

To: Mark Laredo, Chair, Land Use Committee
From: Wayne Koch, President, Newtonville Area Council
Re: Community Benefits from Washington Place
Date: 30 January, 2017

Mark Development, LLC has offered \$700,000 in community benefits if Washington Place is constructed.

Based on our years of studying and listening to community needs, the Newtonville Area Council (NAC) would like specific community benefits included in the Board Order for the project. Inclusion in the Board Order will ensure that the funds are actually used for the benefit of the village in accordance with the developer's intent.

- **Feasibility Study** of adding a handicapped accessible MBTA Purple Line train station on Washington Street, across from Verizon's Newton switching center. Estimated cost: \$250,000.

Background: The funding for the Auburndale MBTA Purple Line station includes funds for switching Newton's three MBTA commuter rail stations to the north side of the tracks. For West Newton and Newtonville, this would allow for handicapped access to the stations and improved safety for all commuter rail patrons due to the lower elevations on the north side. The new stations could use ramps to access the tracks, and include new platforms raised to the height of train entrances. The use of ramps avoids the high expense of adding elevators to the stations.

The study would evaluate the feasibility and cost of moving the Newtonville station to the north, with access on Washington Street. Potential costs include handicapped access (ramps), building a raised platform to access train cars directly (no steps as exists today), and building a rain/snow shelter for commuters.

- **Lighting** on both sides of the Walnut St. bridge over I-90. Mark Development has committed to new signalization at the corner of Walnut and Washington streets, integrated with new, attractive street lighting. The NAC would like identical lighting on the south side of the bridge (i.e. at the intersection of of Austin St., Newtonville Ave., and Walnut St., on city owned land.) This will help unify the north and south sides of the village. Estimated cost: \$100,000

- **Bridge planters:** Beautiful Newtonville, a 501 c(3) organization, has successfully raised private funds for building and supporting planters on Washington St. and Walnut St. The NAC would like beautification funds to improve the aesthetics of the

bridge over the turnpike. This initiative aims to a) unify the two halves of the village, b) improve the visual and auditory experience of pedestrians crossing the bridge, and c) beautify the bridge from the vantage of pedestrians positioned anywhere in downtown Newtonville or from Washington Place. Options might include painting the steel fencing a bright color that complements the surrounding cityscape and adding planters on the bridge.

Feasibility study and landscape architecture study: \$50,000. Implementation (planters and trees) \$75,000.

- **Unified design:** The confluence of three projects in downtown Newtonville — Washington Place and Austin St. developments, and a city program to improve the commercial district of Walnut St. between Newtonville Ave. and Claflin Place, allow a rare urban planning opportunity to unify all three projects with a coherent design and universal materials. The NAC would like the developer of Washington Place to commit to the unified design by allocating time for their landscape architect to participate in a coordinated design process including the city planning department and Austin Street Partners. Estimated cost: \$30,000

- **Newtonville Improvement Discretionary Fund.** There will likely be unmet needs after the projects on Austin St., Washington Place and the Walnut St. urban plan are completed. These needs might include unique lighting, winter tree lighting, and additional benches, banners, and plantings. We propose the establishment of a discretionary fund of \$100,000 to cover unforeseen costs. The fund could be managed by a liaison committee (including the Planning Department, City Council, and NAC), or by a subset of these three organizations. Estimated cost: \$100,000

- **New, modern bus stations** at the corner of Walnut and Washington streets and on Walnut Street near Austin St. The MBTA has added modern glass bus stations throughout downtown Boston in a cooperative program with an outside vendor. The vendor provides the stations and sells banner advertising to support construction and upkeep. The NAC would like the city to investigate a similar program for Newton, with the first stations located in Newtonville. Estimated cost: None.

An alternative is to build new bus stations. Estimated cost: \$25,000 each (total: \$50,000).

Grand total: \$655,000.