
90 Washington St.

City of **Somerville**

Request for Qualifications | January 2023



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Executive Summary

The City of Somerville and the Somerville Redevelopment Authority, collectively referred to throughout this document as the City, requests information and qualifications from interested entities as a first step toward identifying qualified development teams for the redevelopment of city-owned property at 90 Washington St. (Project). The site was acquired by the Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA) as the location for the City's future Public Safety Building (PSB). The City seeks a development team capable of delivering a mixed-use project, integrating the determined programming for a future Public Safety Building and private development with other uses meeting community needs (civic space, retail businesses, housing, medical services, recreation facilities and commercial space) as determined by the responding developer team (Respondent) across the 4+ acre site.

Based on direction from City Council, the Somerville Redevelopment Authority, and prior community engagement, the City has identified the following Project objectives:

1. Eliminate blight on a vacant, decadent site which is detrimental to the safety, health, welfare, and sound growth of the surrounding community.
2. Deliver a much-needed public safety building to the community.
3. Provide an opportunity to meet additional community objectives like the creation of more civic space, residential units, and/or commercial space for jobs.
4. Serve as a model, innovative approach to community development that combines a public use successfully integrated with private development; and
5. Advance SomerVision 2040 goals and Climate Forward, by promoting transit-centered and sustainable development that encourages economic growth and adds vitality to the Inner Belt neighborhood.
6. Host welcoming, multi-functional spaces that address community and neighborhood needs.

The selection process will occur in two phases and is anticipated to conclude by year-end 2023. In this first phase, the Request for Qualifications (RFQ), interested parties are required to present information on their qualifications, past project experience, capacity for securing financing to support this development, experience promoting the participation of minorities, women, and minority-owned and women-owned businesses in the development and operation in past projects, and a narrative regarding opportunities at the site. Written statements of qualifications are intended to demonstrate to the City the Respondent's current capabilities, as well as past successes in delivering similar projects. In addition, the City is requesting responses to several questions (RFQ Questions) intended to serve as guidance for the second phase of the disposition process, though responses to the RFQ Questions will not to be utilized to evaluate respondents.

In the second phase, Request for Proposals (RFP), the City intends to invite a small group of selected Respondents from the RFQ phase to provide proposals for the redevelopment of the 90 Washington St. site. Respondents can expect to provide a conceptual development plan, including a proposed site program and conceptual site configuration, along with an overview of the development team structure, including clear identification of the master developer, more detailed documentation of the development team's financial position, details about the team's diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategy, and a financial offer to the City for acquisition of the site. Respondents selected to proceed to the RFP phase will have the option to make changes in the team composition between phases, understanding that the RFP will include more specific goals for site development that were not anticipated during the RFQ stage. The City will evaluate all complete responses to the RFP and intends to select one or more recommended development team(s) to enter into negotiations with the City to reach a development agreement.

MILESTONE	DATE
RFQ Released	January 30 th 2023
Pre-Submittal Roundtable & Site Tour	February 6 th , 2023
Respondent Questions about the RFQ Due	February 13 th , 2023
Answers to Respondent Questions about the RFQ Posted	February 17 th , 2023
RFQ Responses Due	March 17 th , 2023
RFQ Release to Shortlisted Developers	May 2023
RFQ Responses Due	July 2023
Redevelopment Partner(s) Selected	October – December 2023

Figure 1: Timeline

Description of Subject

The subject site is located at 90 Washington St. on the northwestern edge of the Inner Belt neighborhood of Somerville and bordered by East Somerville to the northeast, Brickbottom to the south, and Union Square to the west. The site has 600+ feet of frontage along Washington St, a busy corridor connecting west to Cambridge and east to the Charlestown neighborhood of Boston.

The 4.3-acre site was identified as the future location for the new Public Safety Building, combining a fire station with Police and Fire headquarters, and acquired by the Somerville Redevelopment Authority via demonstration project in 2019. In 2020, the City cleared the site of the vacant Cobble Hill Shopping Center. Since then, the City has undertaken schematic design of the Public Safety Building and engaged in several rounds of community engagement aimed at gathering input to guide the redevelopment of the site.

The site is a corner lot, at the intersection of Washington Street and New Washington Street. To the east of the site lies Cobble Hill Apartments, a 224-unit rental complex with over 300 income-eligible senior residents that was built concurrently to the now demolished Cobble Hill Shopping Center on the project site. When initially developed, a berm with screening trees was installed to create a buffer between the two uses. This landscaped area falls on the 90 Washington St. project site. To the west of the site, across New Washington Street, are two properties that separate the project site from the new East Somerville Green Line Station. One is owned by ITS Realty LLC and is home to a local landmark, Olivera’s Restaurant. The second site is owned by the MBTA.

Redevelopment Context

90 Washington Street was acquired by the Somerville Redevelopment Authority in 2019 by eminent domain under a Demonstration Project Plan, with the purpose to eliminate blight and to prevent the recurrence of blight. This Plan found that 90 Washington Street was blighted due to its dilapidated, unsafe, and unhealthy condition.

The Demonstration Project Plan seeks to resolve these issues in the pursuit of the elimination of blight. Not only will this Project eliminate blight by removing the existing decadent building, but also by pursuing the kind of transformative, mixed-use, transit-oriented development the community calls for in SomerVision and the Inner

Belt Neighborhood Plan. The successful development of the site will improve the safety and health of the neighborhood surrounding it.

The Demonstration Project Plan by which 90 Washington Street was acquired by the Redevelopment Authority has three goals:

I. Eliminate Blight: “This Project seeks to resolve these issues in the pursuit of the elimination of blight. Not only will this Project eliminate blight by removing the existing decadent building [completed in 2020], but also by pursuing the kind of transformative, mixed-use, transit-oriented development the community calls for in SomerVision and the Inner Belt and Brickbottom Neighborhood Plan. The successful development of the site will improve the safety and health of the neighborhood surrounding it.”

