

MEMORANDUM

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FROM: HR&A Advisors

DATE: April 17, 2026
Revised May 5, 2026

RE: Evaluation of Responses to the 90 Washington Street Request for Proposals

Purpose and Background

This memorandum presents HR&A Advisors' review of the Technical Proposals submitted in response to the City of Somerville and Somerville Redevelopment Authority's (SRA) Request for Proposals (RFP) for the redevelopment of 90 Washington Street. The City issued the RFP in January 2026, with responses due on April 10, 2026.

The approximately 3.99-acre site is located at the southeast corner of Washington and New Washington Streets in Somerville's Inner Belt/East Somerville neighborhood, five minutes from the East Somerville MBTA Green Line Station.

The City's objectives for the site include: (1) recouping a meaningful share of its approximately \$35.3 million acquisition cost; (2) delivering a high-density, mixed-use development with housing affordable to a range of incomes, ground-floor commercial activation, publicly accessible green space, and community space; and (3) advancing dense, transit-oriented development that fits the surrounding neighborhood context.

This memorandum presents HR&A's evaluation of each respondent's submission against the technical criteria established in the RFP: Project Understanding and Development Concept (20 points), Zoning and Entitlement Strategy (10 points), and Organization Expertise and Experience (15 points). The financial components of the proposals are being reviewed separately.

The City received two proposals for the redevelopment of 90 Washington Street. Each proposal reflects distinct approaches to the site's opportunities and constraints, with areas of alignment with the City's stated objectives alongside elements that would benefit from further development in subsequent phases. The balance of this memo presents a team overview for each respondent followed by a criterion-by-criterion technical review.

This memorandum has been updated to reflect findings from respondent interviews conducted on April 28, 2026. Each respondent team presented its proposal and responded to questions from the Civic Advisory Committee (CAC), providing an opportunity to clarify elements of the written submissions and assess each respondent's depth of understanding of key technical and programmatic considerations. The criterion-by-criterion reviews reflect the original written submissions; interview-driven observations and refinements are captured in the Interview Findings narrative at the top of each respondent's section and in adjustment callouts within affected criterion sections, with adjusted scores flagged by an asterisk in the Technical Evaluation Summary table.



I. Respondent Team Overviews

The following overviews summarize each respondent's firm profile, relevant project qualifications, and lead principal experience, followed by the technical review.

Wood Partners

Firm Type & Focus	Wood Partners is a national multifamily developer with a track record of mixed-use, transit-oriented residential development in the Northeast and Greater Boston.
Relevant Projects	Alta Revolution, Somerville, 329 units, 430K SF, 2022 Alta on the Row, Worcester, 370 units, 560K SF, 2024 Alta Oxbow, Wayland, 218 units, 360K SF, 2022 Alta French Hill, Marlborough, 276 units, 2025
Lead Principal(s)	Jim Lambert, Managing Director of Development at Wood Partners Quinlan Locke, VP of Development at Wood Partners Mark Theriault, Managing Director of Construction at Wood Partners
Development Program	Residential: 344K SF <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total Units 324 - Total Affordability: 20% (65 Units) Retail: 14.7K SF Community Space: 5.7K SF Total GSF: 364K SF

North River Leerink

Firm Type & Focus	North River Leerink Manager LLC is a New York-based real estate investment, development, and management firm affiliated with North River. The firm owns and operates a mixed-use portfolio including existing commercial holdings in Somerville's Brickbottom neighborhood.
Relevant Projects	Addison, East Boston, Residential: 230 units, 215K sf, 2024 100 Chestnut Street, East Somerville, Lab/ Office: 200K sf, 2023 200 Inner Belt, Somerville, Office: 200K sf, 2013 (Acquired) Lockwood Mills, Waterville, ME, Mixed-Use: 172K, 2019 (Acquired)
Lead Principal(s)	Sarah Saint-Amand, Lead Developer, NRL Murray Fisher, NRL
Development Program	Total Residential Units: 426 (<i>refined from up to 600 in initial submission</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordable Units: 20% (~85 based on 426-unit count) Three-building program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Washington Street Tower (14 stories) - Central Tower (9 stories) - Cobble Hill Building (6 stories)

II. Technical Review

The technical evaluation scores each proposal on a 45-point scale across three categories:

