



**CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE**

**SPECIFICATIONS**

**SALE OF UNION PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFP EP20/21-03**

**BID OPENING ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2020 AT 11AM**



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The City of East Providence requests proposals from interested parties to purchase the Union Primary School, a prominent historic structure owned by the City of East Providence located at 1320 Pawtucket Avenue (map 503, block 23, parcel 9). The City seeks proposals that will benefit the City while preserving the historic architectural features of the former school house. Generations of families have attended the school and it has always been a prominent landmark of the community. Successful proposals will demonstrate a commitment to the preservation of the exterior architectural features, conformance to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and a clear benefit to the City.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

The Union Primary School is one of the oldest remaining former school buildings of the City. The original one-story structure with an end gable roof facing Pawtucket Avenue was built and designed by Architect Christopher Dexter in 1873. The tower and south addition were added to the original structure in 1888, which was designed by Architect William Walker and Son. Later smaller additions occurred in 1900 and 1904. The red brick addition to the rear of the main structure was added in 1961, which was designed by Architect Michael Traficante.

Previous renovations took place in the early 1990s to allow Union Primary School to serve as a child daycare center and elderly meal site. Renovations were made to the fire alarm system and handicap accessibility to meet 1990s building code requirements. In all cases, the individual, non-profit or firm that responds to this RFP must accept the premise in "as is" condition, without warranty by the City as to the condition of the land, building and mechanicals. All interested parties are responsible at their sole cost and liability for all pre-development costs including due diligence studies such as traffic, geotechnical, storm water management and other site analysis.

The subject property is a 43,480 sq. ft. parcel with frontage on Pawtucket Avenue. Access to the property is provided by three driveways on St. Michaels Court. The parcel does not have frontage on St. Michaels Court, see enclosed assessor's map. Adjacent parcel 10 (map 503, block 23, parcel 10), which is owned by St. Michael's & Grace Church provides access to the school's side and rear parking area from St. Michaels Court, see enclosed memorandum of understanding.

**A non-mandatory onsite meeting is scheduled for FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2020 AT 10AM with all interested development firms for an opportunity to discuss the project with city officials.**

## **III. ZONING**

The property is currently zoned as Residential-3, which primarily allows for residential and municipal uses. Proposals may conform to the existing zoning or may be predicated upon a zoning variance, zone change, comprehensive plan amendment or special use permit. In all cases, the applicant is responsible for all costs associated with meeting the existing or proposed zoning requirements. Proposals must clearly illustrate the potential reuse of the property and interested parties must perform their own due diligence with respect to zoning, Comprehensive Plan conformance, building code and preservation issues.

#### **IV. REGULATORY RESTRICTIONS**

Because the City used Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to make improvements to the property, the following regulatory requirements apply to its redevelopment:

- If jobs will be created, 51% will be held by, or will be available to, persons at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI).
- If housing unit(s) will be created, 51% must be occupied by households at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI).
- Any construction or renovation must pay Davis Bacon prevailing wages.

This regulatory requirement will not apply if the purchase price is equal to or greater than its Fair Market Value (FMV). The last appraisal was done in 2017 which determined a FMV of \$250,000.

#### **V. DESIRED REUSE**

The entire building is handicap accessible, multiple rooms vary in size, a front reception area and more than adequate off-street parking. These amenities of the building and site could accommodate a variety of different types of uses such as an office, medical examination facility, art studio or a daycare facility. The following development type (or combination of types) is desired for this property:

- Professional offices (i.e. business or medical)
- Residential
- Medical clinic
- Private school
- Child day care center
- Health, fitness and wellness facility
- Animal or veterinary hospital
- Commercial educational facility
- Art studio (i.e. live/work)

No future large scale exterior additions that would impact the exterior historical architecture or impede the site lines of the front façade from the street will be permitted and the City will reinforce this requirement through deed restrictions intended to protect the exterior historical architectural features as well as the following:

