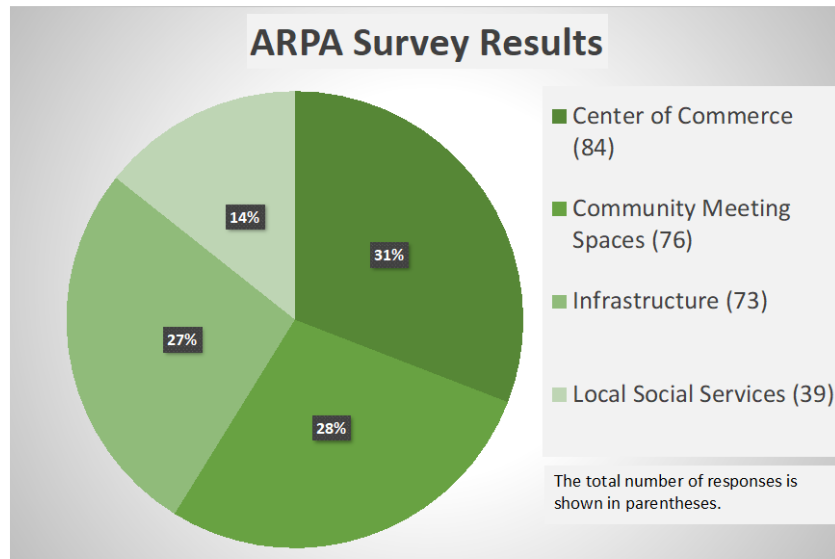


American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

Shaftsbury, Vermont

Survey Results/Committee Recommendations



CENTER OF COMMERCE: Most often mentioned was the need to invest in a revitalized commercial center. People are concerned about the absence of restaurants, coffee shops, and other businesses that serve as gathering places and bring jobs into the community.

COMMUNITY MEETING SPACES: The next biggest suggestion was the creation of communal spaces: people want *places to connect with their community*. The most often-made suggestion was a “Town Green” on the land next to Cole Hall; other suggestions ran the gamut of indoor and outdoor, small and large, but most were for places where community events could be held.

INFRASTRUCTURE: This data also presents a clear message that people want some of this money to be used to expand our infrastructure – to make daily life easier, to increase potential commerce, and to create opportunities for joint recreation. People are interested in spending ARPA funds on the creation of sidewalks, hiking trails and bike paths; efforts to beautify our downtown; installation of a bus stop; electric vehicle charging stations; and a variety of improvements to Howard Park’s facilities.

LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICES: Respondents also made many comments about the need to build community through developing more avenues for local social services, with a particular focus on meeting places for the oldest and youngest among us.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the view of this committee, the clearest message from this survey is this: a significant portion of this once-in-a-generation cash infusion should be used to *turn Cole Hall and its immediate surround into a Community Center* – one that can host community events both large and small, indoors and outdoors. Our recommendations fold into this potential Community Center as many of the other citizen priorities as possible; the remainder of our recommendations reflect the same priorities in other venues. We begin with the smallest recommendations.

\$20,000 to the Shaftsbury Historical Society for matching funds for window replacement in the Governor Jonas Galusha Homestead

Rationale: The Historical Society has agreed to make the Galusha Homestead available for some of the kinds of community meetings survey respondents called for.

\$63,750 to the North Shaftsbury Community Club to repair its slate roof

Rationale: The Community Club offers a low-cost option for any group or individual to hold a meeting or event in the space. This roof is in urgent need of repair and a professional estimate was obtained from a local roofing contractor.

\$95,000 to the McCullough Free Library for the purchase of a 24-hour library satellite kiosk

Rationale: The Library has offered to extend its services to include a satellite branch in Shaftsbury. The library would staff, maintain and stock this small kiosk, which would serve as a 24-hour selection and return site for library books and media, as well as offering an internet “hot-spot”.

The ARPA Committee recommends considering the remaining roughly \$820,000 to address community needs and recommendations (in descending order of relative expense):

1. The creation of a Community Center on the grounds of Cole Hall with the addition of the purchase of the adjacent property. This Community Center should include:
 - a. a renovated and re-thought Cole Hall
 - b. a second indoor structure connected to Cole Hall, with the library kiosk attached
 - c. a Town Green with a covered pavilion that can accommodate many people
 - d. an electric vehicle charging station
 - e. creatively designed signs to advertise and direct people to town destinations.
2. Infrastructure for outdoor activities:
 - a. bike paths
 - b. sidewalks
 - c. hiking trails
 - d. downtown beautification (e.g., flower gardens)
3. Re-establish the Town Economic Development Committee, with an assigned annual budget.