

Lopez, Donna

From: randa ghattas [randaghattas@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2014 1:58 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: Parking in Area IV

Dear City Council,

I am writing as a resident of Area IV. I live on 88 School St right off Bishop Allen. Like many of my neighbors who live off Bishop Allen, any development on Bishop Allen affects my street. I want to emphasize that I support the current developments of 10 Essex St and H-Mart. 10 Essex St will help improve Bishop Allen and add much needed residents. I strongly believe the way to solve our traffic problems is to add residents next to public transit and reduce parking lots. With regards to H-Mart, we are finally getting an affordable grocery store, something many residents have been complaining about for a long time.

I strongly encourage City Council to think creatively about the problem of traffic and parking. If it is only about parking and moving cars, then we will never become a sustainable city and traffic will continue to increase and parking will get worse. Parking inconvenience is really a part of living in a city. To assume that we should be able to park so easily and drive without any traffic is not possible and unrealistic. In any case, our traffic situation is so much better than living in the suburbs, where, if you take the time to drive out there, you truly begin to understand what traffic really is.

I recommend that the city consider instituting neighborhood parking for residents, something akin to what Boston has, but maybe including a larger catchment area. This would truly transform the local traffic and parking issues, specifically those around residents expecting to drive from one neighborhood to another and park in those neighborhoods. Another is to invest in improving what we can in our public transit system, including adding bus only lanes, and expanding our biking infrastructure so it is as safe and accessible as possible. As a Public Transit Committee member, we are currently identifying strategies to improve our system, in conjunction with the Bike and Transportation Committees. We can also require that any reduction in parking for development comes with a deed that does not give resident parking stickers to those residents. That would also signal our commitment to sustainable development.

I hope that the City Council will encourage the gradual renewal of Central Square and support the much needed addition of housing and affordable retail. There are creative solutions to parking and transportation, let's take advantage of them. Traffic and parking studies don't address more holistic and sustainable strategies to transportation. We need to embrace these strategies as we think about future development. Things may take time, but we want a better city and a sustainable city.

Thanks
Randa Ghattas
88 School St.