

## Town of Westport

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# Request for Interest, Ideas & Innovation

for the  
Rehabilitation, Conversion and/or Redevelopment  
Of the

## Former Westport High School

Located at

19 Main Road  
Westport, MA

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Proposals, sealed and clearly marked "Former Westport High School," are due **no later than 2:00 p.m. Thursday March 10, 2022**, in the Board of Selectmen's Office, 816 Main Road, Westport, MA 02790 or by email to James Hartnett Town Administrator at: [Hartnettj@Westport-ma.gov](mailto:Hartnettj@Westport-ma.gov). The contact person is James Hartnett, Town Administrator, 508-636-1003 or [Hartnettj@westport-ma.gov](mailto:Hartnettj@westport-ma.gov).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1) Objective

The Town of Westport is preparing to offer the former Westport High School, situated at 19 Main Road, in Westport, for adaptive reuse or other creative redevelopment proposals by qualified entities. The Town is seeking ideas and/or expressions of interest (“Letters of Interest”) from persons who recognize the unique opportunity to bring new life to this building/property that occupies a centrally located parcel in Westport, close to nearby highways.

The Town, through its Administrator is requesting Letters of Interest from prospective proponents for the reuse and redevelopment of this property. The Request for Interest, Ideas, & Innovation (RFI) precedes the issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP). The Town anticipates issuing an RFP after reviewing the Letters of Interest and presenting them before members of the community and local government officials.

Since the Town is merely seeking ideas for the future use and redevelopment of the former Westport High School through the RFI and will subsequently issue an RFP soliciting proposals for the development of the property, this RFI is not subject to the Uniform Procurement Act, Chapter 30B.

### 2) Community Desire

On October 28, 2020, and November 11, 2020, residents took part in a virtual interactive meeting to evaluate and discuss possible future uses for the Westport High School property. During the October 28<sup>th</sup> meeting Utile Architectural Firm presented several options for the use of the property. The November 11<sup>th</sup> virtual meeting was held with the Long Term Building Committee and town residents. These sessions were the first steps to allow the Town residents to shape the future of this property and make them integral pieces of the community fabric.

Community feedback demonstrated that potential future uses for the Westport High School property included: Senior Housing (with an affordability aspect), Recreation and/or Art Center, Open Space, Municipal Offices and Services, leasing the building (but keeping the Gymnasium & Athletic Fields for community use). Utile Architecture and Planning looked at adaptive reuse of the High School for municipal offices, public uses, senior living and multi-family housing , they also looked at site redevelopment for single and multi-family housing and senior living. At the community meeting residents expressed concerns with the costs for maintaining the Gymnasium and Auditorium, traffic associated with multi-family housing.

Letters of Interest are being sought to:

- Determine feasible reuse projects of the former Westport High School property that meet community needs and desires while taking into account, zoning, property conditions and the neighborhood;
- Help gauge the type and extent of interest in their development;

- Provide opportunities for developers to identify other entities that may be interested in participating as tenants or co-developers in a possible joint venture
- Generally inform the preparation and issuance of a final Request for Proposals.

The goal of this RFI is to build off of the brainstorming session by educating and informing the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator as to the interest in site redevelopment or reuse and to guide them in their decision as to the type of feasible redevelopment that would occur on the parcel.

## PROPERTY DETAILS

### 1) Property History

The Westport High School was originally built in 1950 with major renovations completed in 1970 along with the addition of an Auditorium and Gymnasium. The Town decided in 2014 that it was in its economic interests to decommission the building as a school and build a new combination Middle-High School at another location.

The current structure consists of a two-story building, attached Auditorium and Gymnasium totaling approximately 155,000+/- square feet on a 62.1-acre lot of land. The building abuts town owned land on the west side of the school, with residential homes on the east, north and south sides

### 2) Property Statistics

The property is designated as Map 66, Lots 1A & 4, Map 67, Lot 25A and a portion of Map 66 Lot 22A shown on the Town Assessors' maps and comprises approximately 62.1 acres of land, more or less. The building is currently being used for the school administration offices and the gym, auditorium, fields and cafeteria are being used for community events. Students have not attended this school since June of 2021.

