Newhall Foundations Repair Project

Demolition of the Former Middle School Buildings

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: October 28, 2026

FAQs

Residents have raised several important questions, both at meetings and a survey tool. This document answers them as clearly and honestly as we can. Where a decision is still being worked out, we say so plainly and tell you when you can expect to hear more. This document will be updated routinely throughout the duration of the projects, shared at public meetings, and posted to the Town website.

Residents asked more questions at the July 23, 2026, community meeting and a total of 74 residents completed the community survey. The answers below include what was shared at that meeting. Questions that do not yet have a complete answer are listed at the end of this document under “Parking Lot Questions.”

Q. Will the advisory committee be able to weigh in on the project's contracts?

A. The project has a seven-member advisory committee that meets monthly. It includes two community representatives from the neighborhood, a Town Council member, a representative from the Mayor's office, the Town Engineer, the Town Project Manager, and the Program Officer from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). The committee reviews the project's progress, its spending, and major decisions and provides its input and recommendations. Because at least one community representative must be present for the committee to meet, the neighborhood always has a voice at the table when these matters are discussed.

Any contract must follow the Town's procurement process, and many require approval from the Legislative Council.

The Town's procurement rules are strict. For competitive bids, the Town is generally required to award the contract to the lowest – qualified – bidder, and every bid opening is open to the public. The team is working out where the advisory committee can fit into that process; one option is to involve the committee early, while the scope of work is being written, so residents help shape what a contractor is hired to do. All contractors must be properly licensed and insured, and the team is looking at whether a contractor's past performance can be weighed in the selection.

Residents also asked whether a performance bond could be required so homeowners would have recourse if a contractor caused damage. Bonding and insurance requirements are part of every construction agreement and scale with the size of the work; the Town will investigate what protections can be built in for homeowners.

Beyond the bid process itself, several outside reviews apply before work can proceed. Bid documents are reviewed by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD); any structure more than 100 years old is reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office; and the projects are submitted to the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO). The Town is also making its best effort to hire minority- and locally owned businesses.

Homeowners will not be forced to work with any contractor they don't want to work with.

Q. What is the timeline for the demolition, and what happens if it isn't met?

A. All demolition bid documents are complete and are under review by the Town and the state agencies (DECD and CHRO) for compliance. Once the project is advertised for bids, the bid period runs about 30 days. Bids are then reviewed again by the Town and state agencies before a contract is awarded; the full bid, review, and award process can take up to six (6) months. After the award, the project starts and residents will begin to see activity at the site. Once abatement and demolition begin, the timeline is based upon normal means and methods and is projected to take approximately six (6) months, providing no concealed or unknown conditions emerge or severe and/or prolonged weather conditions occur which would impact the schedule. If such events occur, the project schedule will be adjusted accordingly to reflect lost time.

Q. What will the land [former middle school property] be used for after the demolition?

A. An earlier proposal for a youth, arts, and recreation center is not moving forward, and no future use of the site has been decided. After the building comes down, the Town will facilitate a community visioning process so that residents help shape what happens with the land. You will have the chance to weigh in, and we will announce how and when to take part.

At the July 23 meeting, Mayor Sendroff confirmed that his position is unchanged: he wants to hear from the community about what residents want for the site, through a visioning session and a bottom-up process. The site is large enough that it may be possible to do more than one thing there.

The Hamden Newhall Neighborhood Association is already thinking ahead about possible options that could benefit the neighborhood to bring into that conversation.

Q. Will the Health Department talk with the community?

A. The Health Department operates separately from this project, but if residents would like to meet with them, the Town can help arrange that conversation. If you have a specific health concern in the meantime, you can contact the Quinnipiac Valley Health District (QVHD) directly at (203)248-4528, or via email at info@qvhd.org.

Q. Some advisory committee members are also part of HNNA. How does that role fit into the projects?

A. The committee was set up on purpose to include neighborhood voices. Two of its six seats are reserved for community representatives, and the Hamden Newhall Neighborhood Association (HNNA) is a key community partner, so having HNNA members involved is by design. It is how we make sure residents' perspectives are built into the project rather than added as an afterthought.