- Preserve all exterior features of the L-shape main structure (1873 original school house, 1888 addition and early 1900s additions) that include, but not limited to the tower, gables, brackets, trim, siding, bands, cladding, windows, window frames, transitions boards, and chimney;
- Preserve all interior features of the tower that are above the drop ceiling at the base of the tower that served as a small office. The interior area to be preserved is approximately 8 feet from the first floor elevation to the top of the interior of the tower;
- Preserve the exterior sign located on the west gable facing Pawtucket Avenue. This sign may or may not date to the 1873 school house, but has been a prominent feature of the school for the last 50 years or more;

- Preserve all interior features of the ceiling of the large room located in the northwest portion of the 1873 school house that include, but not limited to the brackets, molding, and trim. The approximate area to be preserved begins 8 feet from the first floor elevation to the ceiling;
- The rear addition that was built in 1961 offers no historical value, however it may be a threat if its height is allowed to exceed the height of the L-shape main structure (1873 original school house, 1888 addition and early 1900s additions). Currently, the 1961 addition is not visible from Pawtucket Avenue and was intentionally designed to be hidden from Pawtucket Avenue. Alterations may occur to the footprint of the 1961 addition provided they are not visible from Pawtucket Avenue or visually impact the L-shape main structure; and
- Landscaping in the front-yard facing Pawtucket Avenue is currently limited to a few medium size trees and a 6 foot stockade fence located along the north side-yard property line. The lack of landscaping and fencing in the front-yard maintains an adequate view of the building from Pawtucket Avenue and any future landscaping in the front-yard must be limited to species that maintain an adequate view corridor.

## **VI. DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES**

The City has the following incentives to stimulate the investment of capital that advances the City's community goals:

### **1. CITY TAX STABILIZATION**

The City offers tax stabilization for expansion or renovation of any existing facility, construction of a new facility, the addition of tangible business property, or leasehold improvements, excepting instances where the proposed taxable improvements are in excess of \$5,000,000, the percentage of new added taxable assessment shall be stabilized in accordance with the tax exemption schedule of 100% in the first year and reducing 20% each subsequent year over a total period of 6 years.

The minimum threshold for participation in the stabilization program by existing eligible properties is \$150,000 in taxable improvements as determined by the city tax assessor. The minimum threshold for new eligible and tangible business equipment is \$500,000. In addition, applicants for stabilization of tangible business equipment must document the creation or relocation of no fewer than 10 full time equivalent jobs (FTE's) to receive stabilization.

### **2. BUSINESS LOAN PROGRAMS**

The City of East Providence offers a low interest (20 percent below prime) commercial loan program for either commercial or industrial businesses to finance the acquisition, construction and improvements of land or buildings and for the purchase of capital equipment. The Commercial Loan Program is available to business currently located in or relocating to East Providence and provides funding from \$10,000 to \$100,000, at a variable rate adjusted annually, with a maximum payback term of 15 years.

The East Providence also offers a Commercial Microloan Program to finance lease hold improvements, startup expenses, operating expenses and/or to purchase assets for businesses with five (5) or fewer employees, which are unable to obtain a loan through banks and other commercial lending sources. To be eligible for a Microloan, a business owner must reside in the

City and meet HUD income guidelines. Microloans are available for up to \$10,000 at an interest rate of prime rate plus one point, fixed over the term of the loan, with a maximum payback term of 5 years.

## **VII. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

All proposals must be in narrative format and must clearly illustrate the potential reuse of the property. For a proposal to be deemed complete, it must contain the following items:

### **1. AGENCY INFORMATION**

- Name of firm;
- Business address, including city, state, zip code and phone number;
- Contact person phone and e-mail who can respond to detailed questions regarding their firm's proposal;
- Indicate whether or not incorporated and if so, when;
- If not incorporated, name of owner(s);
- Indicate if you ever defaulted on a contract and if so, when and why.

### **2. DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT**

**Development Options:** Identify the proposed re-use of the structure and describe why the specific development options were chosen over others such as townhouses, condos, apartments, senior living, mixed-use, live/work, artist studios, etc. Provide supporting information & data justifying why the proposed re-use option will be successfully occupied.

**Property Description:** Describe in detail the proposed re-use of the structure including but not limited to interior and exterior alterations, building layout, number of units, parking needs and consistency with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

**Development Benefit:** Describe the benefits to the City such as green building design, sustainable energy, preservation of a historically significant structure, job creation or providing a social service to the community.

