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CASE STUDIES

In order to understand potential redevelopment pathways for the Lancaster County Prison site, the East End SAP identified three relevant case studies that provide insights into land disposition, assessment of redevelopment opportunities alongside community input, and phasing of the redevelopment process. These case studies have provided important insights and understanding of relevant precedents for consideration as the site disposition and subsequent redevelopment moves forward.



Airy Street Prison Redevelopment

NORRISTOWN, PA

Use: Mixed-use redevelopment

Size: 5 acres total

Funding: Private-public partnership

Cost: TBD (ongoing project), county currently reviewing the RFEI proposal submissions

Once slated for demolition, the historic Airy Street Prison in Norristown is now the focus of a community-informed effort to reimagine its future. The 2.8-acre site, anchored by a striking 1851 stone structure known locally as “the Castle,” sits in the heart of downtown near the courthouse and County government buildings. Its path from abandonment to opportunity offers valuable lessons about preservation, public engagement, and adaptive reuse.

In the fall of 2023, the County formally committed to pursuing a public-private partnership (P3) and retaining public ownership of the site. This approach would allow flexibility while ensuring long-term public oversight. Rather than rushing into a traditional development bid, the County decided to release a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI), a more open-ended call for ideas and early partnerships.

Released in December 2024, the RFEI laid out the County’s vision: preserve the historic character of the site, at a minimum, the iconic front façade, while bringing in new uses that support Norristown’s economic and civic life. The document invited developers to propose

creative, financially viable solutions that could incorporate housing, office space, retail, or public programming.

The County will remain the landowner and welcomed proposals with flexible ownership models, such as long-term leases, phased development, or co-ownership structures. Developers were also offered meaningful incentives:

- No land acquisition costs
- Eligibility for state and federal grants, including Keystone Historic Preservation, RACP, and LSA funding
- The County’s active pursuit of a \$4 million EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant to address environmental remediation needs

Source: Engage Montgomery county; Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia; Philadelphia inquire, April 2024; final public survey summary (engage Montgomery county), North Penn Now





The Willows at East Greenville

GREENVILLE, PA

Use: Affordable housing

Size: 71 Units

Funding: Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), private investment

Cost: Undisclosed

Once home to the Boyertown Burial Casket Company, this sprawling early 20th-century factory complex has been transformed into a 71-unit mixed-income residential community. Located in the heart of East Greenville, the project blends historic preservation with high-quality affordable housing, offering both a new purpose for the building and long-term benefits for the borough and county.

Bringing this adaptive reuse to life requires a complex stack of public and private funding sources. The project leveraged \$11.66 million in equity from the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program and \$3.36 million through the Federal Historic Tax Credit (HTC), with additional support from the Pennsylvania State Historic Credit program. Public sector partners played a key role: Montgomery County contributed nearly \$2 million, including HOME funds, while the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) provided over \$1.1 million alongside a \$500,000 PHARE grant. Private financing was also critical, with a \$3.99 million permanent mortgage secured through Community Lenders of Pennsylvania.

The project was driven by a strong public-private partnership between Ingerman (the developer), Genesis Housing (a nonprofit partner), Montgomery County, and the Borough of East Greenville. The borough took proactive steps to support the redevelopment by updating its zoning ordinance to allow multifamily residential use in pre-1940 industrial buildings larger than 100,000 square feet, a crucial move that unlocked feasibility for the site. The project also met federal historic preservation guidelines under the National Park Service, ensuring the integrity of the building's character was maintained throughout the redevelopment process.

Converting a century-old factory into modern apartments came with challenges. The site required environmental remediation due to past industrial use and design solutions to address inconsistencies from decades of building expansion and modifications. Despite these hurdles, the redevelopment met PHFA's Green Building Criteria, including Energy Star appliances and water-saving fixtures that promote long-term sustainability for residents.

Source: HUD; Planning Magazine (APA)

Missouri State Penitentiary Redevelopment

JEFFERSON CITY, MO

Use: Mixed-use development including residential, commercial, hotel, museum, and conference center spaces

Size: 23 acres

Funding: Public-private partnership, including private equity, conventional financing, TIF, CID, and public financing methods. “The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is investing \$1.5 million to support infrastructure projects at the Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP) Redevelopment Site. This investment will facilitate the creation of new business sites, spur job creation, and strengthen the region’s economic resiliency. The project is expected to generate 67 new jobs and leverage an additional \$27.8 million in private investment.”

Cost: Estimated at \$153.7 million across multiple phases

Located along the Missouri River in downtown Jefferson City, the 137-acre site is being transformed into a regional destination for tourism, housing, culture, and commerce. The vision is ambitious: a 7-story hotel, a state-of-the-art conference center, residential townhomes, a steamboat museum, an amphitheater, and significant green space—all while preserving the site’s layered and complex history.

A public-private partnership (P3) model lies at the core of this redevelopment. The U.S. Economic

Development Administration (EDA) awarded a \$1.5 million grant to support critical infrastructure improvements, including roadways and utilities. At the state level, the Missouri Department of Economic Development contributed another \$1.5 million through a Community Revitalization Grant to help jumpstart the adjacent River Market project. Together, these early investments are expected to leverage nearly \$28 million in private capital. While one proposed project, a \$130 million hotel and conference center, initially secured \$20 million in state funding, those funds were later removed from the budget, showing the challenges of aligning state-level support with long-term development goals.

The redevelopment is being delivered in distinct phases, each with a targeted focus and funding strategy.

- Phase 1 concentrated on-site preparation, including relocating the gas chamber, stabilizing historic guard towers, and selectively modifying prison walls.
- Phase 2 centers on the River Market—a \$6.7 million community pavilion space designed for farmers markets and events, positioned just outside the prison walls. This phase includes partial wall demolition to improve views and better connect the site to the riverfront.
- Future phases envision a broader mix of uses including hospitality, residential, and cultural programming. These will be pursued as funding becomes available, underscoring the importance of flexible phasing in large institutional redevelopment.

Source: U.S. Economic Development Administration; KRCG; Missouri State Penitentiary redevelopment master plan (Jefferson City)

