgrades/compliance due to "Change of Use".**
3. **Accessibility Code upgrades/compliance for users of all abilities.**
4. **Building System (heating, cooling, power) upgrades.**

Interior improvements needed to support the "alternative use" scenarios in previous section are classified under "Complete Rehab" in the following cost opinion at **$1,587,281**. For phasing consideration, the "Complete Rehab" has been broken out into "Phase 1" for the lion's share of necessary accessibility/interior improvements and regulatory compliance, and "Phase 2" for secondary needs such as replacement of heating, cooling, power, and lighting systems.

"Phase 1" does not include an estimate for Division 33 - Site Utilities scope. The new sprinkler system will require a 4" or 6" Fire Protection Water Service Line. It is unknown where existing water utilities are at present and a cost estimate cannot be determined in good faith.

May 14, 2024

	COMPLETE REHAB	PHASE 1	PHASE 2
DIV. 01 - *GENERAL REQUIREMENTS*	***COMPLETE REHAB***	***PHASE 1***	***PHASE 2***
Temporary Facilities, access, disposal	$40,000	$30,000	$10,000
SUBTOTAL	**$40,000**	**$30,000**	**$10,000**
DIV. 02 - *SITE*	***COMPLETE REHAB***	***PHASE 1***	***PHASE 2***
New walk to accessible entry	$15,000	$15,000	
Demolition: floor and ceiling openings for lift, remove existing suspended ceilings and fixtures	$30,000	$15,000	$15,000
SUBTOTAL	**$45,000**	**$30,000**	**$15,000**
DIV. 06 - *WOOD, PLASTICS, AND COMPOSITES*	***COMPLETE REHAB***	***PHASE 1***	***PHASE 2***
New canopy over accessible entry	$15,000	$15,000	
Framing modifications for new lift	$10,000	$10,000	
Kitchenette cabinetry	$5,000	$5,000	
Wood trimwork (casings, baseboard, mouldings)	$12,000	$12,000	
SUBTOTAL	**$42,000**	**$42,000**	
DIV. 08 - OPENINGS	***COMPLETE REHAB***	***PHASE 1***	***PHASE 2***
New interior doors, frames and hardware	$16,000	$16,000	$8,000
SUBTOTAL	**$16,000**	**$16,000**	**$8,000**
DIV. 09 - *FINISHES*	***COMPLETE REHAB***	***PHASE 1***	***PHASE 2***
Screen and finish hardwood floors	$24,000		$24,000
Repair plaster walls; paint	$56,000	$56,000	$28,000
Repair plaster ceilings; paint	$32,000	$32,000	$16,000
New partitions, wallboard, veneer plaster, paint	$6,000	$6,000	$12,000
Resilient floors at new toilet rooms, kitchenette and lift lobby	$4,500	$4,500	$9,000
SUBTOTAL	**$122,500**	**$98,500**	**$89,000**
DIV. 10 - *SPECIALTIES*	***COMPLETE REHAB***	***PHASE 1***	***PHASE 2***
Toilet room accessories	$4,000	$4,000	
SUBTOTAL	**$4,000**	**$4,000**	
DIV. 14 - *CONVEYING SYSTEMS*	***COMPLETE REHAB***	***PHASE 1***	***PHASE 2***
New LULA	$48,000	$48,000	
SUBTOTAL	**$48,000**	**$48,000**	
DIV. 21 - *FIRE SUPPRESSION*	***COMPLETE REHAB***	***PHASE 1***	***PHASE 2***
New sprinkler system	$119,240	$119,240	
SUBTOTAL	**$119,240**	**$119,240**	
DIV. 22 - *PLUMBING*	***COMPLETE REHAB***	***PHASE 1***	***PHASE 2***
New toilet rooms and kitchenette	$59,620	$59,260	
SUBTOTAL	**$59,620**	**$59,260**	
DIV. 22 -HVAC	***COMPLETE REHAB***	***PHASE 1***	***PHASE 2***
New heat pump system	$268,290		$268,290
SUBTOTAL	**$268,290**		**$268,290**
DIV. 26 -ELECTRICAL	***COMPLETE REHAB***	***PHASE 1***	***PHASE 2***
New power and lighting	$238,480	$150,000	$88,480
SUBTOTAL	**$238,480**	**$150,000**	**$88,480**
	COMPLETE REHAB	***PHASE 1***	***PHASE 2***
SUBTOTAL	**$1,003,130**	**$597,000**	**$478,770**
General Conditions: +	$100,313	$59,700	$47,877
HARD COST SUBTOTAL	**$1,103,443**	**$656,700**	**$526,647**
Overhead + Profit: +	$66,207	$39,402	$31,599
CONSTRUCTION COST SUBTOTAL	**$1,169,650**	**$696,102**	**$558,246**
Contingency: +	$116,965	$69,610	$55,825
Architecture/Engineering Fees: +	$192,992	$104,415	$83,737
GRAND TOTAL	**$1,479,607**	**$870,128**	**$697,807**

CHAPTER 4
Funding & Action Plan

A. Next Steps

1. Undertake Exterior Improvements as Soon as Possible

The most critical action the Town should take is to undertake exterior renovations to prevent any cost escalation or continued degradation of historic features. This will not only reduce future expenses that would be incurred by deferring maintenance, but also ensure the longevity of the building.

After that, two steps may be undertaken simultaneously.

2. Seek Funding for Design and Construction of "White Box" Interior Improvements

Firstly, the Town should pursue funding to develop detailed architectural drawings and then construction for accessibility improvements and interior upgrades. As described in this report, both "Phase 1" and "Phase 2" internal upgrades would make the building ready for any of the alternatives discussed in this report, although some uses may have additional furniture or equipment costs. Those costs may be borne by the entity operating the use—this is commonly called "White box" in real estate, in which a space is nearly finished, with a potential lessee only needing to bring in its own furniture and equipment.

3. Solicit a Grassroots or Established Nonprofit and/or a Property Management Company

Secondly, the Town should solicit interest in one or more of the uses. This may include issuing an RFP for a nonprofit organization to operate and lease the building following one of the financial models described above.

Prior to issuing an RFP, the Town may reach out to neighboring centers such as the Roudenbush Center to determine whether they may have interest in expanding programming to Dunstable. It may also seek grassroots interest in organizing a community use. Several of the precedents explored in this report were started by a group of concerned citizens who wanted to preserve a historic building. If the Town makes it known that a community use needs a group of citizens to develop a nonprofit that can carry out that use prior to issuing an RFP, it may have better results.

This process could move forward as renovations are completed, with the identification of interested parties potentially providing additional support for certain targeted grant programs. The Town may then issue an RFP when the building is ready. An alternative path would be for the Town to issue an RFP for a property management company in order to market and lease the second-floor spaces and potentially the first-floor spaces for the desired uses.

The above approach will allow the Town to proceed with improvements over the next two years and enable the Town to respond to future market conditions when the building is nearly ready for leasing to optimize municipal revenue while providing for community-desired uses.

B. Possible Funding Sources

This report ends with a list of possible funding sources. This list is in no way exhaustive, and specific community uses may have additional possible grants, such as grant programs targeted toward youth centers, maker spaces, or art and humanities-focused spaces.

1. Economic Development Oriented Sources

1.1. Underutilized Properties Program (MassDevelopment)

This program, offered by MassDevelopment through the Community One Stop for Growth, provides awards between $50,000 to $1,000,000 for predevelopment activities, such as architectural and engineering design studies, as well as capital improvements to for "projects that will improve, rehabilitate or redevelop blighted, abandoned, vacant or underutilized properties to achieve the public purposes of eliminating blight, increasing housing production, supporting economic development projects, increasing the number of commercial buildings accessible to persons with disabilities."

The program focuses on funding capital improvements and code compliance projects, along with the design of these improvements. Decommissioned school buildings are eligible for grant funds through this program. While municipalities may own a property for which funding is requested, MassDevelopment prioritizes awards to municipalities for buildings that will not be used for municipal purposes.

Applications are due by June of each year. Matching funds are not required, however a community match at any level makes applications more competitive.

https://www.massdevelopment.com/what-we-offer/real-estate-services/underutilized-properties-program

2. Preservation Oriented Sources

2.1. Community Preservation Act

Historic Preservation: Capital work on qualified historic resources. No match required but active efforts to secure additional funding is helpful. Strong emphasis on community service. Administered by appointed Community Preservation committee with town meeting or city council vote. Typical annual cycle. Interior work may be covered by Dunstable CPA money – verify with your local CPC Committee. If allowed, interior work must also conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, the extent of which is not above and beyond the scope or cost of recommended baseline treatments in this report.

2.2. Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund

The Massachusetts Historical Commission administers the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund with two categories: planning, and development matching grants; 1:1 match requirement. Deadlines are typically March with June awards with development grants stated as being up to $100,000, but in practice awards are in the $50,000 range.

www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcmppf

2.3. Funds Administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation

Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation, and Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors
Both programs award matching grants in the range of $2,500 to $15,000, for March deadline with July notification. See www.savingpplaces.org/build/funding/grant-seekers/specialprograms

These relatively small grants could be directed towards interior restoration.

3. Cultural Enrichment Sources

3.1. Mass. Cultural Facilities Fund

Administered by the Mass Cultural Council, Grant categories: Capital up to $200,000; Feasibility Study and Technical Assistance up to $35,000; Systems Replacement Grants, starting at $8,000; 1:1 match requirement. Emphasis on rehabilitation projects that provide and enhance cultural activities, serve community needs, generate jobs and tourism. Typically, the December deadline for awards is mid-May.

www.massculutralcouncil.org/organizations/cultural-facilties-fund/application-process/

C. Project-Specific Fundraising Plan by Deadline

Source	Grant Request	Deadline
Community Preservation	$900,000	Annual cycle, Town meeting
MassDevelopment Underutilized Properties	$50,000	June 2024
MPPF	$50,000	March 2025
Mass Cultural Facilities Fund:		
Planning	$35,000	December 2024
OR		
Capital	$100,000	December 2024

Appendix 1
Master Plan Goals and Actions

A. Goals

- **Land Use**
  - Maintain Dunstable's rural character and landscape by preserving trees, stone walls, agricultural fields and pastures, and historic architecture.
  - Strengthen and maintain the Town Center as the civic and cultural heart of the community.
- **Housing**
  - Create housing opportunities that meet the needs of the community, as outlined in the Dunstable Housing Production Plan.
- **Economic Development**
  - Identify appropriate development opportunities that will attract private investment to appropriately zoned districts.
  - Promote local agricultural enterprises, as well as the work of local artists and craftsmen.
- **Cultural and Natural Resources**
  - Preserve, maintain and continue to document Dunstable's legacy of historic farmsteads, buildings and landmarks.
  - Preserve Dunstable's historical artifacts and documents.

B. Actions

- Address the housing needs of the elderly, young families and low- and moderate-income. Partner with non-profit and private developers to develop new housing units.
- Attract small-scale neighborhood style businesses, such as cafes, farm-to-table restaurants, country stores, farm stands, antique shops and artist lofts.
- Work with the Merrimack Valley Visitors and Convention Bureau to identify Dunstable as an historic destination.
- Provide access to the Community Room for town-affiliated meetings and events, even during hours when the library is not open to patrons. Alternatively, a Senior Center/Community Center should be created.
- Encourage the Agricultural Commission to work with the Economic Development Committee and agricultural entities in adjoining towns to promote the sale of goods and services from existing farms. Promote and support Dunstable's agricultural economy by encouraging: the preservation of agricultural lands through APRs and Conservation Restrictions; farm-to-table restaurants; a "buy local" campaign; community supported agriculture (CSA); farmers markets, an agricultural coop, food processing facility and community gardens.
- The Historical Commission should initiate a program to collect and archive all known historical documents and records, particularly those that pre-date Town Hall (1907 and earlier). The possible establishment of a museum to house, secure research space, archive and display the documents and artifacts important to the town's history should be explored.
- The Master Plan Committee feels that the expenditure of CPA funds should be encouraged for historic preservation and restoration projects on both public and private property, based on

established qualifying criteria. A Preservation Restriction is required when CPA funds are awarded for rehabilitation or restoration of an historic property, in order to protect the Town's investment.

- Promote and market Dunstable's historical and cultural resources to foster a greater sense of appreciation and stewardship. As part of this effort, "Point of Pride" plaques should be provided for display on historic properties. In addition, a "self-guided walking tour" of historic areas in Dunstable, such as East Main Street and the Town Center, should be developed. A Town Center Committee could be formed to further this concept and address the future planning and protection of the Town Center area.
- Focus on the MUD District, Town Center District and the B-3 zoned area adjacent to Tyngsborough to locate small-scale neighborhood style businesses.

Appendix 2
Public Outreach Results



WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE UNION BUILDING?

FEASIBILITY STUDY PUBLIC KICK-OFF

October 26, 2023 – NMCOG and Spencer Preservation Group

UNION BUILDING REHABILITATION COMMITTEE
WHO WE ARE

Leah D. Basbanes - *Chair*

Walter Alterisio

Alan Chaney

Tim DiNicola

Sherry Kersey

Suchitra Mumford

Jeff Rosen

Bebe Wood

SPENCER PRESERVATION GROUP
WHO WE ARE

PRESERVATION ARCHITECT



Lynne Spencer
Principal of Preservation

Lynne has a long and distinguished tenure in the field of historic preservation. She began her career at *Historic New England*, where she held a series of positions including Director of Properties, a role with responsibility for 120 buildings and 50 historic sites. Lynne worked as project manager for L.V. Mawn Construction, was a consultant for the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and served as state director of the Smithsonian Institute's "Save Outdoor Sculpture" initiative. She has directed the preservation and rehabilitation of numerous buildings of national significance.



Douglas L. Manley, AIA, LEED AP
Principal of Architecture

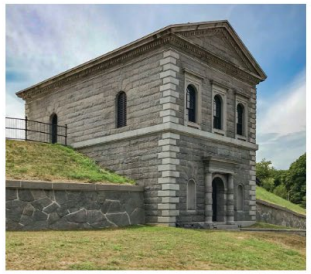
Doug is a seasoned preservation architect focusing on repair, restoration, renovation and additions to historic buildings. His projects typically involve buildings listed on the *State* and *National Registers of Historic Places* for public sector and institutional clients. Doug has particular experience with civic structures and has worked at numerous town halls, sensitively introducing 21st-century office and assembly environments into 19th- and early 20th-century structures.



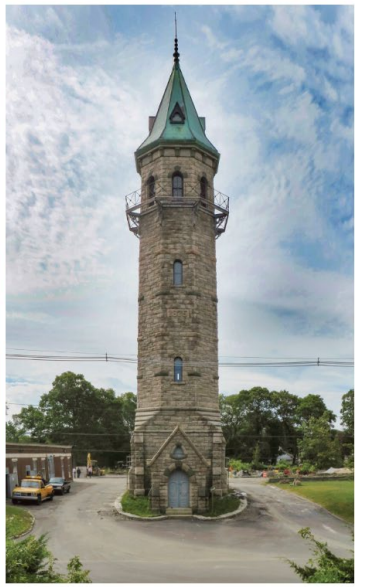
Shawn A. Willett, AIA, CSI
Principal

Shawn has spent nearly a decade honing a sharp interest and appreciation for ecclesiastic and institutional design - for both private clients and historical entities alike. His professional versatility allows him to wear many hats and respond to a broad spectrum of client needs, and played a pivotal role as primary draftsman for the predecessor firm Sullivan Buckingham Architects. Additionally, he's maintained a focus on procuring high-quality construction documents, rendering efficient construction admin services, and engaging his clients with unparalleled clarity and speed.

OUR FIRM







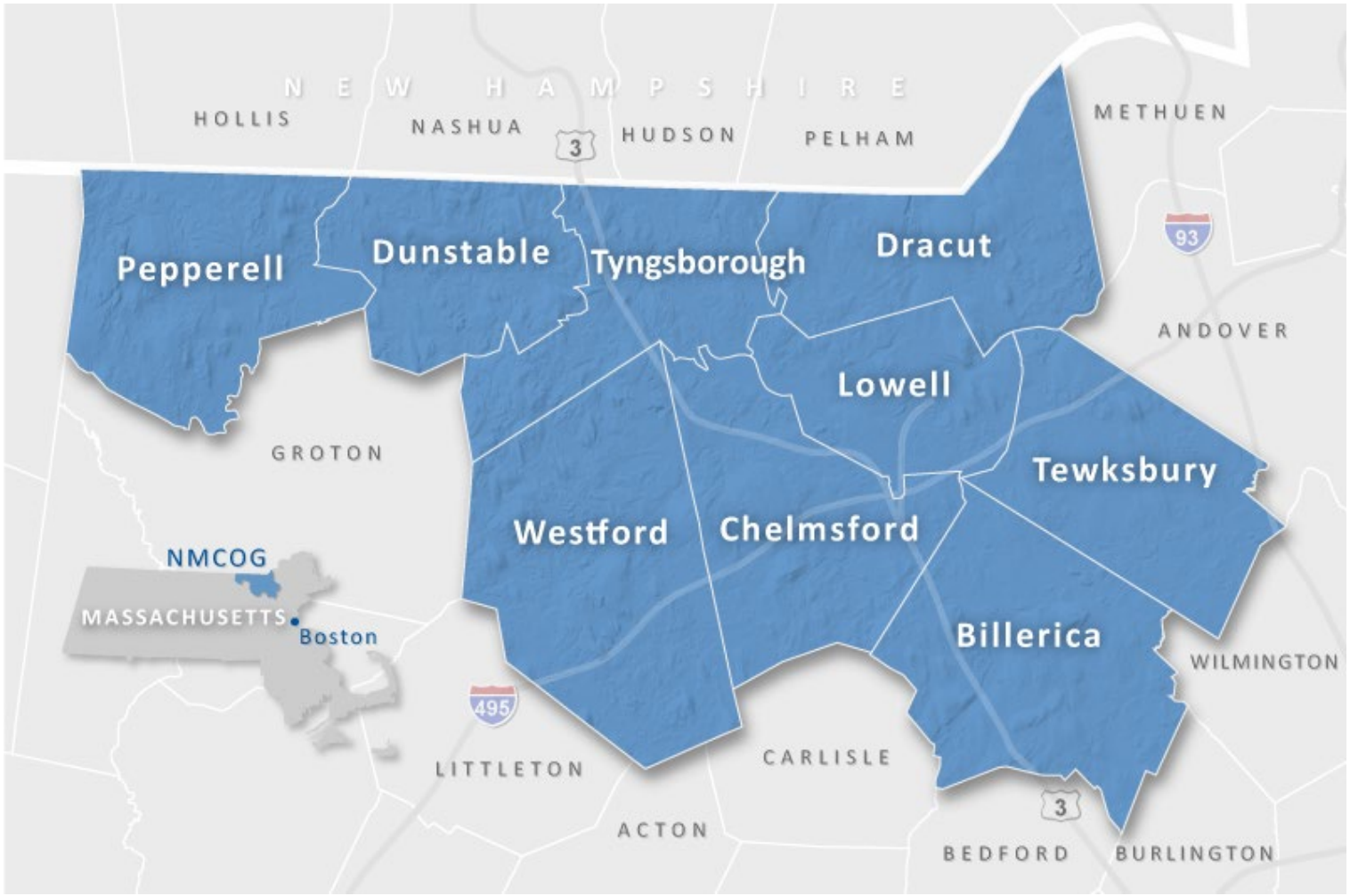








NORTHERN MIDDLESEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
WHO WE ARE



