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James F. Oyster Bilingual Elementary School, Washington, District of Columbia, United States

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***On this page:** A case study on James F. Oyster Bilingual Elementary School, Washington, District of Columbia, United States. Find more at the [Municipal Public-Private Partnership Framework - Project Summaries](#) section for brief summaries of around 100 projects from around the world, examples of successes and challenges, as well as innovative ideas on solutions, or visit the [Guidelines on Innovative Revenues for Infrastructure](#) section.*

Project Summary:

Background

The James F. Oyster Bilingual Public Elementary School was almost closed in 1993 due to the poor physical state of the building and a lack of public capital funds to rehabilitate it. This motivated the establishment of a PPP between the District of Columbia's Public School District, which controlled the school and site; the

District of Colombia municipal government (municipality), which owned the site and was responsible for levying property taxes; and a national real estate development company.

Project Structure

The municipality recognized that the school was situated in an attractive neighborhood, such that the property on which the school was located had added value. Acknowledging the real value of the property, the municipality agreed to allow the private developer to develop an apartment building adjacent to the school, which would generate the cash flow needed to finance a new school building.

The private developer tore down the old school and divided the school property in half. One portion was reserved for building a new school, and the other half was set aside for the development of a nine-story, 211-unit upscale apartment building. Per the PPP contract, the school's design was carefully overseen by the School Board, with input from the community. A USD 200,000 grant from the Ford Foundation helped to pay for the initial design and planning.

To fund the construction of the new school building, the municipality issued USD 11 million in 35-year, tax-exempt bonds, repayable entirely from the revenue generated by the private apartment building. Thus, the school was rehabilitated at no cost to the taxpayers.

Lessons Learned

The school re-opened in 1998. It consists of a three-story brick building equipped with a computer lab, library, gymnasium, 33 underground parking spaces, classrooms designed to accommodate the school's bilingual program, office space for after school programs, and other spaces available for community use.¹

The case showcases innovative exploitation of space around a public asset. By leveraging a portion of the valuable land parcel on which the school sits, the project was able to generate sustainable revenues to fund the refurbishment of the public asset, which otherwise would not have been possible using public school construction funds alone.

Footnote 1: Source(s):[https:// www.esc-pau.fr/ppp/ documents/featured_ projects/usa_ oyster_ school.pdf](https://www.esc-pau.fr/ppp/documents/featured_projects/usa_oyster_school.pdf) accessed 15 February 2019

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2001/09/05/01oyster.h21.html> accessed 15 February 2019

https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1998/09/14/as-schoolsreopen-problemsreturn/69d43c1-07b3-4a43-a170-b35e896dc29c/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.f4023f0a5410 accessed 15 February 2019

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Additional Resources

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Partner Resources

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The [Guidelines on Innovative Revenues for Infrastructure \(IRI\)](#) is intended to be a living document and will be reviewed at regular intervals. They have not been prepared with any specific transaction in mind and are meant to serve only as general guidance. It is therefore critical that the Guidelines be reviewed and adapted for specific transactions.

To find more, visit the [Innovative Revenues for Infrastructure](#) section and the [Content Outline](#), or [Download the Full Report](#). For [feedback](#) on the content of this section of the website or suggestions for links or materials that could be included, please contact the Public-Private Partnership Resource Center at ppp@worldbank.org.

