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Joshua Lee Smith and Mark Borenstein Featured in “Home Field advantage: Local attorneys smooth the path for developers” in the Worcester Business Journal

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Developers are transforming the city of Worcester – from a rundown mall that has become a distribution facility to a former church that will become 400 apartments and a parking garage. Along with these types of developments, however, come legal issues such as zoning laws, historical and environmental concerns, and worried city residents.

While developers, high-profile tenants, and government officials often get credit for new projects, the land use attorneys operating behind the scenes are the individuals who ensure a project moves from concept to completion. The *Worcester Business Journal* recently highlighted the work of two of the firm’s real estate and land use attorneys, Joshua Lee Smith and Mark Borenstein, and the work they have done to help smooth the path for developers in the city, especially when the developers are not local. Josh and Mark provided insight about their work:

“Knowing the players can be an advantage,” said Josh, noting that part of being successful at the job is to do as much homework early in the game as possible, including outreach, and that a local familiarity helps. Mark added that local attorneys can provide value for developers coming from Boston or out of state because of the attorneys’ understanding of their home turf.

Prime examples include Atlanta-based Wood Partners, the developer building Alta on the Row at the former site of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Worcester, and Dallas-based Trammell Crow Residential, a developer that has been given the go-ahead from the city to build Alexan Worcester, a 220-unit multi-family property on Oriol Drive in Worcester. While both developers have Boston offices they used local attorneys, Josh and Mark respectively, to guide their projects through the approval process. Mark noted:

“The manufacturing districts in Worcester are antiquated. I help clients think creatively about how to make zoning work.” Another issue that residential project developers run into in Worcester are the parking requirements, Mark said, stating that “The City of Worcester requires too much parking.”

Parking is an issue Josh is familiar with as well. He had to convince the Worcester Planning Board a 105-unit apartment building at 102 Temple St. could work with 72 parking spaces by stressing the project was transit-oriented, built close to Union Station and the Worcester Regional Transit Authority bus hub. In addition, the building is expected to have a

bike room and management will offer a ride-share program. When speaking to the Planning Board, which ultimately approved the project, Josh stated:

“As this neighborhood has gone through this renaissance and resurgence of development, the city has become much more metropolitan and walkable.”

Continue reading “[Home Field advantage: Local attorneys smooth the path for developers](#)” on the *Worcester Business Journal* website.