



**CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS  
RFP EP25/26-03**

**DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF A SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATOR  
AT THE FORMER OLDHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**NON-MANDATORY SITE AND BUILDING TOUR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2026,  
AT 2:00PM**

**BID OPENING THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2026, AT 11:00AM**

**SPECIFICATIONS**

**ARCHITECT'S RENDERING OF REDEVELOPED SITE**



**I. INTRODUCTION**

The City of East Providence requests proposals from interested parties to 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 redevelopment of the structure into a small business incubator with the possibility of also developing on-site housing.

The City seeks proposals that will benefit the City and its residents 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 of the original 1952 portion of the building, and concepts that promote economic growth, innovative design, long-term sustainability and the creation of new opportunities for the community.

The City seeks to identify a qualified developer or development team — whether for-profit or nonprofit — with the capacity, creativity, and experience to transform the former school into a dynamic and productive small business incubator space. A variety of development approaches are welcome — including full or partial adaptive reuse, selective demolition of the rear portion, and compatible new construction — with a strong preference for designs that preserve the unique architectural elements of the original 1952 structure.

Redevelopment of the former Oldham School offers a development partner a chance to lead a profitable public-private partnership with municipal support, strong community backing, and access to various funding sources. This partnership will lay the groundwork for a project that is both mission focused and market oriented.

Proposals will be evaluated based on overall project merit, alignment with community goals, development feasibility, public benefits, and the respondent's capacity to execute the project. Financial terms will be one of several factors in the selection process.

Proposals are not limited to bidders who submitted Expressions of Interest for this project in 2025.

A non-mandatory tour of the building and site will be held on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 2:00pm located at 640 Bullocks Point Avenue, Riverside, RI 02915.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

The former Oldham School is a prominent school building in the Riverside section of the City. The building is a one-story, red-brick, colonial revival-style school with horizontal massing and a somewhat L-shaped footprint, which was designed by R. Milton Kenyon. Construction was completed in 1952, and a one-story rear addition was added in 1970. Colonial Revival elements remain on the 1952 portion, 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 includes a partial basement. 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 has been 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.

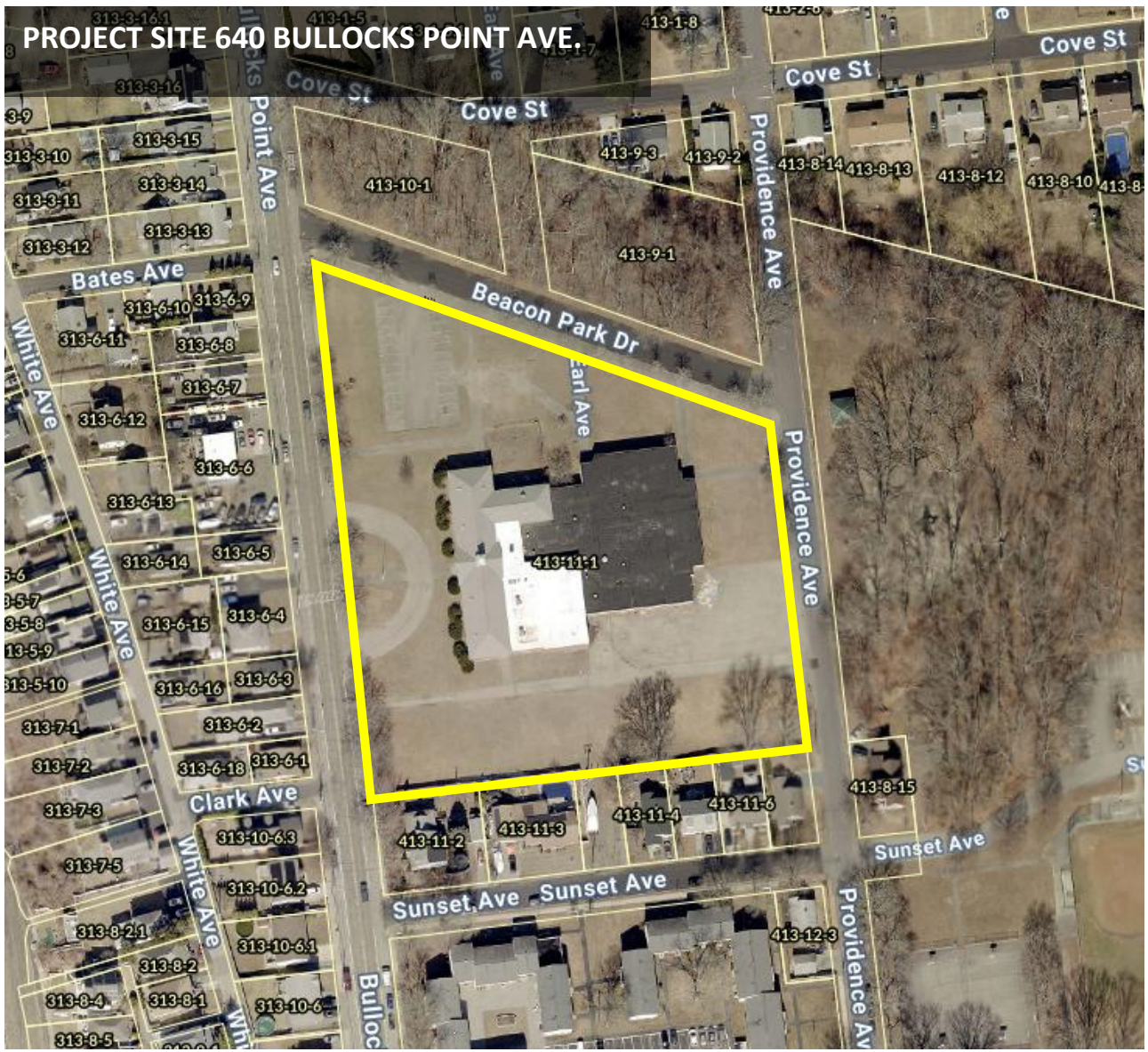
The subject property fronts Bullocks Point Avenue (RI Route 103). Additional access to the property is also provided by two driveways on Providence Avenue. The eastern portion of the building faces the city-owned Providence Avenue playground and recreational park, including two basketball courts, a softball field, a baseball field, splash pad 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 and its historic Loeff Carousel.