**Neighborhood Impact:** Describe the impact that the proposed re-use of the site will have on the adjacent residential neighborhood such as expected occupancy (day, evening, night), time of deliveries, noise levels, parking needs, and other possible impacts to the adjacent church and abutting residential properties;

**Time-Line:** Provide a time line of all major components of the redevelopment of the property.

**Fee:** An acquisition fee.

### **3. PROJECT TEAM**

- Describe the background and relevant experience of the firm along with any sub-consultants to be employed on this project. Describe the background and experience of the designated project manager and other personnel who will participate in the project design and implementation, including a description of the function of each designated participant;

- Describe the relationship or role the firm will have with the City and other stakeholders of the project.

#### 4. FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY & LEGAL STRUCTURE

- Preliminary development budget detailing Sources & Uses, Income Budget, Operating Budget and Cash Flow Analysis. It must be demonstrated that the proposed re-use is financially feasible;
- Describe the legal relationship anticipated with the City in terms of site development, financing, project implementation, ownership, and final disposition/property management.

Respondents may be asked to provide additional information, as needed to assist the City in the decision making process.

### **VIII. SELECTION PROCESS & CRITERIA**

Responses will be evaluated on the basis of the relative merits of the proposal. Proposals will be assessed generally on their overall benefit to the City, preservation of the interior and exterior architectural features, financial feasibility, benefits to the community and quality of design. A brief presentation of the proposal and interview with City staff will be requested prior to City staff submitting a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council. Respondents may be requested to present their proposal before the City Council at a regularly scheduled City Council meeting.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the responses to this RFP:

- Qualifications of the respondents;
- Response from references;
- The extent of preserving the interior and exterior architectural features and a redevelopment plan that is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties;
- Impact the redevelopment will have on the immediate residential neighborhood;
- The type of relationship being proposed between the City and the respondent;
- Financial structure and degree of financial commitments from other private and public funding sources;
- The financial feasibility of the proposal and timeline.
- Purchase Price

### **VIII. GENERAL CONDITIONS**

- The City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any informality, and to select and negotiate services in the best interest of the City;
- The respondent will abide by all applicable Federal, State and City regulations in the performance of their redevelopment of this property;

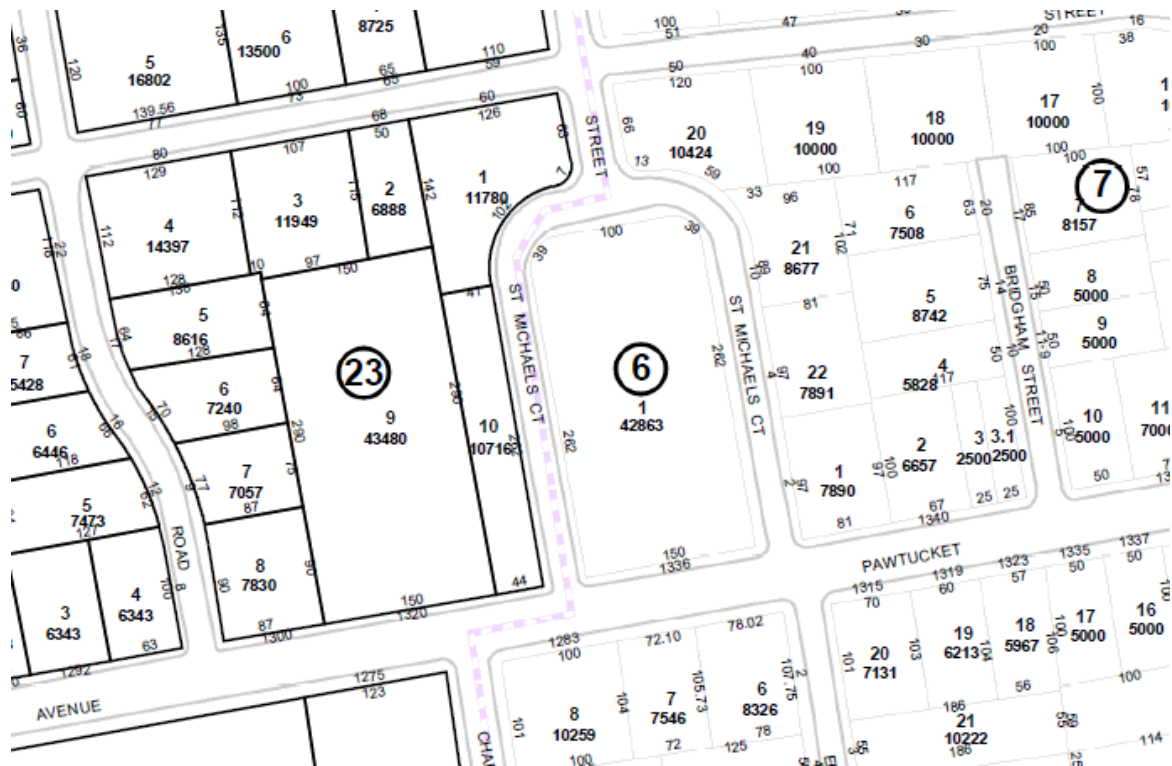
- The City reserves the right to accept all or part of any proposal, and to negotiate a contract for services and cost with the selected respondent.