Source: NMCOG

- Established in 1963
- 196 Square Miles
- 310,009 population (2020 census)
- Greater Lowell Workforce Area plus Town of Pepperell
- Lowell HUD Metro FMR Area minus Town of Groton
- Provides free planning services to member communities, including recent and ongoing Dunstable Housing Production Plan

AGENDA

6:10 pm: Presentation: Union Building, Past and Present

6:25 pm: Exercise: History and Hope Sharing

6:35 pm: Presentation: Union Building, Future Possibilities

6:45 pm: Exercise: Group Brainstorming

7:15 pm: Report Out

7:20 pm: Union Building Tour

UNION BUILDING, PAST AND PRESENT

WHY WE'RE HERE

- Built in 1895
- Currently occupied by the Groton-Dunstable School District.
- District intends to vacate the building and turn it over to the Town
- Committee to lead development of restoration plan and identify viable reuse options

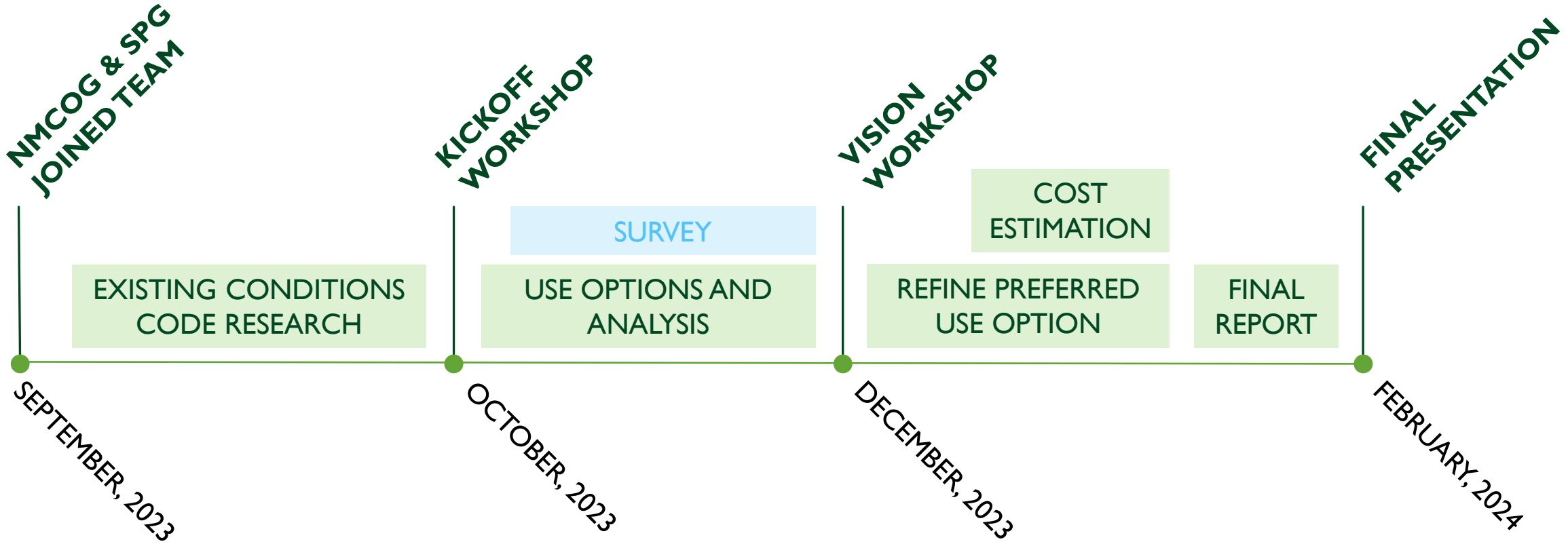


WHY WE'RE HERE

- Start community conversation on needs and hopes for building
- Develop re-use options to share via a townwide survey
- Share the history of the building and discuss site and budgetary constraints
- Deepen our understanding of public concerns



PROJECT SCHEDULE



UNION BUILDING HISTORY

- In 1895, a new school was built and named the "Union School".
- It was designed by Lowell architect Warren L. Floyd in **Classical Revival** style.
- This was a union of five separate school districts.
- The school had two classrooms on each floor, however, several classes met simultaneously in each room when it was first built.
- The classrooms were situated symmetrically so they could all be heated by a central source.



UNION BUILDING HISTORY



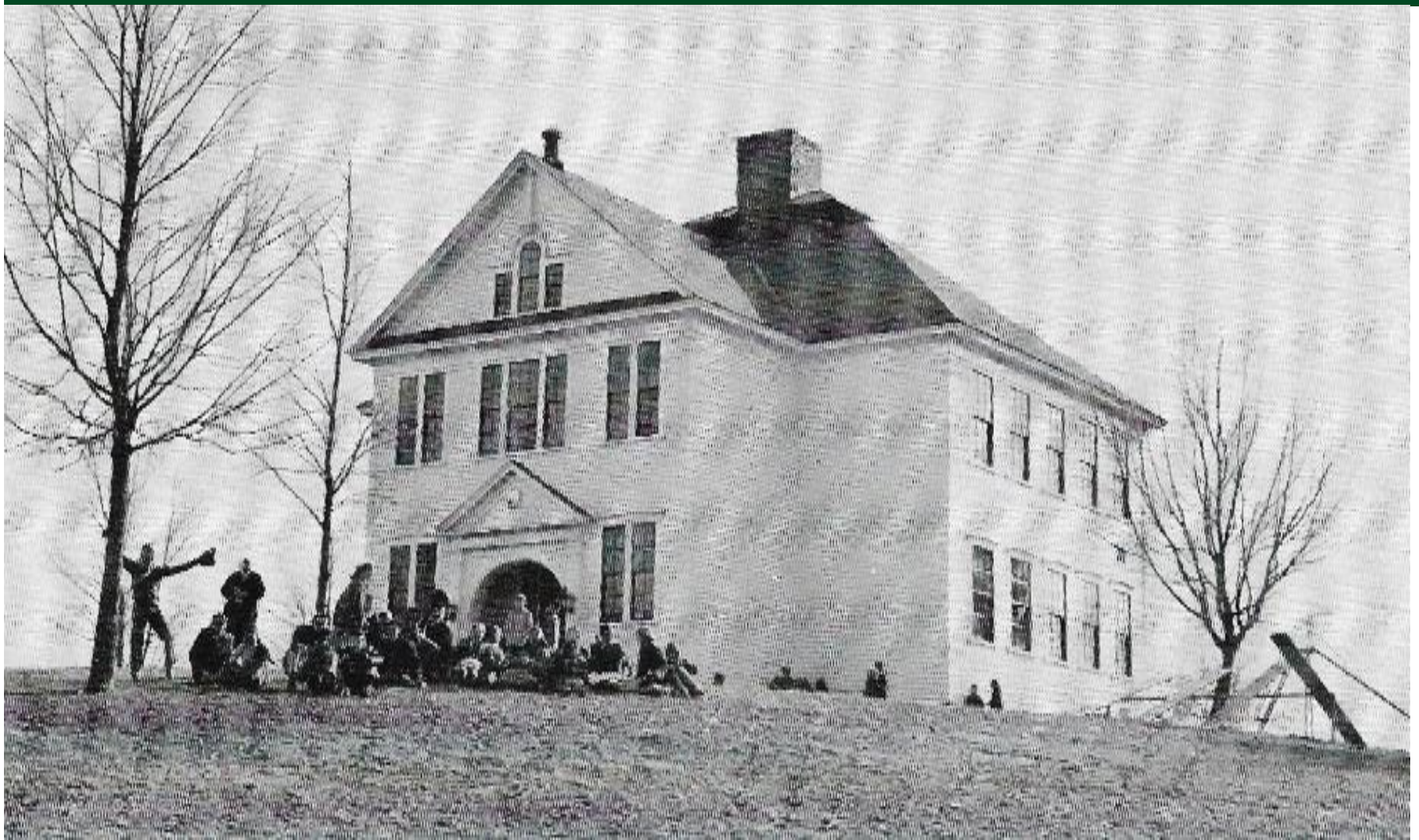
- The Union Building contributes to the **Dunstable Center Historic District.**
- The Dunstable Center Historic District has many significant buildings from the late 1700s and early 1800s.
- The buildings are in styles such as Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Victorian, and Colonial Revival.
- When a 1910 fire destroyed the 1831 Evangelical Congregational Church, it was rebuilt to the east to allow the Union Building greater visibility. It was replaced by a village green in front of the school.

UNION BUILDING HISTORY

- In1962, Swallow Union Elementary School was built to make room for the growing population.
- Swallow Union was connected to the original building via a small structure with a staircase, and Swallow Union had additions in 1980 and 1995.
- Because of their siting on a downhill slope, the additions to the Union School have minimal visibility from either Main or Pleasant streets.



UNION BUILDING HISTORY

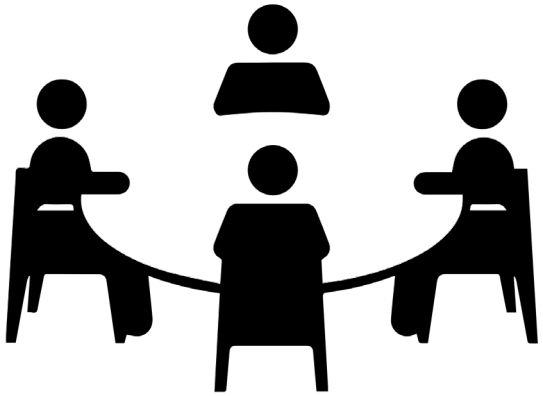


- Most recently housed school programs and other childrens' activities
- Exterior conditions and rehabilitation report completed in 2021 (Discussed later tonight)

IN SUMMARY…

- Historic importance as a place of learning
- Represents the development from a settlement to a town
- Integrated into the Dunstable Center Historic District





What is your history and hopes for the union building?

Share a 6-word story like:

- My kids loved afterschool program here
- Union Building is center of community
- Hope to preserve for future generations

DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Respect Your Turn - Raise your hand and wait for the facilitator to give you the floor to speak.

Step up, Step Back - If you find yourself talking a lot and at length, step back and make space for others and if you find yourself not speaking much, please step up share your opinion.

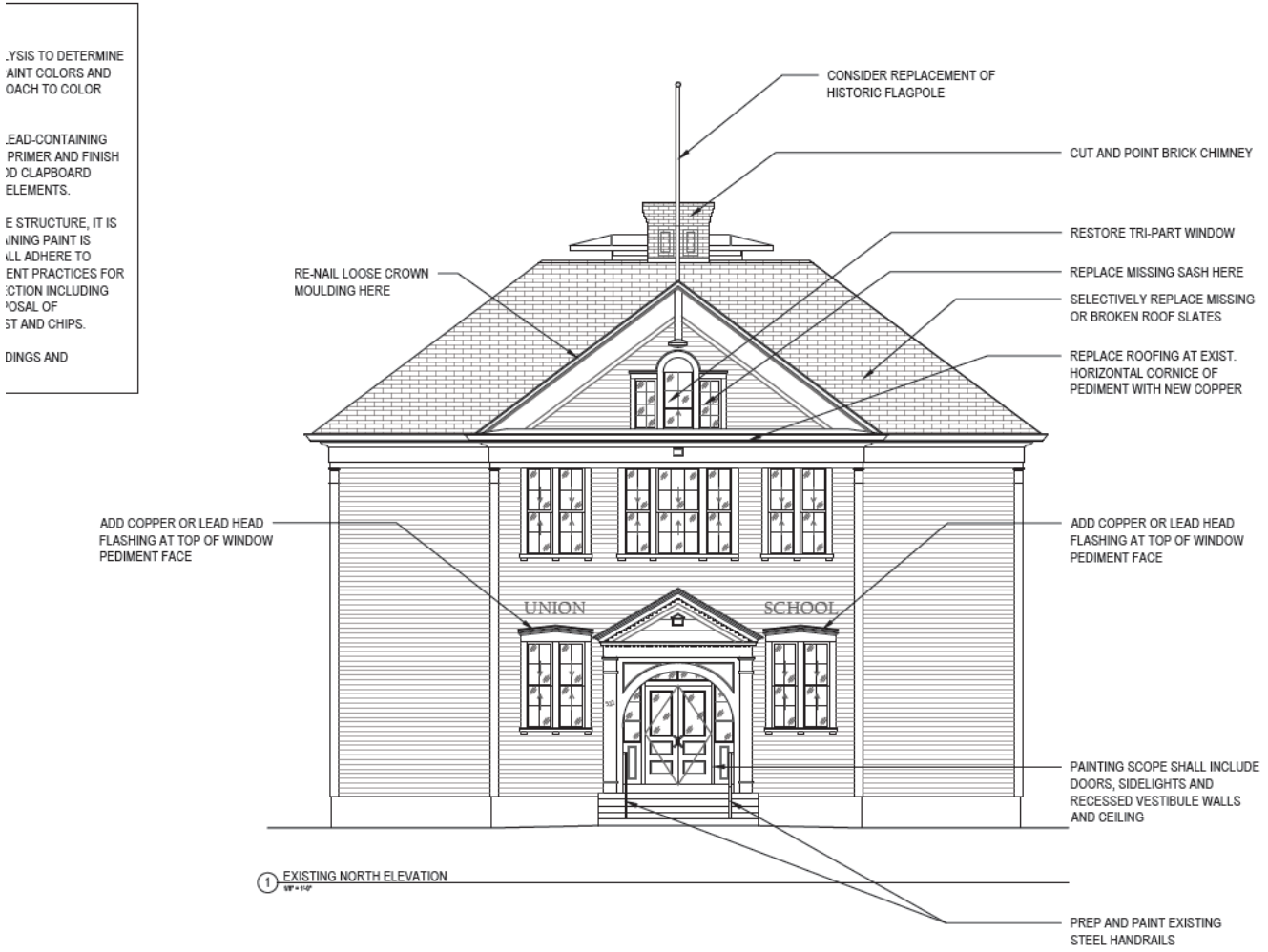
Open Mind - We welcome a diversity of ideas and input.

Comment Cards - If time does not allow for your comment or question, please put additional input on the Comment Card on your table.

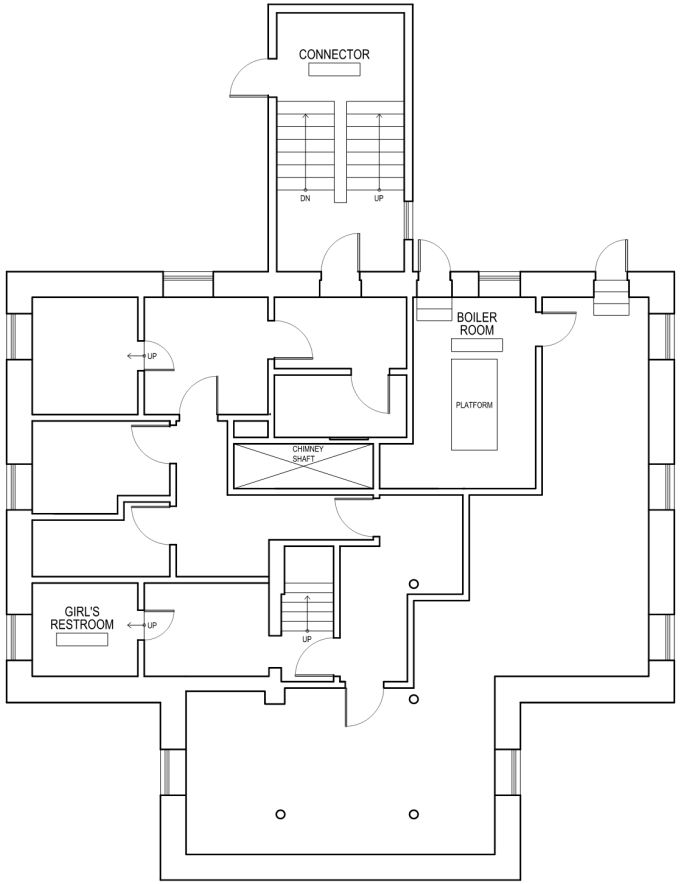
UNION BUILDING, FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

2021 RECOMMENDATIONS

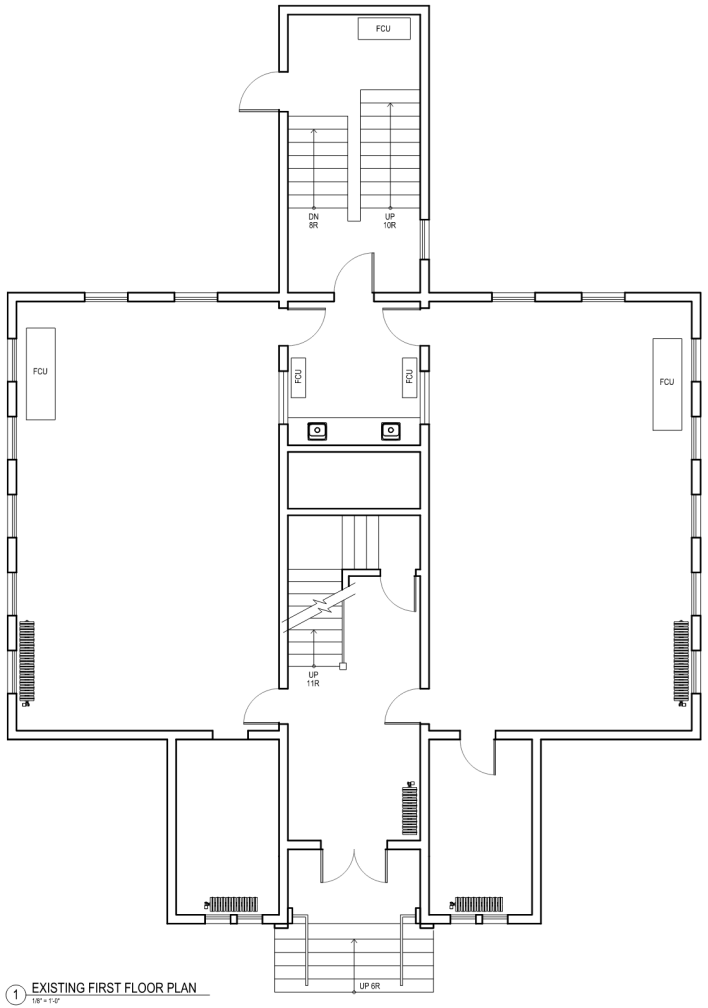
- Recommend to replace shingles, repoint chimney, and foundation, repaint in original colors, repair siding, restore Palladian window, and replace flagpole
- Combined work is estimated to cost approximately **$819,969**, which is due in large part to the safe management of lead paint - to chemically strip and dispose of paint before priming and painting woodwork.



