

Councilor David Schwartz and the Land Use Committee  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton Centre, MA 02459

**RE: Northland Redevelopment in Newton Upper Falls**

Dear Councilor Schwartz,

I support Northland's efforts to redevelop the dilapidated and underutilized lot on the corner of Needham and Oak Streets in Newton Upper Falls. Housing affordability is a real problem in Newton. According to Zillow, the average home costs \$982,600.00, just short of the \$1 million dollar mark. As one drives throughout the city, they will see smaller homes being replaced by larger, luxurious houses (known notoriously as "McMansions"). This is also contributing to the rapid increase of housing costs. If this troubling trend continues unchecked, Newton will almost certainly lose its working and middle class. It is clear that steps need to be taken to avoid this. I have full confidence that with adequate foresight, along with careful planning, Newton can overcome this obstacle.

Part of the solution is to promote the construction of high density developments which will allow an increase in Newton's housing supply as well as provide a large number of affordable housing options for working and middle class families. Northland Investment Corporation has proposed a development of such size and scale that it would in fact represent the largest influx of affordable housing units in Newton's history. They will be redeveloping an industrial park (and eyesore) into a beautiful mixed use development that will contain 677 market rate rental units as well as 123 affordable rental units. This kind of injection of affordable housing is significant and should not be overlooked. This will allow up to 123 housing insecure residents the option to stay in Newton rather than be forced out to more affordable communities in Waltham, Watertown, and elsewhere. This project will also create a considerable amount of retail and office space, which will generate a large amount of needed tax revenue for the city. This project and others like it will help Newton overcome its affordability problem. I ask that the Land Use Committee and the Newton City Council considers this important opportunity while making a final decision on whether or not to let the project move forward.

Thank you,



Alexander MacKenzie  
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