

# Newburyport Brown School Request for Information (RFI) Draft Outline

Revised 2/21/2023 (based upon 2/6/2023 committee meeting/edits made to a 1/31/2023 draft)

## I. Objective

a. What is the opportunity?

The City of Newburyport is preparing to offer the former Brown School at 40 Milk Street for adaptive reuse ~~for the production of affordable housing~~. To ensure a successful RFP process, the City is seeking scenarios for highest and best use(s) of the property **based upon the redevelopment goals outlined in Section III below**, ~~which may not necessarily be the highest dollar value paid upon sale or disposition~~.

**Commented [SZ1]:** What is the point of this statement?

That portion of the property protected by Article 97 restrictions (see related Council Order) must be maintained and is not part of the RFI solicitation.

The City is open to reviewing concepts based on **a fee interest sale of surplus property**.

The property has a FY2023 total assessed value of \$6,262,200.

b. Who is the Review Authority?

~~To be determined. [Note from City Code Section 2-32: "The committee on general government shall be concerned with supervision of city properties whose custody has not been assigned to a specific municipal department."]~~

**Commented [SZ2]:** We shouldn't publish this with a TBD in my opinion.

c. What is the solicitation?

- To ensure a successful **potential** RFP process, the City is seeking preliminary concepts and qualifications of development teams to assess feasibility of redevelopment scenarios and inform a future RFP.
- The City is using this solicitation to gather information on potential redevelopment scenarios. Since the City is not disposing of its interest in the property by way of this solicitation, it is therefore not subject to Uniform Procurement Act (Ch. 30B).

**Commented [SZ3]:** This is misleading. The Committee may be concerned with buildings but does not have any authority to actually do or decide anything. Generally, matters are decided by the City acting through the City Council and the Mayor via constructs in our Charter and Ordinance.

d. What is the solicitation process?

- The City is inviting responses from development teams that can demonstrate their ability to successfully preserve and reuse former school buildings for the production of affordable housing.
- After reviewing responses, the City will summarize and publicize the proposals to the Newburyport community and ~~for~~ its City Council.
- The City may choose to invite all respondents for informational interviews in a fair and transparent manner.
- The City may or may not move forward with issuance of an RFP for Brown School at the conclusion of this solicitation.

## II. Background

- a. Location of property, neighborhood context
- b. Brief history of Brown School: previous and current uses
- c. Site and building conditions: reference past studies and plans (i.e., feasibility studies, housing production plan)
- d. Regulatory conditions: existing zoning and other restrictions (i.e., park use, demolition of school building prohibited, requirement for a preservation restriction, prevailing neighborhood conditions)

### III. Redevelopment Goals

Include a summary of community feedback collected in past public outreach. Based on ad-hoc committee feedback:

- Production of affordable housing with a **preference for older adults aged 62 and above**. All affordable units must meet the requirements for inclusion in the Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) **at no less than 60% AMI**.
- ~~Regardless of elevator service it is preferred that any accessible housing units be located on the ground floor.~~
- Highest and best uses of the grounds and existing structures
- **Preservation of the existing gym as a community space, if at all possible.**
- ~~Potential preservation of the first floor for municipal office space.~~
- A financially feasible project that allows the City to remain fiscally solvent and that allows a developer to demonstrate a project that can be cared for and maintained going forward.
- A project that comports with the character of the neighborhood, respecting the narrow streets and constrained access.
- A development approach that includes a robust community engagement process

**Commented [SZ4]:** This bullet point should move to the top of the list.

**Commented [SZ5]:** Extremely loaded

**Commented [SZ6]:** I'm not sure what this means? This needs more detail and clarity

### IV. Submission requirements

#### a. Qualifications

- Development team members: Provide resumes for each member to demonstrate that the team has qualified professionals to accomplish the project successfully.
- Development team experience: Provide a narrative illustrating the team/organization's mission and areas of expertise. Describe the team's experience in similar projects within the past 5 years. Include information on team's relevant experience on permitting and financial capacity to successfully complete the project.

#### b. Development concept

- Prepare one or more development concepts based on **highest and best uses** of the property and buildings. Each concept must be accompanied by a narrative including assumptions relative to zoning and permitting for the project (i.e., **what zoning changes, if any, are expected** and anticipated permits, etc.), and timelines to secure necessary permits.
- *"All responses should be responsive to the redevelopment goals outlined in Sec. III to the greatest extent feasible, recognizing that there may be variation in the mixture of uses proposed by each respondent, the type, percentage and depth of affordable housing units proposed, etc. Where an adaptive reuse concept cannot adhere to, or be permitted under, the existing Brown School Overlay District (BSOD) zoning or does not involve preservation of the existing gym space, respondents shall provide a **written explanation as to why modification of the BSOD zoning or removal of the gym would be necessary to facilitate the proposed project, for the purposes of financing or as otherwise required for overall feasibility.**"*

**Commented [SZ7]:** What happened to language about receiving at least one concept that comports with existing, hard-fought zoning

**Commented [SZ8]:** According to the developer?

**Commented [SZ9]:** Loaded/leading

**Commented [SZ10]:** BSOD was hard fought public policy, if we don't respect it, neither will applicants.

#### c. Project financing

- Provide a preliminary pro forma, including sources and uses of funds.
- Provide a brief narrative on how the development team plans to utilize proposed financing sources, including permanent loans, DHCD subsidies, tax credits, local funding sources, and other grant programs.
- An estimated timeline for any such project

d. Transparency

- If invited verbally or in writing to submit by any City staff, elected official, or appointed member of a board or commission to disclose the nature of the invite.

V. **Review**

The City will review responses based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:

- a. Completeness of proposal and inclusion of all submission requirements

- b. Responsiveness to redevelopment goals as outlined in Sec. III
- c. Demonstration of ability to successfully execute similar projects
- d. Qualifications of development team

VI. **Important dates**

- a. RFI available date
- b. Site tour
- c. Questions deadline
- d. Proposals due