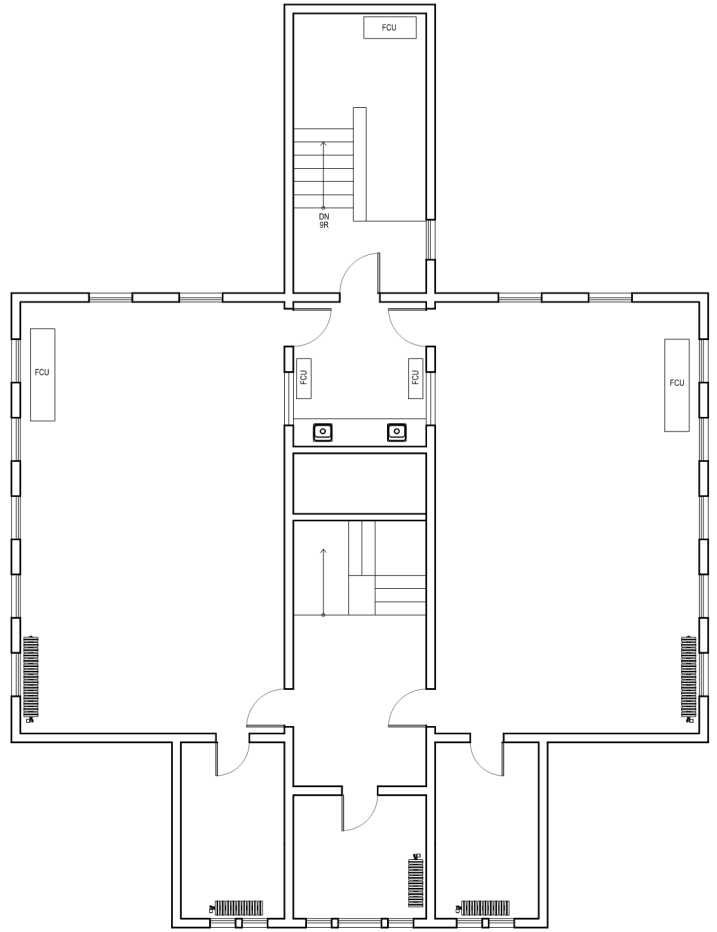
EXISTING FLOOR PLANS



1 EXISTING BASEMENT PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"



1 EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"



1 EXISTING SECOND FLOOR PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"

CASE STUDY 1
ARTIST STUDIOS AT OLD SCHOOLHOUSE – BARNSTABLE, MA


Old Barnstable School – Artist's Studios

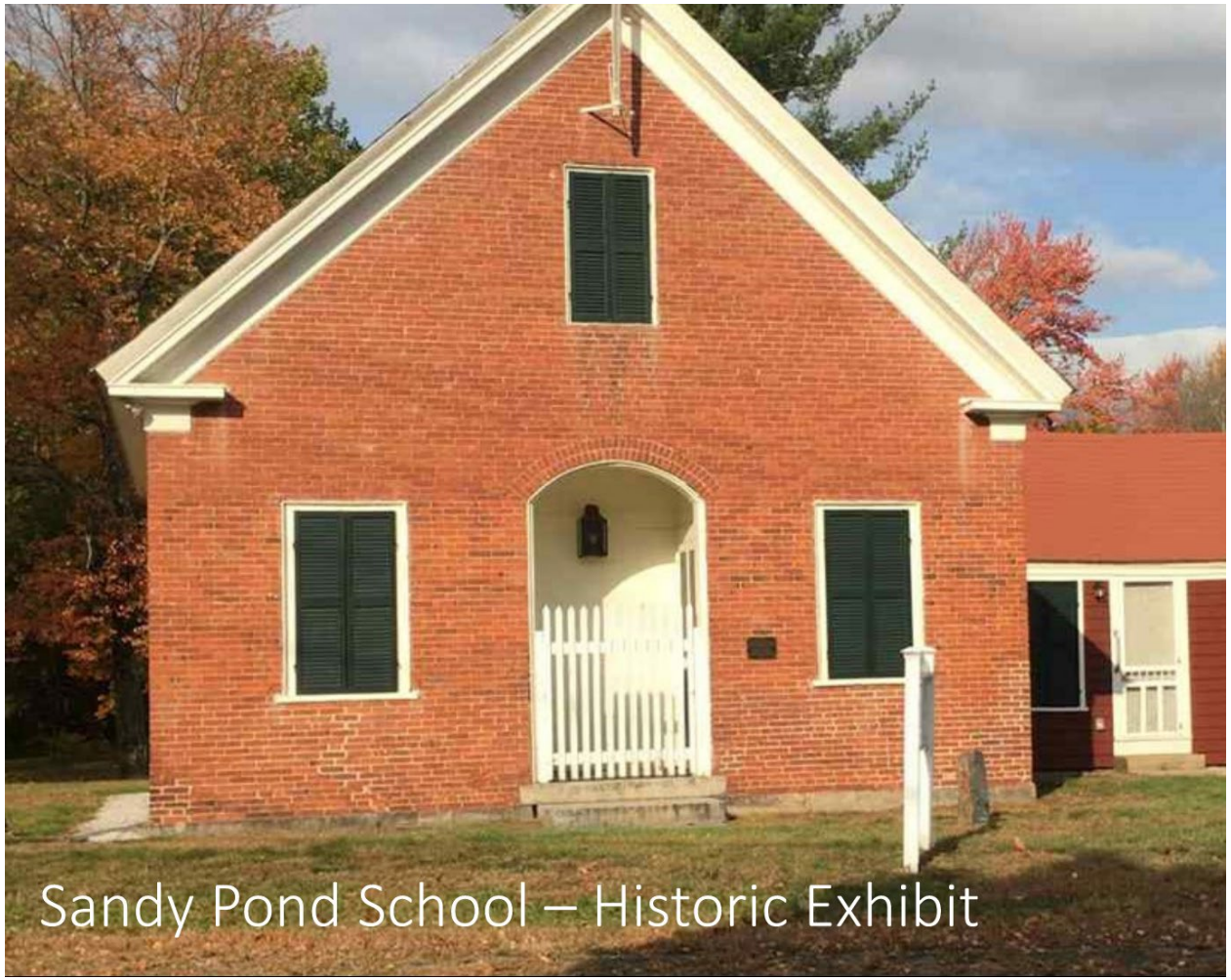


CASE STUDY 1
ARTIST STUDIOS AT OLD SCHOOLHOUSE – BARNSTABLE, MA





CASE STUDY 2
HISTORIC EXHIBIT SPACE AT SANDY POND SCHOOL – AYER, MA


Sandy Pond School – Historic Exhibit



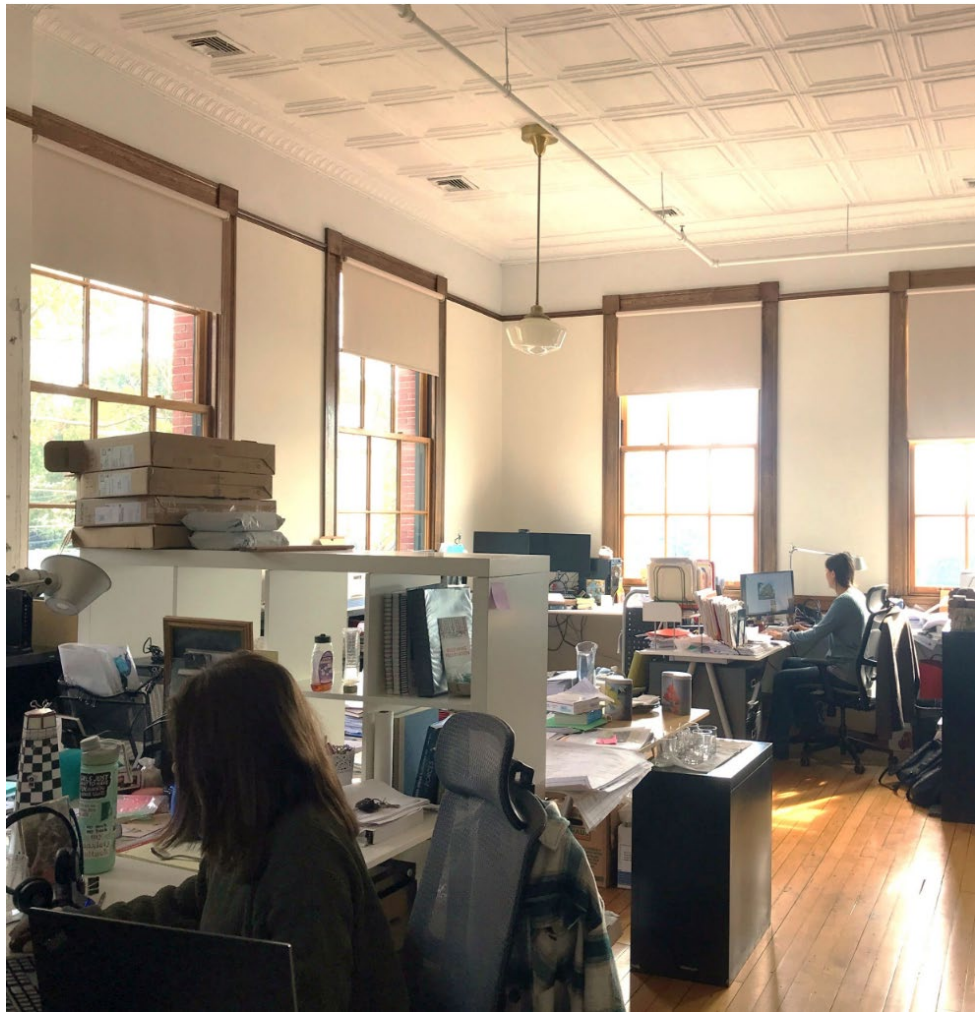
CASE STUDY 2
HISTORIC EXHIBIT SPACE AT SANDY POND SCHOOL – AYER, MA



CASE STUDY 3
PROFESSIONAL OFFICES/EXHIBITS AT VALLEY RD SCHOOL – NAHANT, MA



Valley Road School – Mixed Use: Historical Society Community Room, Business



CASE STUDY 3
PROFESSIONAL OFFICES/EXHIBITS AT VALLEY RD SCHOOL – NAHANT, MA









CASE STUDY 4
APARTMENTS/RESIDENCES AT OLD BELMOND SCHOOL – MALDEN, MA



CASE STUDY 4
APARTMENTS/RESIDENCES AT OLD BELMOND SCHOOL – MALDEN, MA



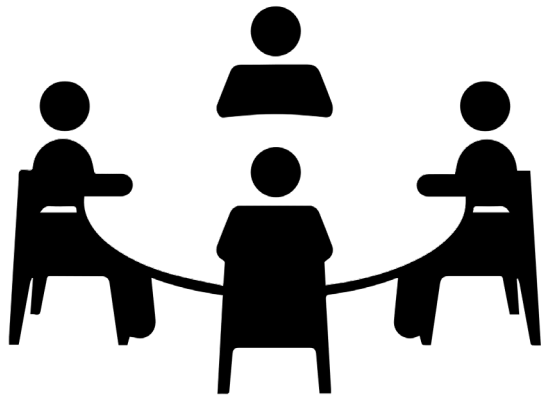


CASE STUDY 5
COMMUNITY CENTER AT OLD HIGH SCHOOL – ROCKPORT, MA









What could the Union Building be?

1. Brainstorm possibilities on tearpads
2. Vote on top possibilities with sticker dots
3. Flesh out top 2 possibilities: What specific hopes or concerns can we add to the vision?
4. Debrief

DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

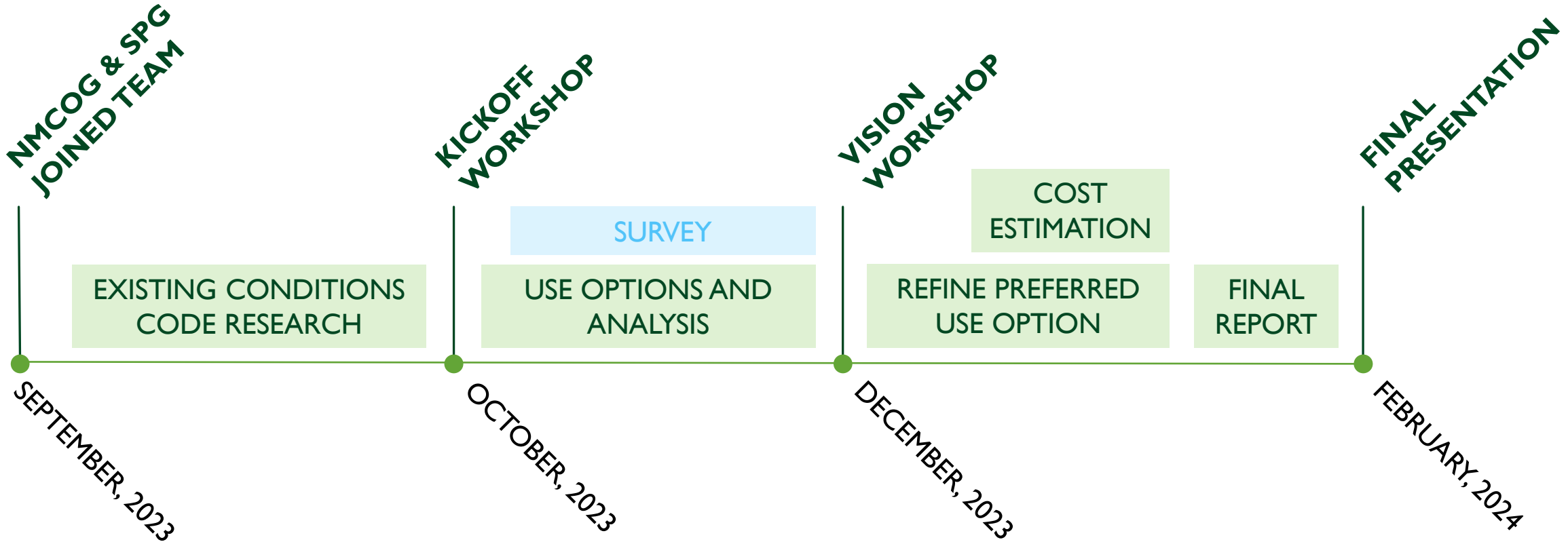
Respect Your Turn - Raise your hand and wait for the facilitator to give you the floor to speak.

Step up, Step Back - If you find yourself talking a lot and at length, step back and make space for others and if you find yourself not speaking much, please step up share your opinion.

Open Mind - We welcome a diversity of ideas and input.

Comment Cards - If time does not allow for your comment or question, please put additional input on the Comment Card on your table.

NEXT STEPS


NMCOG & SPG JOINED TEAM
KICKOFF WORKSHOP
VISION WORKSHOP
FINAL PRESENTATION
SURVEY
COST ESTIMATION
EXISTING CONDITIONS CODE RESEARCH
USE OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS
REFINE PREFERRED USE OPTION
FINAL REPORT
SEPTEMBER, 2023
OCTOBER, 2023
DECEMBER, 2023
FEBRUARY, 2024

THANKS!

Chris Hayes, AICP, Housing and Economic Development Manager
Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

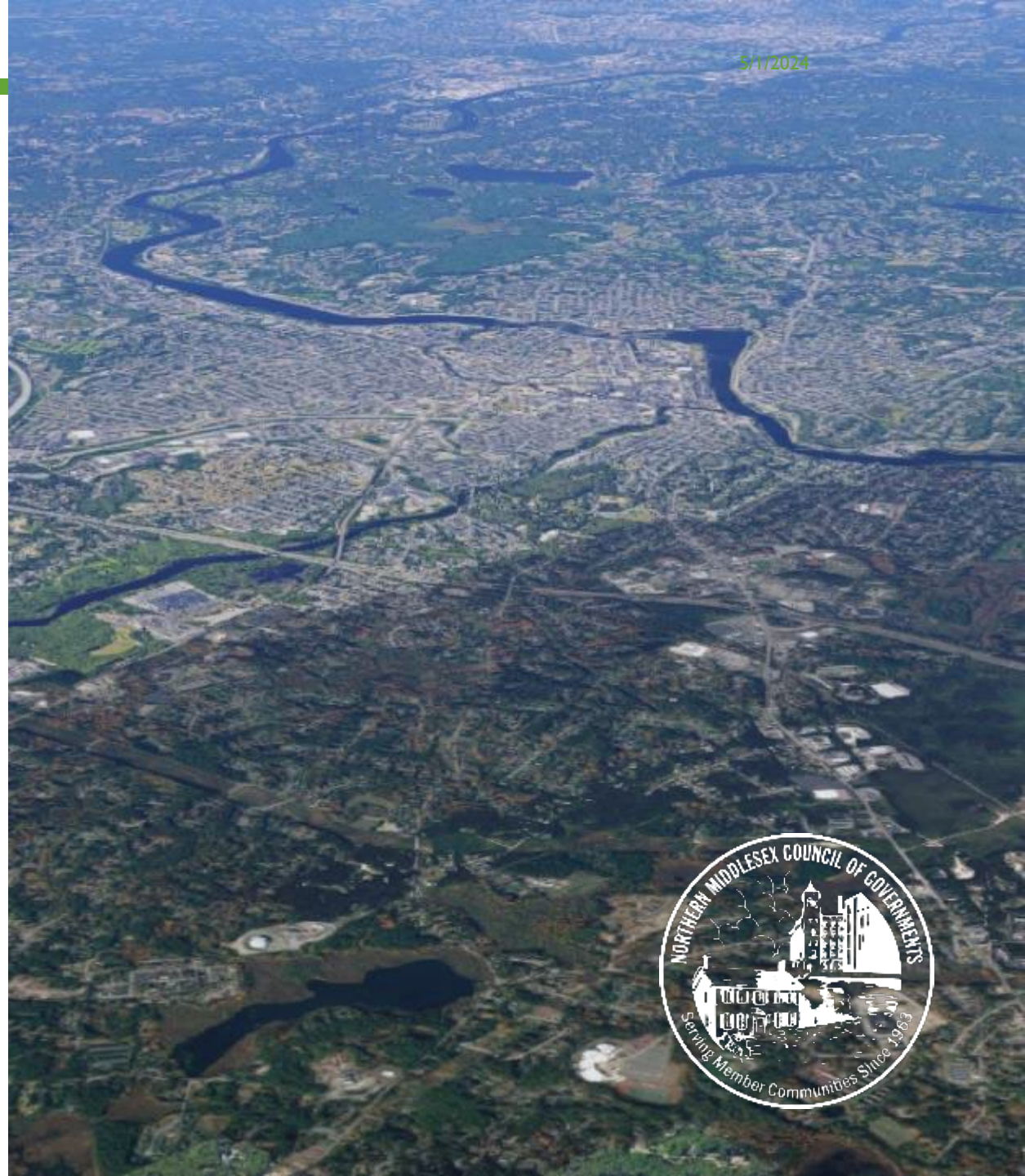
chayes@nmcog.org

(978) 454-8021 x122

Doug Manley AIA, LEED AP, Principle-in-Charge
Spencer Preservation Group

doug@spencerpreservationgroup.com

(617) 227-2675



WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE UNION BUILDING?
Kick-off Workshop Results Summary

30+ **Attendees**

October 26, 2023

The "What is the Future of the Union Building" Kick-off workshop took place at Dunstable Town Hall at 6:00 pm, October 26, 2023 with an additional Hybrid Zoom option. The meeting was advertised via Nextdoor, Dunstable's Facebook page, and the Neighbor to Neighbor newsletter. It was also promoted by the Dunstable Union Building Rehabilitation Committee. 32 attendees were counted, including facilitators, committee members, and members of the public attending in-person or via Zoom.

