

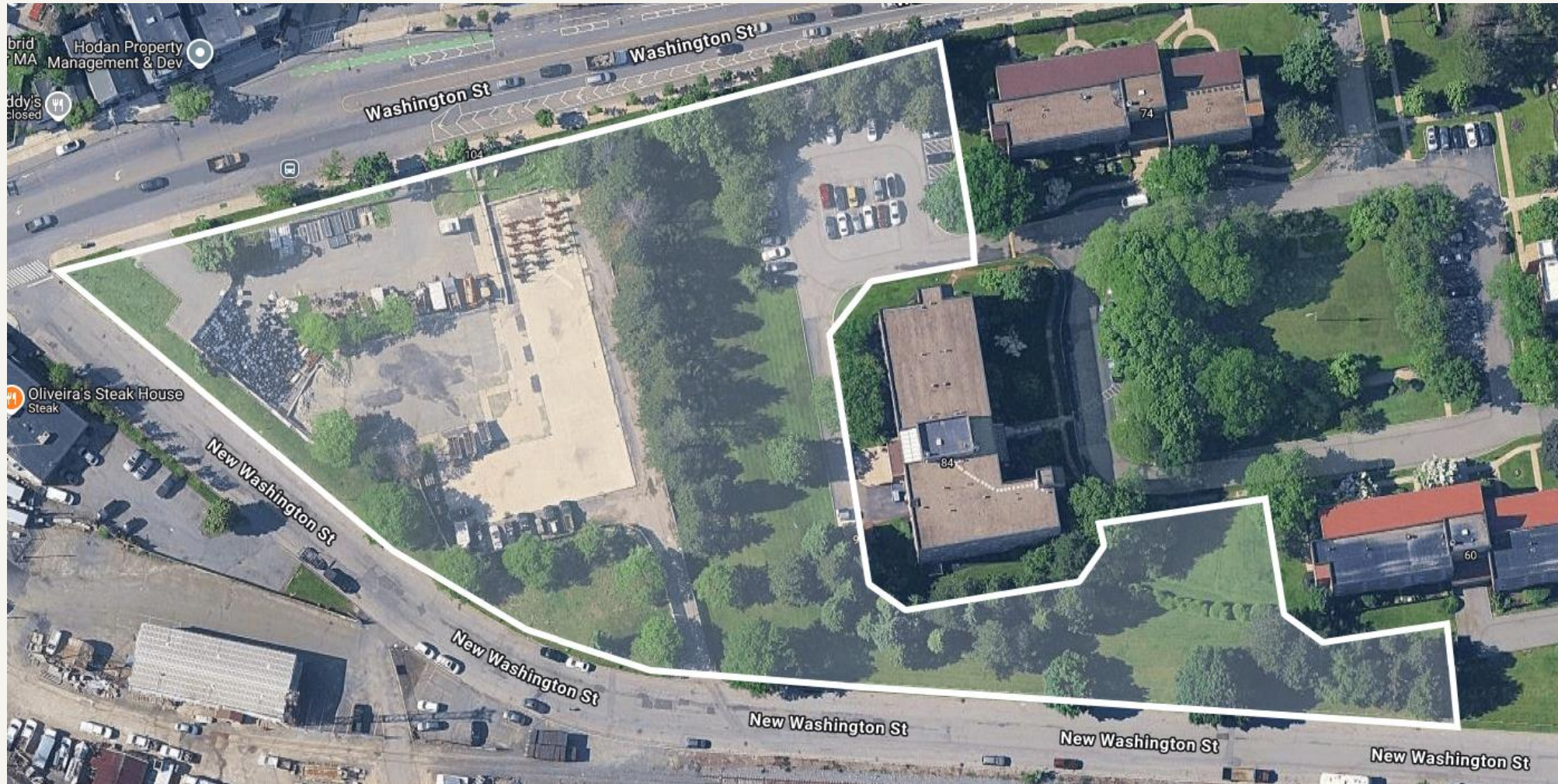
90 Washington Street: Updating the Demonstration Project Plan

November 6th, 2025

Agenda

1. Project background.
2. The 90 Washington Street Demonstration Project Plan and accompanying Memorandum of Agreement.
 - a. Original.
 - b. Updates.
3. Next step: Preparing an RFP for development.

Project background



Project background

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.

Guiding process 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.

Original DPP objectives

Objective A: Eliminate blight.

Objective B: Public Safety Complex.

Objective C: Transformative Development Opportunity.

Updated DPP objectives

Objective A: Eliminate blight.

~~Objective B: Public Safety Complex.~~

Objective C: Transformative Development Opportunity.

Objective D: Recoup funds used to satisfy the judgment for the taking of 90 Washington Street.

Original development process

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.

Original development process

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.

Updated development process

Phase 4: Developer Selection – *Upcoming.*

- RFP or similar process to solicit proposals.
- ~~Technical~~ 90 Washington Civic 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~~ apply for permits from the appropriate Somerville permitting body (e.g. Planning Board) 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?

Priorities for an RFP

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

Priorities for an RFP

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.

Priorities for an RFP

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.

Priorities for an RFP

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.

Priorities for an RFP

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.

Thank you.