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Dear City Council,

I am here to comment on both the Forest City Petition and the Area IV Neighborhood Preservation petition. I have been a resident of Area IV for 10 years and am on the Central Square Advisory Committee. I live on a street surrounded by parking lots. I crave seeing neighbors and more families with children that my children can play with. I wonder when I hear Neighborhood Preservation, what are we trying to preserve: the cars and parking lots or the people: the ethnic, cultural and economic diversity that historically has made our neighborhood unique? I strongly believe that many of us share common goals. I believe downzoning is counterproductive to those goals. With land values high and residents and small businesses gradually being pushed out of our neighborhood, we have to find means to expand access to a diverse range of housing choices, affordable, middle income and market rate housing to take pressure of the existing housing stock and allow for affordable retail rents, all with the goal of building cities for people and communities. We have to do this while being stewards of our environment. I believe petitions such as the Area IV Neighborhood Preservation Petition do little to expand those goals and on the other hand detract from the true issues we should be focusing on. Some of these questions are: how do we, through planning, manage the problem of gentrification, especially when there is a national trend of people moving back to the cities? How do we respond to the changing realities of our neighborhood while not sacrificing our core values of social justice? How do we address climate change through that development? With regards to the Forest City Zoning Petition, I oppose it. I believe that Forest City should have been sent back to the drawing boards to address housing when the community voiced opposition to the nature of the residential tower. Whereas I understand the benefits of Cambridge's commercial and industrial base for keeping our taxes low, I also believe we have to be careful on how we

integrate

~~integrate~~ those elements within our cities. The stretch between JILL BROWN RHONE PARK and MIT may be changing but I would hate to see it become only a place for work without enough residents to activate it day and night. I will end with the fact that we have a process in place through the K2C2 planning process that is trying to address many of the issues that are important to creating livable, <sup>vibrant</sup> ~~viable~~, diverse cities. We should wait until the process is complete. In the meantime, I hope that, as a neighborhood and as a community, we can start having a real <sup>+ constructive</sup> conversation about the challenging issues we are dealing with ~~before it is too late.~~ and what that

means in terms of the ~~built environment~~ <sup>built</sup> fabric of our city. environment.

Randa Ghattas

*COM 2012 #340*

**Communications #77**

A communication was received  
from Randa Ghattas commenting on  
the Forest City and Area IV  
Neighborhood Preservation petitions.

**In City Council July 30, 2012**

**REFERRED TO THE PETITION**