

May 4, 2021

Dear Maria,

I hope you have been doing well!

I was one of the people who raised his hand during the previous zoom call in April. I have done this as soon as I heard about the developers' proposal for cars driven by disabled drivers to back out on Kenwood Street from the garage and make a six-point turn. For understandable reasons, there was no time to comment on the topic during the call. I think this proposal is problematic for at least several reasons.

First, backing out of garages onto streets is prohibited by current Brookline regulations for a valid reason. It creates a serious risk of an accident. When a vehicle backs out of the garage, its driver's line of sight is blocked by the garage walls. The back part of the car (maybe two-thirds depending on a vehicle) gets onto the sidewalk and street BEFORE the driver, who sits in front of the car, emerges from the garage. As we talked about before, many kids run/walk on Kenwood Street on their way to/from Coolidge Park. Backing out vehicles may endanger them.

Second, the 500 Harvard Street building will be located near the intersection of Harvard and Kenwood Streets. Drivers who turn onto Kenwood Street from Harvard Street, especially those making the left turn, have to do it fast. Other residents of the five-street area around Coolidge Park commented on this before. Often, the traffic on Harvard Street is heavy as it is and gets more so as more and more buildings are built in the area. As drivers get onto Kenwood Street, they may not have time to react to a vehicle backing out of the garage, especially when the vehicle's driver does not see them.

Third, a vehicle making a six-point turn right near the intersection becomes another obstacle that a driver turning onto Kenwood Street needs to overcome. Right now, a driver making a left turn has to wait for pedestrians crossing Kenwood Street to finish crossing, vehicles driving from Allston to Brookline to pass, and vehicles making a right turn on Harvard Street to Kenwood Street to finish it. Making a six-point turn is time-consuming. The drivers making a left turn from Harvard Street to Kenwood Street may succumb to pressure from vehicles stuck behind them on Harvard Street, sometimes honking, and rush onto Kenwood Street before the other drivers and pedestrians finish their maneuvers. The added obstacle would further increase the risk of an accident.

Finally, I do not think that it is right that drivers with disabilities should be put under pressure and face more difficult driving conditions than drivers with no disabilities, all of whom will be getting out of the garage driving forward.

Thank you for your time and understanding.

Best regards,
Vitaly Veksler
23 Kenwood Street, Unit 2
Member of the Save North Brookline Committee

The letter was read and electronically signed by Lisa Coady, Joanna Gallimore, Anna Kolodner, and Judith Vanderkay
Members of the Save North Brookline committee