## X. CITY CONTACTS

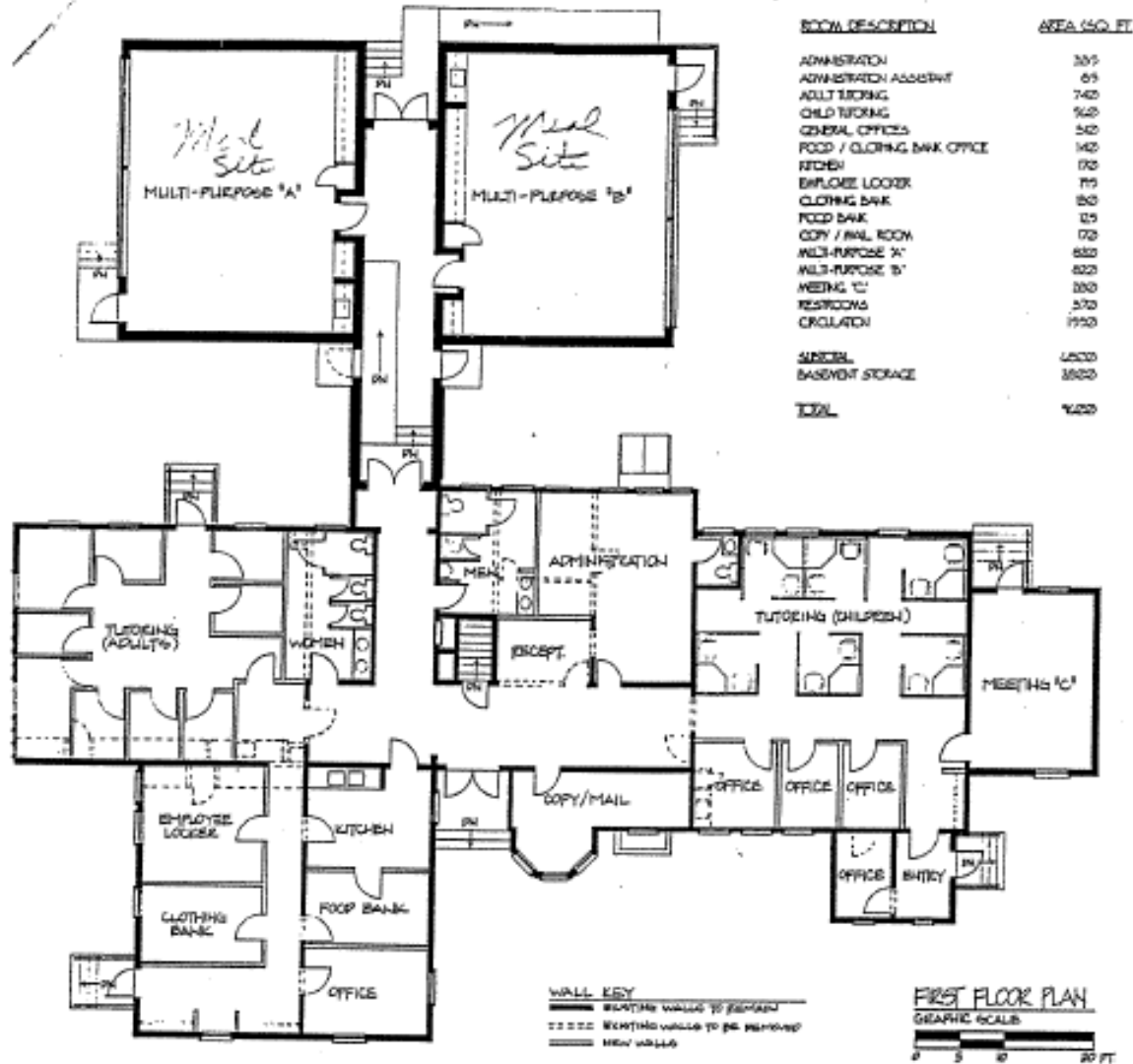
Any questions regarding this RFP may be directed to:

