



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS NEWTON
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Dear Chairman Schwartz and Members of the Land Use Committee,

The League of Women Voters of Newton (LWVN) supports the proposed Northland project because it leverages underutilized space that offers substantial improvements for Newton residents. With this development we will be able to work towards our common goals of increasing housing diversity; mitigating the use of cars; creating new recreational open space; encouraging walking, biking, and use of the Greenway; attracting new shops, restaurants, and other kinds of employers and increasing our commercial tax base.

In the Globe article [NIMBY? Not in these cities and towns](#) Watertown, our neighbor, was cited as an example “ *In Watertown, which permitted 1,296 housing units in the four-year period, Community Development and Planning director Steve Magoon credited the town’s regulatory and elected boards with making the tough decisions needed to allow projects to go forward*”. We believe that Newton should also continue to step up to address the housing crisis in the metro Boston area.

The Newton City Council over the past few years made the difficult decisions to approve both the Austin Street and Washington Place projects. With the Northland project, the City Council of 2018-2019 once again has the opportunity to make another tough decision and do the right thing by approving this development.

Northland’s proposal will provide a diversity of housing options that Newton needs, with an alternative to single-family homes, which many people - from young professionals, to seniors looking to downsize, to people who work in Newton - are looking for but cannot find right now.

- It will increase the housing supply overall and provide much-needed affordable units.
- With the newest proposal, 17.5% of the units will be affordable, producing 140 new affordable units, including 120 of affordable units at a blended 65% of AMI and 20 units of work-force housing for persons at 80 to 110% of AMI

The developer is committed to sustainability and is working with Green Newton to maximize environmentally-friendly features, including those listed below.

- Passive House design in three buildings, exploration of Passive House design in the five remaining residential buildings and LEED for Neighborhood Development certifiability throughout.
- The development will create new connections to the Greenway, plant 600 new trees, and will include 10 acres of active open-space available for public use.

And finally, the project will generate increased tax revenue for the City.

Overall, the combination of increased housing diversity, environmentally-friendly design, added green space, and additional tax income provide an opportunity that LWVN encourages the City Council to support.

Sincerely,

Marcia Johnson
President, League of Women Voters, Newton