II. Public Safety Complex: “The Plan for this Property addresses a critical municipal need: the construction of a new, modern public safety complex. The need for a new public safety facility has been part of the City’s Capital Improvement Plan since November 2016 and has been referenced in other city reports for many years.”

III. Transformative Development Opportunity: The parcel will also support a transformative, mixed-use development program anchored by the nearby East Somerville Green Line Station. Transit-oriented development could meet several important community needs and desires, including tax and job generating commercial development, affordable neighborhood-serving retail uses, community civic space, additional housing, both market rate and affordable, or other community-oriented uses.

Development options will analyze different ways of accommodating multiple uses within buildings, to ensure that other uses on the site provide a public good by meeting community needs, particularly civic uses, green spaces and mixed-use buildings with shops, restaurants, services, medical facilities, housing (particularly affordable units) and job-producing commercial spaces. Ultimately, the goal is to have a Project that meets the public safety requirements as well as provides an engaging and flexible mix of other uses to create an accessible, inclusive, and welcoming space.

The Demonstration Project Plan states the following objectives to achieve its goals:

- (a) To secure the elimination and prevent the recurrence of blighted, deteriorated, deteriorating, or decadent conditions in the project area;
- (b) To ensure the replacement of such conditions by well-planned, well-designed improvements which provide for the most appropriate reuse of the land in conjunction with the City’s comprehensive Plan, SomerVision;
- (c) The improvement of land use and traffic circulation;
- (d) The improvement of public facilities;
- (e) The provision of a decent, pleasant, and humane environment involving a mixture of those land uses needed to produce balanced development;
- (f) To maximize the full socio-economic potential of the project area with the most appropriate land uses and densities, and consistent with the other objectives stated herein;
- (g) To promote economic development which strengthens the City’s tax base without unacceptably impacting the physical, social, and cultural environment;
- (h) To establish the minimum necessary land use controls which promote development, yet protect the public interest;
- (i) To establish a set of controls which are adaptable to both current and future market conditions;
- (j) To secure development in the shortest possible time period;
- (k) To establish a sense of identity and place for Inner Belt;
- (l) To capitalize on the location next to the East Somerville Green Line Extension station.

The City has conducted a nine-month long public outreach process that confirmed the public’s desire to see 90 Washington Street redeveloped as intended by the Demonstration Project Plan, with a Public Safety Building combined with community-oriented uses and mixed use, transit-oriented redevelopment on the site.

Access & Public Transit

Somerville’s investment in infrastructure and transit and the adjacency to several transformative neighborhood developments have resulted in a unique opportunity for the redevelopment of 90 Washington St. The site is highlighted by the adjacency to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority’s (MBTA) East Somerville Green Line station, which started service in December 2022 on the Medford Branch of the Green Line. The East Somerville station is steps away from the site and was delivered as part of the \$2.3B Green Line Extension, which is estimated to reach 45,000 one-way trips per day in 2030. The City’s long-term comprehensive plan, SomerVision 2040, lays out the City’s priorities pertaining to transit-oriented development, sustainability, and resilient growth – all of which are priorities for the Project given the newly opened East Somerville Green Line Station.

In addition to the Green Line access, the site benefits from adjacent vehicular access routes to Downtown Boston and throughout the region. The Northern Expressway, a portion of the New England highway Interstate 93, is accessed 0.5 miles to the east of the site and directly to the west is McGrath Highway, an alternative route to Downtown. The MBTA also operates several bus routes proving access throughout the region with a stop adjacent the site.

The Somerville Community Path, a paved off-street path, runs 1.3 miles alongside much of the Green Line including an access ramp at the East Somerville Green Line Station. The Community Path currently provides pedestrian and bicycle connections north to the Minuteman Path that extends to Bedford, MA. People are also advocating for additional connections to the Charles, Mystic, and Grand Junction Paths. In the inbound direction, it is now possible to bike or walk all the way to North Station on an off-street path from the 90 Washington St site.

