

Oak Square Partnership for Youth and Families

A proposal for the purchase and use of the Our Lady of the
Presentation School building

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Introduction: Oak Square Partnership for Youth and Families

A proposal for the purchase and use of the Our Lady of the Presentation School building.

For more than eighty years, Our Lady of the Presentation (OLP) Grammar School has served the children and families from in and around the Brighton community. Constructed in 1928-29, the OLP building is a cornerstone of Oak Square along with the Oak Square Fire Station (1913), the Faneuil Branch Library (1932) and the recently constructed Oak Square YMCA.

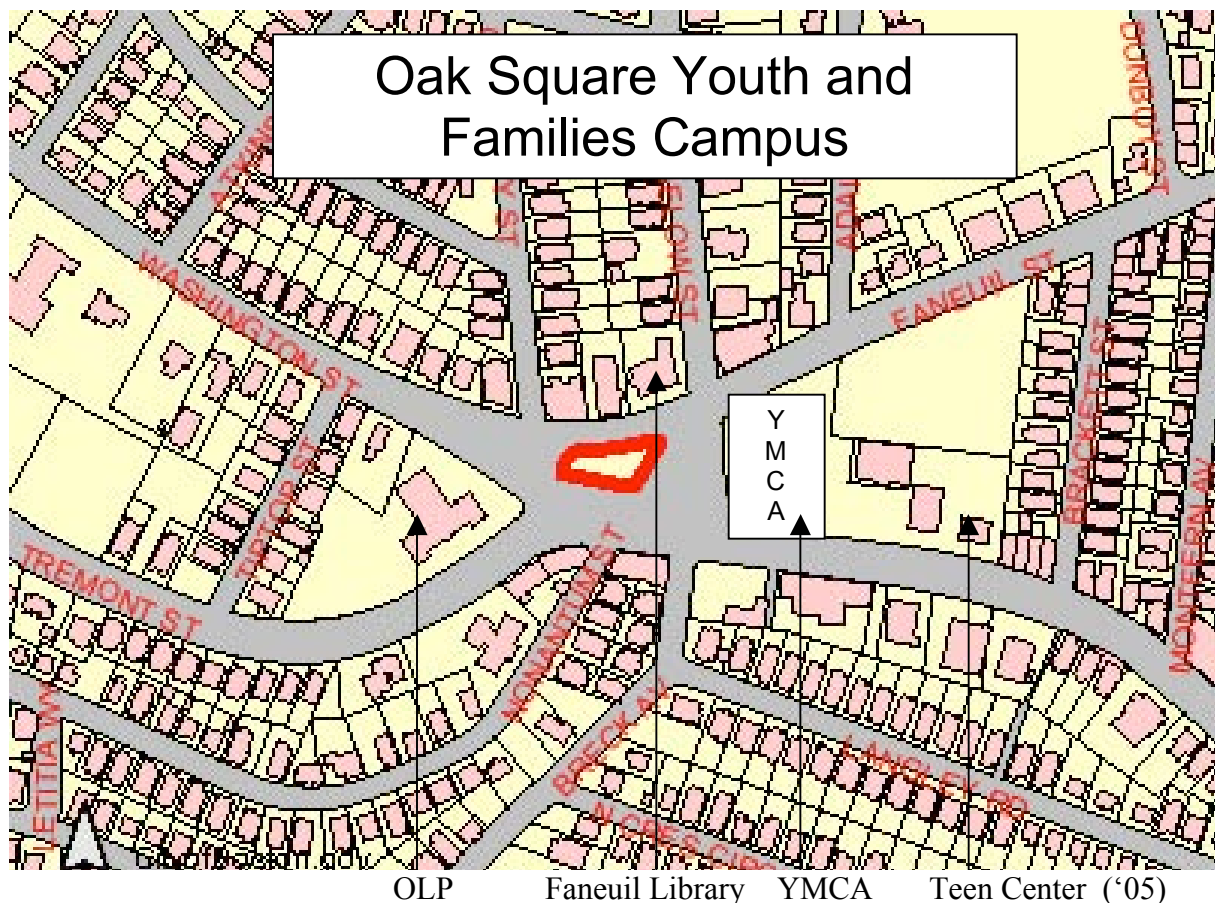
On May 25, 2004, the Archdiocese of Boston announced that it planned to close the OLP Parish and the OLP Elementary School as part of its reconfiguration plan. Following this announcement, many local residents and community groups, some without any direct connection with OLP, raised concerns that OLP Elementary School should not close. The concerns focused on two points. First, local families depend upon the services offered by OLP, and its closure may be a "tipping point" that destabilizes the community if those families move because OLP is closed. Second, Allston/Brighton has already been disproportionately affected by Archdiocese land sales, including the sale of St. John's Seminary to Boston College (43 acres sold, options on an additional 21 acres), and the Archdiocese would do irreparable harm to the community by selling the OLP School and other parcels (totaling 5.8 acres) to private developers without community support.

