



Roberto L. DaSilva  
Mayor

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **East Providence approves 11 new housing units; Kicks off Riverside Square revitalization project efforts**

EAST PROVIDENCE, RI – The City of East Providence is moving forward with adding 11 new critically-needed housing units on the site of the abandoned Platt-Watters school complex in Riverside and a comprehensive study to promote, activate, and revive Riverside Square.

The formerly-vacant Platt-Watters and Burnside school buildings were demolished in the spring and [plans to subdivide the property](#) into eight 7,500-square-foot lots and three 10,000-squarefoot lots were approved by the East Providence Planning Board in July.

“It has been demonstrated that a community’s population growth is tied to the availability of new housing,” Mayor Bob DaSilva said. “New residents to the city will help support local businesses, civic groups and provide resources to aid local government services.”

The East Providence City Council rezoned the three 10,000-square-foot parcels which will be home to affordable housing. The affordable housing designation ensures those three parcels will be restricted to households earning up to 80 percent of the area median income. These eight new single-family homes and three duplexes will add to the city’s housing supply at an important time as the median sales price of a home in East Providence has soared from \$170,000 in 2014 to more than \$300,000 in 2021.

In addition, these new housing units will improve the city's aging housing stock. More than 80 percent of the city's existing housing was built prior to 1980 and nearly 40 percent prior to 1940. This new subdivision will provide new sidewalks to the neighborhood as well new street trees every 35 feet along Burnside and Hoppin Avenues.

"I am very appreciative of the mayor and city council's wholehearted support for quality affordable housing in our community," East Providence Planning & Economic Development Director Bill Fazioli said. "Housing is foundational for individuals and is an essential element for our city's growth and prosperity."

The Riverside Downtown Revitalization planning project is kicking off in September. Students from Roger Williams University will be working in partnership with the City of East Providence, GrowSmart RI, Riverside residents, and community groups to support multiple planning efforts. The students will conduct a planning study and cultural resources survey in Riverside to assess the existing economic, social, and physical conditions of the community. This study coincides with current place-making improvements to the East Bay Bike Path area in the Square and the recently passed Mixed-Use Overlay District, allowing for more flexible zoning.

This project will focus on the work of Main Street America to restore this unique and historic village: <https://www.mainstreet.org/home>

"Helping East Providence grow and maintain its charm is key," DaSilva said. "It is difficult to invite new residents into the city with a low-to-no inventory in the housing market."

“The development of new, affordable homes in conjunction with the restoration of Riverside Square is exactly what we need in our city,” he added.

