

MEMORANDUM

To: Somerville City Council
Somerville Redevelopment Authority
From: 90 Washington Street Civic Advisory Committee
Date: Tuesday, May 5th, 2026
Re: Feedback on responses to 90 Washington Street Request for Proposals

Overview

The Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA) received two responses to the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the redevelopment of 90 Washington Street.¹ Responses to the RFP comprise both a technical component (which includes non-financial elements like site program and diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies) and a financial component (which includes the amount and timing of financial offers). The technical components for the two responses and the presentations that each team gave during their interviews are linked here:

- Wood Partners' [Proposal](#)² and [Interview Presentation](#),³
- North River Leerink Group LLC's [Proposal](#)⁴ and [Interview Presentation](#).⁵

The process for reviewing responses to the RFP involves review by the 90 Washington Street Civic Advisory Committee, the City Council, and the SRA. The CAC is responsible for providing initial feedback to the City Council and SRA on the technical components of proposals and for interviewing RFP respondents. This memo summarizes that feedback in a table organized by topic area, proposal, and whether the feedback is regarding a positive highlight or areas for improvement. Staff have also incorporated feedback that members of the public have shared at CAC meetings.

This feedback was collected over three meetings of the CAC:

- **April 22nd:** CAC members each shared feedback on the two proposals received.
- **April 28th:** Interviews with each of the respondent teams.
- **May 5th:** Follow-up discussion of RFP responses to incorporate takeaways from interviews and finalize summary memo.

Based on current proposals, CAC members have a strong preference for North River Leerink's proposal. However, CAC members have structured their feedback as "Areas for Improvement" and would look to see how each development team updates their proposal during the Best and Final Offer period.

¹ The full text of the Request for Proposals can be found here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/somervillema-live/s3fs-public/RFP-90-washington-street-202601.pdf>

² <https://s3.amazonaws.com/somervillema-live/s3fs-public/WP-RFP-submission-90-washington-st-technical-proposal-combined-quinlan-locke.pdf>

³ https://s3.amazonaws.com/somervillema-live/s3fs-public/2026-04/90-washington-street-cac-20260428-materials-WPpres_6778.pdf

⁴ <https://s3.amazonaws.com/somervillema-live/s3fs-public/90-washington-street-sarah-bidgood.pdf>

⁵ https://s3.amazonaws.com/somervillema-live/s3fs-public/2026-04/90-washington-street-cac-20260428-materials-NRLpres_2182.pdf

Summary of 90 Washington Street Civic Advisory Committee feedback on responses to the 90 Washington Street Request for Proposals (RFP)

	Wood Partners		North River Leerink	
	<i>Highlights</i>	<i>Areas for Improvement</i>	<i>Highlights</i>	<i>Areas for Improvement</i>
Density and general layout	<p>-A CAC member appreciated the amount of density that the proposal introduced and felt that this was the right scale for the neighborhood.</p>	<p>-Several CAC members expressed concerns with how large the single building felt, with several echoing the word “monolithic.”</p> <p>-Several CAC members expressed wanting more density on the site than the 324 units proposed. One member noted that more overall units means more income-restricted units because of the City’s Inclusionary Zoning policy, so was supportive of more units overall.</p> <p>-One CAC member noted that they would be interested in seeing a higher proportion of income-restricted residential units included in the project, and/or units at deeper levels of affordability. They were particularly interested in the creation of more units by reducing parking or the use of a Special District to incentivize more income-restricted units.</p> <p>-Several CAC member expressed disappointment with the program completely comprising rental units, and would be interested in seeing homeownership units added.</p>	<p>-Several CAC members and members of the public expressed excitement about the number of units proposed, both for the creation of overall units and for the number of income-restricted units that this would create. They also appreciated that the team proposed achieving this density across several buildings that decreased in height from west to east, with the shortest buildings adjacent to Cobble Hill Apartments. However, several CAC members also expressed disappointment that the proposed program decreased from 600 units in the initial proposal to 426 units in the interview presentation.</p>	<p>-Most CAC members were curious to understand phasing across the development.</p> <p>-A CAC member noted a concern that all income-restricted residential units were grouped in one building in this proposal, even if it created more income-restricted units overall.</p> <p>-One CAC member noted that this may be too much additional density for the neighborhood at one time and expressed concern for impacts on traffic along Washington Street.</p> <p>-One CAC member noted that they would be interested in seeing a higher proportion of income-restricted residential units included in the project, and/or units at deeper levels of affordability. They were particularly interested in the creation of more units by reducing parking or the use of a Special District to incentivize more income-restricted units.</p> <p>-Several CAC member expressed disappointment with the program completely comprising rental units, and would be interested in seeing homeownership units added.</p>