The committee is advisory, which means it reviews and advises rather than making decisions on its own. That keeps everyone's role clear and transparent, and the community representatives are there to speak about residents' interests.

Q. What happens if the cost to repair a home is more than the home is worth?

A. For most homes, repair is the goal, and that is what the Repair Fund is built to do. In cases where repair is not feasible the Town, through a representative, may offer to purchase the home. Two things are firm about this:

It is voluntary. The choice is yours, and no one will be forced to sell as long as the home remains habitable. Current engineering assessments have not identified any threat to life, health, or safety.

The purchase value of each home will be based on Fair Market Value.

If your home falls into this category, the Town will talk with you directly. The town's intent is for affected homeowners to have a seat at the table to help develop a fair approach and not to be informed of it after the fact. Other stakeholders will part of this work as well, including the CT Department of Economic and Community Development which has a role given the State's funding of the project.

The town's project team sees its role as representing homeowners' interests and giving the homeowners as much say as possible.

At the July 23 meeting, Mayor Sendroff confirmed that the Town is exploring ways to purchase homes where the cost of repair is greater than the value of the home, and that this is still being worked out. Because this is the part of the project that will affect people's lives the most, the Town wants to proceed carefully and fairly. If a home is safe to live in, the owner will not have to leave. The Town has been talking with the State to explore options, since every situation will be unique and complex.

> **STILL BEING WORKED OUT**
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> The full details, including the support available to help a homeowner who chooses this option, are still being finalized. The affected homeowners will have the opportunity to take part in these discussions.

Q. Does this project affect our property value? And if so, why are our taxes higher?

A. First, how your taxes are set. Your assessment reflects 70% of your home's fair market value as of October 1, 2024. Your tax bill is that assessment multiplied by the Town's mill rate. Your bill can change because home values across Hamden changed, or because the mill rate changed, separate from anything about your individual home. Home values across Hamden rose sharply after 2020, which is part of why assessments and bills went up.

Second, what the repairs do**.** Completing foundation, drainage, and waterproofing work will not raise your assessment *unless your assessment has previously been lowered to reflect the damage*.

If you believe your assessment doesn't reflect your home's real condition, you have options. You can ask the Assessor's Office to inspect your property at any time. If a correction is warranted, they will adjust it for the next Grand List. You can also file with the Board of Assessment Appeals each year between February 1 and February 20, with hearings in early March and decisions sent afterward. The Assessor's Office can be reached at (203) 287-7121.

Q. Will there be steps to protect my property and my health from dust and poor air quality during construction?

A. Yes. Protecting residents' health and property is a core part of how the work is planned. At each home, the work includes dust and debris controls, site protection and cleaning, and safety controls. Managing dust and air quality is treated as a priority, and all digging and ground restoration follows the state environmental agency's (CTDEEP) requirements, with a licensed environmental professional providing oversight. The project team will be monitoring dust and air quality around the middle school site, and those results will be shared with residents through a QR code posted at the site and shared with the Hamden Newhall Neighborhood Association.

Q. I have a specific concern about my property during the repair work (for example, a swimming pool). Who should I contact?

A. The air-monitoring program is designed to keep visible dust from leaving the work site. For specific or personal concerns about your property, please contact the project team directly so they can give you an answer tailored to your situation.

Q. When will the work begin, how long will it take, and what are the target completion dates?

A**. Demolition.** All bid documents are complete and under review by the Town and state agencies. Final approval will lock in the start date. Once demolition begins, the work is estimated to take about six months. Early site preparation is already visible at the site.

A. **Newhall Foundations Repair Project.** Homes have been under engineering assessment by Haley & Aldrich since 2024, and nearly 150 properties have been reviewed. The eligibility process is mostly complete, and design work is roughly 40–60% done. About 75 properties are currently planned to be addressed, and that number could grow as more homeowners come forward. Construction documents have been prepared for the first 27 properties: bid documents for the first 18 are complete and under review by the Town, and the next 9 are nearly ready. At the July meeting, a potential construction start of October/November 2026 was shared; the actual start date will be set once bids are reviewed and contracts are awarded.