David Bachrach, Community Development Director  
 East Providence City Hall  
 145 Taunton Avenue  
 East Providence, RI 02914  
 office (401) 435-7536  
[dbachrach@eastprovidenceri.gov](mailto:dbachrach@eastprovidenceri.gov)

**Assessor's Map**  
**Map 503, block 23, parcel 9**



## Interior Layout of 1990s Renovations



A10	DATE: 10/27/94	PROPOSED RENOVATIONS FOR		
	DRAWING TITLE	EAST PROVIDENCE COMMUNITY CENTER		
	PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN	EAST PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND		
	SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"	DRAWN BY: LMI	CHECKED BY: GNS	DATE: 10/27/94



## Pictures of Union Primary School



## Pictures of Union Primary School





## Pictures of Union Primary School



## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

By and between the City of East Providence and  
Saint Michael's and Grace Church

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, entered into this 16th day of February 1992 between the City of East Providence, acting by and through its City Manager (hereinafter called "City") and the Saint Michael's and Grace Church, 1336 Pawtucket Avenue, East Providence, RI (hereinafter referred to as "St. Michael's").

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the City to rehabilitate the former Union Primary School at 1320 Pawtucket Avenue (Assessor's Map 503, Block 23, Parcel 9) to house two proposed tenants, a Self-Help Elderly Meal Site and the East Providence Community Center. The vacant lot directly abutting the Union Primary building in St. Michael's ownership (Assessor's Map 503, Block 23, Parcel 10) will be utilized by the proposed tenants and owner for additional parking. (Tax map attached.)

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties do mutually agree as follows:

1. Use of the parking area located on Assessors Map 503, Block 23, Parcel 10 owned by St. Michael's by the tenants and owner of the former Union Primary School building will be provided free of charge for an initial term of ten (10) years, effective from the date of contract and thereafter until terminated by sixty (60) days written notice by either party to the other. Termination shall be with cause only.
2. The City will improve the parking area by the addition of appropriate security lighting, paving, pavement markings, and landscaping.
3. The City will maintain the parking area including: lighting, pavement markings, snow plowing, and other maintenance as needed.
4. St. Michael's will have continued use of the City's parking area adjacent to the Union Primary Building (Assessor's Map 503, Block 23, Parcel 9) for the duration of this Agreement and any renewals thereof.
5. There will be coordination between all parking area users, especially for major functions.

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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
Union Primary School

1/22/92


6. No changes in the terms hereof shall be binding upon either party unless approved in writing by an authorized representative of either party.

7. This instrument and any or all supporting documents attached hereto by specific reference constitute the entire understanding of the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof.

By:   
Paul E. Lemont, City Manager


Witness: 

Date: 2/26/92

By:   
Philip G. Campbell, Sr. Warden  
for St. Michael and Grace Church

Witness: 

Date: February 20, 1992

By:  3/13/92  
The Rt. Rev. George N. Hunt, D.D.  
The Episcopal Diocese of RI

Witness: 

Date: March 13, 1992

Attachment: Tax Assessor's map

DF/san