Presentation 1: Union Building, Past and Present

The first presentation was facilitated by Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) and introduced the Union Building and the planning process, including a brief overview of its history and current status. It was noted that the planning process is at an early stage, so although public input is valuable, it is only one component of the decision-making process. A public survey based on the kick-off will be released, and feasibility for preferred options will be studied. After the presentation, meeting attendees were invited to share their stories about the Union Building and their hopes for the site in small groups. Facilitators then reported on the groups:

History and Connection

- Many attendees had children that attended the Swallow Union school and took after-school programs in the school.
- "My dream home brought me here, small town living that isn't really small town. Interested in community, fostering a sense of community in Dunstable. Things that bring Dunstable alive and bring people together, [I hope that I], too will participate in the community."
- A PTO volunteer volunteered to bring the Union Building up at PTO meetings.
- "Interested in anything that brings her deeper to the community and connects her."
- "[The school is] Standing over the town and keeping watch."
- "I'm obsessed with this stunning building"
- Some attendees remembered when the school was used for 5th and 6th grade overflow.
- Some attendees attended regular school in the building in the 1950s.
- It was noted that some of the original desks are still in existence.

Hopes

- Community center in Groton as a model.
- Children's programing, Dunstable Children's Museum.
- Would be a wonderful place to have winter activities.
- There was a lot of interest in continuing school-aged children activities in the school

Presentation 2: Union Building, Future Possibilities

The second presentation was facilitated by Spencer Preservation Group (SPG) and reviewed the Union Building's floor plan and a report regarding the exterior restoration of the building. It also reviewed several case studies of similar buildings being re-used for diverse purposes. After the presentation, there was a brief Question and Answer session, then attendees brainstormed uses for the building, then voted on which uses they wished to discuss in more depth.

Questions and concerns voiced during Q&A or after the session included:

- How does existing school impact possible uses?
- How does the limited parking create additional constraints especially for some uses (such as senior center use or use for meetings)?
- What are state funding sources for housing and community facilities?
- Could the building be of more than one use?
- Senior Center space is a critical need as it is currently housed in the Library
- Could the basement be rented out as well if fixed up?
- What are accessibility needs?
- What is the cost to the town, both now and for ongoing maintenance? – This is a concern.
- What educational programming can take place in the Swallow School after the reorganization and what additional space is needed for children's' activities, public or nonprofit?

Because each of the four breakout groups led brainstorming and voting separately and used different methods to vote, each group's results are presented separately on the following pages.

Group 1

Idea	Number of Dots	Notes
Classroom – Historic - Museum	5	Winslow School Tyngsborough – preserve and restore, some alteration. – Source for historic materials
Artist Studios	4	Upstairs, 4 total - Temp. Hall, split room. $9 – 25/sf. Control median. Maintenance? Management?
Community Meeting Space/Rental Space	4	
Historical Society	4	Store archives, display artifacts, office
Crash Pad for TA	1	
Mobile offices – share space		
Senior space		Lunch, bone builders, craft/arts table
Private office		

Group 2

Idea	Number of Dots	Notes
Restoration of Classroom	4	
Art and Performing Arts Workshop Space	3	
Multipurpose Area	2	Adult ed, speakers, other uses that are brainstormed here
Senior Center/Intergenerational Center	2	
Artist Studio	2	
Dunstable Museum	1	
Children/afterschool		
Meeting Space		Similar to Harmony Hall in Dracut, could be used for official town meetings and other meetings
Town Hall storage		
Pickleball		Half-joke, but athletic activities for seniors discussed
Theatre		

Group 3

Idea	Number of Dots	Notes
Historic Room/Museum	6	
Town Administration Space	4	
Maker space/craft	3	
Senior activities/youth activities	2	
Flexible rented space		
Bigger space for meetings		
Housing		

Group 4

Idea	Notes
Residential	
Community center or non profit space	
Space for the Town / residents	Exercise, community space
Upstairs rented as office space	
Retail space	that fits the character of the town
Small entrepreneurial / craft market	
Entrepreneurship for all in Lowell	Food related start ups
Restaurant in Dunstable would be great	Community kitchen, commercial grade kitchen with pop-up events
Coffeehouse vibe	Used books, board games, seniors and kids after school
Council on Aging idea is great as well	Misses Andover senior center
Concert series on the town green	
Indoor farmers market type place	
Anything to do with fitness	After school / council on aging, Karate / Tai Kwan Do, Dance Studio
Trade for something that's happening elsewhere in town that's in a less desirable location	
Cub scouts	If wanted to use the space at Swallow Union on a Saturday or Sunday, it's a $500 fee.
Historic Society/Museum	
Mobile Office	
Community Meeting Space	
Artist space/maker space	

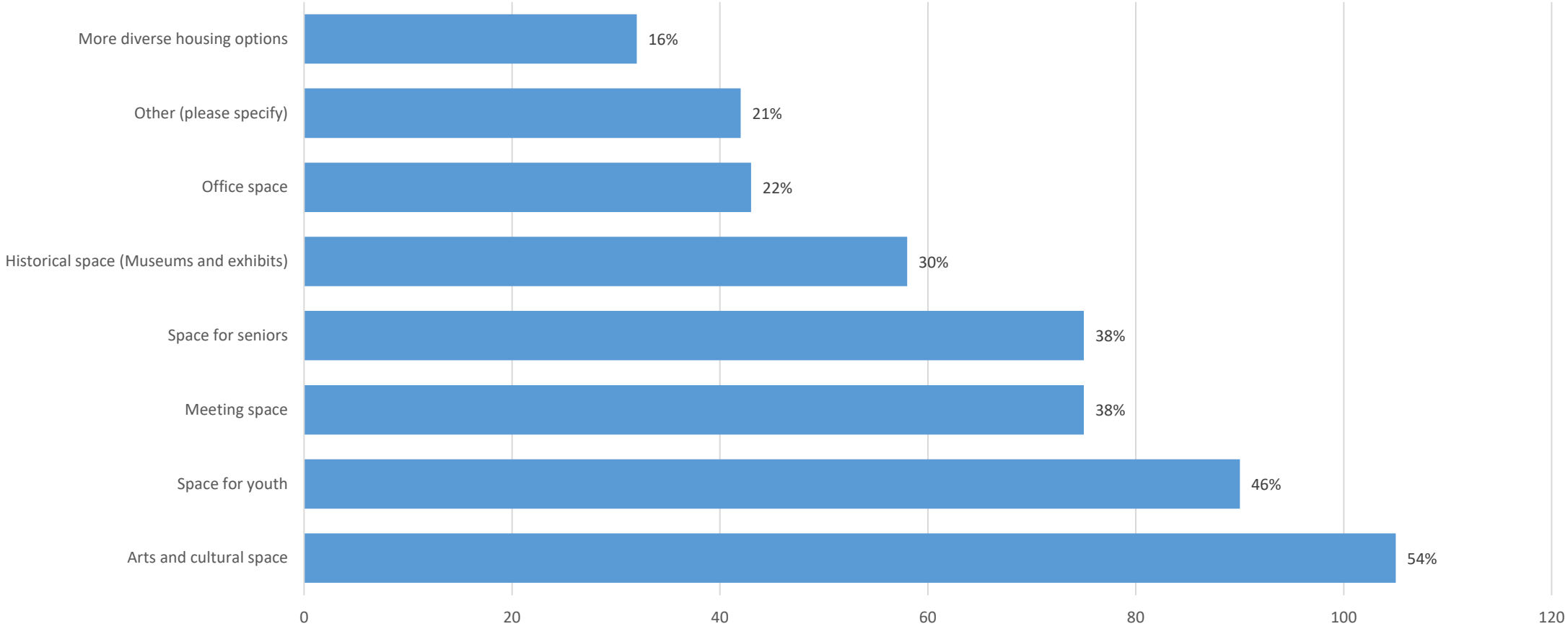
Conclusions

Although the opinions were diverse, no attendees voiced support for razing the building or selling it to the highest bidder. All felt that it was a critical piece of history and should be retained as a valuable asset in the Town Center.

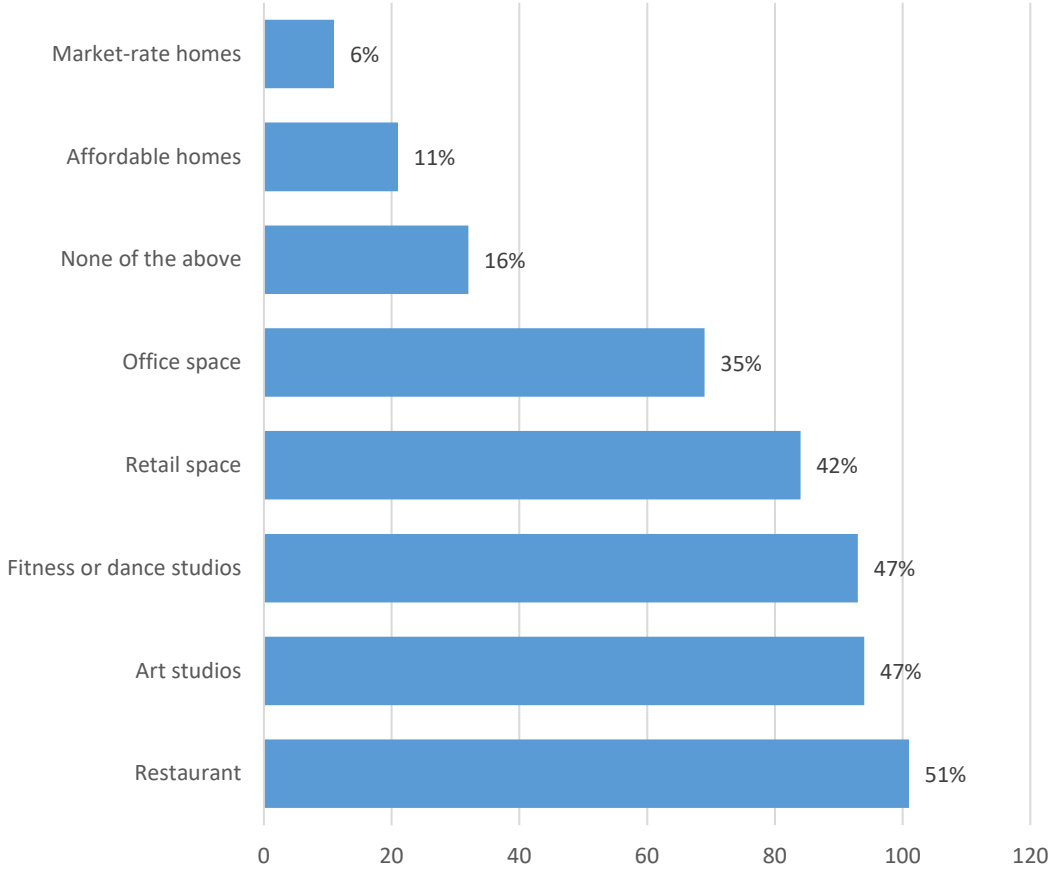
There was perhaps the most excitement for uses that incorporated the history of the Union Building, such as a museum, a space for the Historical Society, or a recreation of one of the classrooms. There was also strong support for arts uses and community meeting uses. There was also a great deal of support for splitting uses and having private uses (art studios, office space, or other income-producing spaces) on the top floor and possibly basement, and a public use on the first floor. Notably, positive or negative feedback on residential uses or affordable housing was not discussed as much as community uses. That said, the public appeared to be flexible: there was a strong sentiment that whatever use contributed to the preservation of the building was acceptable, and that the Town should actively pursue funding sources for this purpose.

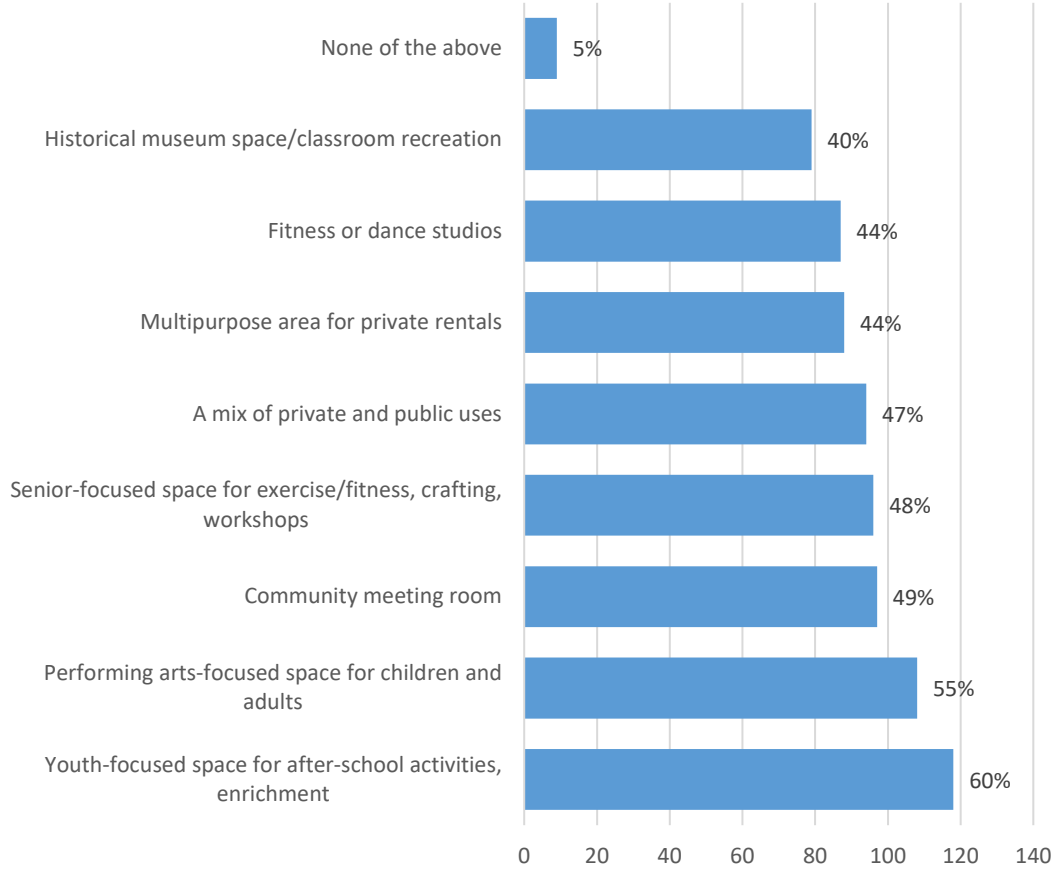
Finally, there are many competing needs in Dunstable. Meeting space when Town Hall spaces are full, senior center space, commercial kitchen, and public arts spaces were all voiced as a need. Some of these may be feasible for the Union Building, while others should be considered if future opportunities rise.

What do you think Dunstable Town Center needs most? (Check all that apply)

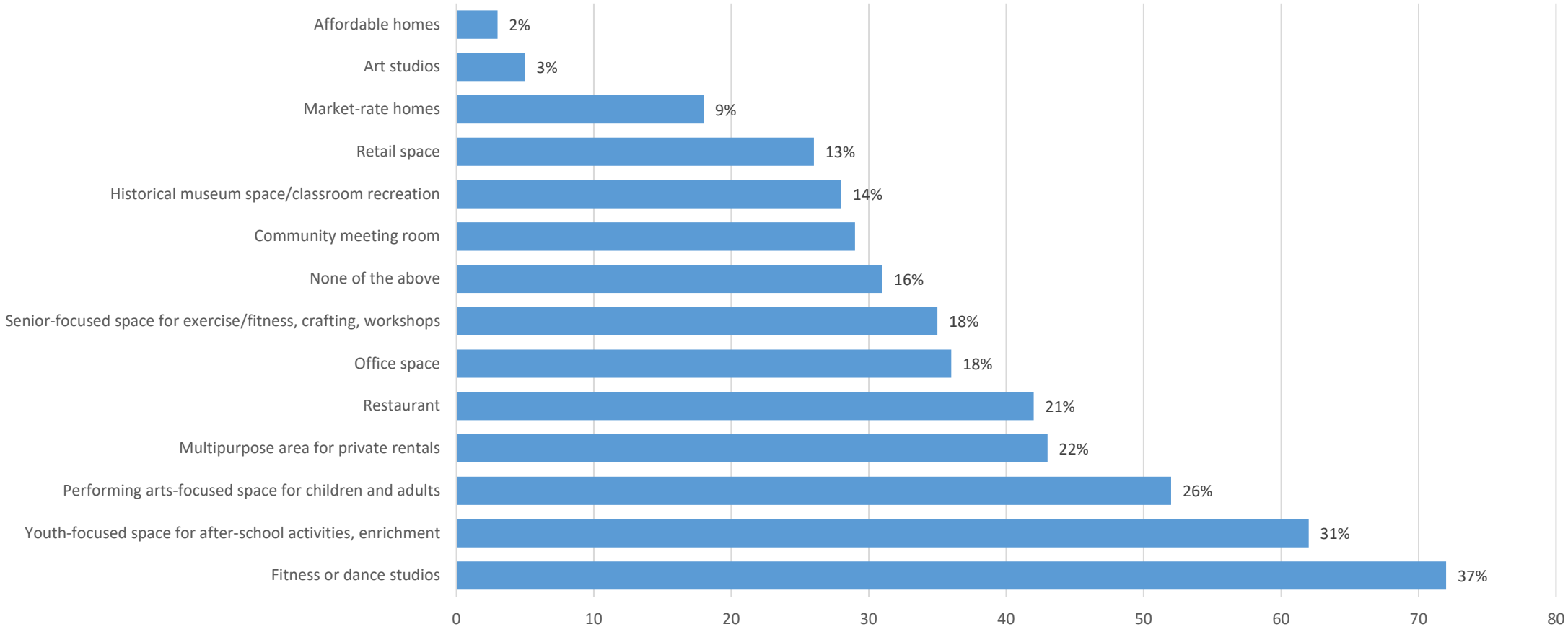


Which of these new private/public uses operated by the Town or a nonprofit for the building would you support? (Check all that apply)