In addition to the structure, the property includes 3 asphalt parking lots (located on the north side, the south side and one behind the school on the west side) and several Athletic fields and green space in front of the school.

Additional reports and studies can be found on the Town Website for the Long-Term Planning Town Building Evaluation Committee at the following link:

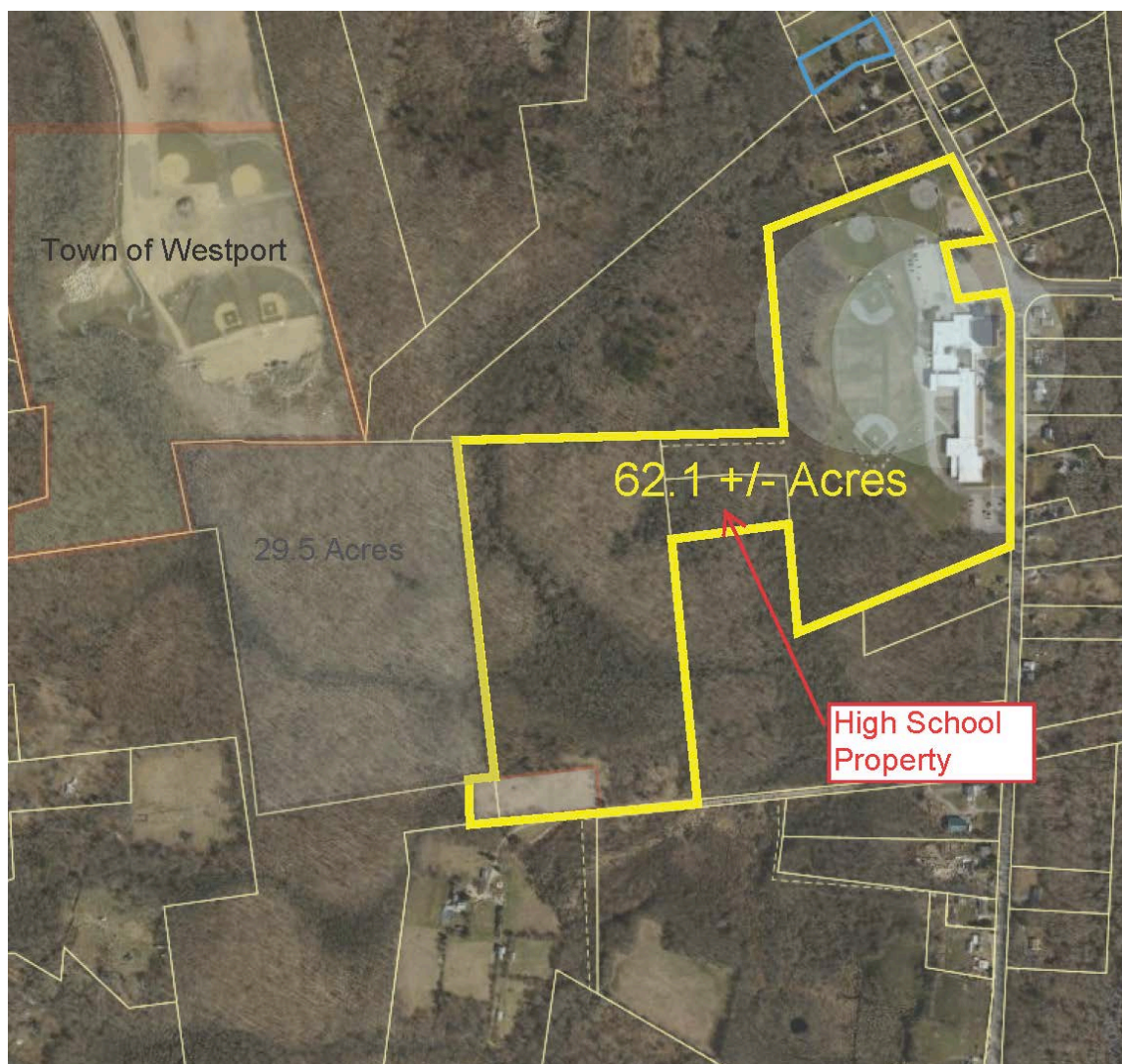
<https://www.westport-ma.com/long-term-planning-town-building-evaluation-committee>.

