



CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE
DEVELOPMENT OF A MIXED-USE HOUSING & SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATION
COMMUNITY AT THE FORMER OLDHAM SCHOOL
SPECIFICATIONS
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP EP22/23-31
BID OPENING TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 12, 2023 AT 11:00AM



I. INTRODUCTION

The City of East Providence requests proposals from interested parties to purchase or lease the former Oldham School, a prominent historic structure owned by the City of East Providence located at 640 Bullocks Point Avenue (map 413, block 11, parcel 001) for the development of mixed-use housing and small business incubator. The City seeks proposals that will benefit the City while preserving the historic architectural features of the former school. 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 former Oldham School is a prominent school building in the Riverside section of the City. A one-story, red-brick, colonial revival-style school with horizontal massing and a somewhat L-shaped footprint, the Oldham School was designed by R. Milton Kenyon. Construction at Oldham started in 1951 and was completed in 1952. A one-story rear addition was later added in 1970. In the 1951 portion of the building, Colonial Revival elements remain, including the hip roof with cupola, the gable-roofed central entrance pavilion trimmed with brick quoins, and the doorway framing of pilasters and pediment. In the 1970 addition, internal design elements remain, including the original library and its wooden veneer walls and original lighting. The building is approximately 33,900 square feet and is sited on a 3.9 acre lot.

Oldham School operated as an elementary school for over 50 years. When it ceased to operate as a school, it continued to operate as a YMCA after-school program for area schoolchildren. For the last 10 years it was used as a storage facility for the school department, housing extra desks and other school materials.

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 3.9 acre parcel with frontage on Bullocks Point Avenue. Additional access to the property is also provided by two driveways on Providence Avenue. The eastern portion of the building faces the City-owned Providence Avenue playground and recreational park, including two basketball courts, a softball field, a baseball field, and a wooded walking path. This park and playground are located on the shore of Bullocks Cove. The site is one block away from the East Bay Bike Path and a four minute walk to Crescent Park.

A mandatory onsite meeting is scheduled for Monday August 21, 2023 at 11:00 AM at 640 Bullocks Point Avenue with all interested development firms for an opportunity to discuss the project with city officials.

III. ZONING

The property is currently zoned as Open-1, which primarily allows for open space uses including the following: farming, conservation, nursery, park/playground, church, cultural activity, camp for children. The property is located in the Riverside Square Overlay District, allowing for more flexibility regarding building and use requirements. 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. DESIRED REUSE

The majority of the building is ADA accessible, with multiple rooms that vary in size. Two main reception areas exist, including a front reception area and a reception area on the northern side of the building. Open interior gathering spaces include the gymnasium, a multi-purpose room, and the former library. The site has more than adequate off-street parking and close proximity to a City-owned playground and recreational park. These amenities of the building and site could accommodate a variety of different types of uses.

The City is requesting proposals that feature a mix of the following development types:

- Small business incubator(s)
- Shared/collaborative workspaces, including micro-offices
- Art studios (live/work)
- Child daycare center
- Health, fitness and wellness space (gymnasium), open to public use
- Café, restaurant, brewery
- Residential, with a minimum of 20% being affordable
- Farmers Market/Community Garden

The City considers the following two components mandatory:

- Small business incubator(s) must be part of the offerings in this space
- The existing gymnasium must remain open and available to the public for recreational use

No future large scale exterior additions that would impact the exterior historical architecture of the 1951 portion of the school, visible from the Bullocks Point Avenue, 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 main structure that faces Bullocks Point Avenue (1951 original school house) that include, but not limited to the gables, brackets, trim, siding, bands, cladding, windows, window frames, transitions boards, and chimney;
- Preserve or replace-in-kind (and design) all millwork at the entry facing Bullocks Point Avenue;
- Alterations to the rear addition added in 1970 may occur, pending all necessary reviews.
- Any future landscaping in the front-yard must be limited to species that maintain an adequate view corridor. Overall, a wooded and tree-lined streets general aesthetic should be maintained and/or sought.