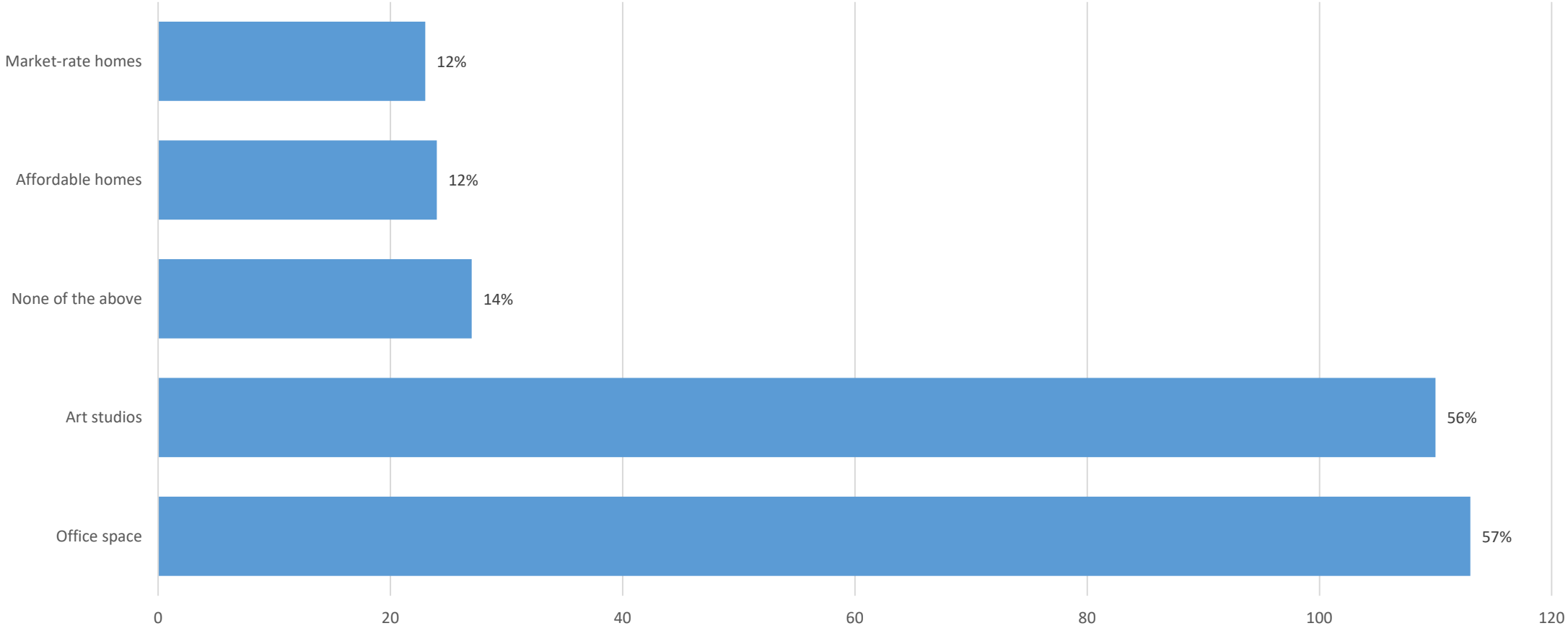




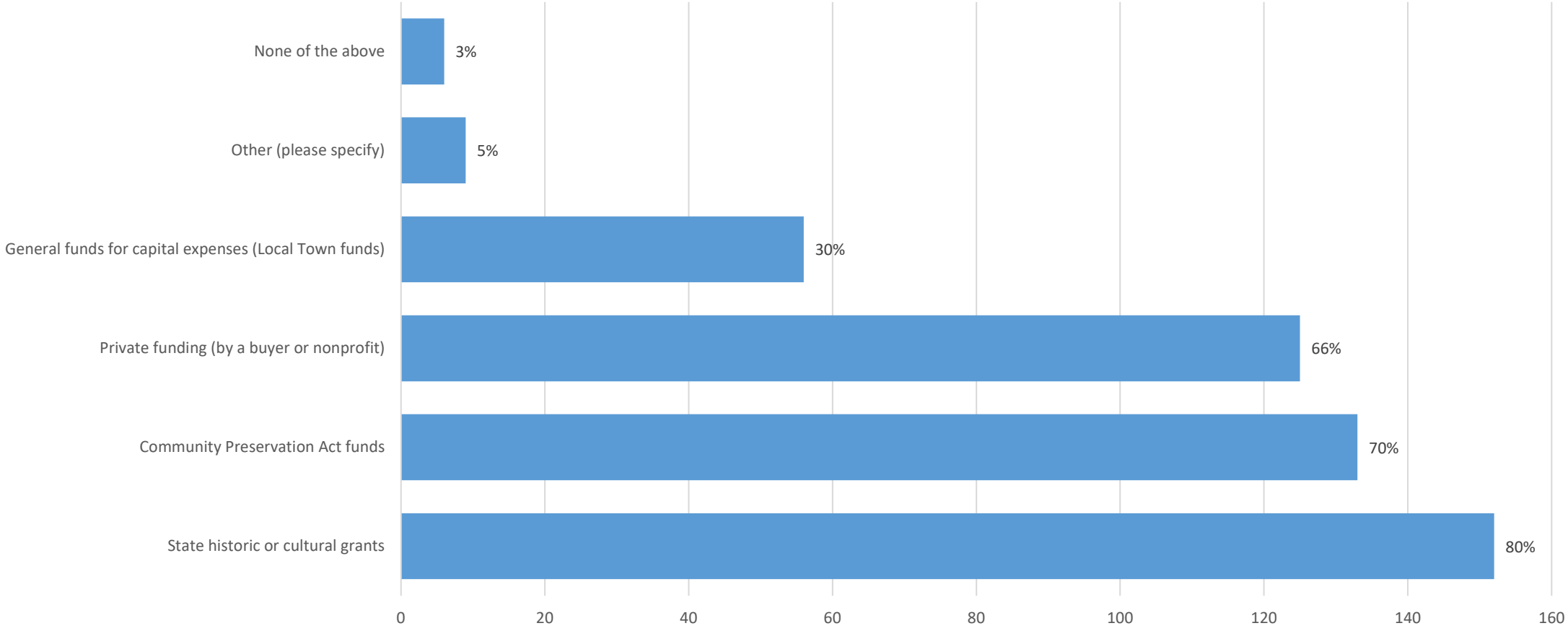
Which of the uses would you most like to see in the Union Building? Select up to 3.



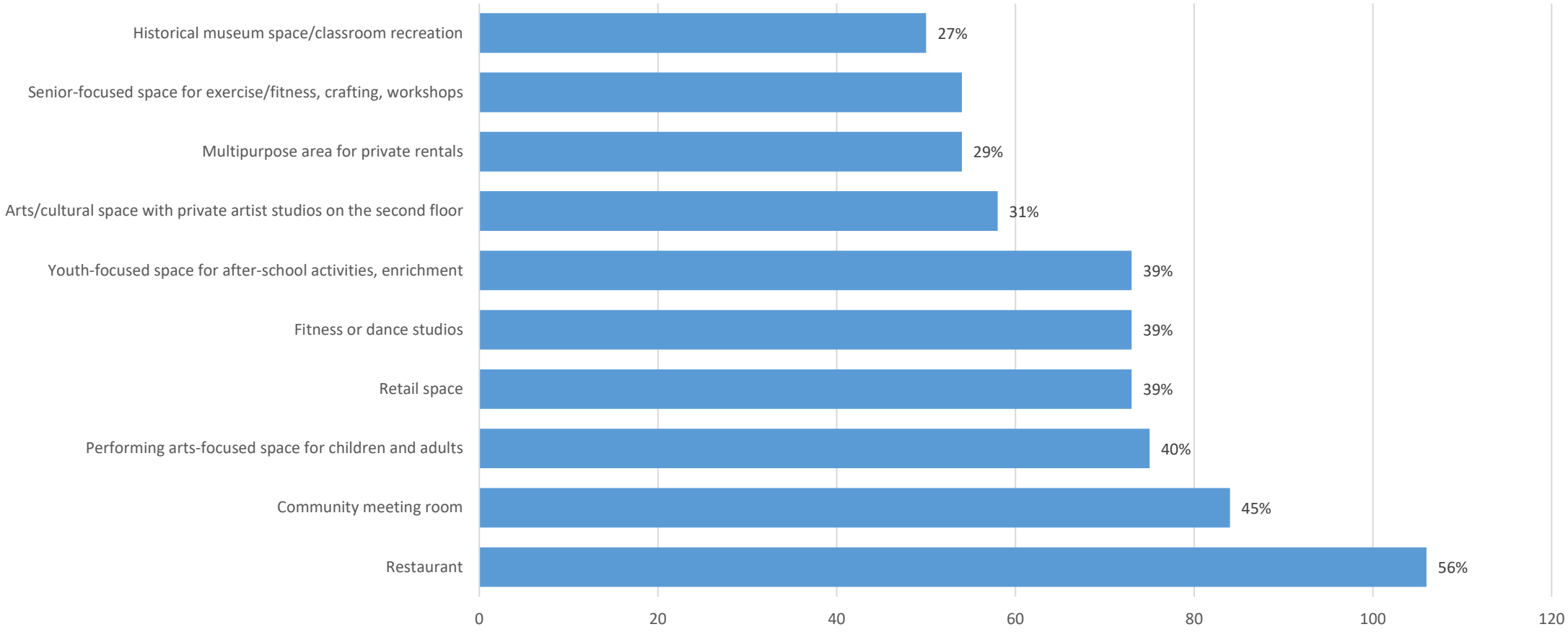
The Union Building Rehabilitation Committee is considering a public use on the first floor and a private use that would pay rent to offset costs on the second floor. If the bottom floor was public and the top floor was used for a private space, which would you support for the upper space? (Check all that apply.)



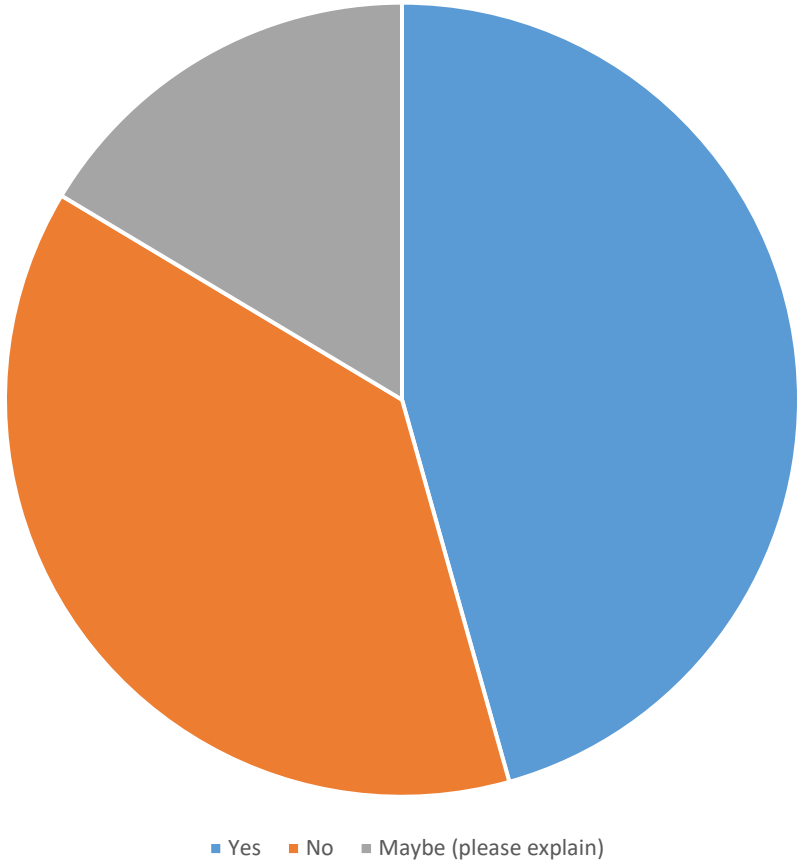
Which of the funding sources would you support for necessary improvements? (Check all that apply)



Which of the following uses might you or members of your household personally use? (Check all that apply)



Would you support the Town selling the building for one of the uses you support?



Concerns

- Parking
- Proximity to school
- Safety (Children at Swallow Union)
- Historical preservation
- Maintenance





WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE UNION BUILDING?

FEASIBILITY STUDY SURVEY RESULTS MEETING

February 8, 2024 – NMCOG and Spencer Preservation Group

UNION BUILDING REHABILITATION COMMITTEE
WHO WE ARE

Leah D. Basbanes - *Chair*

Walter Alterisio

Alan Chaney

Tim DiNicola

Sherry Kersey

Suchitra Mumford

Jeff Rosen

Bebe Wood

SPENCER PRESERVATION GROUP
WHO WE ARE

PRESERVATION ARCHITECT



Lynne Spencer
Principal of Preservation

Lynne has a long and distinguished tenure in the field of historic preservation. She began her career at *Historic New England*, where she held a series of positions including Director of Properties, a role with responsibility for 120 buildings and 50 historic sites. Lynne worked as project manager for L.V. Mawn Construction, was a consultant for the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and served as state director of the Smithsonian Institute's "Save Outdoor Sculpture" initiative. She has directed the preservation and rehabilitation of numerous buildings of national significance.



Douglas L. Manley, AIA, LEED AP
Principal of Architecture

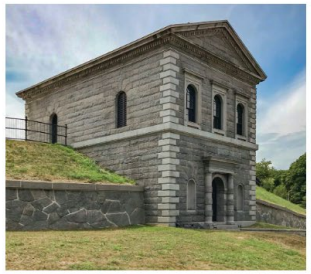
Doug is a seasoned preservation architect focusing on repair, restoration, renovation and additions to historic buildings. His projects typically involve buildings listed on the *State* and *National Registers of Historic Places* for public sector and institutional clients. Doug has particular experience with civic structures and has worked at numerous town halls, sensitively introducing 21st-century office and assembly environments into 19th- and early 20th-century structures.



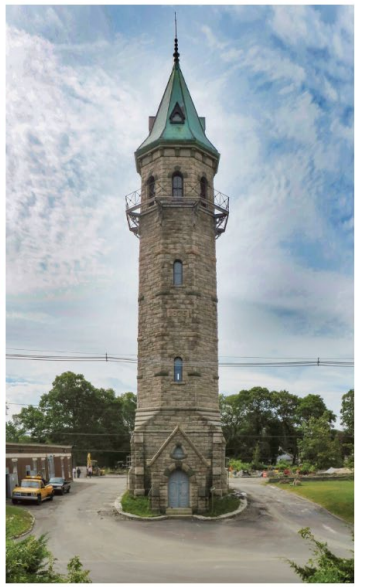
Shawn A. Willett, AIA, CSI
Principal

Shawn has spent nearly a decade honing a sharp interest and appreciation for ecclesiastic and institutional design - for both private clients and historical entities alike. His professional versatility allows him to wear many hats and respond to a broad spectrum of client needs, and played a pivotal role as primary draftsman for the predecessor firm Sullivan Buckingham Architects. Additionally, he's maintained a focus on procuring high-quality construction documents, rendering efficient construction admin services, and engaging his clients with unparalleled clarity and speed.

OUR FIRM







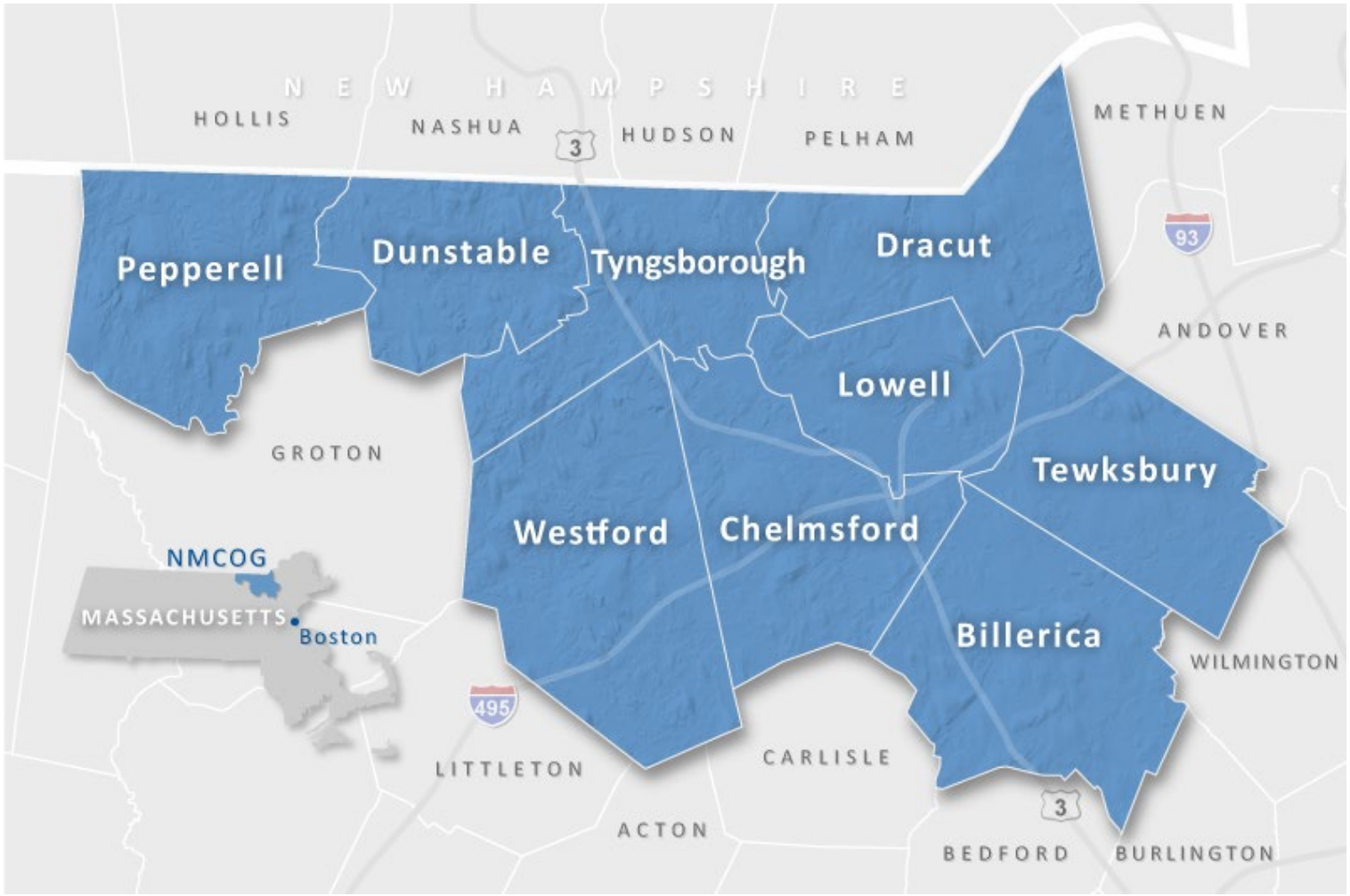








NORTHERN MIDDLESEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
WHO WE ARE



Source: NMCOG

- Established in 1963
- 196 Square Miles
- 310,009 population (2020 census)
- Greater Lowell Workforce Area plus Town of Pepperell
- Lowell HUD Metro FMR Area minus Town of Groton
- Provides free planning services to member communities, including recent and ongoing Dunstable Housing Production Plan

AGENDA

6:05 pm: Welcome

6:10 pm: Why We're Here, Plan Timeline, and Survey Results

6:20 pm: The 5 Downstairs and 2 Upstairs Use Options

6:25 pm: Exploration of Parking and Interior Renovation Costs

6:30 pm: Exercise 1: Facilitated Discussion on Alternatives

6:50 pm: Exercise 2: Who do we know?

