An Open Letter to the Residents of Newton Regarding the Northland Newton Project

For the last 50 years, Northland has made its home in Newton. We are your neighbor and the sponsor of the Northland project. We currently own three separate properties that comprise the Northland project - Marshall's Plaza, the Ivex industrial site, and the Saco Pettee Mill. These 22.7 acres, the largest potential development site in Newton, present a historic opportunity to (1) create beautiful new green space and community amenities, (2) provide desperately needed affordable housing, and (3) address the existential threat of our time, climate change, with one of the largest Passive House communities in the United States. Our vision for the Northland project is the transformation of Needham Street into a live-work-play environment that prioritizes the pedestrian and the cyclist.

On March 3rd, the residents of Newton will have the opportunity to vote on this project. If YES wins and the City Council's approval is *upheld*, Newton will become home to the Northland project, a 21st century master plan that features smart growth, affordable housing, sustainability, accessibility, aging in community, open space, community amenities, and historic preservation - a neighborhood that can be accessed on foot (or bicycle) on all four sides through public parks.

If NO wins, the City Council's 17-7 approval will be *overturned* and the project as envisioned will not proceed. Having fully exhausted the City Council's Land Use permitting process, Northland will then have the option to apply directly to the State for alternative permitting under an affordable housing statute known as Chapter 40B. In that event, the most likely outcome will be *three non-integrated 40B developments that total 1,500+ new apartments.*

Proceeding with multiple 40B projects will require us to develop the parcels separately *without* the master planning that so beautifully integrates the Northland project into the Upper Falls neighborhood and transforms Needham Street into a true pedestrian and bicycle-friendly destination. *In addition, the State's 40B approval process overrides the City Council's Land Use process and, as such, will NOT require any of the appealing elements of the Northland project that were negotiated by the City Council:*

- Ten acres of open space
- Undergrounding 1.5 miles of unsightly utilities
- Aging-in-community building
- Community playground
- Community gardens
- Passive House design (the most stringent energy standard currently in use)
- Restoration of the South Meadow Brook
- Daylighting of the historic waterfall
- $5 million traffic fund
- $1.5 million Countryside School contribution
- $1 million splash park
- Annual $1.5 million commitment for free electric shuttles to the Newton Highlands T Station (running in ten-minute intervals)

The Northland project has thousands of supporters who passionately believe that it reflects the progressive values that Newton stands for. We believe that the Northland project is the right choice for Newton's future based upon the support the project has received from 17 City Councilors (including all three Ward 5 Councilors), Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, and many community organizations including:

- Green Newton
- 350 Mass - Newton Node
- Engine 6
- Families Organizing for Racial Justice (FORJ)
- Uniting Citizens for Housing Affordability in Newton (U-CHAN)
- Bike Newton Steering Committee
- Newton Interfaith Clergy Association
- Progressive Newton
- Voters for a Vibrant Newton PAC
- Newton-Needham Regional Chamber
- Executive Committee of the Newton Democratic City Committee
- Newton CAN-DO

For a complete list of supporters and more information about the project, see www.yesfornewton.com.

Thank you.

Larry Gottesdiener
Chairman and CEO of Northland