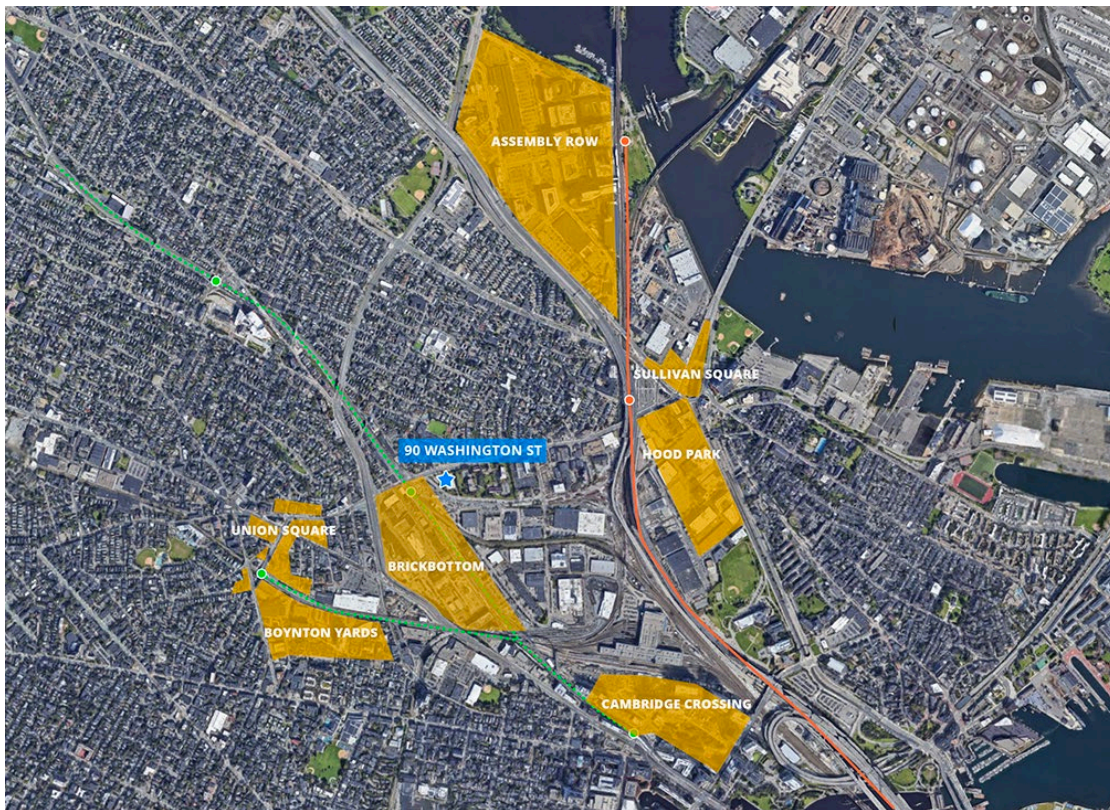


Figure 2: Access and Regional Context

Local Market Context

The site is located in the Inner Belt neighborhood of Somerville, roughly two miles northwest of Boston. The site is well-situated as a major gateway into Somerville, with convenient rail and vehicular access and visual prominence along a key corridor into the city. The City is experiencing tailwinds from proximity to employment and educational hubs, particularly in the Life Science sector, due to fewer opportunities for infill development in these districts.

Somerville is the most densely populated city in New England and has a rich history as a center for heavy industrial activity. The City of Somerville is home to a diverse population of young professionals, blue collar workers, college students, and a large immigrant population from countries like El Salvador, Haiti, and Brazil. Somerville's popular city squares feature vibrant business and entertainment centers with critically acclaimed restaurants, bars, and small businesses as well as a burgeoning arts scene.



Figure 3: Neighborhood Boundaries

Demographic and Employment Snapshot

Somerville is home to roughly 81,000 residents, up over 6.5% when compared to 2010. The City has a diverse population with 11% identifying as Hispanic, 10% identifying as Asian, and 5% identifying as African American. Somerville has a median age of 31.5 with a population largely composed of college aged adults, ages 18-24 (12% of population), and young professional adults ages 25-34 (27% of population). In contrast, elders over 65 comprise 9.3% of city residents. When comparing this number to the median age in Massachusetts (39.6) and Boston (32.4), Somerville stands out as an attractive and popular place to live for college aged and young professional adults – the result of relative affordability, cultural and entertainment attractions, and high-transit and walkability. Somerville also benefits from exposure to the educational hub that is the greater Boston metro area, with over 40 colleges, universities, and community colleges in proximity. Schools found in less than a 2-mile radius to Somerville include MIT, Tufts, Harvard, Cambridge College, Lesley University, and Bunker Hill Community College. Combined, these schools alone provide an education to over 65,000 full time undergraduate and graduate students. Over 65% of residents in Somerville have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to nearly 47% of Massachusetts residents overall.

The median household income for residents in Somerville is \$102K, well above the state median household income of \$84K. In 2020 there were around 57,000 employees in Somerville, a 13% increase from 2015. The leading industry sectors of employment are Scientific and Technical Services followed by Educational Services and Health Care. Mass General / Brigham and Cambridge Health Alliance are major healthcare employers in the area while nearby universities like Tufts, Harvard, and MIT are leading education employers. Investment in Tech and Life Sciences has continued throughout the Somerville area. This trend is reflected in recent multimillion dollar Life Science developments like Boynton Gateway (\$278M, 330K SF), 15 McGrath Highway (\$230M, 260K SF), 100 Chestnut Street (\$193M, 200K SF), and Assembly Innovation Park (\$514M, 1M+ SF).

These developments will continue to build momentum for employers and signal that the City of Somerville is a growing Tech and Life Science hub. In turn, these investments will attract retail, small businesses, start-ups, and entrepreneurs who stand to benefit from proximity to these hubs.

Real Estate Market Snapshot

Residential

Somerville's adjacency to major employment centers, high quality of living and improvements in transit have benefited the residential market of New England's densest city. Vacancies are just over 4% with rents approaching \$3.90/SF, not far behind rents achieved in nearby Cambridge of \$4/SF. Somerville has roughly 250 multi-family residential buildings holding over 6,600 rental units. There are an additional 1,200+ units that are planned or currently under construction in Somerville.

Somerville requires 20% of units to be affordable in new construction and has seen a growing number of residential projects achieving higher percentages of affordability and even 100% affordable housing made possible through a combination of local and state incentives.

Lab/Life Science and Office

Proximity to life science clusters in Cambridge and Kendall Square has resulted in a surge of commercial lab development in Somerville, with office-to-lab conversions also becoming more frequent. Expanding transit access will continue to provide increased connectivity and allow for strong market fundamentals to reach Somerville and other inner-suburb markets. Asking rents for Class A lab product in Somerville are upwards of \$95/SF. Conversely, the office market in Somerville has plateaued, mirroring the office landscape throughout the Boston MSA. The upper end of the Somerville office market garners office lease rates approaching \$50/SF with vacancy rates hovering around 10%.

In aggregate, the Somerville office and lab market recorded a vacancy rate of 2% with around 115 buildings and 3.2M SF available prior to the pandemic. Vacancies in the area reached a high of 6% in 2021 but rebounded in 2022. Somerville currently has around 3.7M SF of office and lab space with another 1.9M SF under construction and 572,000 SF proposed.

Retail Market

Somerville is known throughout the Northeast for its art, bar, and restaurant scene. The location at 90 Washington St. is in the heart of the Somerville only a 10-minute walk or a 5-minute bike/drive to shopping and dining at nearby Assembly Row and Union Square. With Somerville boasting a high household median income, which has continued to rise over the last 5 years, the area shows strong retail spending potential and a desire for increased arts and cultural amenities.