Based on concerns raised by the community, the Archdiocese agreed to keep the OLP School open for one additional year but reaffirmed its decision to close the school at the end of the current school year.

During the past few months, many civic and community leaders, educators, and concerned parents have explored potential uses for the OLP School building if the Archdiocese goes ahead with its plan to close OLP. The attached proposal calls for the creation of the *Oak Square Partnership for Youth and Families Campus* that would incorporate the OLP facility as a multi-service educational cooperative. Under this proposal, the OLP School building would be divided into the following compartments:

- Six classrooms dedicated to a private, independent elementary school;
- Four classrooms dedicated to a full-time preschool/kindergarten;
- Two classrooms dedicated to YMCA after-school and summer camp programs;
- Five additional classrooms, plus a large function room, of multi-use space available to be used by these three programs as well as for adult education programs.

Under this proposal, the OLP building would be purchased, or leased, from the Archdiocese using revenue expected from the operation of the school, preschool, and YMCA programs. As detailed in the proposal, taken together, the revenue from these programs should support purchase/renovation costs up to \$3 million.



Oak Square Partnership For Youth and Families

The Oak Square Partnership for Youth and Families is a collaborative effort to support, coordinate and expand youth and family programs. By coordinating and leveraging the educational programming and facilities of the Our Lady of the Presentation (OLP) Elementary School, the Faneuil Public Library, and the YMCA, the Partnership will work to develop programs that address the educational needs of local youths and families with programs ranging from preschool to adult education. The combined efforts of the YMCA, library and OLP will form a single Oak Square Community Campus to allow and encourage families to access coordinated and comprehensive youth and family services.

Over the past ten years, the number of families and rate of owner occupancy has declined in Allston-Brighton while poverty has increased. The Partnership for Youth and Families was born out of concern that local families need additional support and that the closing of OLP School would be a tipping point that destabilizes our community.

Oak Square Community Campus Coordinated Full-Service Programs

- Affordable full-time, full-year preschool for children, ages 2 through 5.
- Comprehensive and expanded YMCA afterschool and summer camp programs.
- Homework assistance programs with BC tutors at the Library.
- Private, progressive, service-based elementary school for grades 1 to 6 which seeks to foster a commitment to civic engagement.
- Adult education services including literacy, ESL, and GED programs with coordinated childcare options.
- Parent skills and enrichment programs.
- Intergenerational program with local seniors

Proposal: Oak Square Educational Cooperative



For more than eighty years, Our Lady of the Presentation Elementary School has operated in Oak Square as a Roman Catholic grammar school. The Archdiocese of Boston has announced that OLP will close at the end of the 2004-2005 school year. The expected closing of OLP provides an opportunity for community and civic leaders to explore expanded use of the facility for youth and family services.

Physical Plant: the OLP facility is a Y-shaped Italian Renaissance Revival building that occupies a triangular 56,129 square foot lot bordered by Tremont and Washington Streets at the heart of Oak Square in Brighton. In 2004, the City of Boston assessed the value of the land at \$589,900 and the building at \$1,293,000. The OLP facility contains 16 large classrooms (each at least 650 sq. ft.) on its first and second floors, and two large basement resource/function rooms.

Properly renovated, the OLP facility can be subdivided into a multi-use cooperative building that can house the following educational programs:

- YMCA after-school programs serving up to 75 children.
- YMCA summer-school program serving up to 150 children.
- Four-classroom pre-school serving up to 72 children.
- Elementary school serving up to 150 children.
- Mixed-use classroom space for adult education programs.

