

Dear Members of the Newton Land Use Committee,

I am excited to learn about a proposed development for the area along Needham Street and Oak Street. It seems the developer, Northland Investment Corporation, would like to use this land to build a multi-use development that will include retail and office space alongside (or underneath) rental housing.

This is exactly the kind of building project that Newton needs. Not only is that area of parking lots and plazas along the Upper Falls greenway rather an eyesore, I also never see those parking lots even remotely full. I think I speak for many Newton residents when I say that I'd much rather have the curated shops and local businesses that a development like Assembly Square or the Lynnfield Marketplace attracts. Outdoor malls are really popular right now - they are so much more enjoyable and attractive than typical malls. I love that there would be parks (seven, I think) and lit walking paths for evening strolls. Also, a transportation hub with shuttle buses to MBTA stops and into the city really would make this such a fun place to live and to visit. It's also a smart move to cut down on traffic on Needham Street (which I hear the city has set aside funds to make improvements to? Any movement on this?). I heard that Northland actually cut down on its retail space to make sure it wouldn't affect Needham Street traffic - which is really commuting traffic anyway. I hope we can get the infrastructure of the road ways straightened out so that it doesn't have to limit great investments in our city - like this Northland development.

I'm also a big supporter of affordable housing (as I think we all should be), and this Northland development would provide 123 homes for affordable housing candidates. This is a huge selling point for me, and I hope it is for our city as a whole. We really need to do our part to lift up people who haven't gotten the support and services they need to come out of poverty. Think what access to Newton schools could do for a family in this kind of situation? I'm sold!

Please do everything you can to support this great opportunity for Newton!

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greig Whitney', with a stylized, flowing script.

Greig Whitney
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Chestnut Hill, MA 02467