Somerville is currently comprised of over 3.5M SF of retail space with a vacancy rate just over 2%. Retail vacancies have continued to decline post-pandemic while square footage and count of retail businesses has risen. New retail space in Somerville currently collects an average rent around \$35 PSF.

Adjacent Development and Neighborhood Projects

Somerville has experienced significant growth over the past decade, the result a confluence of targeted redevelopment and planning efforts as well as strong economic fundamentals. Specifically, growth in the Lab/Life Science sector, improvements in connectivity, and residential demand has led to catalytic, mixed-use projects throughout Somerville. A few developments to highlight:



Union Square: Union Square is a transit-oriented redevelopment plan near the newly opened Union Square MBTA Green Line Station. The state-approved project includes the development of 15 acres, or 2.4 million SF, into a mixed-use development with office, residential, lab, and retail spaces throughout. The project will add 1,000 residential units, 1.5M SF of lab/office space, and 140K SF of commercial/retail space.



Brickbottom: Planning efforts for the Brickbottom District of Somerville have spurred private development. The first private project in many years is underway to develop land in the neighborhood into a state-of-the-art Life Science facility. When completed, the site will feature a four-story building with 200K of rentable SF of Class A lab and office space with an additional 8K SF of ground floor retail.



Boynton Yards: A 2.5M SF Life Science and innovation community a mile away from the Project site bringing 2.1M SF of Class A Life Science and Office space, 450 residential units, and a community center. 101 South, the first phase of the Boynton Yards project, opened recently delivering 290K SF of lab space.



Assembly Row: Formerly a 145-acre industrial site, the neighborhood is now home to a 45-acre mixed-use development with shopping, dining, residential, office space, and other entertainment options throughout. Currently the development has 800K+ SF of office space, over 1,000+ residential units and 500K SF of retail space.



Cambridge Crossing: A 43-acre, 4.5M SF mixed-use, transit-oriented development connected to the diverse neighborhoods of East Cambridge. When completed, the site will deliver about 2.1M SF of commercial space, 2.3M SF of residential space and 100K SF of retail and dining space.



Sullivan Sq: Located in the northern corner of Boston, the project will transform a previously heavily industrial area into a mixed-use development. The project will bring 1.7M SF of office/lab space, 788 residential units, 200 hotel units, and 75K SF of retail/restaurant. Overall, the project will be made up of 5 office/lab buildings, 10+ restaurants, space for three existing businesses, and community space.



Hood Park: A 20-acre mixed-use redevelopment in Charleston, MA. The project delivered 1.8M SF of office/lab space, 335 residential units, 150 hotel units, 100K RSF of retail/commercial space.