The work will be done in rolling phases, organized by location and by the type of repair needed, so the neighborhood is not disrupted all at once. A new phase does not have to wait for the previous one to finish. The first 18 properties are split into three phases based on the type of work and how close the homes are to each other, and there is a master schedule for these 18 properties. Each property has its own scope of work and its own schedule. A construction manager will meet with each homeowner before work begins on their home, all repairs will meet or exceed building code, and no home is considered finished until both the engineer and the homeowner sign off. From the first property to the last, the overall program is expected to take about three years.

Q. What kind of work is planned for the first 18 homes?

A. Of the first 18 homes, 14 need exterior work only, mostly drainage and/or foundation concrete repairs, and 4 need minor interior work. Many of the properties are getting drainage changes, and most of that is site work and excavation. Before choosing how to do the work, 7 Summits reviews the documents and conditions at each property and plans how to move equipment without damaging the property, so the work causes the least disruption possible. The State Historic Preservation Office reviewed these properties and confirmed that none of them are historic homes.

Q. Have the owners of the first 18 homes been contacted, and what happens next?

A. Yes. The owners of the first 18 properties have been sent an access agreement letter that allows the 7 Summits team to visually inspect the property and confirm the initial assessment. As of the July meeting, 16 of the 18 letters have been returned, and the team is contacting those homeowners to set appointments. Before the work goes out to bid, there will be another appointment so that bidders can inspect each property and understand its conditions. Every eligible homeowner will eventually receive the same notice as their home moves forward.

Q. How is the order of homes decided? Can the most damaged homes go first?

A. The first 18 homes are the ones whose designs were finished first. The more complex homes needed more engineering work, so their documents took longer. Right now, properties are listed in alphanumeric order, but nothing is set in stone. Now that design work is picking up, 7 Summits will look at grouping homes by need, using the damage findings from Haley & Aldrich's assessments, and at clusters of nearby homes that make sense to do together. The first 18 homes are meant to get the work underway; after that, the team will revisit the order with the most damaged homes in mind.

Q. How can I find out where my home stands?

A. Stop by the 7 Summits construction trailer on Newhall Street. The construction team is there during the workday, and residents are welcome to come by, introduce themselves, and ask questions. You can also contact the project team directly. Residents who left their name and contact information at the July meeting will receive a follow-up from the project team and Haley & Aldrich.

Q. I never filled out the questionnaire, or I'm not sure my home is eligible. Is it too late?

A. No. Questionnaires are still being accepted. If you have not submitted one and think there is any chance your property may be eligible, please submit one and the team will assess your property. The current count of about 75 properties could grow as more homeowners come forward.

Q. Where can we see the schedule after the meeting, and can it be posted publicly (website and flyers)?

A. Yes. We can post the current project schedules on the project website (www.hamdenedc.com) so residents can follow progress. Meeting materials, including the slides presented at community meetings, will also be posted there.

Q. What happens if the timeline isn't met?

A. Timelines are treated as living documents. Updates to the project timelines will be shared with the community.

Q. Who is paying for this, and how is the project funded?

A. **Demolition. $5.4M** through the CT Department of Economic and Community Development Community Investment Fund. **$200K** from the Town's Community Development Block (CDBG) grant (blight), and **$3M** in local funds.

A. **Newhall Foundations Repair Project:** The project has a total budget of approximately $18M, funded through a combination of a State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development Community Investment Fund (Round 7) grant (**$8M**), federal ARPA funds ($**1.8M**), and locally appropriated municipal funds (**$8.1M**).

Q. How did this become a Town of Hamden taxpayer responsibility rather than a State issue? Why isn't the State, CTDEEP, or the Attorney General covering the cost?

A. $8.1M in local dollars have been appropriated to this project by the legislative council, and the town council also allocated $1.8M from the American Rescue Plan Act for the assessments. The State of CT, through the Department of Economic and Community Development, has committed $8M. Residents have asked why the original site-remediation parties, including Olin, are not covering this work. The project team noted that those parties were released by the State.

Q. What will the cost be to the taxpayer?

A. $8.1M in local dollars have been committed to this project, and the town earmarked $1.8M of its allocation from the American Rescue Plan Act for the assessments. The State has committed $8M.