### 3) Zoning and Other Restrictions

This property is zoned Residential/Agricultural. Interested parties should review the zoning and other permitting requirements in the Town's Zoning By-Laws. For the purposes of this RFI, projects that conform to the zoning are not required but encouraged. Respondents are welcome to present creative concepts that may require zoning changes but should outline the zoning change that would be required.

Demolition – An adaptive reuse of the building is preferred, however, concepts that recommend partial or complete demolition will be considered.

4) Property Photos & Aerial Imagery



## RFI PROCESS & REQUIREMENTS

### 1) Anticipated Schedule and Process

RFI Issued	February 4, 2022
Pre-Submittal Meeting & Property View	February 17, 2022
Questions about the RFI Due	February 22, 2022
RFI Responses Due	March 10, 2022

### 2) Submittal Requirements

Letters of Interest will provide the Town with the ability to better understand the type and level of interest in the Westport School property and will provide interested parties with an opportunity to provide input to the Town on possible reuse scenarios or considerations. Submittal of a Letter of Interest or participation in this process is not a precondition of participating in a future RFP process, but it is recommended, as the information gathered from the RFI process will assist in guiding the Town in generating the forthcoming RFP requirements.

Letters of Interest are requested for submittal to the Town Administrator no later than **2:00 pm on Thursday March 10, 2022**, in any of the following methods (listed in order of preference):

1. Submission in PDF format by email to: [hartnettj@westport-ma.gov](mailto:hartnettj@westport-ma.gov)
2. Submission by mail on paper in 8 ½" x 11" format for text, and to the extent practical, for graphics (oversized pages or graphics should be folded to 8 ½" x 11") to  
Town Administrator  
Westport Town Hall  
816 Main Road  
Westport, MA 02790

Pre-Submittal Meeting and Property View - Interested parties will have the opportunity to attend a pre-submittal meeting, to be held at the former Westport High School, 19 Main Road, Westport, MA, on Thursday February 17, 2022 at 10:00 am, at which time Town representatives will review for those in attendance the materials included in this RFI and respond to questions about the property, the Town's process and related issues. Town representatives will conduct a view of the property for interested parties. Interested parties may, on a separate date, arrange to conduct an inspection of the property for purposes and under conditions agreeable to the Town.

### 3) **Submittal Review and Selection Process**

Review Authority – Commencing the middle of March 2022, an Evaluation Committee comprised of the Town Administrator, Town Planner, and Chair of the Board of Selectmen and member from the Long Term Building Committee will begin to review submitted interest packages.

Review Basis – Each submission will be evaluated based on the submission's responsiveness to Town interests, community objectives and guidelines and such other criteria as deemed helpful in assessing the best future use of the property.

Distribution of Submissions – During the review process, the interest packages may be directed to such Town boards, committees and individuals whose comments and observations the Evaluation Committee deems will assist in the assessment process. The Committee may seek the advice and input from any Town boards, committees or individuals, and from Town Counsel, during the review process.

Additional Information/Interviews – The Committee may request additional information of one or more respondents relative to a submission. Respondents may also be invited to appear before the Committee. The right to an interview does not automatically extend to all whose submissions are accepted for review, but is granted in the sole discretion of the Committee.