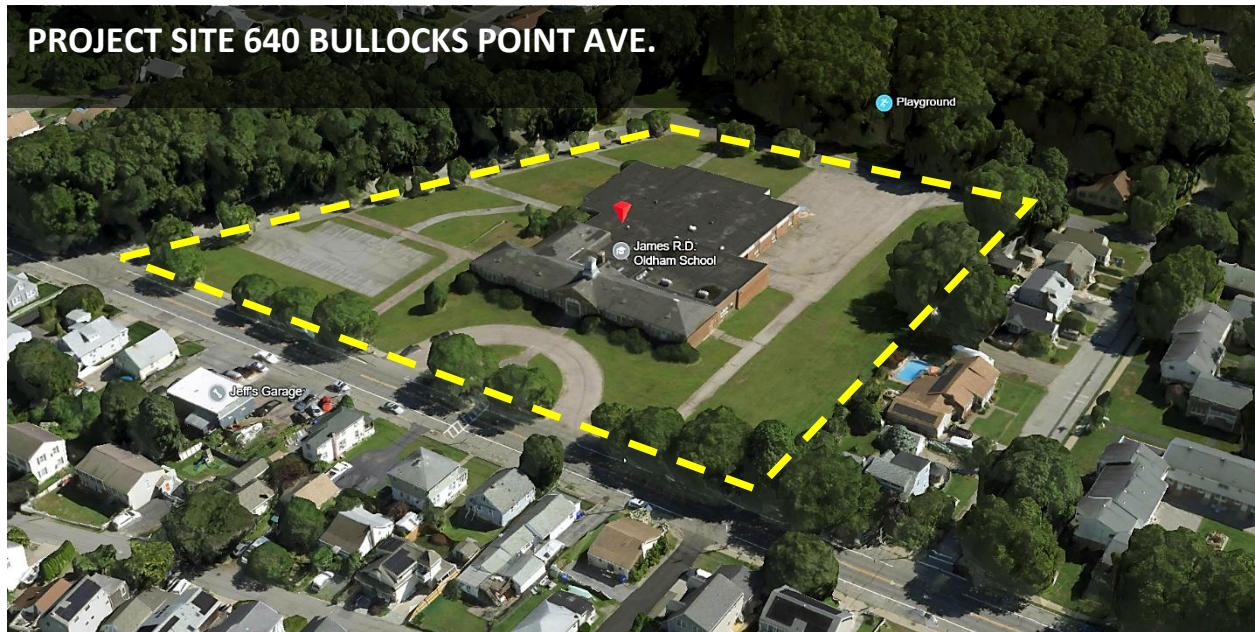
The majority of the building is ADA accessible, with multiple rooms that vary in size. Two former reception areas exist, including a front reception area and a reception area on the northern side of the building. Open interior gathering spaces include the gymnasium, a multi-purpose room, and the former library. The site includes two large on-site parking areas.