V. 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.

VI. 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. 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), traffic generation, time of deliveries, noise levels, parking needs, and other possible impacts to the abutting residential properties;

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

Offer: The City will entertain either a long-term lease or straight acquisition. Submit a long-term lease structure and/or purchase price.

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.
- Provide professional references from similar projects.

4. FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY & LEGAL STRUCTURE

- Provide preliminary development budget detailing Sources & Uses, Income Budget, Operating Budget and Cash Flow Analysis. Proposal must demonstrate 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.
- Provide the names of potential operators interested in the business incubator component(s).

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

VII. 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 or lease price
- Business plan detailing the scope and viability of the business incubator(s), along with the names of potential operator(s).
- A plan detailing how the gymnasium will remain open and available to community members for recreational use.

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.

IX. CITY CONTACTS

Any questions regarding the RFP may be directed in writing to Melissa Spurr, ARPA Project Manager at mspurr@eastprovidenceri.gov and Ralph Mitchell, Procurement Specialist at rmitchell@eastprovidenceri.gov no later than **MONDAY AUGUST 28, 2023 AT 11:00 AM.**

Assessor's Map
Map 413, block 11, parcel 001



Oldham School site, number 11 on the map.

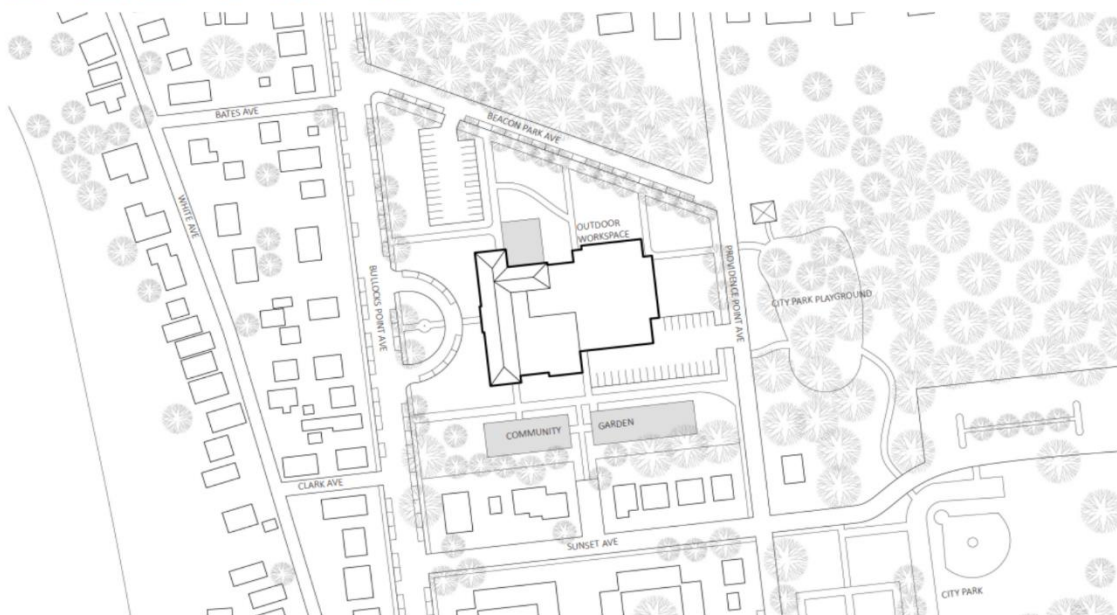
Interior Layout

OLDHAM



Campus Layout

OLDHAM



Pictures of Oldham School



Front. Western side of the building. Facing Bullocks Point Avenue.



Close-up of millwork



North side of building. Front portion of the school.



North side of building. Back addition.



Close-up of entry on northern side of building



Eastern side of building. Runs along Providence Avenue.



Southern side of building.



Open space adjacent to the building on southern side.