Selection of Concepts – The Committee will evaluate the submitted interest packages based on a number of criteria, including Community input to date, the contribution of a project to the needs of the Town and the neighborhood, the feasibility of the project, any information relative to preservation of the school building and its features and whether or not zoning relief or a zoning change may be needed. The objective is to select between three and five concept plans to assist the Town in preparing an RFP.

These concepts will then be brought to the community in an open forum at which point the selected respondents are invited, though not required, to attend and present their concepts. Based on the community feedback on the concepts presented at the forum, the Town will then determine next steps towards revitalizing the high School property. The goal of the RFI process is to assist in the generation of an RFP with comprehensive and defined requirements and criteria to guide developers in formulating proposals.

**4) Submittal Components**

1. Cover Letter
  - a. Statement of Interest
  - b. Identify primary respondent
  - c. Provide name, address and contact information (including email address) of all interested parties
2. Basis of Interest
  - a. Describe the intended use
  - b. Describe the extent of property use (entire or portion of parcel, reuse all/part/none of current structure)
  - c. If possible, provide an expanded description of your redevelopment vision, including diagrams, renderings, or other drawings relating to the plans and/or layouts.
3. Financial Overview
  - a. Long-term lease from Town, purchase of property from Town, or another form?
  - b. Describe how the proposed reuse will cover all anticipated ongoing operating and maintenance costs.
  - c. Describe how the proposed reuse will cover or contribute to any associated capital costs.
  - d. What potential capital funding sources would be appropriate for the reuse vision?
4. Relevant Experience
5. Tenancy: The Town encourages those who may not be prepared to advance proposals for reuse of the entire property, but would wish to be considered as a tenant within another entity's proposal to provide information on the space needed within the site and an overview of the desired use.
6. Additional Information: The Town further encourages persons to present any additional information or suggestions that the Town should take into account prior to issuing an RFP.

**5) Rights Reserved by Town**

- The Evaluation Committee may request additional information to supplement and further develop a response.
- Each respondent should include sufficient supporting material to allow a meaningful and comprehensive evaluation of its submission.
- The Town reserves the right to reject any and all submissions, or to cancel the RFI, with no penalty, if deemed to be in the best interests of the Town.



**6) Other Considerations**

- Respondents may submit more than one response to this RFI. However, each submission to reuse the property must be a separate, complete package that can be considered independently.
- The Evaluation Committee may amend or revise the RFI as a result of questions submitted by respondents or for any other reason that causes the Committee to believe it would be in the best interests of the Town to do so. Such amendments or revisions will be published on the Town Web site.
- The Town will not be liable for any costs incurred by any respondents in the preparation and presentation of responses to this RFI or in the participation in views, interviews, or any other aspect of this RFI process.
- The selection of a submission by the Evaluation Committee for consideration during this RFI process does not presume approval of the proposed plans nor impose any obligation upon the Town to select said respondent in a future RFP. Conversely, a respondent whose proposal is selected by the Evaluation Committee has no obligation to participate in a future RFP process.

**7) Questions**

Written responses will be provided to requests for clarification or interpretation of the meaning of the provisions of this RFI, to all questions raised at the pre-submittal meeting, and to those questions otherwise submitted in writing, which responses will be provided on the Town Web site. Questions must be submitted to the Town Administrator via email or mail as provided in the Submittal Requirements.

**8) Public Disclosure**

All submission packages, their contents and accompanying documentation, no matter when submitted, will become the property of the Town and will be regarded as public records when received as directed by M.G.L. Chapter 4, Section 7, Clause 26. Respondents should be further aware that, with certain exceptions, the Town is required under M.G.L. Chapter 66 to make its records available for public inspection. Respondents should appropriately mark all materials they deem confidential or proprietary. However, the Town will bear no liability to any respondent in the event that the Town is legally required to disclose information that a respondent may define as confidential or proprietary.