

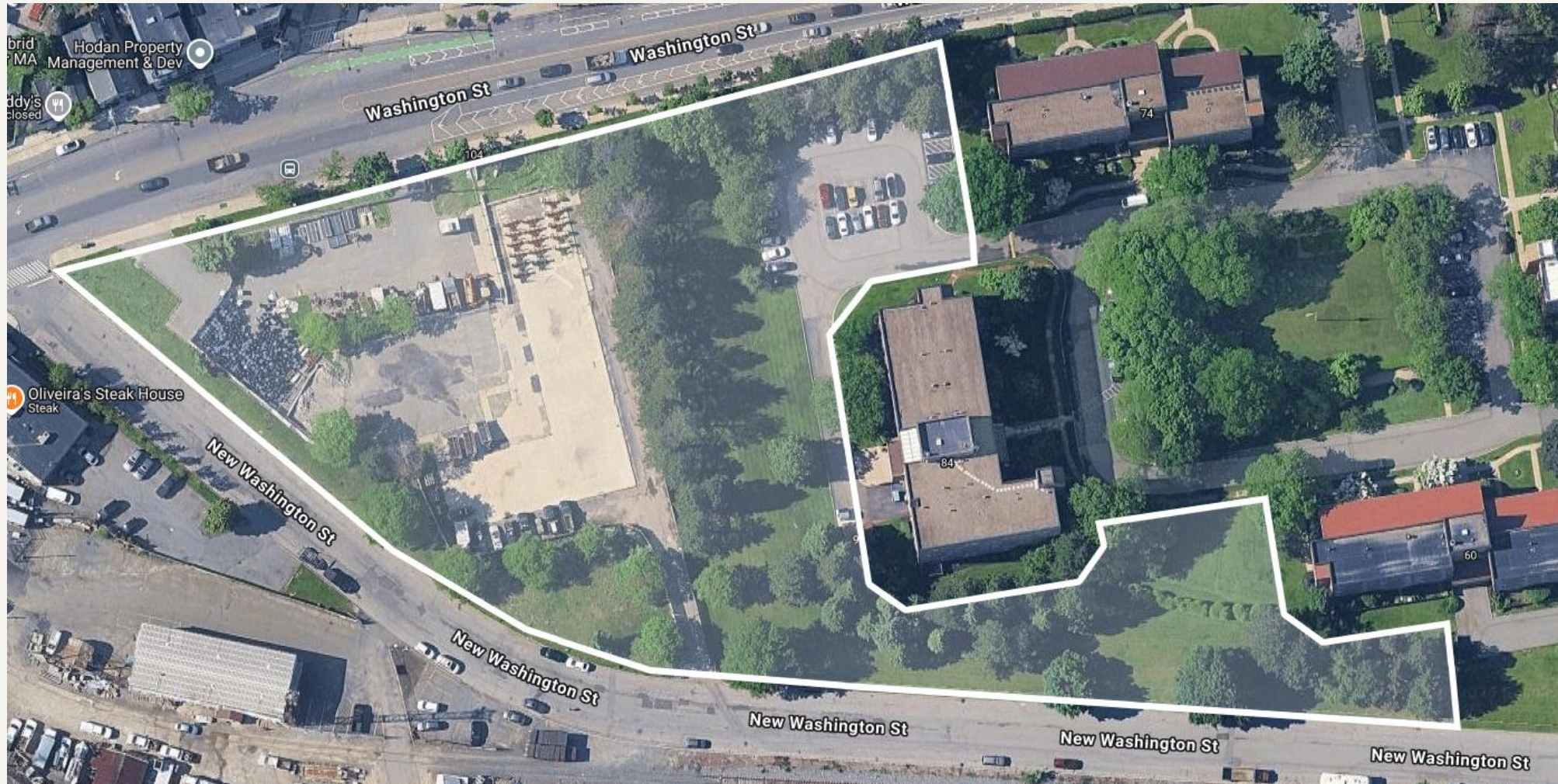
90 Washington Street: Development Process and Objectives

October 23rd, 2025

Agenda

1. Context.
2. Development process review and updating the guiding documents.
3. Development objectives and program of uses for an RFP.
4. Next steps.

Context



Context

The SRA/City paid a total of **~\$39 million** for 90 Washington Street. This unexpected expense impacts the City's ability to offer key services and pursue vital capital projects.