The City has recently invested significant funding into the building and property including replacement of the front section of the building’s roof, asbestos remediation necessary for the roof replacement and removal of an underground fuel storage tank north of the building.

A Hazardous Building Materials Assessment was completed by a licensed environmental professional in 2025 which shows that the building contains lead-based paint and asbestos. The original 1952 portion of the building, as well as the southwest corner room immediately adjoining the southern side of the original building, has visual evidence of heavily damaged building materials and substantial mold growth due to water intrusion prior to replacement of the roof.

A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment was prepared by a licensed environmental professional in 2024 which recommended removal of the underground fuel oil tank north of the building. No other areas of concern were found. The tank was removed in 2024, and tests revealed no adjacent soil contamination. A Closure Certificate for Underground Storage Facilities was issued by the RI Department of Environmental Management on 1/16/25.





### **III. DESIRED REUSE**

The City welcomes creative and innovative proposals that align with the City’s objective, including, but not limited to, those outlined below.

- Small business incubator(s)
- Shared/collaborative workspaces, including micro-offices
- Spaces suitable for workforce training
- Spaces suitable for community activities
- Retention of existing gymnasium open to public use
- Publicly accessible café, restaurant, art gallery or similar use

- Residential dwelling units, with a minimum of 20% designated as affordable to low-moderate income residents; affordable units designated for seniors and/or veterans are preferred.
- Outdoor public recreation, farmers' markets and similar community-related activities

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 significant changes or large-scale exterior additions shall be permitted to the architectural façade of the 1952 portion of the school, visible from the Bullocks Point Avenue. Architectural features of this façade shall be preserved and restored including gables, brackets, trim, siding, bands, cladding, windows, window frames, transition boards, chimney and millwork. Architectural features that cannot be restored must be replaced in-kind. The City will reinforce this requirement through deed restrictions intended to protect the exterior historical architectural features. 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 of the building's facade. A landscaped and tree-lined aesthetic should be designed and/or maintained.

A goal of this project is for the small business incubator to be affordable to tenants / clients.

Respondents may propose multiple programmatic uses of the building and establish partnerships.

#### **IV. ZONING AND BUILDING CODE COMPLIANCE**

The property is currently zoned as Open Space (OS-1), which primarily allows for open space uses including the following: municipal facilities, farming, conservation, nursery, park/playground, church, cultural activity, camp for children. The property is also located in the Riverside Square Overlay District, allowing for more flexibility regarding building and use requirements. As a Municipal Facility, proposals are not required to conform to the use or dimensional requirements of the OS-1 district.

