

Nadia Khan

From: Theodore M. Hess Mahan
Sent: Monday, October 31, 2016 1:11 PM
To: Alexandra Ananth
Cc: Nadia Khan; [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Comments Re the Orr Block Project

Dear Alexandra:

Please see attached comments from Alison Conant.

Ted Hess-Mahan
Councilor-at-Large Ward 3
871 Watertown Street
Newton, MA 02465
(508) 847-4855
thessmahan@newtonma.gov

When responding, please be aware that the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has determined that email may be considered a public record, and therefore cannot be kept confidential.

"If there be time to expose through discussion the falsehood and fallacies, to avert the evil by the processes of education, the remedy to be applied is more speech, not enforced silence."

--Justice Louis D. Brandeis

From: Alison Conant [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 31, 2016 12:49 PM
To: Theodore M. Hess Mahan
Subject: Comments Re the Orr Block Project

Dear Councilor Hess-Mahan,

Here are my comments about traffic, parking and the proposed Orr block project for Newtonville. Thank you for your attention.

To the City Councilors:

My comments have to do with the transportation questions in the planning department's September 9th memorandum and in succeeding proposals put forth by the developer. The memorandum says that the Traffic Impact and Access Study estimates 89 new trips during morning peak hour from this development. I'm not sure how peak hour is defined here, but I am wondering if the consultants and planning department members have experienced driving down Walnut or Lowell Streets at 7:30 am prior to the start of Newton North High School. I drive that way and it is already congested. It is hard to see where additional cars would go.

Secondly, I don't see where the study is taking into account the additional traffic that will be generated from the Austin Street development.

Third, I do not see how modernizing the signalization at Washington and Walnut is going to decrease the number of vehicles.

Fourth, I'm a bicycle advocate, but I don't understand how the installation of bike lanes in both directions from Foster Street to Newtonville Ave can work. If there are two vehicle lanes southbound on Walnut going towards Washington, how can that be reduced to one lane at Foster without causing vehicle congestion? Also, bicycle lanes are for bicycle travel. A bike lane that goes for two blocks is not advantageous to cyclists. It just takes away space that could be for vehicle travel or parking.

Fifth, Resurfacing the intersection won't help traffic and re-decorating the bridge will be a waste of money. It won't help traffic and people aren't going to hang out on the bridge because it's too noisy.

Sixth, listing ADA compliant crosswalks would seem to me to be a responsibility of the city and not something we need to thank the developer for doing.

An additional factor that I have not seen addressed is that during the evening hours, numerous U.S. Post Office trucks are parked on the south side of Washington St., extending roughly from Lowell St. east past the Sunoco station. I don't know where these trucks will park, as they no longer park in the Austin St. lot. There will either have to be a new place for the mail trucks, or evening parking to access the new development will be severely limited.

In summary, I was surprised that the transportation peer review did not take a wider look at the impacts on traffic and parking in the area. I feel and hope that it is the responsibility of the Newton Planning Department to take a step back and take a wider look at what both this development and the Austin Street development are going to do to traffic in the area. I think that we count on the planning department to protect our interests as citizens who live and get around in this city and I don't see that that is happening in this memo.

Alison Conant

68 Brookside Ave.

Newtonville, MA 02460