In response, the City announced in January 2025 that it would focus on the sale of the land for private redevelopment without a Public Safety Building.

90 Washington guiding documents

The high-level goal and development process are guided by several documents, including:

- The **90 Washington Street Demonstration Project Plan (DPP)**, adopted by the Council and SRA in February 2019;
- A **Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)** between the Council and SRA signed February 2019, outlining process expectations.

Development process review

Phase 1: Demonstration Project Plan Approval – *Complete.*

Phase 2: Acquisition of 90 Washington Street – *Complete.*

Phase 3: Project Delineation and Design – *Ongoing.*

- Public Safety Building Committee.
- Public Engagement Process to determine more detailed development objectives and program of uses, which must be approved by the Council.

Development process review

Phase 4: Developer Selection – *Upcoming.*

- RFP or similar process to solicit proposals.
- Technical Advisory Committee and then City Council narrows down proposals to two. The SRA selects a finalist from these two.
- The SRA negotiates a land development agreement.

Phase 5: Project Implementation – *Future.*

- SRA/staff work with the selected developer to implement the project, which must break ground within three years from the date of transfer.

Updates to DPP / MOA

- Remove the goal of developing a public safety building as part of the project and add a goal to recoup funds spent on the taking.
- Replace the Technical Advisory Committee that reviews RFP proposals with the Civic Advisory Committee, to match current SRA/Council standards.
- Lengthen the time in which a developer can break ground on the project once selected, to allow for flexibility in developer discussions.

Do you have any questions on the recommended changes to the DPP or 2019 MOA or the process they lay out?

Development objectives

1. **Recoup a significant portion of funds** paid for the taking of 90 Washington Street.

Development objectives

2. Achieve a combination of some or all of the following **land uses**:
 - a. **New housing**—Including owner-occupied and rental residences affordable to a range of incomes and available in a range of sizes.
 - b. **New commercial space**—Particularly for retail shopping, food & beverage and personal service businesses in ground-floor storefronts, with outdoor dining/seating if possible. Grocery stores, markets, retail food businesses, restaurants and pharmacies are especially desired by local residents.
 - c. **New civic space**—Particularly for non-profit organizations, community groups, social service enterprises.
 - d. **Green space**—Active and passive recreation and gathering areas.

Development objectives

3. Meet the following **development principles**:
 - a. **Mixed-use building formats**—The parcel should be primarily used for housing, but with a variety of ground-floor uses that address the commercial needs of residents and workers in the neighborhood.
 - b. **Dense development**—Target building density that is consistent with the City’s Mid-Rise or High-Rise zoning districts and that introduces significant new housing units to the area, while concentrating density on the western portion of the site closest to the East Somerville MBTA Station.
 - c. **Flexibility in form or massing**—Encourage architectural approaches that deliver High-Rise levels of density while allowing alternative typologies or configurations that advance community goals and enhance the public realm.

Development objectives

3. Meet the following **development principles**:
 - d. **Sustainable design**—Compliant with Somerville’s new Stretch Energy Code and demonstrate leadership in resilient design.
 - e. **No surface parking**—Comply with Somerville’s Zoning Ordinance, which prohibits surface parking so near to transit stations (e.g. the new East Somerville GLX Station).
 - f. **Robust urban canopy and natural landscape**—Incorporate landscaping that strengthens the urban canopy, enhances the public realm, and creates an appropriate buffer to Cobble Hill Apartments. Preserve viable existing trees where possible.

Development objectives

3. Meet the following **development principles**:
 - g. Diversity, equity, and inclusion in the development process**—M/WBE participation in the areas of development, financing, design, construction and ownerships; in workforce development programs; in contractor and supplies diversity programs; and in community outreach to underrepresented communities.

Plan for rezoning

The site is currently zoned Civic (CIV) and will need to be rezoned to allow for the type of transformative, mixed-use development described in the development objectives.

The intent is to rezone the parcel in partnership with the selected development partner rather than rezoning prior to releasing an RFP, to allow for flexibility in responses.

What questions or comments do you have on the development objectives and program of uses?

Next steps:

- **Nov. 6th:** Host a hearing at a joint public session of the Council's Land Use Committee and the SRA to discuss changes to the DPP.
- **Nov. 13th:** Request approval of the City Council of the development objectives and program of uses and of updates to the DPP / MOA.
- **January 2026:** Release an RFP.

Thank you.