Development Opportunity

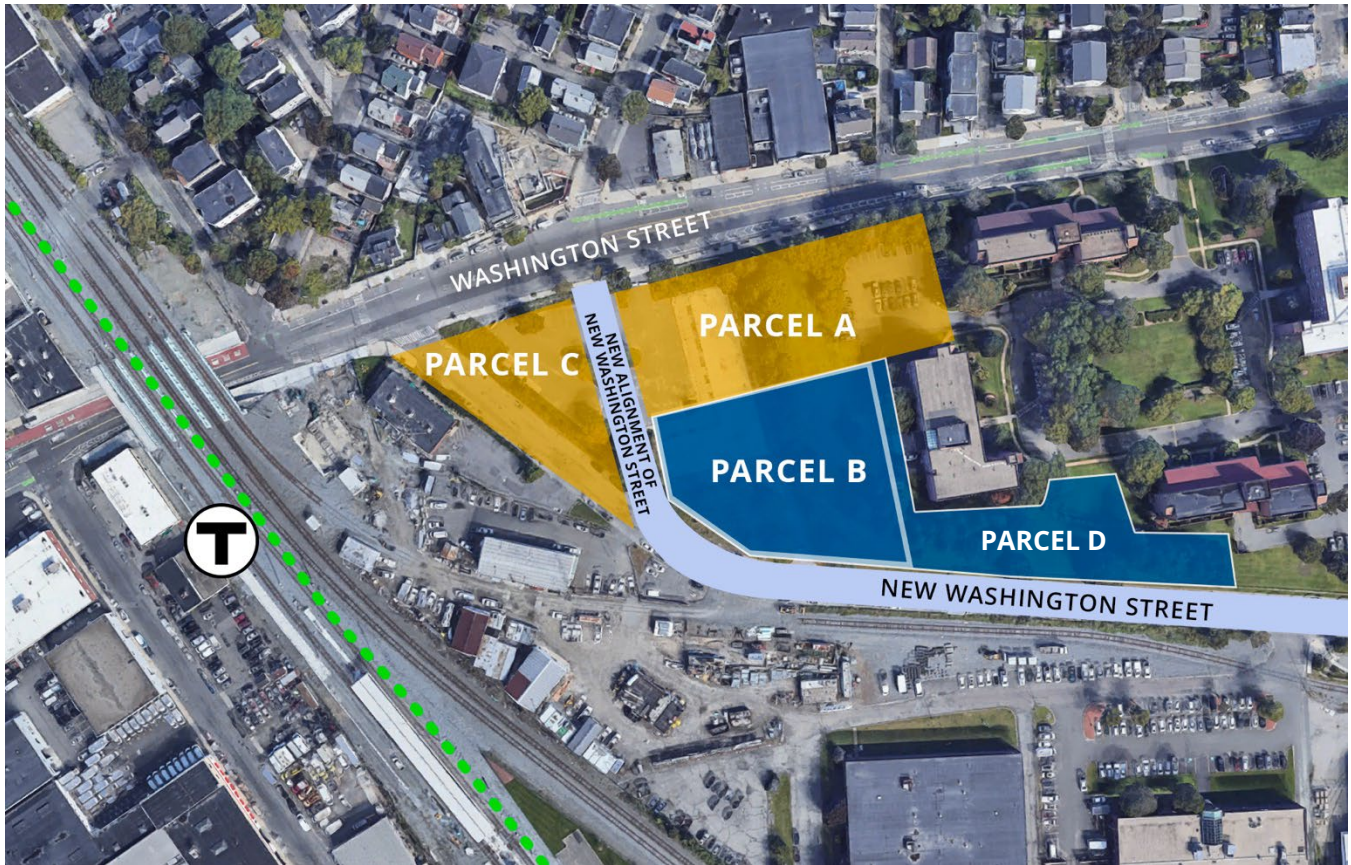


Figure 4: Project Site

The image above shows an initial platting concept for the site. Studies and public engagement thus far have assumed a rerouting of New Washington Street to converge with Washington Street and Franklin Street at a four-way intersection, allowing for a traffic signal and quick and safe access for emergency vehicles (see figure 4 above). Subsequently, the site would be subdivided into four parcels around the new realignment of New Washington Street: the Washington Street Redevelopment Parcels (Parcels A & C), a site for the Public Safety Building, previously envisioned on Parcel B, and the 'tail' parcel along New Washington Street proposed as a below grade geothermal well field (Parcel D) integrated into green space.

The site's four parcels, in accordance with the rerouting of New Washington Street, combine for 4 acres:

- Parcel A: 1.2-acre, rectangular lot fronting Washington Street with a depth of 140 feet and width 380 feet which includes a small portion of the parking lot associated with the Cobble Hill Apartments.
- Parcel B: 1.2-acre, rectangular lot fronting New Washington Street.
- Parcel C: 0.9-acre, triangular lot with 200 feet of frontage on Washington Street and 360 feet fronting the rerouted New Washington St.
- Parcel D (tail): 0.75 acres, fronting New Washington Street and 60 & 84 Washington Street in the Cobble Hill Apartments.

This rerouting of New Washington Street coincided with prior schematic designs pertaining to a central Public Safety Building. However, the City's purpose of the RFQ Questions is to allow Respondents the opportunity to provide feedback to the layout, as well as visions for any alternative solutions to providing the required Public Safety Building program elements.

Zoning Context

The site is currently zoned as a Civic (CIV) special district with the intent of accommodating facilities of a public nature such as municipal buildings, libraries, and police & fire stations; governmental uses; and public or private utility services that support the community. However, the City will lead a rezoning effort to accommodate the selected Respondent's redevelopment plan and, more importantly, the Demonstration Project Plan's objective to leverage "Transit-oriented development to meet several important community needs and desires, including tax and job generating commercial development, affordable neighborhood-serving retail uses, community civic space, additional housing, both market rate and affordable, or other community-oriented uses."

Respondents must comply with the zoning required of such uses, including meeting Somerville's inclusionary zoning rate of 20% citywide for all developments of 18 or more units with distribution amongst the affordable units ranging from 50%-110% of Median Family Income. Somerville has also implemented housing linkage for commercial development since 1991, currently at \$11.23/SF with an exemption given for the first 30,000 square feet. In 2017, the City also instituted a Municipal Job Creation and Retention linkage fee for commercial development, which helps fund programs that train Somerville citizens for skilled jobs. This fee is currently at \$2.75/SF as of March 2022, with an exemption given for the first 15,000 SF. Both fees are revisited every three years to investigate potential adjustments.

Project Objectives

- 1) Advance SomerVision 2040 goals and Climate Forward, by promoting transit-centered and sustainable development that encourages economic growth and adds vitality to the Inner Belt neighborhood;
- 2) Serve as a model to innovative approach to community development that combines a public use successfully integrated with private development;
- 3) Host welcoming, multi-functional spaces that address community and neighborhood commercial, housing, and service needs.

Community Engagement and Priorities

Since December 2021, the 90 Washington Street planning team has heard from hundreds of residents about their preferences for redeveloping the City's 90 Washington St. property. The City of Somerville has held three public meetings, six listening sessions, and a design workshop to gather feedback and refine redevelopment goals for the site. Community engagement has led to preferred, but not definitive, recommendations for the site including orientation. These include:

Desired Uses:

Civic uses
Green spaces
Mixed use buildings with shops, restaurants, services, medical facilities, offices, research / lab space and housing (particularly affordable units)

Development Concerns:

Noise impacts, short and long term
Preservation of existing landscaping features
Site access (bikes and pedestrians)
Limit new parking
Confirm site is safe for reuse and redevelopment
Compensate abutters for construction impacts

90 Washington Street has been selected as the site for a new public safety building, including a Police Headquarters function. During public engagement on redevelopment in 2022, some attendees debated the need for and municipal funding of a new Police facility, anywhere in the city. This RFQ anticipates that a Public Safety Building will be constructed on this site, but its exact programming is still to be determined and may change with time.

Overall, the design concept surveys indicated that voters want to see a mixture of public and private uses developed on 90 Washington St., with civic buildings (the new Public Safety Building) and public green space mixed with privately developed residential and commercial buildings. Most survey respondents preferred a public green space on Washington Street to “knit” civic and private development together into a cohesive whole. Many respondents, as well as neighbors at the Cobble Hill apartments, have highlighted the maintenance of trees as a priority of the site. Additional information pertaining to the community engagement process and feedback can be found at the 90 Washington St. Redevelopment SomerVoice project site: voice.somervillema.gov/90washington_redevelopment

Included in this engagement was the illustration of several potential layouts, all of which incorporated a single Public Safety Building separate from the commercial and public uses on the site. RFQ responses need not rely on the assumption that the Public Safety Building be delivered as a single, standalone building but rather should explore alternatives to integrating the Public Safety Building with private uses or separating the programming components throughout the site.

In addition, Somerville’s comprehensive plan update SomerVision2040 outlined the City’s values relating to Climate & Sustainability, Commercial Development, Housing, Mobility, Equity and many others – all of which should be reflected in Respondents vision for the site.

