

Nadia Khan

From: Doris Ann Sweet
Sent: Wednesday, January 25, 2017 1:24 PM
To: Nadia Khan
Subject: Washington Place

Dear Councilors-

I am writing in support of Washington Place and urge you to vote affirmatively for this development and MU4 zoning.

This is a development that will bring so many benefits to the City of Newton: more small-unit housing, more affordable housing, more accessible housing, community space, green space, incentives for use of public transit, a streetscape that will encourage pedestrian traffic, a location in which small businesses can thrive, improvements to the intersection of Washington and Walnut, improved bike routes, improved pedestrian crossings, and a sense of place that will embrace the Austin St. development too. The design has been improved through community feedback and is, to me, a huge improvement over not only what is on that parcel now, but what might be built by right if the MU4 zoning is not approved. This will be a development that Newton can be proud to showcase.

One more thing--transit orientation. I have heard many opposed to the development denigrate the "transit-oriented" appellation for the project. I beg to differ. The buses and commuter rail are not as flexible as driving your car, it is true, and they do not offer 24-hour service. I know, however, from my own and my late husband's experiences that the service is ideal for many who work in Boston and is heavily used for this purpose. When we both worked in Boston, he took the express bus and I traveled on the commuter rail to get to our respective work sites. We also used the commuter rail to return home after evening social and cultural events in Boston. Just recently, with out-of town visitors, I took the express bus to and from Boston during the day several times. This is so much better an experience than the environmentally troubling act of driving into Boston, creating pollution, traffic jams, and bottlenecks, and certainly much less expensive than driving and paying for parking. Millennials may be leading the way in preferring public transit over driving a car into the city, but many of us older folks share that preference. Kay Kahn has worked for years to bring a new accessible commuter rail station to Auburndale, and it is closer to becoming a reality. I expect the same will happen eventually to the Newtonville station.

I appreciate your careful and systematic development of Board order components, and hope that you will vote yes on Washington Place.

Doris Ann Sweet
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