



TEMPLE SINAI

A vibrant, progressive community

August 31, 2016

Rabbi

Andrew D. Vogel

**Assistant Rabbi for
Engagement**

Shoshana Meira Friedman

Rabbi Emeritus

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Education Director

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Executive Director

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Cantorial Soloist

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Town of Brookline

333 Washington St

Brookline, MA 02445

To the Board of Selectmen:

We are writing to express Temple Sinai's grave concern about the building project being proposed at 1299 Beacon Street. We are strongly opposed to this construction.

The project, a 108 unit, 14 story building, is completely out of scale with the rest of the Coolidge Corner neighborhood. The height, size, and density of the structure will change the character of the area and exacerbate the existing congestion problems in what already is a crowded and busy district.

More importantly, we have significant safety concerns about the project. In addition to our own school, Sewall Avenue is the access point for both the Traders Joe's market and for the trucks and cars used by the central Brookline Post Office. The street is already very crowded and difficult for ambulances and fire trucks to navigate. This new construction would worsen an already serious problem.

As we understand it, the new construction at 1299 Beacon would also include a two story garage housing more than 170 cars -- accessed from Sewall Avenue. It is our understanding that a loading dock would also be on the Sewall Avenue side of the 1299 building. So in addition to car traffic entering and exiting the 1299 garage, there will also be delivery trucks and trash for us to contend with. Sewall Avenue is too small to manage the number and length of the postal trucks. It cannot accommodate additional delivery vehicles on this small one way street. The street is so small that it will be impossible for a delivery truck to back into or turn into the loading area designated on the plans.



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The only entrance to Temple Sinai's Religious School building is located on Sewall Avenue, a very short distance down the street from the proposed entrance to the 1299 parking garage and the loading dock. Temple Sinai has 332 member families, over two thirds of whom are Brookline residents. Over 160 children attend our school, from little children in kindergarten through elementary school to grade 10. We also rent space to several other schools, including several programs for toddlers and their parents.

We are most concerned about the safety and security of those children. We feel this project puts the safety of the students coming to school and of our members at risk. At the present time, it is impossible to walk on the sidewalk along Sewall that borders the back side of the post office since the portion in front of the post office is frequently blocked by parked trucks and cars.

Congestion is already a problem - both on the sidewalks and on the street. The load of additional cars traveling down Sewall Avenue or waiting to get into the garage cannot be supported by a narrow one-way street like Sewall Avenue. And while it is a big positive that there will be elder units in the building, then these same elders, as well as other elders attending our synagogue, will have greater difficulty navigating this sidewalk.

While Temple Sinai certainly supports the concept of affordable housing, we are all obligated to provide a safe environment for the children of our community. The negative impact of this wholly unsuitable project on Sewall Avenue and its potential for seriously undermining the safety of Temple Sinai's Religious School students and members cannot be minimized.

Please do not put our children, our members, and the members of the community at risk! We urge you to contact state officials to deny approval for this project.

Sincerely,

Nora Abrahamer
President

Linda Katz
Executive Director

officially representing the Temple Sinai community

Cc: Maria Morelli, Brookline Planning Department