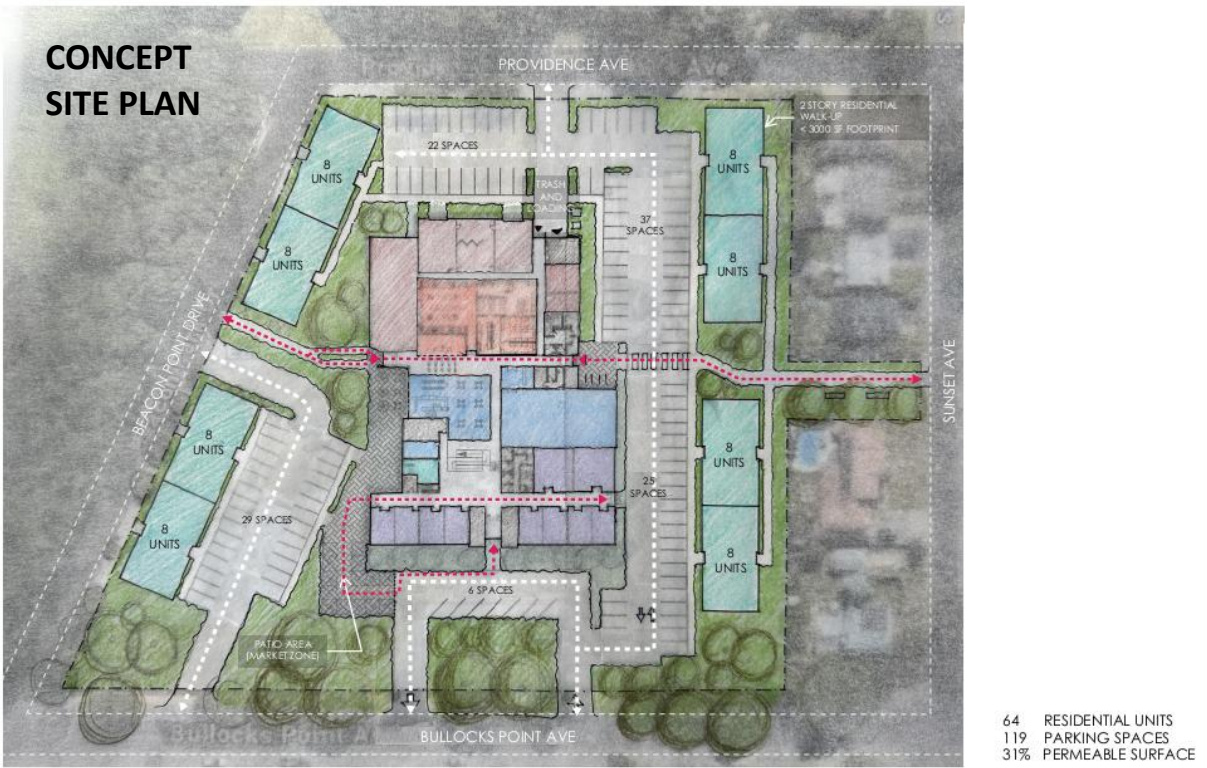
All proposed redevelopment projects must comply with applicable local and State of Rhode Island building codes, including those governing life safety, accessibility, energy efficiency, and environmental standards. Respondents should anticipate early and ongoing coordination with the City's Building Official, Fire Marshal, and other relevant departments throughout the permitting and review process.

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.