SomerVision2040 and community engagement to date have generated the following priorities for the Project:

- New retail space, particularly ground-floor storefronts for retail shops, restaurants and personal service businesses
- New housing at various levels of affordability
- New community-oriented spaces, particularly for recreational and social service uses
- New office and lab space
- New public safety space for fire station (Engine 3), police, fire, and dispatch headquarters
- Mixed-use building formats
- Sustainable design – Progresses the goals of Somerville Climate Forward (e.g. by moving away from carbon-based fuels and utilizing on-site renewable energy sources like harnessing geothermal energy for heating and cooling new buildings on the site)
- Minimized site disruption and maximize tree preservation
- Minimal surface parking

Public Safety Building

The Somerville Police Department and Fire Engine 3 have been located at the current public safety facility at 220 Washington Street since the 1980’s. A former MBTA bus barn, the facilities are functionally obsolete for police and fire operations. As a result, the City included the site of the former public safety building in the 2012 Union Square Revitalization Plan and after an extensive process, the City selected a development partner for redevelopment of the site. To find a new home for public safety, a thorough space needs assessment was conducted and the City

initiated a site search process to identify potential sites for a new complex. The 90 Washington St. site was deemed to be the most viable option in Somerville after an analysis that identified six potential sites.

The Somerville Redevelopment Authority acted to acquire the site in 2019 using the demonstration project plan approach. The rationale of the demonstration project plan was that the project will:

- 1) Eliminate blight on a vacant, decadent site which is detrimental to the safety, health, welfare, and sound growth of the surrounding community;
- 2) Deliver a much-needed public safety building to the community;
- 3) Provide an opportunity to meet additional community objectives like the creation of more civic space, residential units, and/or commercial space for jobs; and
- 4) serve as a model, innovative approach to community development that combines a public use successfully integrated with private development.

The Demonstration Project Plan sought to resolve these issues and pursue the kind of transformative, mixed-use, transit-oriented development the community calls for in SomerVision2040 and past neighborhood plans for the area. Ultimately, the goal was to have a Project that meets the public safety requirements as well as provides an engaging and flexible mix of other uses to create an accessible, inclusive, and welcoming space.

The programming requirements for the Public Safety Building to be incorporated at 90 Washington St. include the following:

- **Fire Engine 3:** Engine 3's two major programmatic elements are the apparatus bays and living quarters for the fire department. The apparatus bays (where the fire engines park) need to be on the ground level with 4 garage bays. The apparatus room with ancillary support is 8,400 SF. The living quarters need to be near apparatus bays for the quickest call time response with sleeping and living quarters at 2,850 SF. In the current layout, it is better for apparatus to use signal technology at the apron to ingress/egress on the realigned Washington Street. The project team could not find a site layout where ingress/egress on Washington Street was suitable for traffic operations on Washington Street.
- **Fire Headquarters:** The fire administration is essentially office space and can be placed anywhere on the site. In addition to Fire Headquarters, the space will be utilized for continuing education and training in the police and fire department. In total, the project is 1,300 SF.
- **Police Headquarters:** The police administration takes up most square footage of the building and, for the most part, is office space. Programmatic elements include office spaces for Administration, Community Outreach, Help and Recovery (COHR), Investigations, and Patrol at 40,000 SF. This includes additional conferencing and break rooms typical of any office space. Specialty areas in addition but also associated with the police department are detention (3,000 SF) and evidence (2,800 SF) including an evidence garage (850 SF). The Somerville PD is an accredited police department, so any design decisions need to consider the desire for continued accreditation. Detention is a program element that should be on the first floor to avoid an additional elevator in the building.
- **Emergency Management:** Emergency Management is a small department requiring adjacency to Dispatch. This space is 350 SF.
- **Shared Program:**
 - o **911 Dispatch Office:** The E911 and Fire Alarm divisions are merging to one location on the site. This will help route calls even more efficiently and effectively. It's important that dispatchers have a quiet desk to take emergency calls and needs to be located near Emergency Management. Space required is 2,300 SF.

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- **Community Room:** Throughout the community process thus far, one of the most exciting program elements for the community is a space to gather. The original intent of the room was to replicate the academy room that multitasks as a community room in the existing public safety building. However, the program of this room keeps evolving. The minimum program for this space is a place where 75 people can gather for a 'lecture style' community meeting at approximately 1,050 SF but community engagement process has indicated significant interest for greater community space programming. Additional reflection on the community room indicates that there will always be a segment of the public that will not be comfortable if it is in within a new Public Safety Building.
 - **Wellness and Locker Rooms:** In SPD and SFD there's a culture of health and wellness for the betterment of the department. Therefore, access to a wellness room and lockers is incredibly important, at 5,800 SF.
 - **Emergency Operation Center/Training:** A conference, training, and media room with high connectivity to gather for SPD/SFD training or emergency operations at 1,400 SF.

The City is seeking a private development team to deliver both the programming required by the Public Safety Building and private, mixed-use programming. At this stage, the City is open to all transaction structures and placement of programming throughout the site. These include a consolidated Public Safety Building, either integrated with commercial uses or in isolation, as well as spreading out the separate programming components throughout the various parcels.

Questions to Respondents

In addition to the criteria by which respondents will be scored, the City is also requesting responses to the following questions, which will be utilized by the City to inform the subsequent RFP and the planning process. Responses to these questions are not to be utilized in the scoring of respondents, apart from a completeness check as required by Submission Requirement 6. Respondents are expected to reply with a cohesive response to each topic but are not necessarily required to provide discrete responses to each individual question. Responses to these questions will not be attributed to specific Respondents during public discussions.

These questions were derived from the public engagement process held over the past nine months and reflect open questions that the community, the City Council, and the Somerville Redevelopment Authority are looking for feedback on to shape a more detailed Request for Proposals in the second phase.