7:00 pm: Convene

WHY WE'RE HERE

- Built in 1895
- Currently occupied by the Groton-Dunstable School District.
- District intends to vacate the building and turn it over to the Town
- Committee to lead development of restoration plan and identify viable reuse options

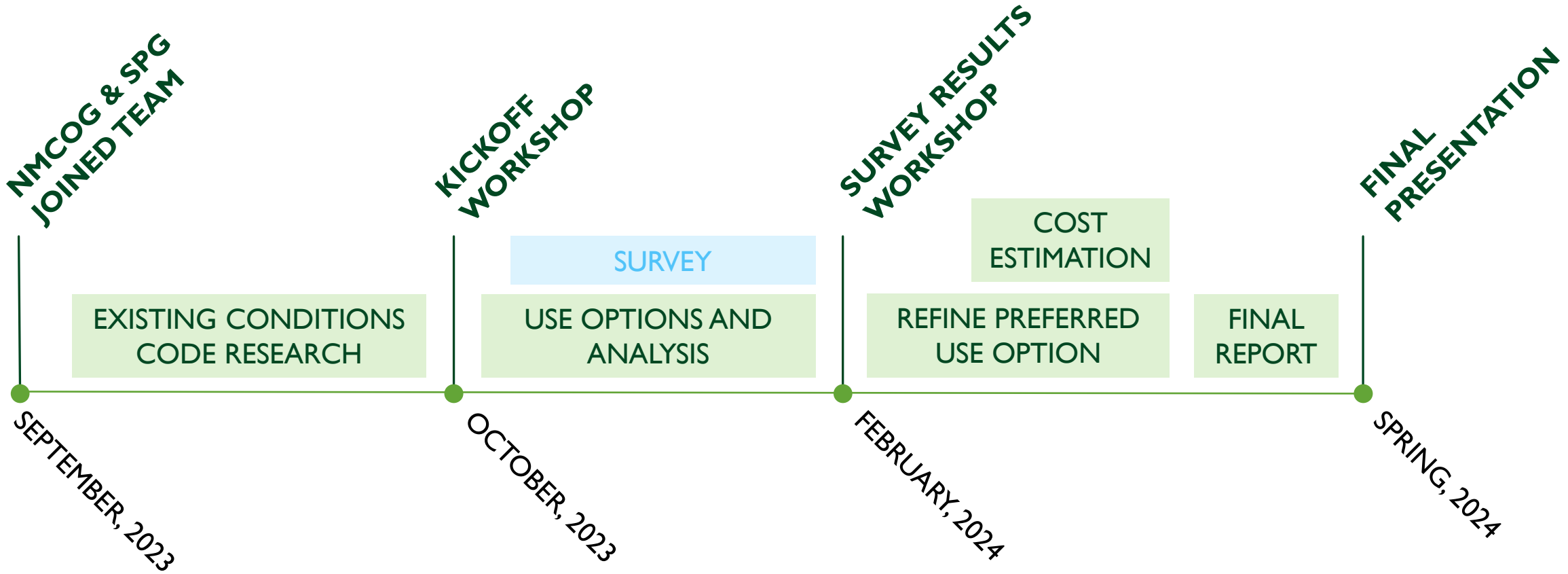


WHY WE'RE HERE

- Continue conversation and weigh possible options
- Deepen our understanding of public concerns
- Begin developing a list of interested parties to explore feasibility of various uses

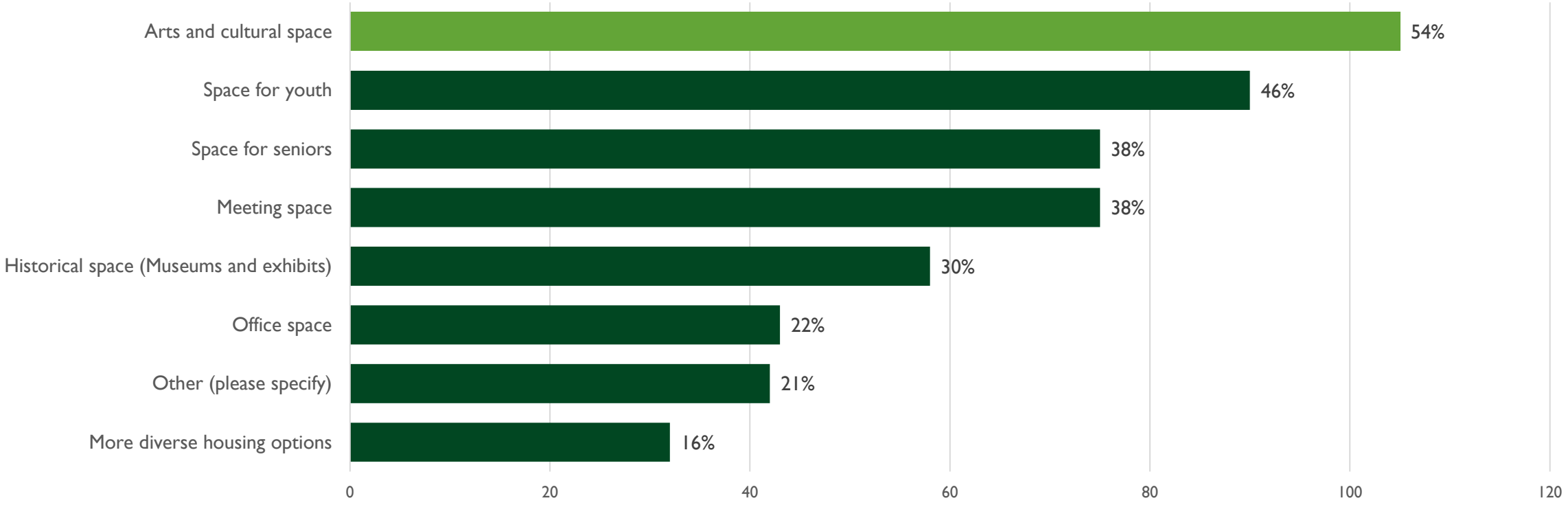


PROJECT SCHEDULE



SURVEY RESULTS

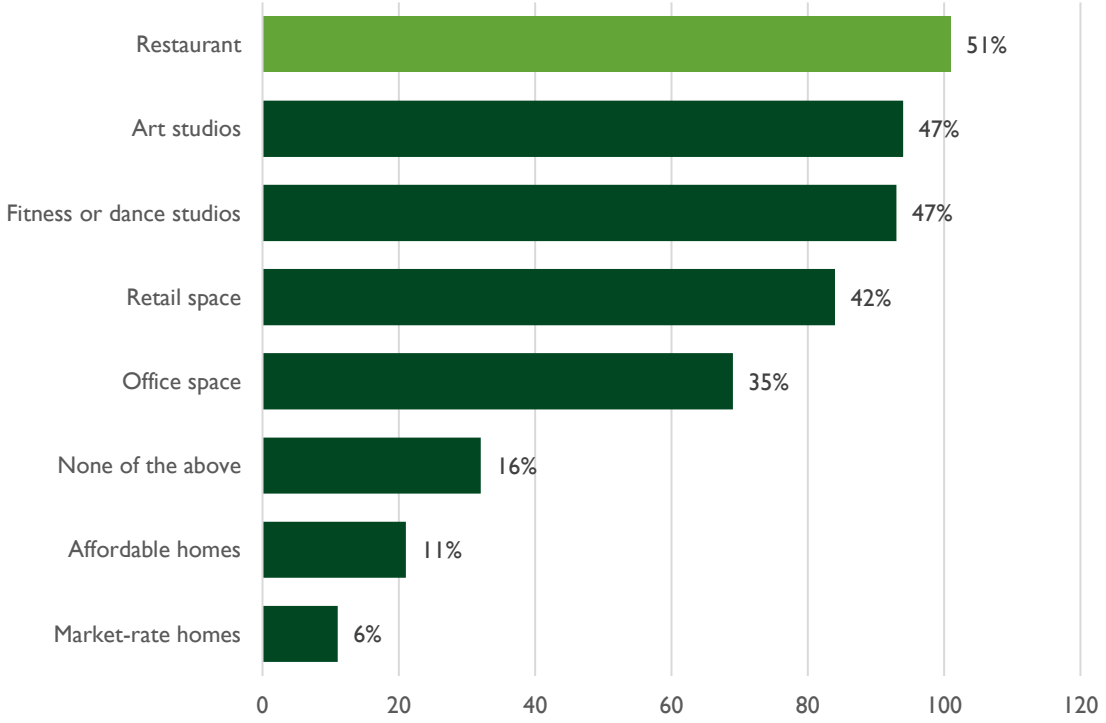
WHAT DO YOU THINK DUNSTABLE TOWN CENTER NEEDS MOST? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)



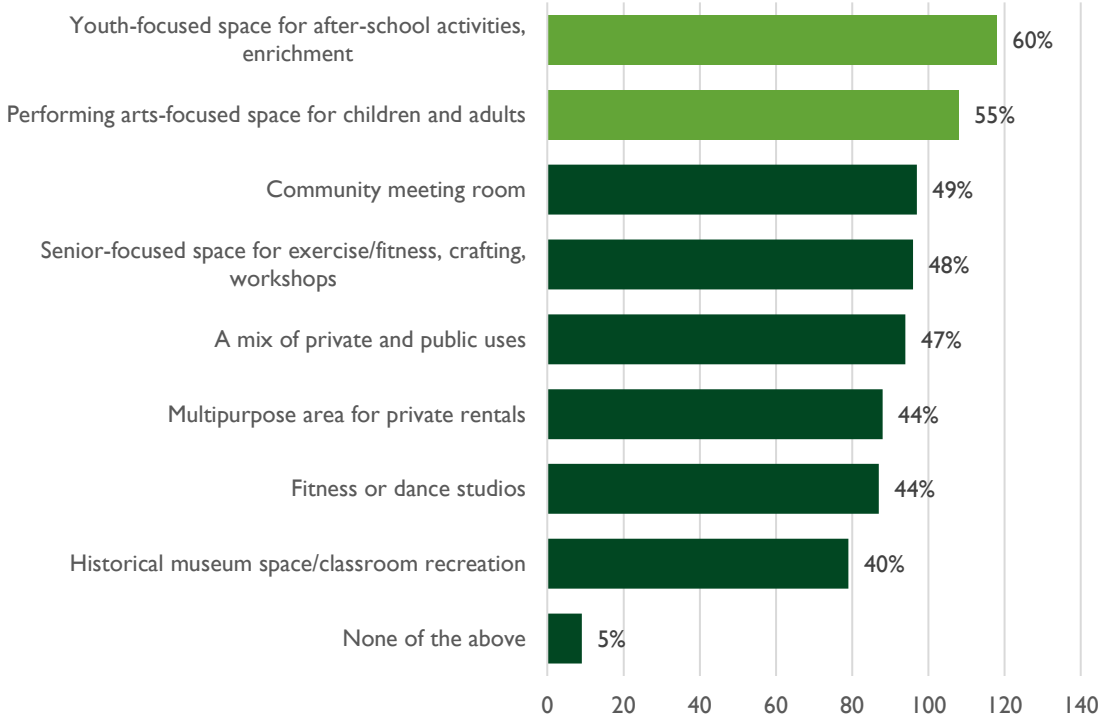
Other responses over 10: General Commercial: 18; Restaurant: 11

WHICH OF THESE NEW PRIVATE/PUBLIC USES OPERATED BY THE TOWN OR A NONPROFIT FOR THE BUILDING WOULD YOU SUPPORT? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

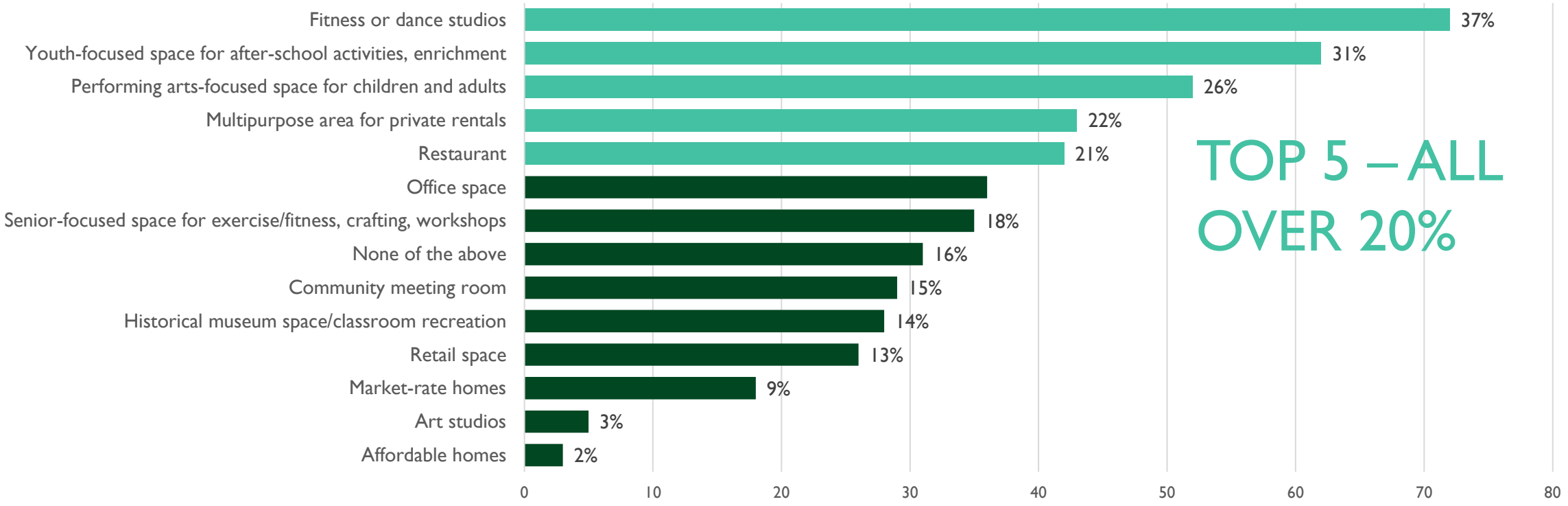
PRIVATE USES



PUBLIC USES

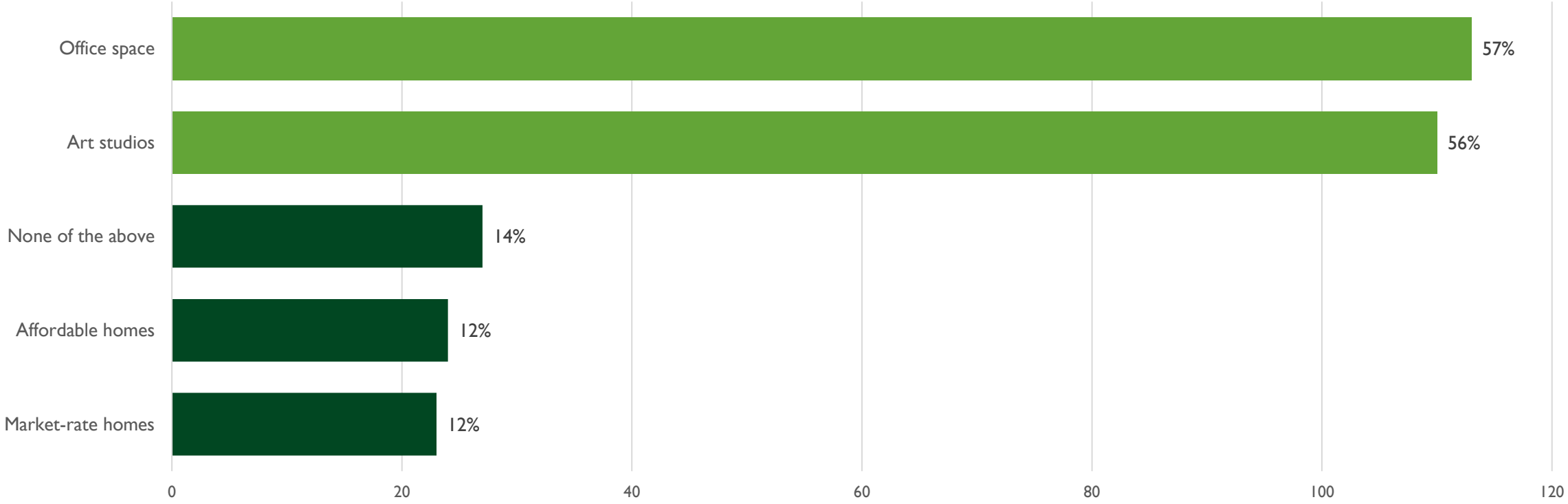


WHICH OF THE USES WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO SEE IN THE UNION BUILDING? SELECT UP TO 3.



