



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
Division of Statewide Planning
235 Promenade Street - Suite 230
Providence, RI 02908



August 24, 2023

Ms. Debra Beavin, Economic Development Representative
Economic Development Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
900 Market St., Room 602
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Ms. Beavin:

The Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning (RIDSP) offers our enthusiastic support for the grant application developed by the City of East Providence for a feasibility study of the former Oldham School as a multi-use small business, blue economy, and arts incubator.

The RIDSP is responsible for preparing and maintaining plans for the physical, economic, and social development of the state; and coordinating the actions of state, local and federal agencies, and private individuals within the framework of the state's development goals and policies. In 2020, the state completed its approved comprehensive economic development strategy, *Rhode Island Innovates 2.0* ("the CEDS"); we find East Providence's application to be consistent with the CEDS, aligning well with goals and objectives included in the strategy. Adaptation of an existing building, providing incubator space, supporting the Blue Economy, growing the renewable energy economy, supporting disadvantaged residents, giving technical support to existing businesses, and helping small businesses to grow are all consistent with the state CEDS.

This project supports the goals, policies, and priorities of the CEDS, specifically:

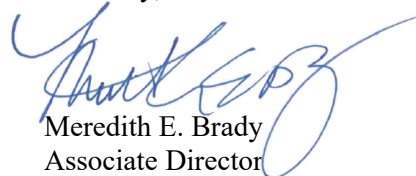
- Opportunity #1: "Establish the Blue Economy as a focus";
- Opportunity #4: "Create a Minority Business Accelerator";
- Opportunity #7: "Make strategic infrastructure investments for targeted industries";
- Opportunity #9: "Continue development of cluster networks and small business intermediaries"; and
- Opportunity #10: "Continue progress and investment in improving quality of place via transit, housing, small business, arts, and culture. Regenerate the state's historic city and town centers."¹

Reuse of this high-profile building as a mixed-use incubator will help the state support entrepreneurs, train workers, and create wealth, while helping East Providence build a more robust local economy with equitable opportunities for residents. Shared economic prosperity will be generated through a combination of local small business creation and the growth of arts-based businesses and the Blue Economy cluster, which are both revenue and employment generators in the state.

¹ QVARTZ [for Rhode Island Commerce]. [*Rhode island Innovates 2.0*](#) (2020), pages 4-5.

We pledge our full support for East Providence's efforts and this exciting opportunity. We look forward to a favorable review of their application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Meredith E. Brady', is written over the printed name and title.

Meredith E. Brady
Associate Director

Cc: Roberta Groch, AICP- Assistant Chief