- Project Understanding and Development Concept (20 pts)
- Zoning and Entitlement Strategy (10 pts), and
- Organization Expertise and Experience (15 pts)

Technical Evaluation Summary

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*

**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.*

Wood Partners

CAC Interview Findings

The Civic Advisory Committee interview with Wood Partners reinforced the written submission and clarified several points raised in this review. The respondent was open to refining the parking ratio and provided a rationale for the current figure, including precast garage economics and the need to support ground-floor retail; the team committed to coordinating with the City on further reductions. The respondent also addressed the relationship between affordability levels and achievable land value, outlining the inherent trade-offs in a manner responsive to City and community priorities.

The respondent walked through its vertically integrated delivery model, combining development, construction, and asset management alongside its approach to community engagement. The local composition of the development and design team was also more fully described.

The interview discussion further substantiated the relevance of Alta Revolution as a precedent, including its delivery under Somerville's Inclusionary Housing Program, providing direct local experience with the affordability framework at 90 Washington Street. The respondent also pointed to a portfolio of projects delivered across multiple market cycles, reflecting an institutional capacity to navigate financing, construction, and lease-up conditions of varying strength.

Wood Partners presented a strong, executable proposal grounded in regional precedent and direct local execution capacity. Through the Best and Final Offer (BAFO) process, the City would expect further iteration on the parking program, ground-floor activation and tenancing strategy, the massing transition along the Cobble Hill edge, and opportunities to test the density assumption against the full capacity of a High-Rise District designation. Refinement of the public realm strategy and clarification on the proposed treatment of the southeast parcel would be expected.

Project Understanding and Development Concept (14 / 20 pts)

A. Development Vision & Alignment with City Objectives (11 / 15 pts):

The proposal presents a housing-led, transit-oriented mixed-use development consistent with the framework outlined in the RFP. The program includes 324 rental units, of which 20 percent are designated as affordable in compliance with Somerville's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, along with approximately 14,735 square feet of ground-floor retail, 5,770 square feet of community space, and fully structured parking. The submission reflects an understanding of the City's stated priorities and complies with the City's prohibition on surface parking. It aligns with Somerville's Specialized Building Code through its pursuit of PHIUS Passive House certification, high-performance building systems, electrified mechanical infrastructure, and efficient building envelopes.

The proposed parking program includes approximately 398 structured spaces for 324 units, a ratio of approximately 1.23 spaces per unit. This ratio is higher than typical for sites adjacent to the Green Line Extension, and the relationship between the proposed parking program and the City's Transit Area parking policy would benefit from further discussion.

The affordability program is structured at the 20 percent inclusionary housing requirement. The approximately 14,735 square feet of proposed ground-floor retail is described programmatically, with intended uses including food and beverage, personal services, and daily-needs retail. Given that community engagement identified grocery access as a priority, further definition of the retail strategy and intended tenants would strengthen the proposal's alignment with this objective.

The proposal also identifies an approximately 0.76-acre parcel at the southeast corner of the site that would be conveyed back to the City following certificate of occupancy. The intended use and scope of this parcel are not defined in the proposal and would benefit from clarification as the project advances.

Following the April 28 interview, this score has been adjusted upward to reflect the respondent's direct articulation of the parking ratio trade-offs and the relationship between affordability levels and achievable land value, responsive to City and community priorities.

B. Site Plan, Massing, Public Realm & Ground-Floor Program (3 / 5 pts):

The proposal employs a seven-story podium building wrapping a precast structured parking garage, with repeatable upper floor plates of approximately 53,315 square feet. This is an efficient and feasible typology for delivering housing at scale. Ground-floor uses are concentrated along Washington Street, including retail for food and beverage and personal services, alongside 5,770 square feet of community space. These uses are aligned with the mixed-use program described in the RFP.

The public realm strategy includes a plaza of approximately 7,100 square feet at the corner of Washington Street and New Washington Street, street trees along primary frontages, and references to green roofs and EV-ready parking infrastructure. The massing response at the eastern edge of the site, adjacent to the Cobble Hill Apartments, is addressed primarily through landscape buffering and setbacks. Given that the RFP identifies this adjacency as a priority for scale transition and screening, the massing strategy at this edge would benefit from further refinement in subsequent phases.

