Imagining a New Strong School

Public Meeting #2
December 8, 2021

Please sign in! Type this URL into your browser:
tinyurl.com/Strong-Sign-In
Agenda

6:00 pm  Meeting opens + sign-in
6:05 pm  Agenda + ground rules
6:15 pm  Project background and what we learned
6:35pm   What’s next?
6:45 pm  Group activity + discussion
7:30 pm  Meeting ends
Some Zoom Tips:

- Please keep your microphone on **mute** when you’re not speaking.
  - The **mute** button is at the **bottom left** corner of your Zoom window.
  - When muted, you will see a red slash over the microphone.

- Please **raise your hand** when you would like to speak. The meeting host will call on you when it’s your turn.
  - Click the “**Reactions**” button at the **bottom right** of your Zoom window. Then, click “**Raise Hand**”

- You may also use the **Chat** feature to make comments or ask questions.
  - The “**chat**” button is in the **bottom center** of your Zoom window.
Other Ground Rules:

Be respectful of others.
Let everyone participate.
Keep comments brief and to the point.
Listen with an open mind.
Challenge the issue, not the person.

Let’s create a safe place where we can all discuss our vision for the future of Strong School!
What is the Strong School Study?
Strong School
Past

2010: Strong School closed
2011: 1st development proposal (housing)
2014: 2nd development proposal (housing)
2016: 3rd development proposal (arts+housing)
2018: Community planning

Present

2021: City launches new development study

Future
Past

Building Analysis
Community Analysis
Market Analysis

Present

CAN the building be reused?
HOW should the building be reused?

Future

Base rehab cost (−)
Development cost (−)
Operating income (+)
Funding sources (+)
Funding gap vs. surplus

Will it work???
Past

Present

Future

May: Kick-off

May - Jun: Visioning and Program Analysis

Jun - Jul: Building + Site Analysis
Past

Present

Future

Dec: Final reporting and next steps

May: Kick-off

May - Jun: Visioning and program analysis

Jul - Aug: Test cases

Aug - Sep: Financial feasibility analysis

Oct - Nov: Site analysis
Fast Facts

Located at 69 Grand Avenue, New Haven

Built in 1915 (106 years old!)

Historic building has 3 floors and is about 41,000 square feet

1996 addition has 1 floor and is about 3,500 square feet

About 1 acre of land

Historic gym/auditorium and outdoor terrace facing Grand Ave.

Four main entrances (*not handicap accessible!*
Floor Plan (1F)
Classrooms
Gym/Auditorium
Hallways
Use of Space

Historic Strong School Total
33,740 sf (net)

CLASS 14,680sf 44%

CIRC 11,755sf 35%

CLASS 6,260sf 18%

CIRC 4,240sf 39%

2F 10,745 sf

1F 14,160 sf

AUX 3,445sf 24%

B 8,835 sf

UTILITY 3,225sf 37%

AUD 3,445sf 10%

UTILIT 3,960sf 11%

CLASS 5,865sf 41%
Use of Space

A lot!
Open Space
Building Condition

Overall condition is FAIR

Roofs:
- Main roof is good and just needs minor repairs.
- Clear drains.
- Gym roof needs replacement

Envelope:
- Spot repairs to exterior walls; some masonry and coping needs replacement
- Can keep existing windows, but better to replace now.

Interior finishes:
- Lots of cleaning and touch-up.
- Remove any hazardous materials
- Wood floors need repair.
- Tin ceilings need replacement.

Mechanical/Utilities
- Assume everything gets replaced
Development Goals

- Enrich social and cultural life
- Drive economic development & support local businesses
- Serve diverse neighborhood constituencies
- Host continuous activity, daytime and evening
- Provide revenue to the City of New Haven
- Include programming in the arts, education, health/wellness, food, and/or youth services
- Include public-facing programming on Grand Ave.
- Include housing only as part of a mixed-use development, with emphasis on affordability
- Support New Haven’s Vision 2025 Plan and other planning priorities for Fair Haven

*adapted from “Strong School District Community Criteria for Economic Development,” Jan 2020
Survey

July 6 - August 11, 2021

Shared via e-mail and paper flyers

Spanish and English versions

153 online responses

72% live in Fair Haven
What would you like to see more of in Fair Haven? Please choose your top 5.