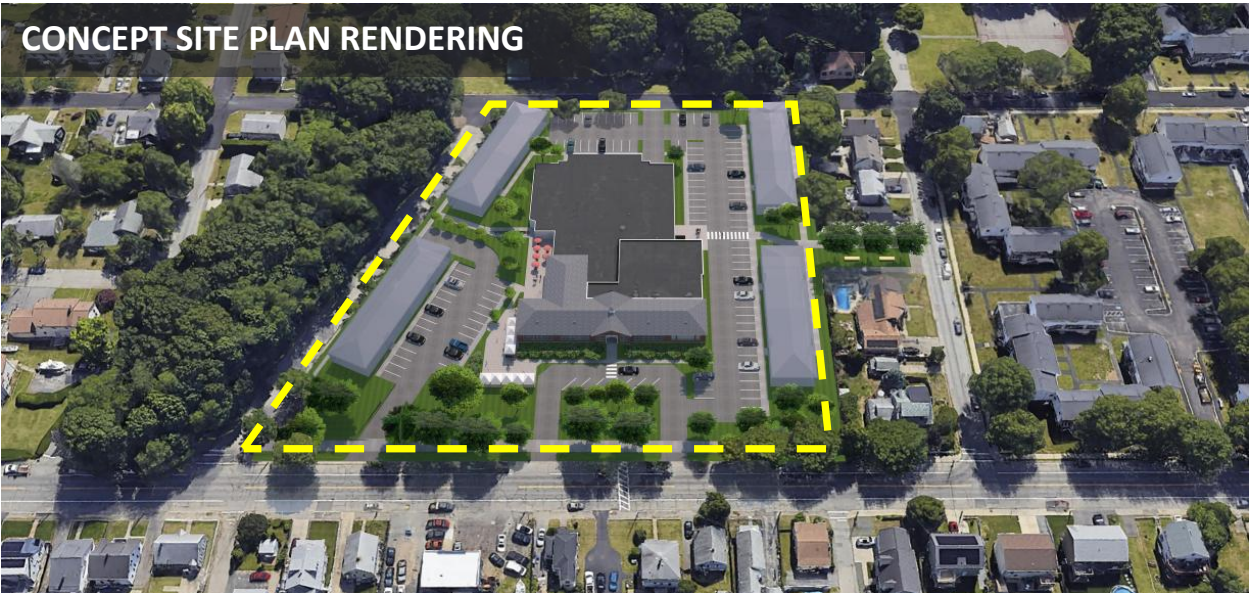
## **V. FEASIBILITY STUDY**

In September of 2025, the City finalized a Feasibility Study funded through a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Agency. Prepared by consultants, New Venture Advisors, the study explored the feasibility of converting the former Oldham Elementary School into a small business incubator. The decision to fund and conduct the study was based on preliminary recommendations from a 2022-2023 revitalization assessment by Roger Williams University and GrowSmart RI, in partnership with the City of East Providence, which recognized the need to find alternative uses for the school site as part of a Riverside development plan. The team suggested repurposing the facility as a specialized food and/or arts-focused business incubation space. The goal of the Feasibility Study was to create a feasible plan for a multi-use business incubator in the former school building that would generate jobs through startups and offer a supportive network and resources to promote long-term success for small businesses, which a focus on helping the most disadvantaged residents in East Providence. Extensive community outreach included community meetings, potential stakeholder interviews and a survey for small businesses and entrepreneurs in relevant economic sectors.

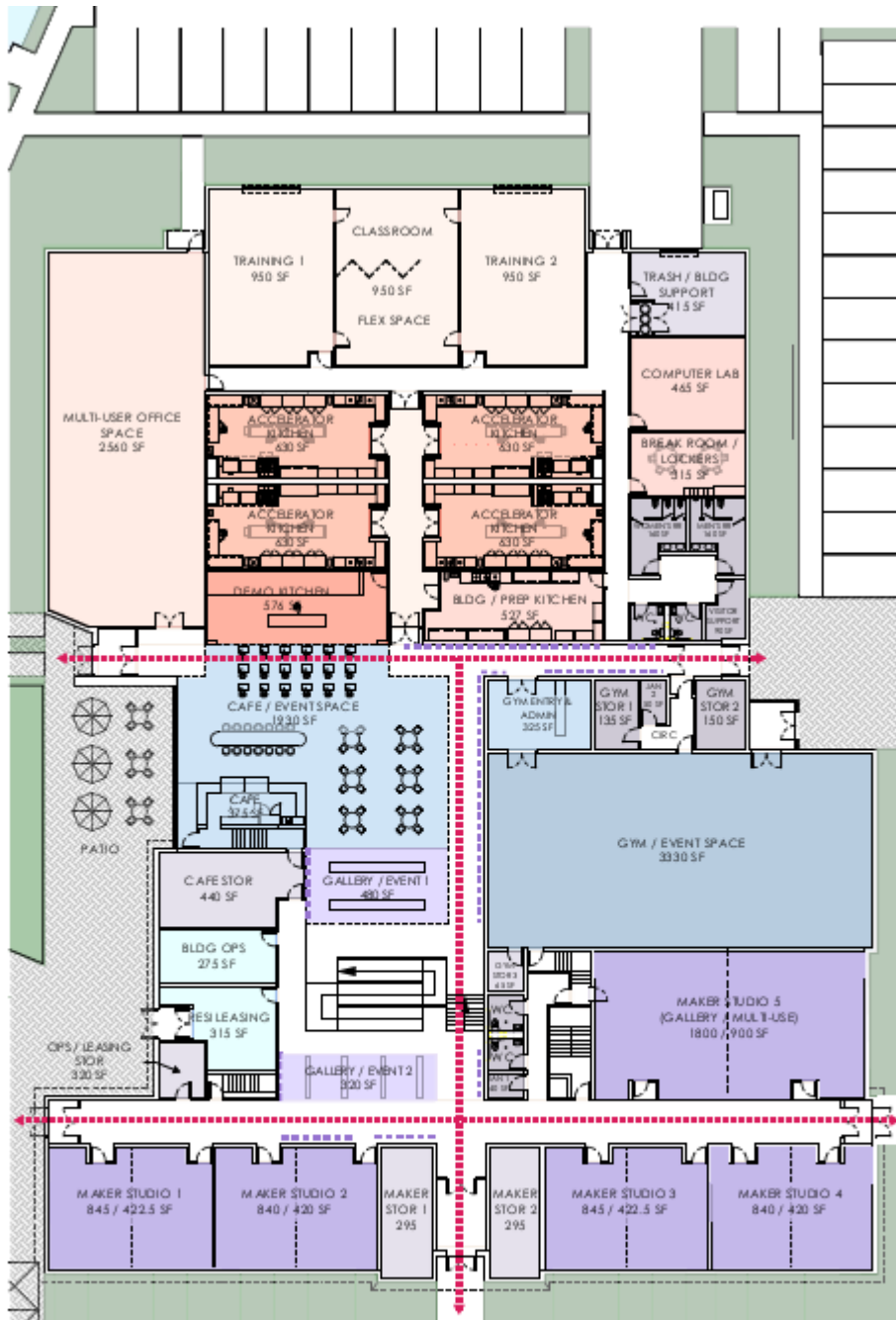
The study confirmed strong market demand across the food, arts, and workforce sectors, validated the financial viability of a multi-use incubator model, and recommended the adaptive reuse of the Oldham School building alongside a possible new housing development. The proposed business model includes a multi-industry approach to programming the building, ensuring the operator does not depend on any single industry or entity for revenue. This diversification of revenue sources creates a stable operating model and simplifies management, with local partners identified to support the specialization of spaces, offer skills needed to assist users and functions, and provide specialized programs and opportunities for visitors and the community. The plan will require one or more organizations to develop, manage, lease space and build mutually beneficial partnerships to support activities. The business plan suggests that the project is expected to be EBITA (earnings before interest, taxes and amortization) positive and generally positive cash flows after the first year. The study concludes that there is a pathway to redevelopment that meets the three key criteria: community and stakeholder support, a practical operational and management model, and a sustainable long-term revenue plan.