Transit Oriented Development

The site is adjacent to the new East Somerville Green Line station. The City is interested in understanding how respondents see that proximity in terms of the potential for the site.

- I. What does the new Green Line station mean in terms of development potential and marketability for this site and the types of uses you would consider pursuing?
- II. What parking ratios would you expect to utilize at the site? Please note that the City has a zero parking minimum and would like to see a 0.6 spaces/1,000 sf parking maximum for projects close to transit.

New Washington Street Relocation

The City is planning to reroute New Washington Street into a 4-way intersection with Washington Street and Franklin Street to make a signalized intersection (see figure 4). This divides the site, providing a more controlled exit for responding fire apparatus as well as discrete development pads. The City is interested to know how respondents view that approach.

- I. Do you view the rerouted 4-way intersection as a favorable improvement over current conditions with regards to development potential?
- II. There are two parcels between the site at 90 Washington St. and the Green Line station. How might the incorporation of these sites impact your approach to the realignment of New Washington Street?

Sustainable Construction and Construction Costs

The City requires that the project be sustainably built, including the consideration of ground source geothermal heating. Typically, the City aims to see new construction that meets either a Net Zero, Passive House, or LEED Platinum standard. Additionally, residents of the abutting Cobble Hill Apartments are sensitive to preserving the existing site conditions that were instituted to buffer their residences including a berm with a row of screening trees.

- I. Describe your philosophy with respect to sustainability and the types of programming you envision for the site.
- II. Describe any volatility or other vulnerability you see in the construction costs to fulfill the philosophy described above.
- III. How would you react to a requirement to meet sustainability goals or a priority for geothermal heating at the site?
- IV. How viable would it be to redevelop the 90 Washington St. site without disruption to the berm or the trees?

Integrating the Public Safety Building into a Public Private Partnership

The City has looked at a variety of ways of siting the Public Safety Building alongside private development on the site with various public-private partnership options. The options explored generally fit into one of four categories:

- A. Entirely independent Public Safety Building and dedicated parking facility for the PSB staff.
- B. Public Safety Building on its own parcel with a shared parking facility.
- C. Public Safety Building with integrated private development and a shared parking facility.
- D. Distributed Public Safety Building facilities across the site with the fire station, fire headquarters, police headquarters, 911 dispatch, and community gathering room in up to five different locations.

Part 1: Independent or Integrated Public Safety Building

The City is interested to know which of these are most feasible from the Respondents' perspective. Please respond with your reaction to the various scenarios, utilizing the following questions as prompts in your response. Respondents are not required to respond to every question for every scenario.

- I. Please comment on which scenarios are achievable and/or preferred.
 - What complexities do you envision?
 - How do programmable uses differ between scenarios listed?

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- Please comment if you would have a preferred scenario and if any scenario would preclude you from responding to the RFP.
 - Specific to Scenarios C and D, what uses do you feel are most complementary to locate over the different components of the Public Safety Building program? Is it achievable to integrate the Public Safety Building with residential and commercial uses from a market, physical, and functional perspective?
- II. If a respondent was able to acquire either or both two parcels between the site at 90 Washington St. and the Green Line station, would that change the approach to integrating the Public Safety Building on site?

Part 2: Legal Partnerships & Transaction Types

The City is open to a broad range of legal arrangements to move ahead with the shared parking facilities and integrated Public Safety Building construction scenarios (City retains land under the facility and leases to the private developer, City sells land and leases the property for the PSB program elements, joint venture, etc.).

- I. Would a long-term ground lease hinder your ability to develop residential product? Is there a minimum lease length you would need?
- II. Are there legal/transaction arrangements you would prefer if scenarios B, C, or D above were pursued?
- III. Are there legal/transaction arrangements you would be unwilling to accept to realize scenarios B, C, or D?

Do you have opinions on how the building and operation of the Public Safety Building factors into a transaction structure that the City should consider?

Part 3: Phasing and Construction

The City is interested in seeing both the private development and the Public Safety Building proceed to construction in as smooth and quick a timeframe as possible. Understanding that each scenario has its own pros and cons with respect to phasing construction, the City would like respondents' opinions with regards to the following.

- I. Would you be open to an arrangement in which the respondent is compensated to manage construction and/or operations of the Public Safety Building? Would you respond to the RFP if that was a requirement?
- II. Please describe any key interdependencies and sequencing considerations. Are there phasing priorities that the City should consider for the RFP? Do any of the product types have a particular implementation timeline that should be considered when phasing with the Public Safety Building construction?

Ground Floor Uses

The types of public-facing ground floor uses were a theme during the community engagement. Residents expressed a strong desire to see neighborhood retailers - convenience stores, laundromat, coffee shops and accessibly priced food businesses, as well as community-oriented services including recreation centers, health clinics, and food pantries on the site.

- I. How do you view the viability of small retailers, restaurants, and service businesses on this site? How might community service uses be feasibly accommodated on the site?
- II. If the RFP were to include a requirement for a certain amount of community-serving ground floor uses like those listed above, what sort of standards would you want to see/not want to see (min sq. ft., percentage of ground floor, maximum rent, etc.)?

Affordable Housing

During community engagement, affordable housing was a strong priority for residential uses located on the site. The City is interested in understanding how you would view different approaches to affordable housing. The baseline zoning requirement for affordable housing is 20% representing a mix of affordability levels for an average of units available to those making 65% Area Median Income (AMI).

- I. How much additional affordable housing do you think can be delivered on-site given current market conditions?
- II. Are units for a middle-income tier (100-120% AMI) a product that you would find marketable at this site?
- III. Are there subsidy programs or other financing tools that would be critical to bringing more affordable housing to reality?

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategies

The City is strongly committed to ensuring the Project provides opportunities for businesses and individuals who historically have been underrepresented in development projects of this size, scope, and local context. The City expects the Project to incorporate "M/WBEs" (a term being used to denote both minority-owned and women-owned business enterprises, whether certified or not), as well as minority individuals and women.

