



Phenix Elementary School Fact Sheet

415 7th Street

West Des Moines, Iowa

www.wdm.iowa.gov/Phenix



- ◆ Phenix Elementary School opened its doors in 1939. The West Des Moines Community School District closed the school in 2014.
- ◆ In 2015, the City of West Des Moines purchased the school and the entire block for \$535,000.
- ◆ Ownership of the building will be transferred to Community Housing Initiatives, Inc. (CHI), a nonprofit housing developer, to rehabilitate the building into 17 rental housing units.
- ◆ The project will provide live/work space, with the classrooms surrounding the outside of the building as apartments, and interior spaces converted to be suitable for artists' studios. Estimated Rents:

50% AMI Tenants	1 Bedroom	\$650
	2 Bedroom	\$780
80% AMI Tenants	1 Bedroom	\$850
	2 Bedroom	\$925
	3 Bedroom	\$1,000
Market Rate	2 Bedroom	\$975
	3 Bedroom	\$1,050

- ◆ Income Limits (percentage of Area Median Income or AMI):

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6
50% AMI	26,950	30,800	34,650	38,450	41,550	44,650
80% AMI	43,050	49,200	55,350	61,500	66,450	71,350

- ◆ This is a \$4.78 million project for CHI (it includes a \$3 million CDBG from the Iowa Economic Development Authority, \$855,000 from the City of WDM and a \$625,000 Workforce Housing Loan from the Iowa Finance Authority).
- ◆ CHI will pay taxes on the building. They also are contributing \$300,000 and not collecting a developer fee (\$764,800) which is generally 16% of the total project cost.
- ◆ No significant changes will be made to the building's exterior. The gym, stage & parking lot also will remain intact. The City is investigating options for the gym. One of those options may involve turning the gym into a branch of the WDM Public Library with computers and Internet connectivity. Officials also are exploring the development of vacant lots along 6th Street into single family homes.



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The future of Phenix Elementary has been discussed at a variety of public meetings since 2014. In addition, newspaper articles and editorials have informed the public about the project. Below is a timeline of key events, meetings, news articles and editorials:

- ◆ 6-30-14 – *Des Moines Register*: **City of West Des Moines considers buying closed school**
- ◆ 6-30-14 – City Council meeting – Approval for Ahlers & Cooney, P.C., to represent City of West Des Moines and WDM School District in the negotiation and sale of Phenix.
- ◆ 8-13-14 – Finance & Administration Council Sub-Committee meeting – Discussed application to Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) for CDBG funding for Phenix.
- ◆ 8-15-14 – *Des Moines Register*: **Sale of Phenix planned for West Des Moines work-live space**
- ◆ 8-18-14 – *Des Moines Register*: **Phenix building eyed for conversion to apartments**
- ◆ 8-21-14 – *Des Moines Register editorial*: **City should give time to decide buildings' fate**
“The school was closed at the end of last year, but the city of West Des Moines hopes to buy the building and convert it into live-work spaces for artists. This would be an ideal new life for an important piece of the city’s history. The plan hinges on the city receiving a \$3 million federal grant, but it seems like a winning proposal.”
- ◆ 8-25-14 – WDM City Council meeting – Approval of grant application for Phenix.
- ◆ 8-29-14 – WDM School Board meeting – Approved sale agreement to City of West Des Moines.
- ◆ 9-8-14 – City Council meeting – Approval of option agreement to purchase school and site.
- ◆ 1-15-15 – *Des Moines Register*: **WDM Phenix apartments project receives \$3 million grant**
- ◆ 7-6-15 – *Des Moines Register*: **Valley Junction looks to thrive, not just survive** – Phenix and its planned conversion into 17 live-work units is mentioned.
- ◆ 10-28-15 – HistoricWDM.com is launched for the Historic WDM Master Plan. The Phenix site is mentioned several times on the site and project app.
- ◆ 3-10-16 – Historic WDM Master Plan opportunity sites are revealed (one of which is Phenix) and it is discussed at length during the public meeting.
- ◆ 3-21-16 – City Council meeting - Workforce Housing Loan Application for Phenix.
- ◆ 5-10-16 – Historic WDM Master Plan public meeting – Discussed opportunity sites including Phenix.
- ◆ 7-20-16 – Historic WDM Master Plan public meeting – A draft of plan is revealed including plans for Phenix. The Plan is posted on the City’s website, the Master Plan website and the project app.
- ◆ 8-5-16 – *Des Moines Register*: **West Des Moines nixes request to reopen Phenix playground**
The article mentions that Phenix will be converted into apartments.
- ◆ 9-12-16 – Planning and Zoning meeting – Historic WDM Plan is presented. Phenix is discussed.
- ◆ 9-19-16 – City Council meeting – Historic WDM Master Plan is presented to City Council. Phenix is discussed during the presentation of the plan.
- ◆ 10-31-16 – City Council meeting – Acceptance of Workforce Housing Loan Agreement.