Zoning and Entitlement Strategy (9 / 10 pts)

C. Appropriateness of Proposed Zoning Pathway (4 / 5 pts):

The respondent proposes rezoning the site to a High-Rise (HR) District as the preferred entitlement pathway, potentially implemented through a site-specific High-Rise Special District that would apply the City's established HR framework while tailoring dimensional standards to the site. This approach is appropriate given the site's scale, location, and transit accessibility, and is consistent with City precedent and the pathway contemplated by the RFP. The proposal ties its conceptual massing to HR form-based standards, including podium street wall, vertical density, structured parking, and consolidated open space.

The proposed development program takes a relatively conservative approach to height and density, and does not fully capitalize on the capacity a High-Rise District would enable across the full site. Overall, the strategy represents a low-risk pathway that preserves flexibility for collaborative refinement through the entitlement process.

D. Quality and Feasibility of Entitlement Strategy and Timeline (5 / 5 pts):

The proposal describes a ten-month entitlement sequence aligned with the City's September 2027 target closing. The sequence reflects familiarity with Somerville's approval process, including



Exclusive Negotiation Agreement, Land Development Agreement and zoning filing, City Council adoption, and Urban Design Commission and Planning Board review prior to closing. Framing the development concept around established HR District standards would support a coordinated review.

The proposal does not identify specific entitlement risks or mitigation strategies, and community engagement with residents of the Cobble Hill Apartments is not addressed in detail. Given the proposed parking ratio of 1.23 spaces per unit, a Transportation Demand Management approach could support alignment with the City's Transit Area parking policy. These elements would be expected to be developed more fully in subsequent phases.

Following the April 28 interview, this score has been adjusted upward to reflect the respondent's familiarity with the City's entitlement process and stakeholder dynamics.

Organization Expertise and Experience (14 / 15 pts)

E. Demonstrated Success Delivering Comparable Projects (8 / 8 pts):

The respondent demonstrates a strong track record of delivering similarly scaled multifamily projects in Somerville and across the Greater Boston region. Four relevant project examples are provided, all multifamily rental, three located in Massachusetts. Firm-level metrics, including approximately 55,000 units delivered nationally and more than 5,000 in Greater Boston since 2008, are consistent with the scale of the proposed development.

The four submitted comparables are directly relevant to the City's evaluation criteria. Alta Revolution (Somerville, 2022) is the most directly comparable, with 329 units, 20 percent inclusionary housing, and a transit-oriented program at Assembly Square; this project was developed within the existing Assembly Square Mixed-Use District. Alta on the Row (Worcester, 2024) demonstrates downtown multifamily delivery at 370 units. Alta Oxbow (Wayland, 2022), a 218-unit project on a municipally-owned site disposed of through a competitive RFP process, is directly relevant to the public land disposition context of this procurement. Alta French Hill (Marlborough, 2025), a 276-unit project with income-restricted units and retail developed through a public-private transaction with MEDC, further demonstrates the respondent's experience with public-sector partnerships.

F. Public-Sector Partnership Experience (3 / 4 pts):

The respondent's prior engagement with the City of Somerville on Alta Revolution provides a foundation for this procurement, and the public land disposition experience demonstrated through Alta Oxbow (Wayland) and Alta French Hill (Marlborough) is directly relevant to the transactional structure anticipated for 90 Washington Street. The portfolio does not include an example of a developer-led rezoning in Somerville or a comparable municipality, which would be a relevant area to explore in subsequent phases given the rezoning required at 90 Washington Street.

G. Key Personnel Qualifications and Capacity (3 / 3 pts):

The proposal identifies a development team led by Jim Lambert, Managing Director of Development, with PCA Architecture named as the design partner. The consultant team, including civil, landscape, MEP, geotechnical, and environmental engineers, along with a general contractor, is not fully identified in the submission. These positions would be expected to be identified in subsequent phases of the procurement.

TECHNICAL SUBTOTAL: 37 / 45 pts

North River Leerink

CAC Interview Findings

The Civic Advisory Committee interview with North River Leerink included substantial supplemental material beyond the written submission, including conceptual massing and site plans. The team also refined elements of the residential program and provided additional detail on the proposed retail, community space, and parking program.

