A Reuse Framework for Surplus School Sites

Recommendations for the City of Baltimore

September 12, 2016
Today’s Focus

Challenges of school reuse in Baltimore

Assets

Volume of properties

Reuse process
Challenges of school reuse in Baltimore

**Assets**
Most surplus school sites are located in economically challenged areas and possess low market value for redevelopment.

**Volume**
There is a wave of surplus school sites that will be transferred to City control over the next ten years.

**Reuse Process**
The process for the evaluation and disposition of surplus school properties is disjointed, uncoordinated, and inefficient.
Assets
Volume of Properties
Reuse Process
Most surplus school buildings are functionally obsolete and require major renovations or retrofits for new uses.

$9.6 Million
Average required renovation cost per school for all planned school closures to modernize facilities
Surplus schools are located overwhelmingly in economically challenging locations.
As a result, an identifiable reuse is not readily obvious for many sites.
Weak Assets

**Volume of Properties**

Reuse Process
The scale of planned school closures set to occur through 2024 represents a significant share of existing schools in Baltimore.

Projected school closures by year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Closures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>2017</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>2019</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>2020</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2024</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total school closures resulting from the 21st Century Schools initiative: 26

Percent of all Baltimore schools that are scheduled to close: 16%
The large number of school closures over a short timeframe will compound the impact these closures have on the City.

Therefore, the City must prepare for the carrying costs of holding a large number of properties. More than likely, the City will have to maintain many of these sites for an extended period of time or offer significant subsidies to incentivize disposition in a short timeframe.
Weak Assets
Volume of Properties
Reuse Process
School Reuse Framework Objectives

1. Evaluate and map the current City process for reuse of surplus school sites.

2. Identify process gaps currently inhibiting surplus school sites from reaching their full potential.

3. Create a comprehensive recommendation for Baltimore’s surplus school reuse process.
HR&A mapped the current school reuse process to identify where process gaps exist.
The Project Team identified six key process gaps.

**Process Gap 1:** The timeline and schedule for school program closures is subject to change, making reuse planning ahead of school program closure difficult.

**Process Gap 2:** The agency or department responsible for maintenance and site control of surplus properties is not clear throughout the reuse process.

**Process Gap 3:** There is not a systemic evaluation of the appropriateness of sites for use by public agencies.
The Project Team identified six key process gaps.

**Process Gap 4:** There is a lack of due diligence and information to make informed decisions on reuse

**Process Gap 5:** There is an insufficient evaluation of reuse options for weak market locations

**Process Gap 6:** With regard to school closure and reuse, City agencies often function independently in siloes, without a full understanding of the actions or responsibilities of other agencies
HR&A’s proposed reuse framework addresses process gaps through five recommendations.
**Recommendation 1:** Establish a task force to bring together the various stakeholders and oversee the process in a holistic and coordinated manner

Gaps addressed:
- Gap 6: City agencies often function independently in siloes
- Gap 1: The timeline and schedule for school closure is subject to change
- Gap 2: Agency responsible for site control and maintenance is not clear at times
**Recommendation 2:** Conduct an initial assessment at each site that informs reuse potential and prioritizes reuse options

**Gaps addressed:**
- Gap 1: Lack of due diligence to make informed decisions on reuse
- Gap 3: No systemic evaluation of the appropriateness of sites for use by public agencies
- Gap 5: Insufficient evaluation of reuse options for weak market locations
**Recommendation 3:** Formalize community engagement within the reuse process to gather resident input and seek buy-in for potential reuse options

**Gaps addressed:**
- Gap 4: Lack of due diligence to make informed decisions on reuse
**Recommendation 4:** Implement a project visioning phase to provide proof of concept for a proposed use and, if applicable, generate interest from private users

**Gaps addressed:**
- Gap 4: Lack of due diligence to make informed decisions on reuse
**Recommendation 5:** Provide a clear reuse track for sites based on their location in strong- mid- and weak-market and their targeted reuse.

Gaps addressed:

- Gap 5: Insufficient evaluation of reuse options for weak market locations