TOP 5 – ALL OVER 20%

THE UNION BUILDING REHABILITATION COMMITTEE IS CONSIDERING A PUBLIC USE ON THE FIRST FLOOR AND A PRIVATE USE THAT WOULD PAY RENT TO OFFSET COSTS ON THE SECOND FLOOR. IF THE BOTTOM FLOOR WAS PUBLIC AND THE TOP FLOOR WAS USED FOR A PRIVATE SPACE, WHICH WOULD YOU SUPPORT FOR THE UPPER SPACE? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)



CONCERNS

24: Security and Safety for Students
20: Desire to preserve building, façade
18: Limited Parking
9: Miscellaneous responses
8: Avoid costs to the town, including self-sustainability for maintenance
6: Generate revenue for the town
6: Impacts to traffic/access to school



OTHER SURVEY RESULTS

- Which of the funding sources would you support for necessary improvements? **Majority supported these:**
  - State Historic or Cultural Grants
  - Community Preservation Act Funds
  - Private Funding (Buyer or Nonprofit)
- Would you support the town selling the building for one of the uses you support?
  - 46% said Yes
  - 38% said No
  - 16% said Maybe (Under Certain Conditions)
- Which uses would you or members of your household personally use?
  - Only restaurant received majority at 56%, but community meeting room was at 45% and many other uses were at 40%

SURVEY RESULTS, SUMMARIZED

- Which of the uses would you most like to see in the union building? **Top five, all over 20%:**
  - Fitness or Dance Studios
  - Youth-focused space for after-school activities and enrichment
  - Performing arts-focused space for children and adults
  - Multipurpose area for private rentals
  - Restaurant
- Majority support for both office space and art studio space if upstairs was used for a private use
- Majority support for CPA funding, private funding, and state grants
- Major concerns include safety and security of children, desire to preserve the exterior of the building, and limited parking

SHORTLIST OF USES

USE OPTIONS DOWNSTAIRS: FITNESS/DANCE STUDIO

- Requires flexible space
- Could be combined with other uses
- Requires interested entity to program space
- Precedent: Community Center at Old High School - Rockport, MA





USE OPTIONS DOWNSTAIRS: YOUTH-FOCUSED ENRICHMENT AND AFTER-SCHOOL SPACE

- Requires space filled with tables, desks, and supplies
- Requires interested entity to program space
- Compatible with some other uses







Source: https://www.procaresoftware.com/blog/enrichment-programs-for-students-why-your-child-should-get-involved/

USE OPTIONS DOWNSTAIRS: PERFORMING ARTS-FOCUSED SPACE FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

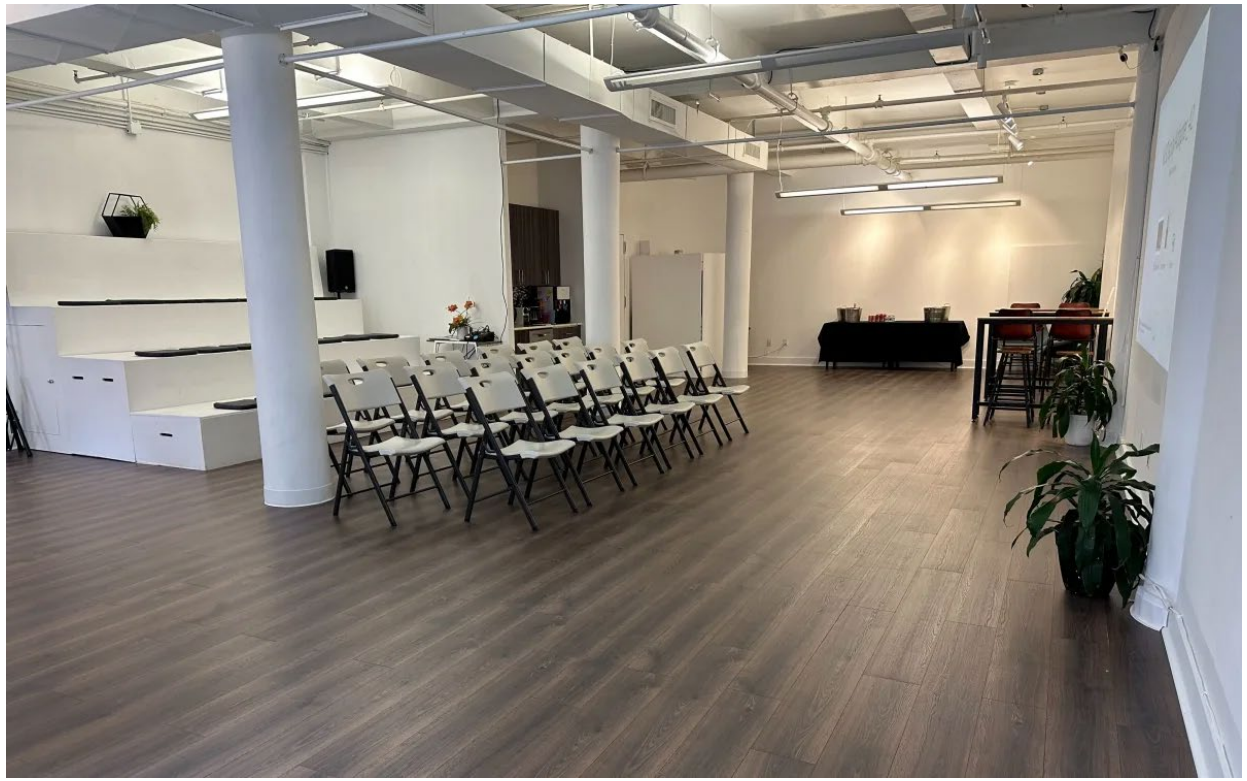
- Could be rented for community uses
- Could be combined with other uses
- Possibly duplicative of space at Town Hall
- Requires interested entity to program or manage space



Source: https://www.fineartsbuilding.com/little-studio/

USE OPTIONS DOWNSTAIRS: MULTIPURPOSE AREA FOR PRIVATE RENTALS

- Could be rented for community uses
- Could be combined with other uses
- Requires interested entity to manage space
- Would public demand be enough to sustain this use?



Source: https://www.peerspace.com/s/?space_use=Event&location=new-york--ny#m=redirect

USE OPTIONS FOR DOWNSTAIRS: RESTAURANT

- Size of rooms could only support café style, grab-and-go, or coffee uses
- Larger scale commercial kitchen financially infeasible for this size and location of property
- Smaller café use might not be operationally financially feasible



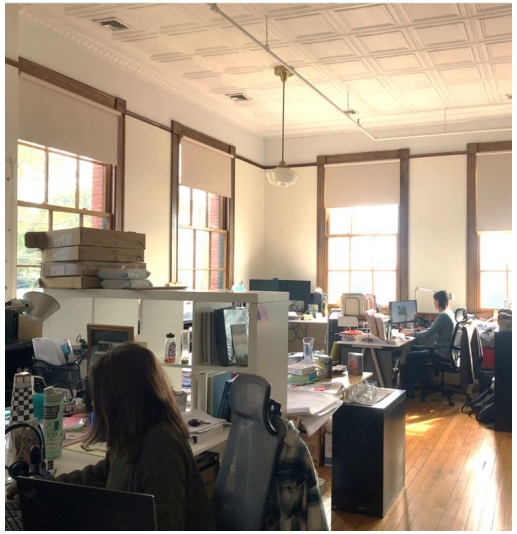
USE OPTIONS FOR DOWNSTAIRS: HISTORICAL/MUSEUM SPACE

- Was not as popular as part of poll
- Poll did indicate great interest in history in general
- Might make room less compatible with other highly-ranked uses
- May not generate as much income or community use as other uses
- Precedent: Sandy Pond School – Ayer, MA



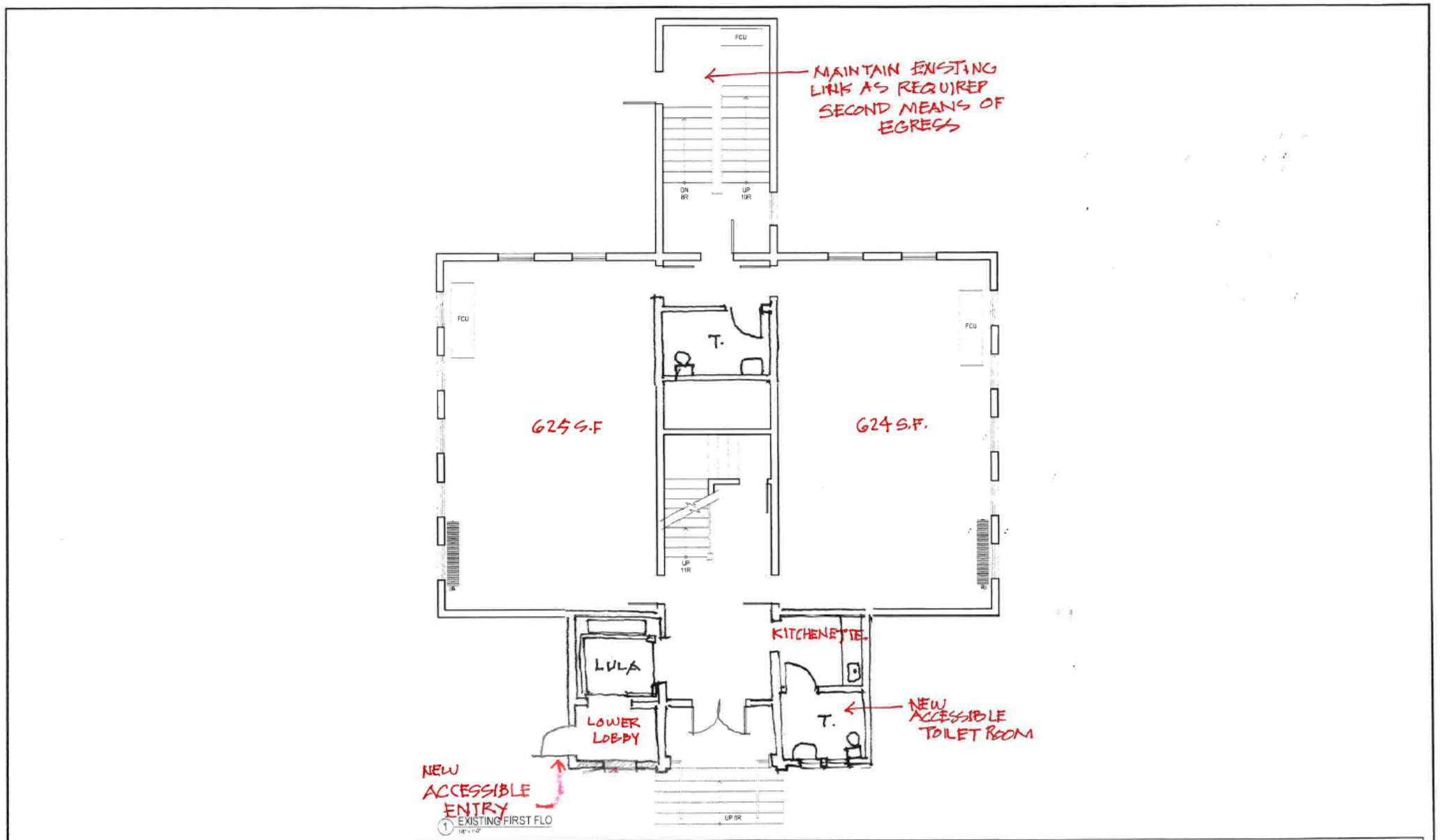
USE OPTIONS UPSTAIRS: ART STUDIOS OR OFFICE

- Poll indicated support for both options if upstairs were a private use
- Rent could offset maintenance costs of building
- Require elevator to second story
- Precedents:
  - Old Schoolhouse – Barnstable, MA (Artist Studios)
  - Valley Road School – Nahant, MA





ARCHITECTURAL STUDY



ARCHITECT
Spencer, Sullivan & Vogt
ARCHITECTURE + PRESERVATION

OWNER

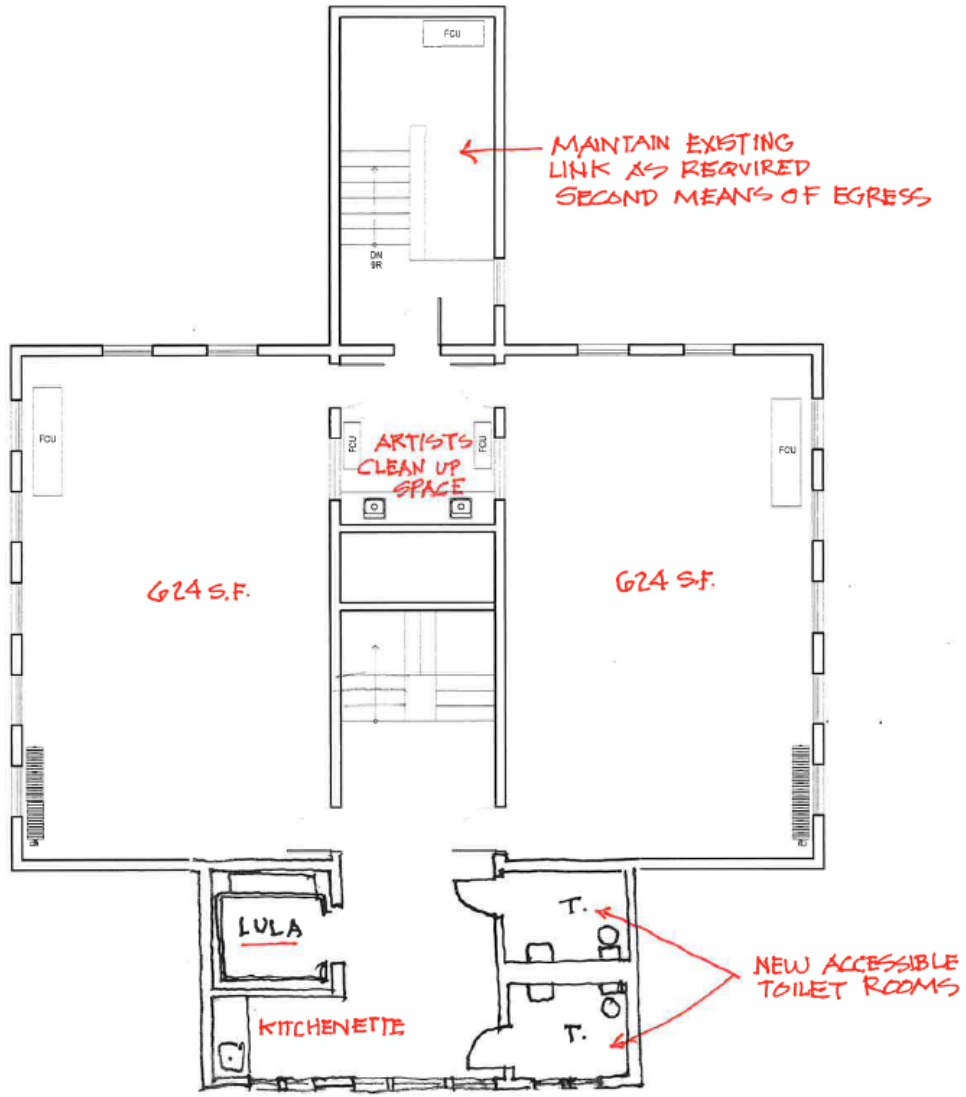
PROJECT
UNION SCHOOL BUILDING
522 MAIN ST. DUNSTABLE, MA 01827

ISSUE DATE
Oct. 7, 2021

PROJECT #
2109.00

SHEET TITLE
EXISTING CONDITIONS
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SHEET #
EX- 102



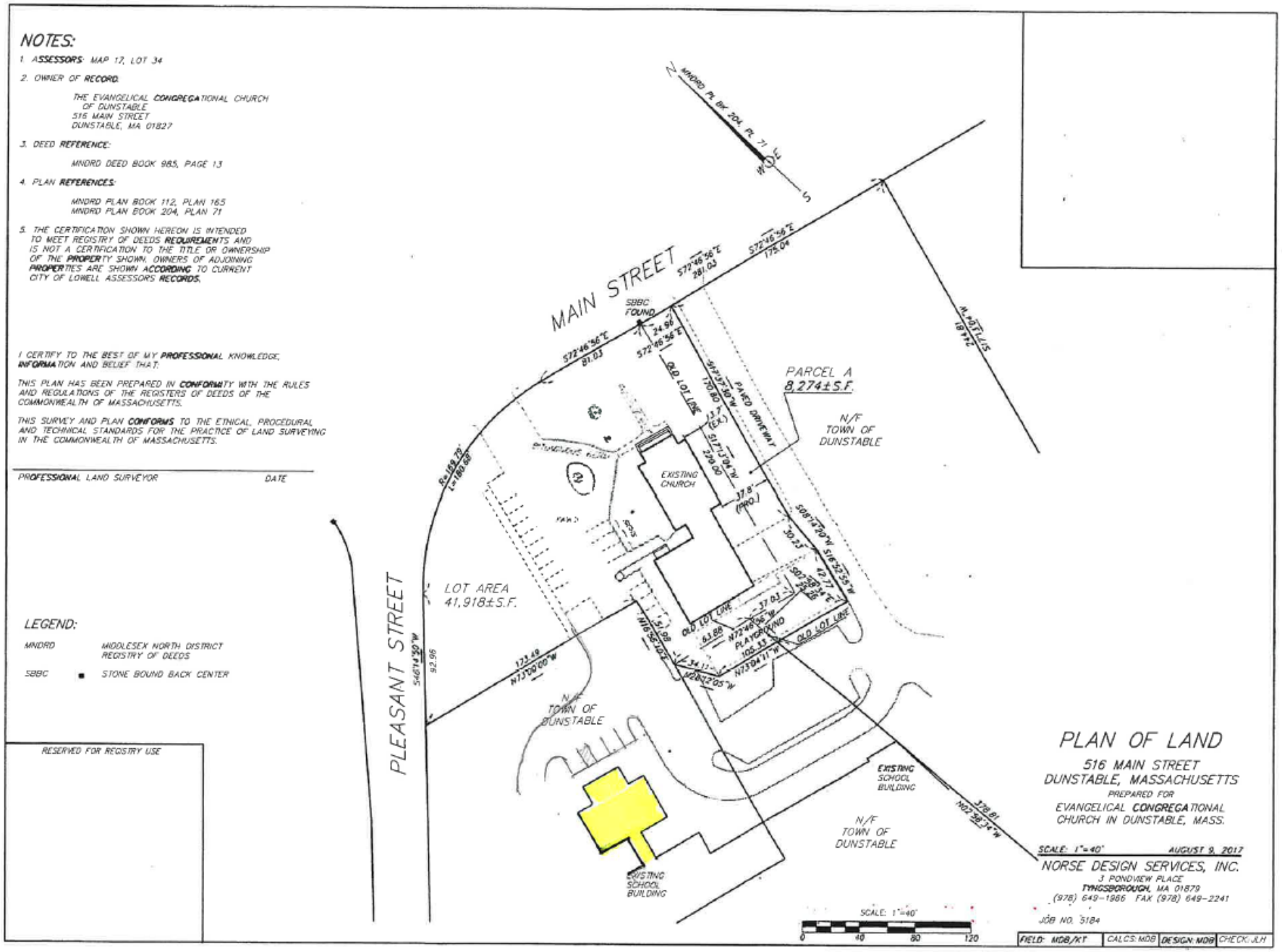
1 EXISTING SECOND FLOOR PLAN

ARCHITECT: Spencer, Sullivan & Vogt ARCHITECTURE - PRESERVATION	OWNER:	PROJECT: UNION SCHOOL BUILDING 522 MAIN ST, DUNSTABLE, MA 01827	ISSUE DATE: Oct. 7, 2021 PROJECT #: 2109.00	SHEET TITLE: EXISTING CONDITIONS SECOND FLOOR PLAN	SHEET #: EX- 103



1 EXISTING EAST ELEVATION

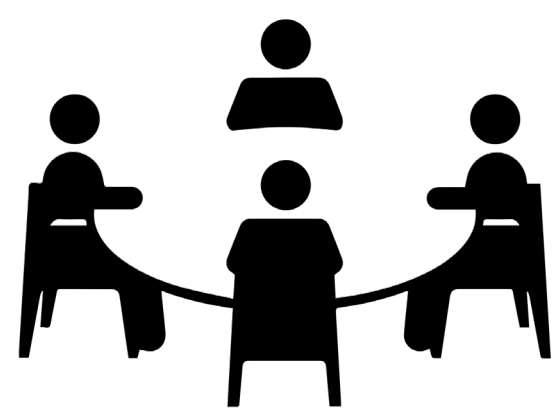
ARCHITECT:	OWNER:	PROJECT:	ISSUE DATE:	SHEET TITLE:	SHEET #:
Spencer, Sullivan & Vogt ARCHITECTURE • PRESERVATION		UNION SCHOOL BUILDING 522 MAIN ST, DUNSTABLE, MA 01827	Oct. 7, 2021 PROJECT #: 2109.00	EXISTING CONDITIONS EAST ELEVATION	EX-202