1. Arts and culture spaces (71% of participants included in their top 5)
2. Youth spaces (61%)
3. Restaurants and cafes (52%)
4. Green spaces (41%)
5. Community gathering/meeting space (36%)
6. Affordable Housing (32%)
7. Fitness space (31%)
8. Retail (29%)
9. Supermarkets (29%)
10. Social Services (19%)
How could the Strong School site be reused to benefit the neighborhood?

- Community oriented uses
- Youth programs e.g. recreation, learning, and after-school
- Arts & culture programs
- Adult education and training programs
- Small neighborhood retail/marketplace/incubator

*Housing: a polarizing issue!
What we’ve heard:

“I’d love to see it as a flourishing hub of our community. It’s a great property that we should be stewarding, not neglecting.”

“Please don’t let it deteriorate. People need a place to live—why not there?”

“Anything but housing.”

“I’d love to see some sort of coffee shop/cafe/brunch spot go in there along with a restaurant or a fitness center”

“Strong School can serve as a center for the community providing for a multitude of interests from the diverse makeup of Fair Haven.”

“providing a nice outdoor space for the kids to come and play would be nice, especially since the strong school is within walking distance.”

“Hacen falta lugares para que los ninos y adolescentes quieran estar mas involucrados e orgullosos de su comunidad.”

“It’s a beautiful building. I hope we can avoid tearing it down to build it back up.”

“ANYTHING would be better than what it is now!”
Redevelopment Test Cases

- Interboro created test scenarios for different ways to reuse Strong School.
- We compared:
  - ways to use the physical space
  - types of uses and programs
  - options for new construction
- We analyzed community impacts and the potential costs and financing
- We worked with the City and Steering Committee to choose a preferred scenario
- We conducted a more detailed financial analysis to confirm that the preferred scenario would work.
Redevelopment Test Case

Historic Strong School reused as community-oriented arts/nonprofit hub

Replace 1996 classroom wing with new multifamily residential building

Add new accessible lobby with elevator to serve both buildings
Test Case: 2nd Floor

5 large flex spaces for arts/community-oriented organizations

Central hallway
gallery/collaboration space

New wing with 9 apartments
Test Case: 1st Floor

Gym/Auditorium available for community programming

5 large flex spaces for arts/community-oriented organizations

Central hallway gallery/collaboration space

New wing with 9 apartments
Test Case: Basement

4 flex spaces for arts/community-oriented organizations

Former boiler room high-bay gallery or black-box theater

Central hallway gallery/collaboration space

New wing with 9 ground-floor apartments
Past

Building Analysis
Community Analysis
Market Analysis

Present

CAN the building be reused?
HOW should the building be reused?

Future

Base rehab cost (-)
Development cost (-)
Operating income (+)
Funding sources (+)
Funding gap vs. surplus

Will it work???
Redevelopment Test Case

Historic Rehab Cost: $5,963,750
Nonprofit/Arts Space NOI: $5,615,548
RLV: -$348,202 (-$8/sf)
Financing Gap: $1,499,723

New Construction Cost: $4,918,200
Residential NOI: $6,179,300
RLV: $1,261,100 ($38/sf)
Financing Gap: $1,229,550

Gap filling: City programs, CT HTC, CT Brownfields, Fed C-PACE, Fed HTC, Fed NMTC...
Redevelopment Test Case

- Will this test case DEFINITELY happen at Strong School?
- Is this the ONLY thing that can happen at Strong School?
- Is this the BEST thing that can happen at Strong School?

No, not necessarily! We think that this test case is a GOOD scenario that can work for Strong School, Fair Haven, and the developer. This is a strong starting point!

But, there are many possible ways to reuse this building. We should keep an open mind and ask developers to bring us their best and most creative ideas for Strong School.
What’s Next?
Past  | Present | Future

Request for development proposals (RFP)
What is an RFP?

- **RFP = “Request For Proposals”**
- Issued by the City to advertise a development opportunity
- Asks developers to send proposals that describe how they would use the property and how they would finance it.
- Provides background information about the property
- States development goals and requirements
- Should encourage creative proposals from developers
How does selection typically work?

- Developers who are interested in the RFP will send in their ideas for what they would do with Strong School.
- Developers must show why their idea is the best, how it will work, why they are qualified to do it.
- The City will form a selection committee that will review all the proposals and decide which one(s) are the best.
- The RFP can include guidelines and criteria that developers must follow.
- The RFP can also include a scoring system that rewards proposals that do a good job of meeting the project’s goals.
Next Steps:
How would YOU want to shape the process?
Plugging into the RFP Process

1. **Write**
   Create a request for proposals (RFP) that states the project goals and selection criteria. Think about who will respond.

