

90 Washington Street Request for Proposals Review Process

May 11, 2026

Reviewing RFP Responses

The SRA received two responses to the Request for Proposals (RFP) to redevelop 90 Washington Street. The two proposals are from:

- Wood Partners.
- North River Leerink Manager LLC.

As a reminder, the main objectives of the RFP are to:

1. Recoup a significant portion of funds paid for 90 Washington Street.
2. Create a combination of new housing, new commercial space (particularly ground-floor retail), new community space, and green space.
3. Abide by various development principles, including mixed-use building formats, dense development, and the creation of a robust urban tree canopy and natural landscape.

90 Wash. St. RFP Review Schedule

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Response #1: Wood Partners

Project team: Wood Partners (Lead), PCA (Architect)

Program:

- **Mass/Height:** 1 building, 7 stories
- **Use:** Residential with ground floor retail and community space
 - **Total units:** 324 (20% income-restricted)
 - **Retail:** 14.9K square feet / **Amenity:** 14.7K square feet
 - **Community space:** 5.7K square feet
 - **Parking:** 398 spaces (structured)

Other highlights:

- Proposed access drive between the site and Cobble Hill.
- Proposed ~7,000 square foot civic space at Washington and New Washington and returns the “tail” to the City.



Response #1: Wood Partners



Response #2: North River Leerink

Project team: North River Leerink Manager LLC (Lead), Handel (Architect), SCAPE (Landscape Architect)

Program:

- **Mass/Height:** 3 buildings, 6-16 stories
- **Use:** Residential with ground floor retail and arts space
 - **Total units:** 426 (20% income-restricted) (originally proposed up to 600)
 - **Retail:** 17K square feet / **Arts Center:** 8K square feet
 - **Parking:** 200 spaces (belowground)

Other highlights:

- Proposed central open space between the buildings.
- Proposed arts center on the ground floor of the income-restricted building.



Response #2: North River Leerink



Program Comparisons

	Wood Partners	North River Leerink LLC
Massing/height	1 building, 7 stories	3 buildings, 6-16 stories
Number of residential units	324 (65 income-restricted)	426 (86 income-restricted)
Retail space / strategy	14.7K square feet; some detail about food and beverage and personal services users	17K square feet; focus on grocery, food and beverage, and personal services
Parking	398 spaces (structured aboveground)	200 spaces (belowground)
Other highlights	Proposes returning portion of “tail” to the City; Proposes new access drive along eastern edge	Proposes an arts space as one ground floor use; Proposes a central open space between buildings

CAC Review: Wood Partners

Highlights: Several CAC members appreciated the **access drive** that the team proposed along the eastern edge of the site, and the **experience of the development team in Somerville**.

Areas for improvement:

- Most CAC members expressed concerns with **how large the single building felt** (“monolithic”) and **wanted to see more density** on the site.
- Most CAC members and several members of the public expressed concern with the proposal’s **high parking ratio** (398 spaces for 324 residential units), given the site’s adjacency to the MBTA Station.
- Most CAC members noted that the proposal **does not include significant new green space** and that the 7,000 sf space at the intersection of Washington and New Washington Streets is not sufficient for gathering. They were also concerned by the **amount of space given to private amenities**.
- Several CAC members noted a **lack of detail in the development team’s retail strategy** and wanted to better understand how the development team would prioritize small and local businesses.

Staff Review: Wood Partners

Excerpts of staff considerations for Wood Partners' proposal:

- The proposal includes a **very high number of parking spaces** for the site's proximity to the MBTA station. The proposal would benefit from reducing the number of parking spaces.
- The proposal **does not create significant new open space** that is easily accessible to the public. The development team might consider adding additional public open space accessible from Washington or New Washington Street, such as at the southwest edge of the site. The team might also consider consolidating private amenity spaces on top of the parking garage to create room for public spaces.
- The development team referenced a **desire to break up the façade of the building using recesses** from Washington Street, but this may better be achieved by a change in building materials. It is unclear if these recesses also help achieve a higher unit count, but this should be further explored and discussed with the Urban Design Commission (UDC).

