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Dear Newtonville Business Owner:

I am writing to invite you to come meet with me to discuss any outstanding questions you may have about the Austin Street development project and how it may impact your business. The vitality of the villages in Newton is an important part of the City's character and I believe that the Austin Street development will only serve to enhance that vitality in Newtonville.

Newtonville is a unique destination village and the addition of shops and residences at Austin Street along with the City's planned infrastructure and streetscape improvements will serve to strengthen the local economy. These improvements will help to attract new foot traffic and the new residents will likely take advantage of the shops at their doorstep. In addition, we have listened to the concerns of the Newtonville business owners and we have come up with a solid plan that minimizes disruption to businesses during construction and ensures ample parking for all shoppers and employees. Once the project is completed, the amount of parking available in Newtonville will be *greater* than it is now.

I am genuinely interested in having a conversation with you regarding any outstanding concerns you may have over the development of Austin Street. I will be at the Cambridge Savings Bank on Tuesday November 3rd and Thursday November 5th and hope that you have time during one of those two days to meet. Please contact Hannah Woit at 617-796-1104 or at hwoit@newtonma.gov with the times that you would be available to meet.

Thank you for all you do contribute to our community. You are an important part of our city, and I look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,

Setti D. Warren
Mayor
City of Newton, MA

1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

www.newtonma.gov



DEDICATED TO COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE



What will the Austin Street Development bring to Newtonville?



The Austin Street Parking Lot redevelopment presents our city with a rare opportunity to remarkably **strengthen the City's local economy** as well as **improve the variety of housing options** we have available. Local businesses will benefit from new residents and potential customers within easy walking distance. Current and projected demographics show that we need to ensure that housing is available, affordable and diverse enough to enable our seniors to stay as they age, our children to raise their families, and our teachers, police officers, firefighters, and other city workers to make a home for themselves and their families here in Newton. This is what we need to do if we want to retain the vitality and character of our villages.

~ *Mayor Setti Warren*



Economic Vitality

- New boutique retail shops will add street-level vitality and complement existing shops which will enhance the village as a unique shopping destination for all Newton residents.
- Increased vitality will attract both new businesses and shoppers.

Parking

- 127 public parking spaces at grade - maintaining the current number of public spaces in the lot.
- 90 new underground parking spaces for residents and employees.
- A comprehensive plan is in place for short- and long-term parkers - shoppers, commuters, seniors, employees and construction workers during construction. For the detailed plan visit www.newtonma.gov/austinstreet.

Housing

- 68 fully-accessible and efficient 1- and 2-bedroom rental apartments, 750 - 1100 square feet:
- 17 affordable homes (25% of total) for households at less than 80% area median income - \$55,800 for 2 people.
 - 51 market-rate homes affordable to middle class households.

Streetscape Improvements

- Streetscape improvements to enliven the pedestrian experience in the Newtonville Village:
- The project includes an new public plaza and sidewalk improvements along Austin Street.
 - The City will fund Walnut Street Corridor improvements including widened sidewalks, new benches and lighting, and marked bicycle lanes.



Austin Street Frequently Asked Questions



Village Character and Economy

Can the village support new businesses without hurting those there already?

- Yes, there is significant unmet retail demand in Newtonville.
- Three or four new small boutique shops will complement existing businesses.
- New residents will spend an estimated \$1.5 million in retail and \$280,000 in dining annually in Newton. (Source: Economic Impact Study, RKG Associates)
- For most Newtonville businesses, 40% or more of their customers come from the immediate area.
- New village residents will increase foot traffic to help maintain a robust village economy.

How does this development add to the character of the village?

- Redevelopment of the Austin Street parking lot will extend the south Newtonville village center along Austin Street with widened and enlivened sidewalks and new retail shops.
- A new public plaza will provide a gathering spot and improved pedestrian experience along Bram Way.
- The new three- and four-story building fits into the existing fabric of the village with a building height that is lower than surrounding landmarks like the Masonic Temple and adjacent church.

Housing

Why do we need this type of housing? And what is affordable?

- There is a great demand for smaller homes for small households (1-3 person) and Newton seniors choosing to downsize.
- Demand is outpacing the supply of units for this growing segment of the population.
- 25% of the homes will be affordable to households earning less than 80% of the area median income (AMI) as published annually by HUD. Currently, AMI is \$55,800 for a two-person household.
- The market rate homes are affordable to middle income households. Currently, 2 people each making about \$55,000 per year (\$110,000 for two-person household) could afford a one bedroom apartment.

(Source: Demographic Trends and Housing in the City of Massachusetts, Dukakis Center 2014)

Construction Timeline

- Spring - Summer 2016* - Infrastructure work along Austin Street (replacement of gas, water and sewer) completed by Newton Department of Public Works. (approximately 4 months)
- Spring 2017 – Spring 2018* - Construction of 28 Austin Street. (approximately 13 months)
- Summer 2018* – Walnut Street Corridor Improvements by the City of Newton (approximately 4 months)

For more information go to: newtonma.gov/austinstreet





Austin Street

Frequently Asked Questions



More FAQ's

Is the new building sustainable?

- Yes, the building will be LEED-Certifiable and will be highly-energy efficient with roof-top solar.
- New electric vehicle charging, car-sharing (such as Zipcar), and bicycle parking will be provided.

Is this a good deal for the City? Is the one-time lease payment of \$1,050,000 enough?

- With a 99-year lease, the City will maintain ownership and retain revenue from the newly rebuilt parking lot. In addition to the \$1,050,000 upfront lease payment, the City will receive \$750,000 for offsite infrastructure upgrades, \$300,000 in building permit fees, 17 new affordable homes, a rebuilt and landscaped 127-space public parking lot, a new public plaza and street improvements— and over \$300,000 annually in new real estate tax revenues.

Why is this a good location for new housing and retail shops?

- This building will activate an unlandscaped and aged municipal parking lot and bring new residents to the village with access to shopping and public transit right at their doorstep.

Will there be enough parking during construction?

- The developer, City staff, and local business have worked for several months to develop a comprehensive plan to park 170 cars during construction. 50 spaces will be maintained in the Austin Street lot, 20 additional temporary parking spaces have been identified in the village, and a free and continuous shuttle will provide access to 100 free parking spaces in the Aquinas School parking lot one mile away. For the detailed plan, visit www.newtonma.gov/austinstreet.

How and when can I apply for the affordable housing units? And what are the income requirements?

- After the special permit is granted, the development team will produce an Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan. It will include a schedule, lottery process and local preference system. If the special permit is approved in 2015, the application process is likely to begin in the Spring of 2018. Check the developer's website for updates. Income levels are published annually by HUD. Currently, 80% of area median income for a two-person household is \$55,800.

What is going to happen to the little piece of land in the back corner?

- The developer has committed to set aside funding for improvements to this area following a community-based process to determine a specific use such as a garden or pocket park. This will enliven a parcel that is currently overgrown and will discourage misuse.

For more information go to: www.newtonma.gov/austinstreet