- I. Describe your approach to promoting the participation of minorities, women, and minority-owned and women-owned businesses in the development and operation of projects, as applicable. Statements may include experience and/or strategies that the Respondent could realistically utilize with in the areas of:
 - M/WBE participation in the areas of development, financing, design, construction and ownership
 - Workforce development programs/initiatives
 - Contractor and supplier diversity programs
 - Community outreach to underrepresented communities

Submission Requirements

To be considered for participation in Phase II – Request for Proposals, respondents must clearly, completely, and concisely address each of the following areas in their responses to this RFQ:

- 1) **Cover Letter:** Submit a cover letter summarizing the key points of the qualification submittal. The respondent should elaborate on its interest in the opportunity, its consideration of the priorities for 90 Washington St. as outlined previously, and summarize the materials presented to support the RFQ.
- 2) **Description of Organization:** Respondents should include a description of all firms comprising the team, including identification of the lead respondent. For each developer on the team, submit the following: company name, legal status, company address, and firm profile, and identification of key firm management.
- 3) **Relevant Project Experience:** Respondents should demonstrate their ability to design, construct, operate and/or manage projects of comparable size, program mix, and complexity by sharing information on previous projects completed in the past 10 years. Provide examples of working on developments with the following elements:
 - a. Mixed-use development with varying levels of residential affordability
 - b. Transit-oriented development
 - c. Projects incorporating public space and civic uses

- d. Projects with a public-private solicitation or partnership with government
- 4) **Financial Capacity:** Respondents should provide a short description of their ability to financially fulfill the obligations of the development project and supporting documentation readily available (statements of support from debt and/or equity sources, and/or financial statements, etc.)
 - 5) **Development Approach:** Respondents should provide a narrative statement describing a high-level vision for the site, including initial conceptions of a potential development program for the site and approach to open space. The content of this statement will provide the City with a sense of the respondent's perceptions about the site's optimal use. Include in this narrative the envisioned approach to collaboration with the City pertaining to the Public Safety Building.

Evaluation Criteria

To be considered for selection each respondent must certify in its cover letter that it meets the following minimum requirements. Any response that fails to include such certification in its response, demonstrating that these criteria have been met, may not be considered for selection to participate in the RFP stage.

- 1) Respondent has provided responses to all questions posed in the "Questions to Respondents" section and has provided all the information required in the "Submission Requirements" section;
- 2) Experience in delivering 3 urban, mixed-use developments in the last 10 years of at least 200,000 SF and/or \$100 million;
- 3) Demonstrated financial stability over the past five (5) years and ability to secure capital and fund pre-development expenses, through submission of financial statements and/or letters of commitments from debt and equity partners.

The selection process will include an evaluation procedure based on the criteria identified below. Applicants that clearly meet the minimum requirements above will be evaluated. Following the rating of all fully responsive submissions, the selection committee will identify, or "short-list," applicants with the highest ratings by the committee. The committee may choose to interview the short-listed applicants.

	Very Advantageous	Advantageous	Minimum Criteria
Relevant Project Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated extensive record of experience in completing projects similar in complexity, type, and magnitude, including successful implementation of comprehensive mixed-use public-private partnership projects that include delivery of a public facility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some prior record of executing complicated mixed-use developments and/or public-private partnerships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered three urban, mixed-use developments. Developed one transit-oriented development.
Financial Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibited significant ability and capacity to secure appropriate project financing for complicated mixed-use development projects in an urban setting with established sources of debt and equity, including its own. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some limited experience in securing project financing for complicated mixed-use development projects in an urban setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No litigation or loan defaults in the past 10 years
Development Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concept justification by market demand and conditions. Provides innovative solutions to delivering PSB requirements, maximizing private development on site, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A full development approach narrative but that fails to credibly detail the approach to delivering the PSB and/or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a Development Approach aligned with the City's priorities.

	adheres to the priorities outlined in the RFQ.	lacks an integration of several uses	
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Anticipated Solicitation Schedule

The City of Somerville’s anticipated timeline for the disposition process is outlined below. The City intends to release a Phase II RFP following evaluation of all RFQ responses.

MILESTONE	DATE
RFQ Released	January 30 th 2023
Pre-Submittal Roundtable & Site Tour	February 6 th , 2023
RFQ Questions Due	February 13 th , 2023
RFQ Answers Posted	February 17 th , 2023
RFQ Responses Due	March 17 th , 2023
RFQ Release to Shortlisted Developers	May 2023
RFQ Responses Due	July 2023
Redevelopment Partner(s) Selected	October – December 2023

Figure 1: Timeline

The selection of a development partner will occur in two phases. In this first phase, the RFQ, interested parties are required to present information on their qualifications, past project experience, vision for development, and capacity to secure financing to support this development. The City of Somerville will evaluate all complete responses using the criteria outlined in this RFQ.

On February 6th, the City will host a site visit for prospective teams to tour the site and ask questions. The City will also accept written questions submitted to tfields@somervillema.gov by February 13th. The City will post a consolidated list of answers no later than February 17th.

The City intends to invite selected respondents from the RFQ phase to respond to an RFP which will be released in May 2023. The RFP will ask selected respondents for greater detail on the proposed program, financing structure, implementation strategy, and comprehensive diversity and inclusion program.

Appendix

Zoning: <https://www.somervillezoning.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/12/20191212-Somerville-Zoning-Atlas.pdf>

SomerVision 2040: <https://www.somervision2040.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/06/SomerVision2040-May-2021.pdf>

90 Washington St Demonstration Plan: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/ifa.somervillema.gov/documents/90-washington-st-demonstration-plan.pdf>

Programming & Site Evaluation Report <https://voice.somervillema.gov/13595/widgets/42537/documents/26430>