

The following are questions received pursuant to the City’s RFP and the City’s responses. This document will be posted on the project webpage.

- 1. Is the city requiring the successful bidder to pay for restoration of infrastructure in public space that is contiguous with these properties (sidewalks, streets, water, sewer, storm, electric, light poles, etc.)?**

City response – No, the City will not require the developer to pay for offsite improvements. The exception may be those improvements that are immediately adjacent to the property, such as curb cuts/driveway aprons, associated ADA ramps or water/sewer upgrades on the property or changes required because of the developers intended use. The City intends to seek MassWorks or similar funds to support the surrounding infrastructure improvements although these funds are not gaurenteed. The City has retained funds from MassDevelopment to bring neighborhood infrastructure plans to 25% design in coordination with the preferred developers’ plans to form the basis for a MassWorks funding request.

- 2. From the concept plan and estimates provided by VHB, there are “private” and “public” sections – Does it mean the City will cover the “Public” part and the developer will cover the “Private” part?**

City response – Yes, similar to above, the City intends to seek MassWorks or similar funds to support the surrounding infrastructure improvements although these funds are not guaranteed. This could include certain onsite public components such as parking or playgrounds. However, a developer who can incorporate public improvements onsite (such as parking or playground improvements) would achieve points in the evaluation criteria for Community Connections.

- 3. Will Pepin Gym and Auditorium counted as Community Connections as in the 3rd Evaluation Criteria if we choose to retain both for public use?**

City response – Yes.

- 4. Center School playground was open to the community. Does the City want any specific playgrounds or gardens to remain open to the community?**

City response – The evaluation criteria as detailed in the Request for Proposals will award points to developers who can retain, replace or otherwise provide playgrounds open to the public at the Center School property and the Maple Street property. Public gardens could be provided, but did not rank high in community input during the Downtown Strategic Plan.

- 5. Are any recent environmental reports available that cover any of the following: lead paint, asbestos, mercury, lead in domestic water system, underground storage tanks? Typically, schools are required to maintain some form of a plan to manage exposure to students to environmental issues.**

City response - The School Department provided various records, including but not limited to asbestos management plans for Center School, Maple School, and Pepin School which will be made available to proposers as part of a forthcoming Addendum and will be posted on the City's website.

The City has identified the existence of an underground tank associated with the Pepin building. In consultation with the Easthampton Fire Department, the City has temporarily converted the heating system back to oil and intends to use as much of the existing oil as possible, and then convert the system back to natural gas.

Plans and information about the tank will be uploaded to the project webpage and included in the forthcoming addendum.

Such records and other information is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute a representation or warranty of any nature or kind by the City or any of its departments that the information contained in such documents is true, accurate or complete. Any individual or entity responding to the Request for Proposals is not entitled to rely on such documents or information for any purpose. Each individual or entity submitting a proposal in response to the City's Request for Proposals should rely on their own due diligence and not any documents or other information provided the City.

- 6. Will Chapter 40B apply to this project or has it been already approved?**

City response – It is generally believed the City would support a proposal that required a Comprehensive Permit through Chapter 40B. However, the City maintains a 40R Smart Growth Zoning District that is preferred. As noted in the RFP, if an applicant does not utilize 40R an explanation is required. No land use permit has been approved for any reuse and the successful proposer will be solely responsible for obtaining any necessary permits.

- 7. “One Stop for Growth Application” includes the proposal for Structural Condition Assessment for 3 schools from EDA. Are these going to be shared with RFP Respondents? When will these reports be ready?**

City response – No structural condition assessments were completed. Each individual or entity submitting a proposal in response to the City's Request for Proposals should rely on their own due diligence and not any documents or other information provided the City.

8. Is the surrounding community in support of this? Has there been any community input prior to the RFP?

City response – The City conducted extensive outreach as part of the 2020 Downtown Strategic Plan, including regarding potential reuses of the schools. The Mayor’s office, City Council, and the Affordable and Fair Housing Partnership reasonably believes there is broad support for conversion of the buildings to affordable housing. In preparing the RFP, a subcommittee held 9 public meetings, City Council and the City Council Property Subcommittee held meetings, a public site visit and a public hearing. Community input was gathered during this process and is incorporated in the RFP.

9. Two single families between Pepin Parking lot and Center – Are there people living in these houses? Has there been any conversation with those single-family owners about this project?

City response: Yes, there are people residing in all the dwellings adjacent to the school properties. There has been direct contact the property owners regarding property boundaries but there has been no contact with such individuals regarding any particular proposed use.

10.

- a. Would Senior (Elderly) housing be evaluated as “Highly Advantageous” as family housing? The Evaluation Criteria in the RFP mentions “Family Size” but not Senior or Elderly.**
- b. Is there an interest, in addition to affordability, for developing housing for seniors and/or veterans?**

City response – Yes, the City is interested in housing for seniors and veterans. If senior housing is Affordable across a wide range of AMI’s and with a variety of unit sizes, it is reasonably believed the evaluation committee would evaluate such use(s) as “Highly Advantageous” as per the evaluation criteria set forth in the Request for Proposals.

11.