NOTES:
1. ASSESSORS: MAP 17, LOT 34
2. OWNER OF RECORD:
THE EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF DUNSTABLE
516 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827
3. DEED REFERENCE:
MNDRD DEED BOOK 985, PAGE 13
4. PLAN REFERENCES:
MNDRD PLAN BOOK 112, PLAN 165
MNDRD PLAN BOOK 204, PLAN 71
5. THE CERTIFICATION SHOWN HEREON IS INTENDED TO MEET REGISTRY OF DEEDS REQUIREMENTS AND IS NOT A CERTIFICATION TO THE TITLE OR OWNERSHIP OF THE PROPERTY SHOWN. OWNERS OF ADJOINING PROPERTIES ARE SHOWN ACCORDING TO CURRENT CITY OF LOWELL ASSESSORS RECORDS.
I CERTIFY TO THE BEST OF MY PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION AND BELIEF THAT:
THIS PLAN HAS BEEN PREPARED IN CONFORMITY WITH THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE REGISTERS OF DEEDS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.
THIS SURVEY AND PLAN CONFORMS TO THE ETHICAL, PROCEDURAL AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR THE PRACTICE OF LAND SURVEYING IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.
PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR DATE
LEGEND:
MNDRD MIDDLESEX NORTH DISTRICT REGISTRY OF DEEDS
SBBC STONE BOUND BACK CENTER
RESERVED FOR REGISTRY USE
MAIN STREET
PLEASANT STREET
PARCEL A
8,274±S.F.
LOT AREA
41,918±S.F.
EXISTING CHURCH
PAVED DRIVEWAY
N/F TOWN OF DUNSTABLE
EXISTING SCHOOL BUILDING
PLAN OF LAND
516 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MASSACHUSETTS
PREPARED FOR
EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN DUNSTABLE, MASS.
SCALE: 1"=40' AUGUST 9, 2017
NORSE DESIGN SERVICES, INC.
3 PONDVIEW PLACE
TYNGSBOROUGH, MA 01879
(978) 649-1986 FAX (978) 649-2241
JOB NO. 5184
SCALE: 1"=40'
FIELD: MDB/KT CALCS: MDB DESIGN: MDB CHECK: JLH

PRESERVE THE UNION SCHOOL BUILDING AS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE: COST ESTIMATES

- Assume preservation & rehabilitation in 2025-26
  - Exterior preservation $ 985,000
  - "Basic' interior renovation $ 400,000
  - Contingency, 15% $ 200,000

$1,585,000



What are the opportunities and challenges?

1. What do you like or what are the benefits you see from each option?
2. What concerns or challenges do you see about each option?
3. What questions do you have about each option?
4. How might you use each option?

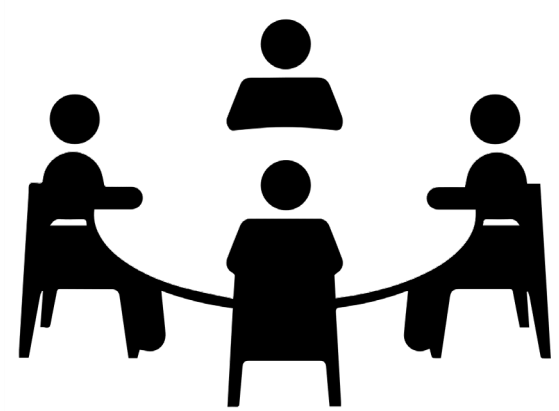
DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Respect Your Turn - Raise your hand and wait for the facilitator to give you the floor to speak.

Step up, Step Back - If you find yourself talking a lot and at length, step back and make space for others and if you find yourself not speaking much, please step up share your opinion.

Open Mind - We welcome a diversity of ideas and input.

Comment Cards - If time does not allow for your comment or question, please put additional input on the Comment Card on your table.



Who do we know?

1. Where have you seen successful operation of any of the proposed uses nearby?
2. Are there any community members who may be interested in running/facilitating any of the potential uses?
3. Do you know of community organizations that might run/facilitate the potential uses?

DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

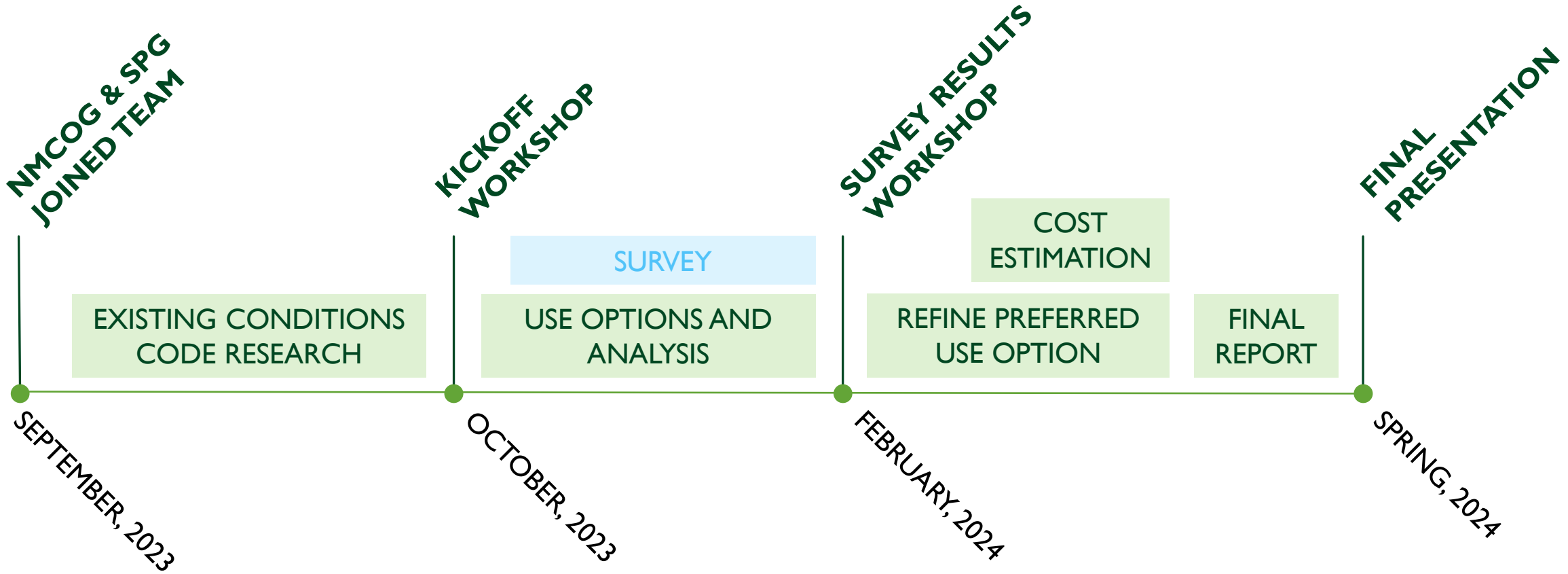
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Comment Cards - If time does not allow for your comment or question, please put additional input on the Comment Card on your table.

PROJECT SCHEDULE



THANKS!

Chris Hayes, AICP, Housing and Economic Development Manager
Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

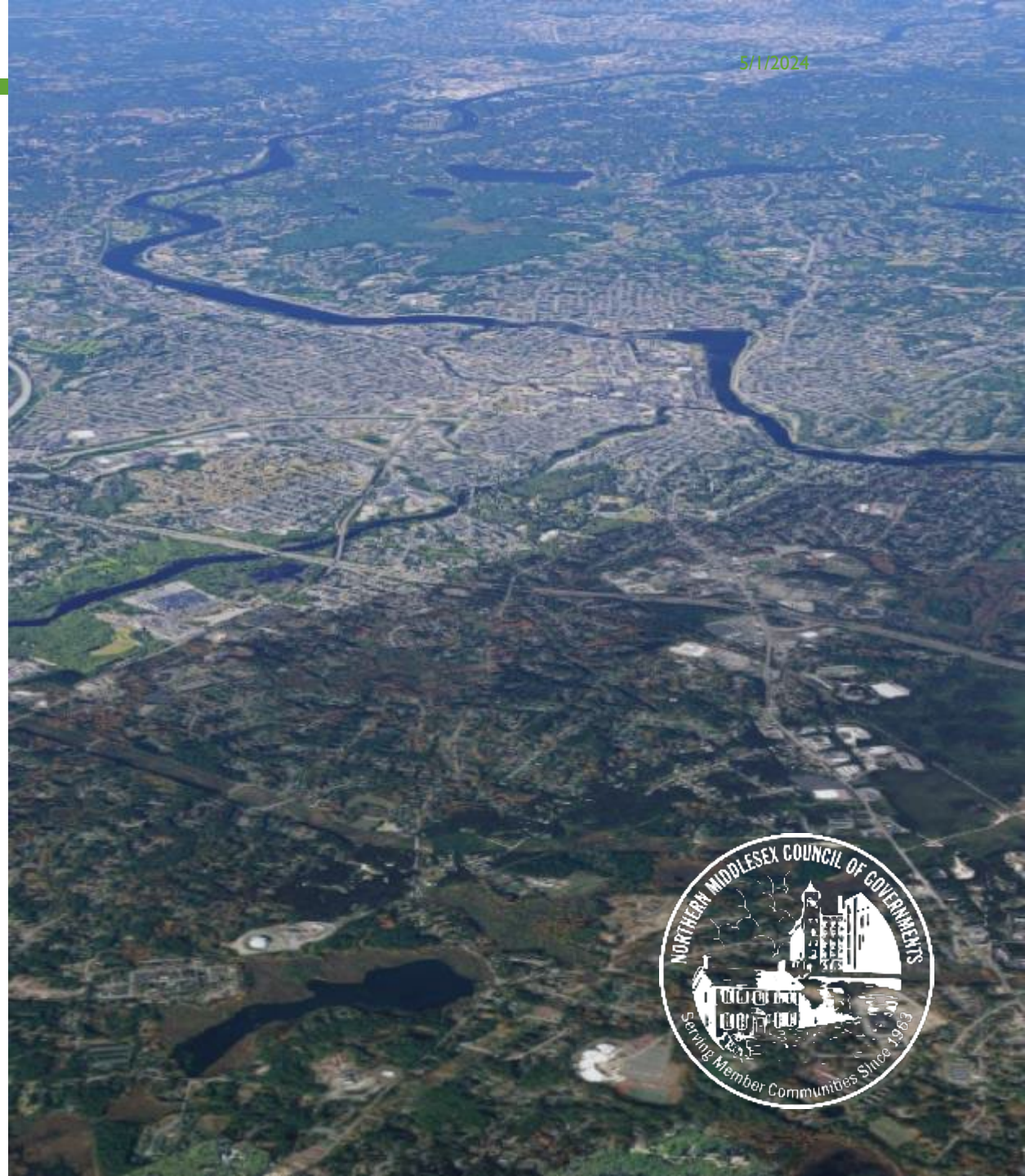
chayes@nmcog.org

(978) 454-8021 x122

Doug Manley AIA, LEED AP, Principle-in-Charge
Spencer Preservation Group

doug@spencerpreservationgroup.com

(617) 227-2675



WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE UNION BUILDING?
Survey Results Workshop Summary

The "What is the Future of the Union Building" Survey Results Workshop took place at Dunstable Town Hall at 6:00 pm, February 8, 2024 with an additional Hybrid Zoom option. The meeting was advertised via Nextdoor, Dunstable's Facebook page, and the Neighbor to Neighbor newsletter. It was also promoted by the Dunstable Union Building Rehabilitation Committee. Attendees included facilitators, committee members, and members of the public attending in-person or via Zoom. There were approximately 30 in-person attendees and an additional ten via Zoom.

~40 Attendees

February 8, 2024

Presentations

Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) reviewed the project's timeline, survey results and possible uses. The purpose of this workshop was to continue the discussion of use options by sharing the results of the survey and beginning development of a list of interested parties to explore the feasibility of each use. Then, Spencer Preservation Group (SPG) presented floor plans showing the entrances and layout of both stories of the building. Accessible toilet rooms, an accessible side entry, and a Limited Use Limited Application (LULA) lift are proposed to be added for basic code compliance. Updated cost estimates were as follows:

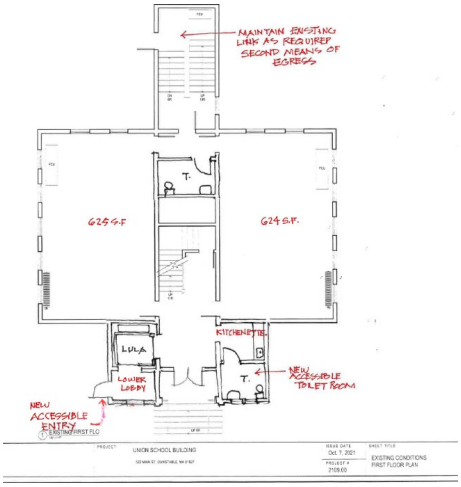
Table 1: Cost Estimates Reviewed at Workshop

Category	Cost Estimate
Exterior Preservation	$985,000
'Basic' Interior Renovation	$400,000
15% Contingency	$200,000
Total	**$1,585,000**

Based on the results of the first public workshop and the survey, five first-floor use options were proposed to be discussed, which would be paired with an art studio or office use on the second floor:

- Fitness or Dance Studios
- Youth-focused space for after-school activities and enrichment
- Performing arts-focused space for children and adults
- Multipurpose area for private rentals
- Restaurant
- Museum or Historical Recreation

Figure 1: Detail of Proposed First Floor 'Basic' Renovation



Group Discussion

NMCOG and SPG staff facilitated three in-person breakout groups and one Zoom group to discuss the following questions:

- What do you like or what are the benefits you see from each option?
- What concerns or challenges do you see about each option?
- What questions do you have about each option?
- How might you use each option?
- Where have you seen successful operation of any of the proposed uses nearby?
- Are there any community members who may be interested in running/facilitating any of the potential uses?
- Do you know of community organizations that might run/facilitate the potential uses?

After group discussion, each group reported out the results of their discussion. Some groups discussed additional uses beyond the five identified. The results of all four groups are combined in the following summary. Observations are coded as follows:

☑ Benefit
☒ Concern or challenge
☺ Possible user of space
📖 Precedent that may also expand or program space
❗ Idea for Use
❓ Question

Fitness Space

A space for regular fitness programming

☑ Participant would use this if offered
❓ Concern about structural stability of building for this use

Rentable Event or Meeting Space

A space for rental for fundraisers, receptions, or other similar functions

☑ Could utilize bandstand and greenspace nearby
☑ Functions take place when school is not in session, utilizing school lot for parking
☺ Youth group fundraisers
☺ AA
☺ Knitting club
📖 Tyngsborough Old Town hall rental space
📖 Lawrence Library Pepperell Art Shows

Performance Space

A space for rental of performing arts uses, either practice or exhibition, including dance, music, etc.

☒ Duplicative of Town Hall spaces

Youth Space

A space for regular children's after school activities

- ☑ Identified need (kids to work on projects and get together with friends)
- ☑ Youth groups already pay for space in churches, schools, so revenue is possible
- ☺ Cub Scouts
- ☺ Girl Scouts
- ☺ 4H
- 📖 Peter Twomey Youth Center, Groton
- 💡 Daycare is possible additional use, but may require security/access changes

Historical Recreation or Museum Space

- ☑ Artifacts currently stored that participants would like to be displayed
- ☒ Duplicative of exhibit space in Town Hall
- ☒ Duplicative of Little Red Schoolhouse
- 💡 Could have display cases (although need to protect artifacts if other uses occurring)
- 💡 Could have rotating exhibits

Commercial Kitchen

A space that could be used by caterers with major costs including three sinks or dishwasher, hood, and grease trap

- ☺ Caterer (Participant)
- ☺ Three additional Caterers (Participant knows)
- ☑ Cost for Woburn space is $810/month for 20 hours, providing basis for business plan
- ☑ Kitchen could also be used for event space, i.e., pancake fundraisers, etc.

Maker Space

A space that could have memberships for light “making” activities.

- ☺ Craft Teacher (Participant)
- ☺ Photographer (Participant knows)
- ☑ Members provide additional revenue
- ☒ Power and loading demands
- ☒ Possible noise impacts

Restaurant

A grab-and-go or coffee-style café

- ☒ Busiest at times school is letting in/letting out
- ☒ Desire a use with alcohol options, not appropriate for this area

Remote Work Space

A space that could have memberships for working remotely

- ☑ These types of spaces are reportedly in demand
- 📖 IHub Innovation space
- 💡 Could include shared services

General Comments on All Options

- 💡 Install dividers to break up space for multiple uses

- Approach property management companies for costs on marketing and managing various uses – a property manager will cost more, though this might be offset by the income generated from the private space.
- Is there enough parking space for a fire truck?
- For the sake of comparison, how much would demolition of the building cost?
- How much would it cost to relocate the building?
- Are there any concerns about floor loading?
- Are there any estimates on how much the space would rent for as an office or art studio?
- Are there any business and/or management plans for any of the options?

Conclusion

Based on the results of the survey and the feedback collected at this meeting, a space that is flexible and cost-effective to use is ideal for the Union Building. While there is considerable interest in locating a full-size commercial restaurant in Town Center, the size of the space and the parking available cannot easily support such a use. In addition, costs of rehabilitating and refitting the space for a new use are a major concern.

Several examples of regional community spaces and events were referenced as examples to look at when determining programming to activate the space. Local artists and event planners have also expressed interest in using the space as a venue for workshops, photography, or catering. However, many residents expressed interest in business and management plans for the different use options to determine what will be the most cost-effective. Possible operators of survey options that were very popular (fitness/dance and youth center) were not able to be identified at the meeting, making it more difficult to pursue those options. Possible next steps include:

- Cost estimation of a commercial kitchen that could be combined with event space
- Reach out to Twomey Center and various youth groups to determine interest in regular programming of space and possible revenue from rental
- Reach out to Tyngsborough and Lawrence Library to determine their operating costs and revenue from rental of their historic spaces
- Determine costs and ability for property management companies to market and manage the space for various uses
- Determine revenue and market viability of upstairs art studio use, office use, and shared workspace use
- Depending on results of above steps, create basic operation revenue estimations for one or more of the following downstairs uses:
    - **Commercial kitchen and event space**: With caterers renting the commercial kitchen and possible additional use of kitchen for events
    - **Membership-based space**: For crafters, photographers, etc, that would not occupy art studios full-time but may need shared storage, etc.
    - **Rental-based space**: Flexible use for meetings or events
    - **Daycare or after-school youth center:** If interested operator could be identified, rent paid from a regular after-school or daycare program