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# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Newton Housing Partnership

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May 19, 2020

Ruthanne Fuller,  
Mayor

Honorable Mayor Ruthanne Fuller  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Ave  
Newton, MA 02459

Barney Heath,  
Director  
Planning & Development

Dear Honorable Mayor Fuller,

Members:

Mark Caggiano  
Eliza Datta  
Chuck Eisenberg  
John Hennessey  
Lizbeth Heyer, Acting Chair  
Kathy Marchi  
Josephine McNeil  
Marva Serotkin  
Stephen Tise

On behalf of the entire Newton Housing Partnership, I thank you for entrusting us with the important job of advising you and the City Council on efforts to expand affordable housing opportunities in Newton. As we continue our work to advance your commitment to be a city that is affordable and welcoming to all, we are pleased to submit this letter in support of the Riverside project that is currently before the City Council for a Special Permit that will bring an unprecedented 102 affordable housing units to Newton

In 2019 the Partnership appointed a four-member working group to evaluate the Riverside petitioner's application. Working group members attended public hearings to better understand the project's impacts and listen to public comment. The petitioner also gave a presentation at a Partnership meeting that provided the members with a detailed understanding of the project, particularly the housing components, and the opportunity to comment and ask questions.

Based on our extensive review, the Partnership voted unanimously to support the project's Special Permit application. The Riverside project's transit oriented location is the definition of smart growth, a concept the Partnership fully embraces -- it generates housing and economic opportunities for 582 families and individuals in a climate-wise location, while contributing significantly to the City's affordable housing needs. The project complies with Newton's Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance, including the number and type of affordable units and the distribution of the units throughout the project. The 582 new housing units also make a significant dent in the supply and demand equation, an important tool to solving our region's housing crisis through your commitment to the Metro Mayor's Coalition landmark housing production goal: to build 185,000 new units by 2030 in 15 surrounding communities. The Partnership was also impressed with the project's contribution to publicly available open space through improved access to the Charles River as well as the opportunity to improve Green Line service by returning a portion of the site to the MBTA for future expansion.

On behalf of my colleagues on the Partnership, we thank you for supporting this important project and encourage the City Council to vote in support of the Special Permit.

Sincerely,

Lizbeth Heyer

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[www.newtonma.gov](http://www.newtonma.gov)



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Chair, Newton Housing Partnership

CC:

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Councilor Jacob D. Auchincloss  
Councilor Lisle Baker  
Councilor Alicia Bowman  
Councilor Allan Ciccone, Jr.  
Councilor Deborah Crossley  
Councilor Victoria L. Danberg  
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Councilor Julia Malakie  
Councilor Christopher J. Markiewicz  
Councilor Brenda Noel  
Councilor Emily Norton  
Councilor Holly Ryan  
Councilor Pamela Wright

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