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Retail and community space		-Several CAC members and a member of the public noted a lack of detail in the retail strategy and wanted to better understand how the development team would prioritize small and local businesses and how existing businesses would be engaged during design and construction.	-Several CAC members expressed appreciation for the team's openness to discussing retail strategy and North River's approach of subsidizing retail space at 100 Chestnut. -Several CAC members expressed excitement about the types of ground floor community space proposed ("Earth School," arts center, etc.).	-Several CAC members and a member of the public wanted to better understand how the development team would prioritize small and local businesses and how existing businesses would be engaged during design and construction. One CAC member explicitly expressed concern with the proposal's reference to bringing large chain grocers like Trader Joes to the site, though appreciated that they discussed other alternatives in their interview. -Several CAC members wanted more detail about how the arts and nonprofit spaces would be programmed and managed.
Parking and mobility	-Several CAC members appreciated the access drive that the team proposed along the eastern edge of the site, which created some buffer with Cobble Hill Apartments and improved roadway access to the western portion of Building 84 of Cobble Hill.	-Most CAC members and several members of the public expressed concern with the proposal's high parking ratio (398 space for 324 residential units), particularly given the location adjacent to the East Somerville MBTA Green Line Station. Several members also expressed concern that adding this much parking will increase traffic in the area, particularly along Washington Street.	-Several CAC members appreciated that the project included a relatively low parking ratio (200 spaces for 456 residential units), and that parking would be included underground. -Several CAC members appreciated the access drive that the team proposed along the eastern edge of the site, which created some buffer with Cobble Hill Apartments and improved roadway access to the western portion of Building 84 of Cobble Hill. They would be interested in seeing more detail.	

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Public space and tree canopy	<p>-A CAC member and a member of the public appreciated the preservation of the “tail” portion of the site in the southeast corner for green space adjacent to Cobble Hill.</p>	<p>-Several CAC members noted that the proposal does not include significantly new green space, and that the ~7,000 square foot space at the intersection of Washington and New Washington Streets is not large enough to serve as a gathering space.</p> <p>-Several CAC members expressed concern with the space given to the pool and green spaces located several stories above the ground floor, particularly when the project was creating minimal new public civic space. They noted that they would prefer to see these amenities as public or used for more housing and a clearer concept for inviting the public into the space.</p> <p>-One CAC member expressed concern with the loss of many trees throughout the site and the berm at the site’s eastern edge, adjacent to Cobble Hill Apartments.</p> <p>-Several members noted that the return of the “tail” portion at the southeast corner of the site was not particularly useful for the creation of accessible civic space.</p> <p>-One CAC member noted that, if the project does retain its garage space, it should dedicate a portion</p>	<p>-Several CAC members expressed appreciation about the amount of green space included in the proposal.</p>	<p>-Several CAC members expressed concern that the central green space will feel private to residents and were interested in how the development team could make the space feel welcoming to the public. They were also interested in how the development and eventual property management team would approach security.</p>

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		of the roof of that garage to green or community space.		
Development team	-A CAC member appreciated that the team was experienced developing a similar project in Somerville (Alta Revolution) and that the full team is integrated “in one shop.” Relatedly, they appreciated the team’s proposed community engagement plan and felt it was appropriate for Somerville.		-Several CAC members expressed interest about how the site could be tied into North River’s nearby development in the Brickbottom neighborhood and noted that they have appreciated North River’s approach in that neighborhood. -Several CAC members appreciated the thoughtfulness of the development team and the way they listened to priorities in the RFP.	