The respondent's written submission contemplated up to 600 residential units; the team refined this to 426 units during the interview. The respondent also provided additional detail on the proposed commercial program, including approximately 17,000 square feet of ground-floor retail anchored by a grocery use along Washington. The team described these as preliminary concepts and indicated openness to refining the ground-floor program in response to community input, while noting familiarity with the local retail landscape and existing relationships with potential tenants. The respondent also highlighted the opportunity to connect the site to surrounding neighborhoods, as part of the project's public realm and place-making strategy.

The supplemental massing and site plans clarify how the proposed program would be organized on the site, with three buildings arranged around a central green, subterranean parking, ground-floor retail, community uses oriented to Washington Street, and an east-side scale transition toward the Cobble Hill Apartments. Sustainability was a central theme throughout the interview, reflected in both the development team's stated priorities and the team's credentials. The respondent's track record on comparable ground-up mixed-use residential projects is more limited, though the team brings ample commercial real estate experience and principal-level public-sector backgrounds.

The proposal reflects a thoughtful design vision and a clear public realm anchor in the central green. The proposal is ambitious, and several elements still require significant due diligence that raise feasibility considerations. The most significant is the fully subterranean parking, which has limited precedent in Somerville residential development at this scale and could be subject to meaningful cost and constructability concerns given the site's soil conditions. The three-building configuration would also likely require phased delivery, which introduces sequencing complexity. The use of LIHTC as a funding source for the affordable component introduces additional procedural and timing considerations that would need to be accommodated within the overall delivery schedule. As due diligence advances, the site plan would also be expected to evolve, which may meaningfully shift the configuration presented during the CAC interviews.

Through the BAFO process, the City would look to confirm the deliverability of the overall project and the elements outlined above. The financial components of the proposal are being reviewed separately, as referenced in the Purpose section above.

Project Understanding and Development Concept (14 / 20 pts)

A. Development Vision & Alignment with City Objectives (11 / 15 pts):

The proposed vision is responsive to several of the City's goals for 90 Washington Street. The program contemplates up to approximately 600 residential units distributed across three buildings, with 20 percent (approximately 120 units) designated as affordable housing. Proposed ground-floor retail, arts and community space, and centrally organized open space support the City's mixed-use framework and the community priorities identified through prior engagement.

The proposal articulates a landscape-led approach to the eastern edge adjacent to the Cobble Hill Apartments, including a proposed 25-foot landscaped buffer and privacy screening, directly responsive to the RFP's identification of this adjacency as a priority for scale transition and screening. The parking program proposes 200 below-grade spaces, a ratio of approximately 0.33 spaces per unit, consistent with the City's Transit Area parking policy. The respondent also identifies M/WBE participation targets of 30 percent for construction subcontracts and 20 percent for professional services, along with workforce development and community benefits commitments. The proposal references sustainability measures including on-site renewable energy and stormwater management but does not propose a specific certification standard.

Following the April 28 interview, this score has been adjusted upward to reflect the refined residential program and broader framing of the site within the surrounding Somerville context. The program contemplates approximately 426 residential units distributed across three buildings (refined from the up-to-600 range described in the written submission), with 20 percent (approximately 85 units) designated as affordable housing.

B. Site Plan, Massing, Public Realm & Ground-Floor Program (3 / 5 pts):

The proposal does not include visual massing or site plans, noting that additional diligence is required. As a result, the development program is conveyed through written narrative only. The massing strategy is organized to concentrate density along Washington Street and step down toward the adjacent Cobble Hill Apartments. The three-building program is described as follows: a 14-story Washington Street Tower containing approximately 280 units; a 9-story Central Tower containing approximately 200 units; and a 6-story Cobble Hill Building containing approximately 120 affordable units alongside arts and community space. Buildings are arranged around a central green space intended to serve as a focal point for residents and the broader neighborhood.

The proposal describes a coherent programmatic concept, though the development program, massing, and ground-floor layout are presented at a conceptual level rather than through the site plan, floor plate studies, elevations, or landscape plan typically expected at this stage. The proposed program rests on feasibility assumptions that warrant due diligence, particularly to understand how site plan modifications may be required if key program elements prove to be infeasible. Further design and programmatic due diligence, specifically regarding subterranean parking, would be expected in subsequent phases.

