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Lori Jobe

23 ESSEX #7

Dear City Councilors,

My name is Lori Jobe and I have lived on Essex St. for 20+ years and the condo building I live in is adjacent to one of 3 surface parking lots at the intersections of Essex and Bishop Allen, and near to the future site of 10 Essex and HMart. It is very likely all of the surface parking lots near my home will see development in the coming months and years. Parking in our area is already one of the biggest challenges facing current Central Square residents. Essex St. has 48 resident only and 9 metered spaces, we also have a high school, middle school, 3 daycare centers, a 69 unit building for senior affordable housing, and a church at the top of our street. Unless there is an absolute need to have a car on Essex or in Central, then you probably don't have one!

When development talks started a couple of years ago, I, and many others, were very excited to see new investment and interest in Central and an emphasis on environmentalism by building more densely around public transit. Environmentalism and planned development were two of the key issues surrounding the last Council elections. Two yrs. ago, when the GC planning study was released, I trusted the City would put in place new traffic and parking policies before developments broke ground...however, this has not happened.

We now see the first of these developments, seeking special permits to reduce required parking, which will set precedence for other developments, before any reforms have been implemented. I would suggest Cambridge look to its neighbor Boston, as well as many other American cities, in regards to mitigating traffic and parking issues (South Boston was the most recent Boston neighborhood to switch to neighborhood parking permits due to development and increased demand on residential parking). Let's save a lot of time and energy by getting some reforms into place in anticipation of new development. If we need a parking and traffic study to confirm what many of us already know, then let's do a study, not only in Area IV, but in a given radius around all of Central Square.

A few possible solutions:

1. Neighborhood specific parking permits. Our area suffers from a great deal of commuter traffic, having neighborhood specific parking permits would go a long way in alleviating traffic and protecting our residential parking. Treating Central Square like Strawberry Hill, or West Cambridge is outdated.

2. Requiring developers to enter into agreements limiting residential parking permits to new residents. Precedence has already been set for this type of agreement in Cambridge regarding special permits granted to MIT.

3. I would strongly suggest to break ground on the redesigned, and hopefully enlarged, Green St. garage, before selling off city owned parking lots. Central already has the least amount of public parking compared to Harvard and Kendall. How does it make sense to start talking about selling off municipal parking lots in Central this year, while designating the reconstruction of the Green St.

garage as a "long-term goal" in the C2K2 report? The parking study should also include Green St., as the C2K2 report suggests.

4. The parking study should also address pedestrian and bicycle safety in Central Square. Central was the only location in the State of Massachusetts to make the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's top 10 list for most dangerous area for both bike accidents (ranked #2) and pedestrian accidents (ranked #3).

If some of these reforms had already been implemented, it is very likely I would have supported the 10 Essex development.

Thank you