

**Safe School Siting Act Report for Public Comment  
and Notice of Public Meeting  
The Wangari Maathai Community School  
7 Thomas P. Whitten Way, Providence Rhode Island  
March 29, 2019**

The Wangari Maathai Community School (“Wangari”) is providing this Safe School Siting Act Report for Public Comment and Notice of a Public Meeting in accordance with Rhode Island General Law 23-19.14 (the Industrial Property Remediation and Reuse Act), and more specifically 23-19.14-4 (commonly referred to as the Safe School Siting Act or “SSSA”). The purpose of this report is to provide information regarding Wangari’s evaluation of the existing building located at 7 Thomas P. Whitten Way, Providence Rhode Island, also known as the John Hope Settlement House (the “Site”), as a public charter school. Wangari is offering this report on the proposed siting for public comment and is simultaneously providing notice of a public meeting to receive comments on the proposed siting.

**Cost:**

There is no required environmental mitigation required to site a public school at the Site; therefore, Wangari does not anticipate incurring any costs or expenses in connection with cleaning up and/or monitoring the Site in accordance with applicable regulations.

**Timing:**

Written approval from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (“RI DEM”) to site a school at the location will be received prior to Wangari finalizing its selection of the property. If this property is approved by RI DEM, Wangari hopes to begin renovations of the property by May 1, 2019 so it is ready for students for the 2019-20 school year.

**Rationale:**

Wangari will begin serving students as a public charter school in Rhode Island during the 2019-2020 school year. Wangari has been diligently searching for a place to house its students in Providence, Rhode Island. While 15 properties have been considered by Wangari, each of these properties has been determined unsuitable for Wangari at this time either due to cost-prohibitive acquisition costs, the extensive nature of renovations required, unsuitable geographic location and/or the necessity of significant and costly environmental remediation.

The Site is preferred by Wangari because of its location and accessibility, the suitability of the existing building for educational purposes, including the size and layout of the building and the surrounding improvements and land, and the fact that the Site does not require any environmental remediation to be used as a School.

Specifically, Wangari has selected this site because of its prominent location at the crossroads of the West End, Federal Hill and Upper South Providence neighborhoods of Providence. It is easily accessible by both car and bus, and a city bus stop is directly in front of the building. There is ample parking for both employees and visitors and has plenty of room for a school bus to pull in and out safely to pick-up and drop-off students. The grounds of the Site provide an enclosed play area for Wangari’s youngest students (Kindergarten & 1st grade), a wide open

space for our older students, and has existing garden beds that can be incorporated into Wangari's hands-on learning approach to science.

The building itself can accommodate Wangari's younger grades in ground-level rooms within the existing daycare wing and older grades can be accommodated within the upper floors of the original brick building. Structurally, there is an elevator and two stairwells; the daycare wing also allows for direct egress.

Additionally, the fact that no environmental mitigation is required to occupy it as a School makes the Site feasible when compared to other sites under consideration, which in many cases have more extensive and costly environmental concerns.

There is a 30 calendar day comment period, commencing with the date of this notice, during which the public may review this report and submit written comments regarding siting of a school on this Site.

Public comments should be submitted in writing to:

Ashley L. Blauvelt  
Principal Sanitary Engineer  
RI Department of Environmental Management  
235 Promenade Street  
Providence, RI 02908  
Phone: (401) 222-2797 x7026  
Email: [ashley.blauvelt@dem.ri.gov](mailto:ashley.blauvelt@dem.ri.gov)

The meeting will be held on:

Date: March 29, 2019  
Place: 7 Thomas P. Whitten Way, Providence Rhode Island  
(John Hope Settlement House)  
Time: 5:45 to 7:15

A final report, summarizing and responding to comments received from the public will be made available at the conclusion of the public comment period.