Q. How much money has been spent on the foundations project so far?

A. The Foundations project is in what is called pre-construction: engineering assessments, design, and preparing bid documents. The total spent to-date is **$1,496,426.00**

Q. Has Hamden received the funds approved by the State Bond Commission in December 2025?

A. The Community Investment Fund awards for both projects are still in the contracting phase. Funds will be disbursed to the town on a reimbursement basis.

Q. What happened to the $2 million fund set aside during the original cleanup, and can that money help residents now?

A. Residents recalled being told during the original cleanup that about $2 million was set aside in case property owners ever needed to dig below four feet. Those funds were provided to the Hamden Economic Development Corporation (HEDC). The Town's understanding is that roughly $883,000 remains, and that it was earmarked for soil management costs on properties that may be making home improvements or removing deteriorated structures that may have been serving as a waste fill cap.

HEDC remains a viable organization and has contractual control of these funds and remains under State oversight. If HEDC were to dissolve, the funds would go to the Town, and the Town would be responsible for the management of these funds with state oversight. The Soil Management funds must be used as originally intended. The State has completed the most recent Single Audit of HEDC. The recent audit and the Soil Management contract documents are posted to the Town's website.

Q. Will this project raise my property taxes or homeowners' tax bills?

A. The repair work itself is funded through the grant, ARPA, and municipal funds described above, and completing the repairs will not raise your assessment unless your assessment was previously lowered to reflect the damage. How the Town's overall budget and mill rate are set is a separate, town-wide matter.

Q. Can I be reimbursed for repairs I have already paid for? Should I pay to fix urgent problems now while I wait?

A. The Repair Fund was set up to repair homes from this point forward, and it has a finite budget. The Town will not be able to reimburse homeowners for repairs they paid for in the past. If your home has urgent problems right now, such as flooding or a foundation that continues to sink, please contact the project team so they know about your situation.

Q. Who is doing the work and what is their experience with this kind of project?

A. **Demolition.** BL Companies was hired by the Town through a competitive bid process for the planning and specifications for the demolition project. 7 Summits Construction was hired by the town through a competitive bid process to serve as Construction Manager on the demolition project. The demolition contractor has not yet been selected but will be selected through a competitive bid process.

A. **Newhall Foundations.** The engineering evaluations of the homes are being performed by Haley & Aldrich, a firm with geotechnical and environmental engineering experience. The program and construction are being managed by 7 Summits Construction, selected through the Town's competitive

RFP process, as the Program and Construction Manager. The construction vendors will be selected through the Town's competitive bid process. Homeowners will have final say of who enters their property/home.

At the July meeting, 7 Summits explained how construction contractors will be chosen. The bid process includes set-asides, and contractors are vetted during the process. The most qualified low bidder is awarded the work, and the work will be spread among several contractors rather than giving all 18 properties to one contractor. 7 Summits has contacted several agencies about including minority-owned businesses in the bid process and has been reaching out to generate interest among local businesses. As Construction Manager, 7 Summits will be on the job, in the household, and checking in with homeowners to make sure all work is performed to standard.

Q. Will the repairs include replacing windows and doors damaged by the sinking foundation?

A. The repair documents are focused on foundation repair. Windows and doors in the basement will be repaired/replaced if they are eligible and these are included in the documents. Windows and doors in the upper floors are not currently part of this project.

Q. Will fences, sheds, and other structures damaged by a sinking foundation or yard be covered?

A. The repair documents are focused on foundation repair. Windows and doors in the basement will be repaired/replaced if they are eligible and these are included in the documents. Windows and doors on the upper floors, fences, sheds and other structures are not currently part of this project.

Q. My home was rebuilt or changed after other damage (for example, a fire). Will the foundation work damage the newer construction?

A. Every home's situation is different. If your home has been rebuilt or reconfigured, a member of the project team will sit down with you individually so the plan for your home takes those changes into account.

Q. Will I have a say in the repair plans for my home?

A. Yes. Participation is voluntary, and you approve the scope of work for your home. The construction manager will meet with you before work begins, and no repair is considered complete until the engineer, the Town, and you have all signed off.

