

90 Washington Street Request for Proposals | Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Version 1 (February 9th, 2026)

The City of Somerville and Somerville Redevelopment Authority (together, the “City”) are seeking proposals from a development team capable of delivering a transformative, mixed-use project at 90 Washington Street. More information can be found on the City’s [webpage for the project](#). This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document compiles questions that the City has received in response to the RFP and is intended to provide further clarity to respondents. The City will be accepting questions about the RFP through April 3rd, 2026, and will regularly update the FAQ on the project webpage to incorporate new questions.

1. What neighborhood sensitivities should respondents be aware of?

As described in the RFP, 90 Washington Street is directly bordered by Cobble Hill Apartments, a low-income senior housing complex owned by Corcoran Jennison Companies (CJC). 90 Washington Street itself also used to be owned by CJC, who divided the parcel in 2013 in anticipation of a development project that did not move forward. Because CJC anticipated ongoing ownership of both properties, the property line is located relatively close to several Cobble Hill Apartments buildings and certain uses cross the parcel boundaries, including:

- A parking area at the northeast corner of 90 Washington Street that is still used by Cobble Hill residents; and
- A second access drive to the western side of Cobble Hill Apartments’ Building 84.

Respondents should take this proximity into account and should consider how to create an appropriate buffer with Cobble Hill Apartments, whether through green space or other infrastructure. (For instance, the development proposed in 2013 when the property was divided proposed a thoroughfare between the two parcels that would have provided access to Building 84 from Washington and New Washington Streets. That proposal can be found [here](#).) The City anticipates that the selected development team will work with CJC to maintain secondary fire access to Building 84, but we do not anticipate that the parking area will be maintained for use by Cobble Hill residents. CJC has started the process of relocating parking onto their property.

2. What will staff interactions look like for the selected development team?

The City approaches this process as a partnership and anticipates that City staff will work with the selected development team every step of the way to navigate City systems and answer

questions. Somerville frequently manages this type of public-private partnership, including in Union Square and at the 299 Broadway redevelopment in Winter Hill. The City can also help the development team consider grants that could support certain elements of the project.

3. What are the City's financial goals for the project? Can you provide more context for the September 2027 anticipated land closing?

The City's goal is to recoup as much of the \$39M spent on the eminent domain taking of 90 Washington Street as possible. For this reason, the evaluation criteria in the RFP is weighted slightly towards the financial element of the proposal. The City also prefers near-term and certain payments over payments that are further in the future.

The September 2027 anticipated land closing listed in the RFP is the point at which the City anticipates a project being able to obtain entitlements to build, since this is a common timing for a land sale. However, the City is open to alternative timelines that do not tie the land sale to receiving entitlements to build.

4. Can you share any City or neighborhood preferences regarding building height, massing, or stepbacks?

The City does not have any specific guidance regarding building height, massing, or stepbacks beyond what is shared in Section III of the RFP on Development Objectives. In general, the City and neighborhood are interested in seeing proposals that include significant new housing, concentrate density on the western portion of the site, and create an appropriate buffer with Cobble Hill Apartments.

To achieve these goals, the City encourages respondents to think creatively. The City is open to a development team proposing either building typologies that currently exist in the Somerville Zoning Ordinance or introducing building typologies not currently allowed by zoning. If a development team chooses the latter approach, the City would work with the selected development team to craft zoning for the parcel through a Special District, as described in Section IV of the RFP.

5. Is the City open to redesigning elements of the public way (e.g. crosswalks, curb cuts) along Washington Street and New Washington Street as part of the project?

Yes, the City will work with the selected development team to consider improvements to the public way or changes to curb cuts that would support the project. Past planning efforts for the site have considered this kind of change: Corcoran Jennison Companies' proposal from 2013 (found [here](#)) proposed a new curb cut into a thoroughfare along the eastern edge of 90 Washington Street, and past City planning efforts for the site have considered how New Washington Street could better meet Washington Street at a right angle. Any proposed changes to the public way would be discussed during the process of creating the land development agreement and/or during the zoning approval process for the project.

6. What are the City's parking expectations? Would a parking ratio of zero be considered?

Somerville does not require a minimum parking amount for new development, and many community members would be excited by the prospect of a low parking ratio given the site's proximity to the East Somerville MBTA Green Line Station. However, the City is also considerate of project financing expectations related to parking. The Somerville Zoning Ordinance does not allow for surface parking on the site but would allow for structure above-ground or below-ground parking.

7. The City has convened the 90 Washington Street Civic Advisory Committee (CAC) to ensure ongoing community input into the process. Can respondents speak with this group prior to finalizing their proposal, or are there other neighborhood groups/associations that respondents should speak with?

The CAC will not be hosting a meeting to answer questions prior to the due date for proposals of April 10th. However, the development objectives described in Section III of the RFP come from discussions with the CAC and from engagement conducted by CAC members with the wider neighborhood, particularly the sections about site uses and development principles. CAC members also approved of the final form of the development principles.

There are no other neighborhood associations or councils active at 90 Washington Street. However, East Somerville Main Streets, one of Somerville's two Main Streets organizations, is active in the area.

8. When is the project expected to go to bid for contractors and when is the anticipated start of construction?

The City has released an RFP to select a development partner but will not release a bid for contractors. We anticipate that this will be managed by the development team that is selected through the RFP process.

The anticipated start of construction will also be dependent on the selected proposal. In the RFP, the City has laid out an intended timeline to arrive at entitlements for the project by September 2027, with the goal to likely start construction shortly thereafter, but the City will not manage construction.

9. Is a Project Labor Agreement required for this project?

A project labor agreement (PLA) is not required for this project.

10. Is a civil survey available for the site?

The City does not have a civil survey available for the site.