



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS NEWTON

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August 8, 2011

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Secretary
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge St – Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

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and

Maeve Valley-Bartlett, Acting Director
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act
Attn: Deirdre Buckley, MEPA Analyst
100 Cambridge St – Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: The Station at Riverside, Newton, Massachusetts
Draft Environmental Impact Report - EEA No. 14590

Dear Secretary Sullivan and Acting Director Valley-Bartlett:

The League of Women Voters of Newton believes that the Normandy Real Estate Partners' proposal to transform the current MBTA light rail station at Riverside into a transit-oriented, mixed-use, residential and commercial destination will offer considerable benefits to the City of Newton.

The project will transform an existing 12-acre parking lot (960 spaces) into a LEED silver development, with landscaped parks, green spaces and rain gardens, residential street frontage, and a multi use path from Grove Street to Charles River Basin. The development is consistent with the City of Newton's long term Comprehensive Plan, which identified Riverside as "a significant development opportunity" in 2007.

The planned LEED silver certification will mean reduced GHG emissions, consistent with MEPA policy and Stretch code (minimum of 20% reduction in overall energy use). The project will use less energy, water, and include LID practices (green roof, porous pavement walkway, and vegetated bio-retention gardens).

Though the LEED silver goal is commendable, we wonder what are the barriers that keep the developer from planning a gold or platinum level LEED certification that would offer even more environmental benefits and energy use reductions?

This project offers real benefits for stormwater improvements. The developer will implement "best practices" management, focus on groundwater re-charge and water quality. All stormwater will be treated, filtered prior to discharge into river. It will reduce the amount of non-point source pollutants, including phosphorus currently ending up on the nearby Charles River.

Can the proposed 65% reduction on total phosphorus from stormwater runoff be further improved by maximizing efforts to increase infiltration, slow runoff, and expand opportunities for re-charge? Are there opportunities for further decreasing impervious spaces, increasing green spaces and tree canopy, including more green roofs and capturing runoff for irrigation?

The project will also include important sewer improvements, and will likely replace or repair parts of a 48" water main that runs through the site. Inflow and infiltration (I/I) problems will also be addressed. Newton has a big problem with clean groundwater

