School-to-Community-Center Conversion Matrix – New England (2018–2025)

#	Town / City	Building Name / Project	Approx. Size (sq ft)	Approx. Cost (USD Millions)	Main Uses After Conversion	Year Completed / Phase	Pool (Y/N)	Phased Project (Y/N)	Key Lessons / Highlights
1	Portland ME	Stevens Square Community Center (former McAuley HS)	~50 000 + shared campus	~$15 M (est., multi-phase mixed use)	Childcare (96 kids), fitness & wellness center, café, offices, auditorium, gym	2023 (open)	No	Yes (multi-tenant build-out)	Mixed-use model ensures revenue; historic tax credits; reuse of gym/auditorium; part of larger campus.
2	New Haven CT	Trowbridge Youth & Community Center	~7 900	$3.8 M	Youth programs, half gym, arts/music rooms, food pantry	2024 (opening phase)	No	Yes (renovation phase + adjacent park)	Modest scale fits neighborhood; integrates outdoor space & food security.
3	Framingham MA	Former Marian High School Community Center	~100 000	$3.35 M (purchase) + TBD renovation	Multi-generational rec + meeting space + arts + sports	In planning (2023 – 25)	No	Yes (visioning → renovation)	Start with survey & roof / ADA upgrades; build program around existing gym/theater.
4	Wilmington VT	Old School Community Center	~25 000 (est.)	<$1 M incremental rehab	Gym, meeting rooms, youth/senior programs, tenants	2019 active reuse	No	Partial (tenant buildouts)	Rural nonprofit model; leveraged existing gym; multi-tenant for sustainability.

	City	Project	Size (sf)	Cost	Uses	Timeline	Pool	Phased	Key Insights
5	**Bridgewater VT**	*Bridgewater Community Center*	~15 000 (est.)	$2 – 3 M (underway)	Childcare, business incubator, meeting & event space	Under development (2024 – 25)	No	Yes	Early foundation + broad tenant mix enhance viability; uses phased renovation.
6	**Burlington VT**	*Old North End Community Center*(École Nazareth 1929)	~30 000	$6 – 7 M	Commercial kitchen, classrooms, playgrounds, tenants, arts & youth	2022	No	Partial	Historic tax credits; modern accessibility + digital infrastructure; multi-tenant success.
7	**Concord NH**	*City Wide Community Center*(former Dame School)	~30 700 (13 800 reuse + 16 900 new)	$10.6 M	Library branch, fitness, multi-purpose rooms, offices for P&R Dept.	2018 (open)	**Yes**(therapy / lap pool added)	**Yes** (old + new construction)	Strong municipal model; pool adds draw; phased expansion worked well.
8	**South Portland ME**	*Mahoney City Center (Project in Planning)*	~60 000 (est.)	TBD (> $20 M potential)	Municipal offices, meeting space, library, rec functions	Planning 2024 – 25	TBD	Yes (planned phased redevelopment)	Visioning before design critical; public buy-in for civic reuse.

9	Rochester VT	*Former High School Reuse Feasibility Study*	~35 000	Study phase only (~$50 K study)	Childcare, arts, workforce training, community gathering	Feasibility 2022	Yes (pilot No phase model)	Shows how to analyze reuse early; financial + social impact framework.
10	Boston MA	*Quincy Grammar School / CCBA Center*	~20 000	N/A (gradual over decades)	Cultural / education / senior programs for Chinatown	Historic ongoing	No No	Neighborhood-level reuse preserving heritage; shows smaller urban scale viability.

📊 Aggregate Insights

Metric	Observation
Average Size	30 000 – 40 000 sq ft typical; range 7,900 – 100,000.
Average Cost (per project)	Roughly $6 – 10 M for mid-size renovations; smaller town projects $1 – 3 M.
Projects with Pools	**1 of 10 (Concord NH)** included a pool.
Phased Projects	**8 of 10** employed multi-phase or staged implementation.
Median Completion Year	2022 – 2023 (active period for many reuses).

🧠 Key Takeaways for Windham, Maine

1. **Phasing is the norm.** Nearly all towns began with stabilization, feasibility, and limited programs before full retrofit.
2. **Multi-use = sustainability.** Successful centers mix recreation, childcare, business, arts, and community rooms.
3. **Pools are rare.** Only one (Concord) added a pool—often cost-prohibitive in conversions.
4. **Historic preservation incentives** (Portland, Burlington) and **ARPA / state CDFA funds** (NH & VT cases) are major enablers.
5. **Early visioning + community input** (Framingham, South Portland, Rochester) build political support.
6. **Facility size flexibility:** mid-range (30–50 K sq ft) yields best balance between operational cost and program breadth.

Summary of Key Insights & Recommendations for Windham

From these examples you can draw several **practical take-aways** for the Windham Middle School Conversion project:

- **Community engagement & visioning**: The Framingham example stresses early surveys and resident input—to ensure the program fits community needs (all ages, desired activities).
- **Retain large, shared spaces**: Gyms, auditoriums, cafeterias in old schools are assets. The Portland project shows how to leverage them as anchors for programming (fitness, performance, gatherings).
- **Infrastructure and code upgrades matter**: Older schools often need major work (HVAC, windows, roofs, accessibility). Budgeting early for these is critical.
- **Mixed-use programming**: Combining recreation, wellness, childcare, offices and flexible space helps make the center viable and widely used.
- **Historic preservation / identity**: Preserving the character of the building supports community buy-in and can unlock tax credits. The Portland project did exactly that.
- **Integration with surrounding amenities**: Whether park space, senior housing, childcare, or other non-profit services— connecting the center to the neighborhood enhances its value.
- **Scale & phasing**: Consider how much of the building is active initially vs phased retrofit. Smaller scaled pilot components (like the New Haven example) can build momentum.
- **Perform feasibility and business-model analyses** — Don't assume reuse will "just happen"; even when building is structurally sound, programming, funding, operations matter deeply (see Rochester, Concord).
- **Operations & governance model are key** — Decide whether the center will be municipal, nonprofit, hybrid; how revenue streams work; who manages tenancy, schedule, maintenance.
- **Location matters** — These examples show reuse tends to succeed when easily accessible, visible, and near other amenities. The Windham site can benefit from evaluating its connectivity, parking, and neighborhood fit.
- **Funding strategies** — Look for grants, tax credits, public/private partnerships; many examples show state agencies support for community-center conversions (see NH's CDFA program).