Following the April 28 interview, this score has been adjusted upward to reflect supplemental massing and site plans that build on the written submission. The site plan, massing, and public realm strategy would be expected to evolve materially as the team advances due diligence, with potential trade-offs that could meaningfully reshape the proposed configuration.

Zoning and Entitlement Strategy (6 / 10 pts)

C. Appropriateness of Proposed Zoning Pathway (3 / 5 pts):

The respondent proposes rezoning the site through a High-Rise Special District with dimensional standards tailored to the site's context and adjacencies. The proposed framework includes maximum building heights of 175 feet along Washington Street, stepping down to 100 feet along New Washington Street and 70 feet at the Cobble Hill edge, with a blended site FAR of approximately 5.5x (tiered 6.5x, 4.5x, and 3.0x across the three building locations). Additional standards include a 70 percent ground-floor active use requirement, a maximum parking ratio of 0.3 spaces per unit, LEED Silver equivalent performance, and all-electric construction. The dimensional framework is articulated with specificity that would provide a basis for subsequent negotiation with the City on final zoning standards. The proposal acknowledges sensitivities related to height transitions and parking demand and proposes early community engagement and a Transportation Demand Management study to address these concerns.

The zoning narrative does not address how the proposed custom standards would interact with the City's broader High-Rise District framework, or anticipated Council and community concerns. These would benefit from fuller treatment in subsequent phases.

D. Quality and Feasibility of Entitlement Strategy and Timeline (3 / 5 pts):

The proposed entitlement timeline spans approximately eight to ten months, from Land Development Agreement execution in December 2026 through zoning adoption, Urban Design Commission and Planning Board site plan approval, and land closing, targeted for July through September 2027. The respondent identifies two entitlement risks: community concerns at the Cobble Hill edge, and traffic and parking demand. Corresponding mitigation strategies are proposed, including early engagement with the Cobble Hill Apartments residents' association and a Transportation Demand Management study. The risk discussion reflects awareness of the site's most likely pressure points.

The proposed timeline shows rezoning adoption, Urban Design Commission and Planning Board review, and land closing all within the July through September 2027 window. In practice, Design Review and Site Plan Approval typically follow zoning adoption by several weeks to months, and a more phased schedule would help clarify the expected sequencing. These refinements would be expected in subsequent phases.

Organization Expertise and Experience (9 / 15 pts)

E. Demonstrated Success Delivering Comparable Projects (5 / 8 pts):

The proposal describes North River's experience operating in the Greater Boston region, with four project examples provided. The Addison in East Boston (230 market-rate units, approximately 215,000 square feet, completed 2024) is the most directly comparable in scale and typology. 100 Chestnut Street, a 200,000 square foot Class A lab and office building adjacent to the Green Line Extension East Somerville station, is relevant for its transit context and Somerville presence, though as a commercial building it does not reflect multifamily delivery experience. 200 Inner Belt, a 200,000 square foot office and R&D property acquired in 2013, reflects asset management and repositioning experience. Lockwood Mills in Waterville, Maine is a mill conversion that the respondent describes as planned for redevelopment into mixed-use housing.

At the firm level, North River cites approximately 300 acres, five million square feet, and \$3 billion in transaction volume across more than 40 acquisitions and dispositions over four decades. These



figures reflect a substantial institutional track record across property types, though much of the cited activity is in typologies other than ground-up multifamily or mixed-use development.

F. Public-Sector Partnership Experience (2 / 4 pts):

The principals identified in the submission bring public-sector backgrounds from prior roles in New York State and City government, including experience with large-scale civic real estate projects. The submission does not include an example of the respondent entity completing a developer-led rezoning or a comparable public-private multifamily RFP response in the Greater Boston market, which would be a relevant area to explore in subsequent phases given the rezoning required at 90 Washington Street.

G. Key Personnel Qualifications and Capacity (2 / 3 pts):

The proposal identifies a development team with Handel Architects named as the design architect, supported by a consultant team including structural, MEP, civil, geotechnical, environmental, and landscape architecture partners. Further detail on the development entity's delivery team and day-to-day project leadership would be expected in subsequent phases of the procurement.

TECHNICAL SUBTOTAL: 29 / 45 pts