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Lopez, Donna

From: Frank Saccomandi IV [frank@geminetix.com]
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2014 9:45 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: Concerns about proposed bus shelter outside 2440 Massachusetts avenue.
Attachments: Letter to city council opposing bus shelter June 2014.pdf; ATT00001.htm

Dear City Councilors:

My name is Frank Saccomandi, and I am the owner of Unit 14 at 2440 Massachusetts Avenue. I am writing to express my profound concern regarding the city's proposal to construct a bus shelter in front of our building (Massachusetts Avenue and Cedar Street). This bus shelter would be directly outside my bedroom window, thus obstructing the already limited view that I have of the street. Furthermore, I, along with several other worried unit owners, have identified numerous other pressing problems with this proposal.

The proposed location of the shelter is closer to the building than any other shelter along Massachusetts Avenue between Cedar Street and Harvard Station. The implications of the extreme proximity of the shelter are twofold: two of the already very small windows on the façade will be entirely obstructed, and the security cameras installed inside our building will be rendered useless. The latter is especially critical, as our building has already been victim to a spate of incidents involving vandalism and graffiti. The construction of the bus shelter would not only make for yet another target for potential vandals, but would also prevent the security cameras from fulfilling their desired function.

The proposal for the shelter includes a 7-foot illuminated advertisement, which would be located immediately outside of my bedroom window. These advertisements would only insult to the injury that are the two Jumbotron-sized billboards already located across the street. My main concern with these advertisements is the proximity to our building: with only four feet of space between the shelter and the walls of the building, it would be distracting to the occupants of the building while also expressing sentiments or opinions that may wrongly be attributed to the building and its occupants. I am pretty confident that you would not allow an advertisement to be located adjacent to your bedroom window, both for soundness of sleep and peace of mind.

The proposed relocation of the bus stop and construction of a shelter would also remove the only two metered parking spaces from the front of our building. These spots are crucial for guests (especially those with disabilities), contractors, and delivery personnel.

The proposed shelter would reduce the clear path width of the accessible sidewalk route. According to the Architectural Access Board Rules and Regulations 521 CMR, Section 20, Accessible Route Standards: "An accessible route shall have a minimum clear width of 36 inches (36" = 914mm) except at doors and at openings." The clear path here would be reduced to less than 36 inches, the minimum clear path width for single wheelchair passage. In order for someone in a wheelchair or someone pushing a stroller to travel down the sidewalk, he/she would have to diverge from a straight path of travel, while also taking care not to collide into joggers who would also be funneled into the narrow path due to the shelter and existing tree wells. Our building is one of the few wheelchair accessible residential buildings in the area – it is incomprehensible to me why the city would want to install an obstruction to wheelchair users right outside of it. We have several disabled people among our residents, and this would directly and negatively impact them.

The proposed shelter suffers from a plethora of drawbacks while providing little, if any, benefit to the city's residents. Many of the bus stops in this area do not have shelters, and our particular stop is not subject to heavy usage. As a result, it is unclear to me why it is necessary for the stop to be located in front of the building to begin with: the MBTA has been reviewing its bus stops and relocating them on many of its routes, including this one. The shelter and the bus stop could likely be moved to the corner of Harvey Street or the corner of Edmunds Street without much protest – the convenience store at the corner of Harvey Street or the Dunkin Donuts would probably not protest against potential customers gathering and alighting in front of their businesses. Notably, placing the stop at the corner of Harvey Street would have the added benefit of positioning the stop directly across Massachusetts Avenue from the stop for buses headed in the opposite direction.

Based on these concerns, I implore all of the members of the city council to reconsider this proposal. It is disappointing to me that the city would have the gall to suggest that most residents would be in favor of the shelter, while repeatedly ignoring letters of opposition to the proposed shelter, which were sent by our trustees in the past. Unit owners, as well as the condominium board, have received no feedback or response from the city with regard to previous opposition. We are all taxpayers, and our worries need to be addressed by the city before it proceeds with this proposal.

Sincerely,

Frank Saccomandi IV

Unit 14

2440 Massachusetts Avenue