<p>PREPARED FOR: CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE</p> <p>JULY 15, 2025</p>	<p>FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR MUNICIPALLY OWNED PROPERTY. THIS IS NOT AN ARCHITECTURAL OR CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENT. BUILDING FOOTPRINT AND AREA INFORMATION ARE ESTIMATES BASED ON ARCHIVED PLANS AND PHOTOGRAPHS. ALL INFORMATION MUST BE FIELD VERIFIED, REVIEWED AND FINALIZED BY A STATE LICENSED ARCHITECT PRIOR TO OFFICIAL USE.</p>	<p>SITE DIAGRAM SCALE: NTS</p> <p>ISSUED FOR CLIENT REVIEW OLDHAM SCHOOL FEASIBILITY STUDY</p>	<p>Public Maker Business Incubator</p>	<p>Kitchens Residential</p>
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# CONCEPT FLOOR PLAN



- PUBLIC
- MAKER / GALLERY
- BUSINESS INCUBATOR
- KITCHENS
- RESIDENTIAL

	PREPARED FOR: <b>CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE</b>	FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR MANIPULATED OWNED PROPERTY. THIS IS NOT AN ARCHITECTURAL OR ENGINEERING DOCUMENT. BUILDING FOOTPRINT AND PERMITTED AREAS ARE FOR INFORMATION BASED ON ARCHIVED PLANS AND PHOTOGRAPHS. ALL INFORMATION IS PROVIDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY AND IS NOT TO BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE. PREPARED AND DRAWN BY A STATE LICENSED ARCHITECT (PRO 151) OFFICIAL SEAL.	BUILDING PLAN SCALE: 1/20
	JULY 15, 2025		ISSUED FOR CLIENT REVIEW <b>OLDHAM SCHOOL FEASIBILITY STUDY</b>

## VI. CITY PARTNERSHIP

This City of East Providence is committed to working collaboratively with qualified developers to ensure the successful transformation of the former Oldham School into a meaningful community asset. The City recognizes the complexity of redevelopment and the City will make every effort to support the selected respondent through the following:

