

Nadia Khan

From: David A. Olson
Sent: Wednesday, January 11, 2017 12:49 PM
To: citycouncil
Cc: Nadia Khan
Subject: FW: objection to rezoning

From: elena wright
Sent: Wednesday, January 11, 2017 12:31 PM
To: David A. Olson
Subject: objection to rezoning

Dear City of Newton Councilors,

Rezoning the property to MU4 is not compatible with the current village scale and context, and would transform the area to a more urbanized, congested area. The addition of 160 residential units and their inevitable cars will create the very urban traffic jams that we ought to be planning to diminish, not increase.

Although the mayor's current description in the Tab cites how beneficial the new residents might be, he neglects to acknowledge that most will not be able to use the very limited and unreliable public transportation available.

Mass transit doesn't go to enough places. Studies indicate that people will generally walk only one quarter of a mile (400 meters or less) to get to their destination. About 80% of jobs have no creditable transit alternatives to car travel. The automobile is the only way to travel from any point in the urban/suburban area to any other point, at any time. This is the reality of Newton residents.

The perception that low income households rely on mass transit is misplaced. The National Household Transit Survey indicated that 76 percent of low income travel is by car and less than 5 percent is by mass transit. Why? There are probably several reasons: jobs are not within walking distance of commuter service, the weather is too unpleasant, transit service is unreliable, and transit service generally takes more than twice the time to get from door to door. Low income employment relies on cars. President Clinton proposed reforms to encourage greater automobile ownership among welfare recipients.

In cities where billions of dollars have been spent to build or expand mass transit systems in order to increase ridership, little has changed and transit system ridership has continued to decline. So lets face reality here. Less than one percent of people use bikes as their method of getting to work. Suburb to suburb commuting has become dominant - 70 percent of trips never reach Boston. block alone will add commuters' cars from 160 units to our Walnut/Washington Street rush hour traffic. The likelihood is that there will be more than one car for new residents because nowadays both spouses work.

I submit that business zoning for our village centers is exactly what we need to preserve. Our current business zoning will not add street clogging traffic density, create the need for additional schools, change the village scale to urban intensity, and turn our Garden City into another concrete jungle. We should not have any

residential zoning that places people, low-income or otherwise, to live in housing that looks like it belongs in downtown Boston.

You can see what is happening in the suburbs all around Boston if you just take a drive through Malden, Arlington, Burlington and Waltham. (Drive down Main St. in Malden to see what will happen here once we change our zoning to accommodate developers.) Many suburbs are losing the battle against developers. Nobody gains anything from changing the zoning in Newton except the developers! The residents lose, the city loses commercial tax potential and accumulates high education costs, and it is a lose-lose result for all the village centers in the city that hope to retain their small town feel. MU4 zoning change now will open the door to such development through all the villages. Please stop it now while we still can.

Thank you,

Elena Dworkin Wright
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