

# Support for Normandy Twining Zoning Petition

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City Clerk Agenda

To: City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>; Lopez, Donna <dlopez@cambridgema.gov>; Paden, Liza <lpaden@cambridgema.gov>;

Dear City Councillors & Planning Board Members -

*RE: Support for Normandy Twining Zoning Petition*

As a long-time Cambridge resident, neighbor of the Central Square Business District, and an architect and urban designer with over 40 years of urban development experience throughout the country, I wish to express my strong support for the Normandy Twining Zoning Petition. The Normandy Twining mixed-use housing proposal, with its unprecedented pledge of 20% affordable units, will provide much needed housing, at all price points, to help meet the unrelenting demand for new housing in Cambridge at this time of severe housing shortages. Housing supply must be dramatically increased across the city at appropriate sites to help meet this unprecedented unfulfilled demand. This site is one of those most appropriate locations.

The proposal's density and height are especially appropriate for this site which will mark the eastern gateway entry into the Central Square Business District along Cambridge's major business arterial - Massachusetts Avenue. Once the project is completed, the new development will serve as an appropriate visual landmark at this business district gateway. Also, because of the project's proximity to the Central Red Line Station and major bus lines, the project's density should reflect this excellent access to transit. It is on a transit-oriented site like this, along our city's most prominent business arterial, that should serve as a perfect example of where increased densities should be encouraged. If density cannot be supported at this site, then where?

Recently, a lower-scale counter design proposal was offered by a City Councillor for this site that suggested it is a viable alternative to the Normandy Twining proposal. It is not. With this alternative's stated requirement for 50% affordable units, provision of extremely expensive underground parking, and use of city land, even cursory calculations are likely to show that it is not a financially feasible plan. If unsolicited design alternatives are placed into the public forum for consideration, it should be the responsibility of the proponent to also show proof that it is a financially viable alternative. That proof has not and will likely not be provided.

The Normandy Twining Zoning Petition should be heartily supported by all City Councillors and Planning Board members wishing to tackle our city's severe housing crisis and wishing to support smart growth at this very appropriate site. Some opponents of this Petition are fundamentally resistant to change - at any location. But change is necessary for the future of our dynamic city.

Lawrence Bluestone