2. **Evaluate**
   Review proposals that developers submit. Discuss which project(s) are most likely to succeed and meet the RFP goals.

3. **Select**
   Pick the developer and proposal that is the best fit for the job.

4. **Execute**
   Work with the developer to define, design, and do the project. Make sure the developer is meeting goals and promises.
Plugging into the RFP Process

1. **Write**
   Create a request for proposals (RFP) that states the project goals and selection criteria. Think about who will respond.

   **Suggestions:**
   - Allow community members to recommend goals/criteria before RFP is written.
   - Allow community members to review and approve scoring system.
   - ...more?

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     - ...more?

2. **Evaluate**
   - Review proposals that developers submit. Discuss which project(s) are most likely to succeed and meet the RFP goals.
   - Suggestions:
     - Allow community members to view developer submissions and vote on their favorites.
     - Include community members in developer interview process.
     - ...more?

3. **Select**
   - Pick the developer + proposal that is the best fit for the job.
   - Suggestions:
     - ...more?

4. **Execute!**
   - Work with the developer to define, design, and do the project. Make sure the developer is meeting goals and promises.
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   - ...more?

3. Select
   Pick the developer + proposal that is the best fit for the job.

   **Suggestions:**
   - Include community members on selection committee.
   - Make community support part of the final scoring method.
   - ...more?

4. Execute!
   Work with the developer to define, design, and do the project. Make sure the developer is meeting goals and promises.
Plugging into the RFP Process

1. **Write**
   - Create a request for proposals (RFP) that states the project goals and selection criteria. Think about who will respond.

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   - Allow community members to recommend goals/criteria before RFP is written.
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   - Include community members in developer interview process.
   - ...more?

3. **Select**
   - Pick the developer + proposal that is the best fit for the job.

   **Suggestions:**
   - Include community members on selection committee.
   - Make community support part of the final scoring method.
   - ...more?

4. **Execute!**
   - Work with the developer to define, design, and do the project. Make sure the developer is meeting goals and promises.

   **Suggestions:**
   - Establish a community steering committee to work directly with the developer
   - Require developer to include regular community updates on progress
   - ...more?
Join a Breakout Room

A “Breakout Rooms” button will appear at the bottom of your window. Click it!

A list of breakout rooms will appear. Click on the right side of the room name to join. Join whichever breakout room you’d like!

You may have to wait a few seconds to join the room. You will see this screen:
Switch Breakout Rooms

To switch rooms and discuss a new topic, click the “Breakout Rooms” button again.

The menu with available rooms will appear again. Choose the room you’d like to join, and click to the right of that room’s name.
Breakout Group 1
Step 1: Writing the RFP

How should community members be involved?

- Suggestion: Allow community members to recommend goals/criteria before the RFP is written (e.g. approved uses, prioritize locals, job creation, community benefits etc.)
- Suggestion: Allow community members to review and approve a scoring system (price, experience, local presence, diversity, etc.)
- Involve more people from the commercial district (SSD)
- Celebrate local culture, cultural organizations
- Allow people to participate according to their own abilities/experience/knowledge. Provide guidance.
- Look for examples in other college towns like New Haven—how have they done RFPs well?
- Be clear and concise with request. Say what we do and don’t want.
- Include outdoor arts/culture/events to benefit neighborhood and visitors
Step 2: Evaluating Proposals

How should community members be involved?

- Suggestion: Allow community members to view proposals and vote on their favorite.
- Suggestion: Include community members in the developer interview process.

- Form a committee with community members. Make it truly diverse, include people who are invested in Fair Haven, have deep local knowledge.
- Look for developers who aren’t profit-driven, have local interests in mind
- Idea:

Atwood senior center; currently underused. Don’t want to see redundancy. Will developers only bring in expensive rental housing? Want to avoid.
Step 3: Selecting the Developer

How should community members be involved?

- Suggestion: Include community members on the selection committee.
- Suggestion: Make community support part of the final scoring method.

- Idea:
- Idea:
- Idea:
Step 4: Developing the Project

How should community members be involved?