HR&A Review: Wood Partners

Excerpts of HR&A considerations for Wood Partners proposal:

- The proposal is “a **strong, executable proposal** grounded in regional precedent and direct local execution capacity.”
- Expect further iteration on:
 - The **parking** program;
 - **Ground-floor activation** and **tenanting strategy**;
 - **Massing transition** along the Cobble Hill edge;
 - **Site density** (against the full capacity of a High-Rise District designation);
 - **Public realm strategy** and the proposed treatment of the southeast “tail” parcel.

CAC Review: North River Leerink

Highlights: Most CAC members expressed appreciation for the **greater density** in this proposal and that this was delivered across multiple buildings, as well as the **central green space**. In general, CAC members strongly preferred this proposal.

Areas for improvement:

- Several CAC members were **disappointed that the number of units proposed dropped** from 600 to 426 and would hope to still see greater density.
- Several CAC members had concerns that **the central green space would feel privatized** and hoped to see improvements to invite in pedestrians on Washington and New Washington Streets.
- Several CAC members **wanted to better understand the development team's ground floor activation strategy**, and specifically how they would prioritize small and local businesses and what their plan was for programming the arts and nonprofit spaces.

Staff Review: North River Leerink

Excerpts of staff considerations for North River Leerink Manager LLC's proposal:

- The **central green space provides a large green space to residents but does not read as accessible to the public** since it is blocked from view from Washington Street. Widening the entrance to the space between the tower and adjacent building or adding design elements that invite in the public would help counter this concern.
- The team proposes using **Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to build income-restricted units that comply with Somerville's Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) policy**. However, these programs require that income levels for units be set at different percentages of Area Median Income (AMI). The City's IZ program is also designed so that income-restricted units are cross-subsidized by market-rate units within the same building, rather than funded by a finite outside source.
- The proposal also **consolidates income-restricted units in one building because of the use of LIHTC funding in that building**, rather than spreading them evenly throughout the project as the IZ program requires. This is not the City's preference and will make permitting the project more difficult since the IZ requirement comes from Somerville's Zoning Ordinance. The proposal would be strengthened by spreading income-restricted units throughout the buildings.

HR&A Review: North River Leerink

Excerpts of HR&A considerations for North River Leerink's proposal:

- The proposal reflects “a **thoughtful design vision** and a **clear public realm anchor** in the central green,” and “**sustainability** was a central theme throughout the interview.”
- The proposal is “**ambitious**, and several elements still require significant due diligence that raise **feasibility concerns**.” These significantly include subterranean parking, which has limited precedent in Somerville residential development at this scale and would greatly impact site program if changed.
- The **phased building approach and use of LIHTC introduce additional procedural and timing considerations**.

HR&A's Response Scoring

Evaluation Criteria	Total Possible Points	Wood Partners	North River Leerink
Project Understanding and Development Concept	20	14*	14*
A. Alignment of Proposed Development Vision with City Objectives	15	11*	11*
B. Site Plan, Massing, Public Realm & Ground-Floor Program	5	3	3*
Zoning and Entitlement Strategy	10	9*	6
C. Proposed Zoning Pathway	5	4	3
D. Quality and Feasibility of Entitlement Strategy	5	5*	3
Organization Expertise and Experience	15	14	9
E. Demonstrated Success Delivering Comparable Projects	8	8	5
F. Experience with Public-Sector Partners	4	3	2
G. Qualifications & Capacity of Key Personnel	3	3	2
Total Technical Points	45	37*	29*
<p><i>*Scores have been adjusted in select sections to reflect findings from the April 28 interviews, with adjustments noted by asterisk in the Technical Evaluation Summary table.</i></p>			

Are there any questions or additional feedback on the technical elements of the proposals?

Next steps

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For more information visit:

somerma.gov/90-washington-redevelopment

or reach out to **Ben Demers, Senior Planner**, at **bdemers@somerma.gov** or the **Somerville Redevelopment Authority** at **sra@somerma.gov**