We are currently exploring accessibility and safety code requirements. We also are developing a detailed business plan for the purchase and future use of the OLP facility.

Coming in 2005: YMCA Teen Center

The facilities that serve youth and families in Oak Square will be expanding in 2005 when the YMCA plans to open a dedicated-use teen center on its property. The YMCA's new teen center will expand and enhance the services that will be available to families at the Oak Square Campus.

Community Needs Assessment

Allston-Brighton has undergone significant change over the past decade (see Appendix A, *Allston-Brighton Needs & Assessment Report*, March 2002, produced by the Allston-Brighton Healthy Boston Coalition):

- Between 1990 and 2000, the number of family households in Allston-Brighton declined 6.5%. Family households account for 32.7% of households in Allston-Brighton compared to the city-wide average of 48.1%.
- At the same time, owner occupancy rates in Allston-Brighton continued to decline to 19.3% compared to a city-wide increase of 9.5% to 30.7%.
- Between 1990 and 2000, Allston-Brighton had a startling 14.7% increase in poverty. As of 2000, 23% of Allston-Brighton residents are in poverty compared to a city-wide average of 19.5%.
- In recent years, Allston-Brighton has experienced a period of unprecedented university expansion.
- Allston-Brighton has become more diverse, with a 6.9% decrease in white (non-Hispanic) population and a 28.2% increase in Asian population.

These changing demographics demonstrate that coordinated and expanded youth and family services are needed in Allston-Brighton to support families, particularly recent immigrant families.

Oak Square Educational Cooperative: Financial Summary

In 2004, the City of Boston assessed the value of the Our Lady of the Presentation Grammar School property at \$1,883,100 (land at \$589,900 and the building at \$1,293,000). See www.cityofboston.gov/assessing/search/default.asp (Parcel 2203728000 details). The 2004 assessment was 14.6% higher than the 2003 assessment and 58% higher than the 1994 assessment. Because any non-educational use of the parcel would require either significant renovation or demolition of the existing school, we believe the market value for the property would range up to a maximum of \$2.5 million (1/3 above assessed value).

Conversion of the existing school into an educational cooperative would only require relatively modest internal renovations (bathrooms, safety code, and handicap access). The Partnership proposal can generate revenue sufficient to purchase and renovate the school. Taken together, we believe that the Pre-School and Elementary components of the partnership will generate \$196,356 in surplus revenue (revenue net all operational expenses). Furthermore, our proposal includes \$50,000 in annual fundraising (OLP has exceeded this amount since September and in each of the past several years). This revenue can be used toward purchase and renovation costs of up to \$3 million in debt at 8% interest over 30 years.

Pre-School/Kindergarten expected financial results:

Total Expected 2005/2006 Pre-School Expenses:	\$469,512
Expected 2005/2006 Tuition Revenue:	\$648,000
Maintenance & Utilities:	\$11,004
2005/2006 Excess for Building Mortgage:	\$167,484

Expenses based on (i) existing six teacher/aide salaries and benefits (\$210,816) increased to account for full day (50%) and full year (28%); (ii) a nine-to-one teacher-student ratio; (iii) \$7,200 in classroom supplies; and (iv) \$57,000 in administrative costs [the elementary expenses include an additional \$50,000 in administrative costs]. Revenues based on 54 full-time students (75% of capacity) enrolled at \$1,000 per month. Maintenance & Utilities based on existing costs (\$33,012) split evenly between the YMCA, Elementary, and Pre-school.

Elementary School expected financial results:

Total Expected 2005/2006 Elementary Expenses:	\$327,324
Expected 2005/2006 Tuition Revenue:	\$367,200
Maintenance & Utilities:	\$11,004
2005/2006 Excess for Building Mortgage:	\$28,872

Expenses based on (i) existing six teacher/aide salaries and benefits (\$262,324); (ii) \$15,000 in textbooks/supplies; and (iii) \$50,000 in administrative costs [the pre-school expenses include an additional \$57,000 in administrative costs]. Revenues based on 108 full-time students (same amount as in 2003/2004) enrolled at the current tuition of \$3,400 per month. Maintenance & Utilities based on existing costs (\$33,012) split between the YMCA, Elementary, and Pre-school.