- a. Can an additional, lengthier site visit of the buildings by our team occur prior to the RFP submission deadline of 2/16/23 to better assess the condition and opportunities of the buildings?**
- b. Second Tours: Will there be any additional tours provided which will help in advancing the architectural drawings for the RFP submittal?**

City response – The City has identified two days (Wednesday, January 4, 2023 and Thursday, January 5, 2023) between 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. where consulting teams can sign up to view the three school buildings.

We are including the following doodle poll which must be completed by December 14th at 4:30 p.m. in order to be eligible. Click here to enter the doodle poll:

<https://doodle.com/meeting/participate/id/boVzjyka>

NOTES:

- Consulting teams can sign up for the same time as another group if necessary.
- City staff will be present to allow access to the building but will not be available for technical questions about the buildings.
- The City reserves the right to request minor adjustments to the schedule.

12. What Historical Elements apply to the three buildings? We have found in the past that at the conclusion of construction, there’s always an excess of “historic” items that are required to be kept but are essentially not being used such as, old doors, shelves, railings, etc. storage needs for these possible items should be addressed with renovations.

City response – Historic elements or historic components listed in the RFP (Evaluation Criteria # 7) refer to the exterior façade of the three school buildings and maintaining elements of the historic appearance of the buildings. Interior building elements are not required to be preserved or saved as part of building renovations. The three school buildings are culturally and architecturally significant; however, the City has not pursued listing of the properties on the National Register of Historic Places. The most recent historic inventory identifies that all three would be eligible. Because they are not listed, under current local ordinances the City’s Historical Commission would review significant demolition (in whole or in part) of the buildings. The City’s demolition delay ordinance can be found [here](#) (see page 55). Each individual or entity submitting a proposal in response to the City’s Request for Proposals should rely on their own due diligence and not any documents or other information provided the City.

13. Any Restrictions on window sizing and replacement? We have found in the past that the large school windows pose an issue after construction with residents’ ability to open and close them, especially the elderly population. Also has been hard to find screens that fit properly

City response – Similar to above, the City is not aware of any restrictions on window sizes. However, significant changes to the windows may change the evaluation of the project under Criteria #7. Each individual or entity submitting a proposal in response to the City’s Request for Proposals should rely on their own due diligence and not any documents or other information provided the City.

14. What utilities are currently servicing each school?

City response - Center School is served by Eversource electrical service and Eversource natural gas service; Pepin School is served by Eversource electrical service and Eversource natural gas service and Maple School is served by Eversource electrical service and Eversource natural gas service. The Maple School and Pepin School are equipped with dual fuel oil/ gas burners. Currently there are approximately 1,300 gallons of heating oil within two storage tanks located in the basement of Maple School and approximately 4,700 gallons of heating oil in an underground storage tank located at Pepin School. The City is in the process of converting the fuel burners back to oil in order to utilize the stored oil and minimize remaining oil within these storage tanks.

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15. After control of any property is turned over to the preferred developer will there be any requirements related to continuing to heat the buildings, providing utilities, and boarding and securing the building until the start of construction?

City response – The City understands this question to apply after a closing on the sale of the property has occurred. As such, the City would require only what may be required under state building, or other applicable codes or laws. The conditions and expectations for buildings maintenance during the time between the selection of a preferred developer and the closing may be identified in the land disposition agreement.

16. After control of any property is turned over to the preferred developer will there be any requirements to allow access to the playgrounds on a particular site until construction starts?

City response – The City understands this question to apply after a closing on the sale of the property has occurred. The City believes that keeping the playgrounds open until construction would be desirable to the community, but is not a required element in the RFP.

The City has agreed to allow its contractor for the Union Street TIP project (Ludlow Construction) to use the driveway and paved areas around the Center School as a temporary staging area. The duration of this will be determined once a preferred developer is chosen and may be clarified in the land disposition agreement.

17. Would a site control consideration other than a purchase and sale, such as a land lease agreement, be considered?

City response – The City will not consider ~~does not wish to~~ other site control options other than a traditional purchase and sale of the real estate pursuant to the RFP. The exception would be ~~with~~ potential arrangements if the Gym and/or Auditorium in Pepin are preserved in which the RFP (page 25) cites the City’s willingness to consider a lease back to the city for community spaces.

18. Open/Public Spaces: Who will be responsible for the maintenance and costs of public space that won’t be deeded to the development project? I’m referring to it as off-site work as a construction cost, but from a maintenance, upkeep and monitoring stand point it would be helpful to fully understand whose responsibility it is.

City response – The City will consider, depending on what is proposed, entering into public/private partnerships and/or lease agreements (as identified on page 25 of the RFP) for items such as maintenance of parking areas or playgrounds that are open to the public.

19. At the site visit, it was noted that there were plans of each of the buildings located on the website (<https://easthamptonma.gov/554/Elementary-School-Reuse>). I had located the plans of Maple as part of the preliminary design program from 2016. In addition to that I found the Mass Development Conceptual plans links which appears to have only site planning. Are there floor plans of the Pepin and Central Schools available that I am missing?

City response - The available floor plans are found on the following pages in the 2016 Maple Design Program: <https://easthamptonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2735/Maple-Elementary-School---PDP-Complete-1>

- Maple - pages 186, 188, 190
- Center - pages 198, 206
- Pepin - pages 208, 210, 212