Q. Will I need to move out temporarily during the repairs, and what support is available if I do?

A. Some work may not allow a homeowner to stay in the home while it is being done. If that is the case, the Town will provide relocation support. Which homes this will affect is not yet known; it will become clear as the team meets with each homeowner about the work planned for their home. The kind of support will depend on each household's situation, and the Town will work it out with the homeowner. Some of these situations will be challenging, and the Town is committed to making sure homeowners are part of the discussion as a solution is worked out.

Q. What about daily disruption, noise, vibrations to nearby homes, and pest control during the repair work?

A. Repairs are handled as a rolling, phased process across the neighborhood rather than all at once. Each property has its own micro-schedule and its own building permits, a construction manager meets with the homeowner before work starts, and the team stays in daily communication with homeowners while work is underway on their home. If a property is not already fenced, silt fencing is put up to define the

work area. Specific questions about vibration or pest control at an individual home can be directed to the project team.

Residents have also raised concerns about animals, such as groundhogs burrowing under sinking sheds and deteriorating concrete, and are worried the problem will get worse when the former school comes down. The project team has heard this concern and is looking into whether animal removal and ongoing maintenance can be addressed.

Q. If construction damages sidewalks or roads, will they be repaired?

A. Yes.

Q. How will success be measured, and who will decide when a home repair is complete?

A. Repair is measured against building code, and all work must meet or exceed it. A home is not considered complete until the engineer, the Town, and the homeowner all sign off on the work. Every property is guaranteed for one year after the Town approves it, and there are mechanisms for homeowners to report any deficiencies during that period. The Town also intends to have monitoring by a licensed environmental professional (LEP) in place during construction.

Q. How do you decide which homes are eligible?

A. Eligibility is determined from multiple lines of evidence including the assessments of the geotechnical engineers, subsurface investigations, review of property documentation, and conversations with the homeowner. In general, a property qualifies if it was remediated by CTDEEP between 2010 and 2012 and has foundation or water issues related to waste fill and/or remediation at the property. Examples of eligible issues include foundation damage caused by waste fill below the house, water intrusion in basements caused by remediation activities, wet lawns caused by the poorly drained soil used for remediation, and other issues caused by unsatisfactory prior remediation activities. Homeowners are responsible for maintenance and repair of their property for conditions that are not caused by waste fill and/or remediation.

Q. What is the step-by-step process for my home?

A. The process runs in a set sequence: you respond to outreach and provide information; your property receives an engineering assessment; you are informed whether it is eligible; eligible properties are surveyed to locate their legal boundaries; you are told which repairs are eligible and, if you accept, construction documents are prepared; 7 Summits Construction sets up site logistics; construction and oversight take place; any unforeseen issues or changes are addressed; and finally the owner, the Town, and the engineer all accept the completed work.

Q. How are drainage and settling problems being addressed?

A. Haley & Aldrich is responsible for designing the foundation and drainage solutions, and the contractors that 7 Summits hires for the Town will carry them out, with the engineer signing off that the work matches the design. Haley & Aldrich's designs use a combination of methods to address each property's unique issues. The goal for foundation repairs is to repair existing damage and provide long-term stability for the foundation. The goal for drainage repairs is to reduce water intrusion into basements by moving water away from the foundation and to improve drainage of the property by sending water runoff underground.

Examples of foundation repairs include replacing portions of damaged foundation walls and floor slabs, repairing foundation cracks, and installing helical piles under foundations to transfer the weight of the house to stronger soils below the waste fill.

Examples of drainage repairs include replacing dry wells that were installed during remediation, installing underground water infiltration chambers to remove excess water from the yard and roof, installing wick drains in yards and sump pumps in basements, sealing foundation cracks and joints, applying exterior waterproofing, and improving exterior grading.

Q. Does this program cover rental or commercial properties, and has everyone been reached?

A. This program is for non-public properties within Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (CTDEEP) Consent Order Boundary and other qualifying remediated properties. Most properties in the Consent Order Boundary are residential. Multiple rounds of in-person outreach were conducted between 2024 and 2025, including multiple mailings of questionnaires to the 305 properties inside the Consent Order Boundary. Many homeowners did not respond to the outreach or declined the free assessment.

Q. What will it cost to repurpose the [former middle school] site, and who will benefit?

A. No use has been decided yet, so there is no repurposing cost to share. The outcome of the community visioning process will define the benefit to residents.