- **Grant Support and Funding Assistance:** The City will provide staff assistance to the selected respondents in obtaining essential information (e.g. loans, tax credits, or grants) to help assemble necessary financing. Additionally, the City will actively pursue – and, when appropriate, apply for – federal, state and private funding to support both predevelopment and capital activities. The City will also provide letters of support, serve as a municipal sponsor when required, and offer grant-writing and administrative assistance.
- **Public-Private Partnership Approach:** The City is prepared to explore a range of partnership models, including ground leases, tax abatement incentives, and phased development structures that balance private investment with public benefit.
- **Ongoing Municipal Cooperation:** The City will designate a primary point of contact to streamline communication, support expedited permitting when possible, and facilitate access to municipal data, records, or technical assistance necessary for due diligence, site planning, and execution.
- **Tax Incentives and Abatements:** To encourage private investment and reduce financial barriers, the City is willing to consider tax abatements and other property tax incentive mechanisms in accordance with local policy and state law. These may include municipal tax stabilization and business loan programs tailored to the scale and public benefit of the proposed development.

The City will retain ownership of the property and collaborate with the selected developer to manage the new entity. Potential structures include, but are not limited to:

- A joint venture between the City and a development partner
- A ground lease or long-term lease model where the City keeps ownership and the partner redevelops and operates the facility
- A non-profit or hybrid organization created by the development partner and other regional organizations aligned with the mission

The development partner will serve as both the financial driver of redevelopment and the lead operator for daily facility functions, overseeing the property, coordinating leasing, and managing relationships with sub-leasees (with the option to engage specialized sub-operators in high-skill areas, such as mixed-use studios and shared kitchens). The respondent will be responsible for building and site redevelopment costs and the ongoing operation and maintenance of the facility and/or any constructed housing. Operation of the gymnasium portion of the building may be managed by the City.

The Oldham School project offers a development partner several benefits including:

- A diversified business model: Multiple use types (food production, arts / maker spaces, innovation / trades, and community uses) offer a mix of revenue streams that lessen dependence on any single sector or tenant.
- Municipal support: The City has already invested in environmental remediation and stabilization and will continue to serve as an anchor and operating partner (of the community-focused gym spaces), reducing risk and ensuring regulatory alignment.
- Community demand: Feasibility analysis confirmed a strong market interest across target sectors, with over forty organizations and thirty small businesses showing interest. This creates a ready pipeline of tenants and users.
- Flexibility for growth: The multi-use concept enables phased development and scaling over time, allowing a partner to adjust programming and investment as demand changes.
- Housing opportunity: The project offers the potential for sixty-four new housing units on the surrounding parcel. This adds value for a partner by combining residential and commercial uses, supporting mixed-income housing needs, and enhancing the financial viability of the broader redevelopment.
- Reputational benefit: By leading a civic-minding redevelopment with visible community benefits, a developer showcases leadership in impact-focused, inclusive real estate development.

## **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);
- Firm background.
- Demonstrated mission / community focus of client base / project selection;
- Firm existing or historical connection to East Providence;
- 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 preservation of the building's exterior architectural features.

**Development Benefit:** Describe the project's benefits to the City and area residents.

**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;

**Timeline:** Provide a timeline of all major components of the redevelopment of the property.

**Offer:** Provide potential long-term lease or other financial structure. The City will retain ownership of the property.

### 3. PROJECT TEAM

- Describe the background and relevant experience of the firm and/or any partners or 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 respondent 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.

## **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, financial feasibility, benefits to the community and quality of design. Respondents may be requested to present their proposal before City staff.

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

- Proven success in adaptive reuse and mixed-use redevelopment projects;
- Ability to organize and allocate capital through grants, tax credits, and private funding;
- Operational expertise in managing incubators, coworking spaces, or specialized production facilities;
- Dedication to inclusive economic growth and long term stability;
- 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;
- Financial feasibility of the proposal and timeline.
- Proposed lease price
- Business plan detailing the scope and viability of the business incubator(s), along with the names of potential operator(s).
- Preservation of exterior architectural features of the original 1952 façade and general streetscape.
- Potential positive and negative impacts of the redevelopment on the immediate residential neighborhood;
- Level of community engagement with the space, including a plan detailing how the gymnasium will remain open and available to community members for recreational use.
- Response from references;

## **IX. 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 both Keith A. Brynes, Director of Planning and Economic Development at [kbrynes@eastprovidenceri.gov](mailto:kbrynes@eastprovidenceri.gov) and Jessica Lamprey, Procurement Specialist at [jlamprey@eastprovidenceri.gov](mailto:jlamprey@eastprovidenceri.gov) no later than MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2026 AT 4:00PM

