

Newton City Council
1000 Commonwealth Ave
Newton, MA 02459

Dear Councillors,

I am a concerned citizen of the City of Newton, and I am writing in support of the Upper Falls development slotted for the space now occupied by the Marshall's shopping plaza.

Many opponents of the project have cited increased traffic along Needham Street as their main objection to the project. However, as traffic patterns clearly indicate, Needham Street traffic is mostly due to current infrastructure challenges along the road and commuting traffic via car. In other words: too many people are commuting via car along this road, which we know is not a sustainable form of travel for commuters. Regardless, 90% of Newtonians currently commute via car despite our close proximity to the cities of Boston and Cambridge and our multiple MBTA access points.

Northland has proposed to build a transit mobility hub to try to address this issue both for the residents of the development and for residents of the Upper Falls. The mobility hub will offer shuttle service to popular commuting locations. This is clearly the route we need to go as a city, rather than accommodating the path of least resistance and enabling (often) single occupant car travel that contributes to climate change and environmental degradation.

Northland has chosen right in proposing this development. It will provide rental housing options the city sorely lacks. One hundred twenty-three of these 800 rental units will be for affordable housing (the accessibility of which needs to be the topic of a separate letter). Occupants will be those who value the sustainable travel options offered by the development, as there will only be one parking space per unit (again - cutting down on any traffic impact).

Thank you for considering my perspective, and I ask that you support this development and the long-range, sustainability measures its developers are building into it.



Johanna L. Geik