Q. Will the site genuinely benefit the neighborhood, and will the community's choice be honored this time?

A. The visioning process is being designed to center the residents most affected, so that the decision reflects what the community wants rather than a use chosen for them. Several residents referenced past experiences where they felt their input was not honored; that concern is noted. The visioning process will begin after the building comes down. Details will be announced.

Q. How will air quality be protected so the work doesn't cause health or environmental harm, including during drilling and jackhammering inside homes?

A. Haley & Aldrich will perform air monitoring at each property during repair work. An air monitor device will be set up outside of the house and will continuously collect readings of dust in the air. If the dust exceeds the allowable limit, it will send an alarm. Haley & Aldrich can provide homeowners with access to their property's air monitoring data and provide indoor air monitoring devices during interior repair work which generates dust.

During **demolition**, a dust-monitoring program runs around the perimeter of the site to keep dust from leaving it, and an air-monitoring program is in place to prevent visible dust from migrating off site. The monitoring results are available through a posted QR code and are shared with the Hamden Newhall Neighborhood Association.

Q. How will contaminants in the ground beneath the former school be handled during demolition without creating greater environmental danger?

A. The former school site meets the State's cleanup standards. During the earlier remediation, four feet of material was removed from the grassy areas, and the areas beneath the buildings will be capped with clean fill. That cap is recorded in the land records and cannot be disturbed; the Town had to obtain permission to carry out this work, and the site is subject to annual inspections plus a full inspection every five years by a licensed environmental professional.

Building materials at the school have been tested to determine what requires abatement, such as asbestos and lead. Those hazardous materials are fully removed from the site and properly disposed of before demolition, with the abatement and removal documented on site daily. Hazardous material must be transported under strict regulations (for example, asbestos must be containerized), and specific truck routes have not been finalized yet.

Residents asked about the areas beneath the tennis courts, sidewalks, and other hard surfaces, which were in place before the earlier cleanup. These hard surfaces will be repaired and will continue to act as a cap, following the environmental land use restriction (ELUR) recorded for the site, and the area will be accessible and safe. The Town's project team estimated the cost of removing the material beneath these surfaces between $1.5M - $2M. Residents at the meeting said they believe this work should be part of the project if the goal is to clean up the site; that view has been noted.

The report describing the remediation actions taken at the site, along with a hazardous-materials inventory, is posted on the project website.

Q. When the air monitors detect dust above the allowable limit, what happens next and what actions are taken?

A. If the air monitors detect dust above the allowable limit, the work will be stopped immediately, and the issue will be addressed before the work can continue.

Q. Who runs these meetings, the Town or a community group? Will there be accountability across current and future administrations? Will there be more than one session so everyone can attend? Will the neighborhood be consistently supported with resources?

A. Both projects are managed by the Town of Hamden, and as such, the town is accountable. The Hamden Newhall Neighborhood Association is a partner and assists with convening the community meetings. The makeup of the Oversight Advisory Committee, the quarterly community meetings, and the project websites are part of how the project keeps residents informed and involved.

HNNA plans to hold quarterly community meetings for updates. At each meeting, you can sign in with your email address or phone number to receive email notifications and automated text reminders. Slides presented at community meetings are posted on the project website (www.hamdenedc.com). This FAQ will be updated throughout the projects, posted online, and provided at each meeting.

“Parking Lot” Questions

These questions do not yet have a complete answer. Each one will be updated in this FAQ as decisions are made.

1. How will the purchase of homes that cost more to repair than they are worth work?

Where it stands: The Town is talking with the State about options. The process, how support will work, and timing are still being developed, and affected homeowners will be part of these discussions.

2. Which homes will need temporary relocation, and what support will be provided?

Where it stands: This will become clear as the home evaluations are completed and the project team meets with each homeowner. Support for temporary relocation will be provided, and affected families will be part of these discussions.

3. Can animal and pest removal, and ongoing maintenance, be provided, especially during demolition?

Where it stands: The project team is looking into this.

4. What truck routes will be used to haul hazardous materials from the former middle school?

Where it stands: The actual demolition contractor is not yet procured. Therefore, truck routes have not been finalized.