- Suggestion: Establish a community steering committee to work directly with the developer.
- Suggestion: Require the developer to make regular community updates on progress.

- Have community meetings and discuss with residents
- Idea:
- Idea:

Include youth programming
Breakout Group 2
Step 1: Writing the RFP

How should community members be involved?

- Suggestion: Allow community members to recommend goals/criteria before the RFP is written (e.g. approved uses, prioritize locals, job creation, community benefits etc.)
- Suggestion: Allow community members to review and approve a scoring system (price, experience, local presence, diversity, etc.)

- Idea: Letter of support from the community management team
- Idea: Significant resident participation on the selection committee
- Idea:
Step 2: Evaluating Proposals

How should community members be involved?

- Suggestion: Allow community members to view proposals and vote on their favorite.
- Suggestion: Include community members in the developer interview process.
- Idea: Selection committee grading/scoring proposals
- Idea: Include in-person presentations (bilingual)
- Idea: City does first round of review - then proposals are presented and given feedback
- Idea: Marketing next steps to the public
- Idea: Developer sharing past projects: what worked, what challenges were there?
Step 3: Selecting the Developer

How should community members be involved?

- Suggestion: Include community members on the selection committee.
- Suggestion: Make community support part of the final scoring method.

- Idea: If proposal goes beyond Strong School to other projects in the community, that should be encouraged
- Idea: Community input directed to the selection committee
- Idea:
Step 4: Developing the Project

How should community members be involved?

- Suggestion: Establish a community steering committee to work directly with the developer.
- Suggestion: Require the developer to make regular community updates on progress.
- Idea: Require the developer to update the community management team regularly
- Idea: Sharing of drawings, concepts, timeline
- Idea: Send updates to the community management team’s mailing list
- Idea: Always accessible information shared at a public hub (like the library) where the community can give input
Breakout Group 3
Step 1: Writing the RFP

How should community members be involved?

- Suggestion: Allow community members to recommend goals/criteria before the RFP is written (e.g. approved uses, prioritize locals, job creation, community benefits etc.)
- Suggestion: Allow community members to review and approve a scoring system (price, experience, local presence, diversity, etc.)

- Idea: establish a committee with representation for different perspectives, shouldn’t be too big
- Idea: Community should be involved in developing rubric
- Idea: Community should be involved in setting goals
- People who live closer have a greater stake
- Historically has been used as a play space, should be included in program
Step 2: Evaluating Proposals

How should community members be involved?

- Suggestion: Allow community members to view proposals and vote on their favorite.
- Suggestion: Include community members in the developer interview process.

- Idea: Interest in translation services—announcements should be made so that everyone understand
- Idea: representation of stakeholders who are in the immediate vicinity of the school should be represented
- Idea: we recognize that that there are multiple perspectives
- Young people should be included
- Reach out to people who do not have access to technology
Step 3: Selecting the Developer

How should community members be involved?

- Suggestion: Include community members on the selection committee.
- Suggestion: Make community support part of the final scoring method.

- Idea: respondents should get “extra points” for being local, mbe, wbe, veterans, should be an entity that contributes to NH’s tax base versus, affordable housing component, utilizing historic tax credits, energy efficiency
- Idea: partner with high schools and art schools
- Idea:
How should community members be involved?

- Suggestion: Establish a community steering committee to work directly with the developer.
- Suggestion: Require the developer to make regular community updates on progress.

- Idea:
- Idea:
- Idea:
Imagining a New Strong School

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December 8, 2021

Please sign in! Type this URL into your browser: tinyurl.com/Strong-Sign-In
Community planning

Building/site assessment

Collect preliminary ideas

Develop recommendations

Seek developer

May 13
Kickoff

May 24
Building Walkthrough

June 16
Steering Committee

July 6
Survey Launch

July 29
Steering Committee

August 11
Public Meeting

Winter 2021
Study Complete

we are here!

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Development Timeline

2010 - Strong School building closed
2011 - Developer proposal: housing (Fernando Pastor)
2014 - Community proposal: mixed-use arts center + housing (SPACe)
2016 - Developer proposal: housing + community space (Ted Lazarus)
2017 - Community mural project
2018 - Community planning process begins; four planning sessions over 2 years
2020 - City of New Haven issues RFP for a redevelopment and market feasibility study
2021 - Study begins (Interboro Partners, WJE, BJH Advisors)