



TOWN OF ARLINGTON

MASSACHUSETTS 02476

781 - 316 - 3090

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

To: Steven Byrne and Dan Dunn, Selectmen's representatives to the CDBG Committee
From: Laura Wiener, Acting Director of Planning
Date: November 9, 2015
RE: CDBG funds for Planning and Zoning Study

As you may recall, this year's CDBG budget allocated \$50,000 for "tasks and services to prepare and recommend a revised zoning bylaw to guide land use and redevelopment consistent with the Comprehensive Master Plan". I believe the intention last winter was to use these funds for rewriting the Zoning Bylaw (known as "recodification"). We are now thinking that a preferable approach is to make some substantive changes to the Zoning bylaw first, and then recodify next year. Recodification is a long and complicated process that will likely take a full year. Some of the changes we would like to make first are defining and allowing mixed use in commercial and industrial zones, changes in the residential zones that would limit the size of new houses and large additions, and allow decreased parking in commercial, mixed use, and multi-family residential projects with the use of transportation demand management practices, such as subsidizing mass transit, providing secure bike parking, and offering car and bike sharing.

The new Master Plan Implementation Committee has had its first meeting as well as subcommittee meetings to prioritize implementation steps. In support of the Implementation activities, we are preparing to contract for some of the CDBG funds, and I wanted to keep you apprised of our plans to use the funding.

1. Right Size Parking Study (\$8,000). This is a market study of parking in multi-family housing in Arlington. We will contract with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to study the actual utilization of parking in 6 existing multi-family developments in Arlington. The data from this study will help us determine if we can reduce the parking requirement in the zoning bylaw for multi-family residential, and mixed use development in commercial corridors and multi-family residential zones. The study will correlate use of parking with other factors such as distance from mass transit and cost of parking. Reduced parking requirements would provide an incentive to develop in the commercial corridors by allowing more development on a lot. This is in support of the Master Plan Implementation steps to:
 - a. Amend the Zoning bylaw to provide redevelopment incentives...in business districts on Mass. Ave., Broadway and Medford Street.
 - b. Amend the Zoning Bylaw to update parking requirements.
 - c. Determine "right size" parking requirements based on actual parking need for different commercial centers.
2. Design Study for Mass. Ave. Corridor Phase 2, from Pond Lane to Mill Street (\$25,000). The Department of Public Works received \$25,000 to begin planning for the Arlington

Center portion of Mass. Ave. Additional funds from CDBG will be used to conduct outreach and get public input on priorities for the Center, particularly focused on Broadway Plaza design and sidewalk surfaces, as well as preliminary roadway design. This is in support of the Master Plan Vision and Implementation steps to:

- a. Support a walkable public realm where residents meet their neighbors, thriving business districts, and cultural and recreational resources that provide shared experiences (A Vision for Arlington)
- b. Adopt a plan for future sidewalk paving design treatments.
- c. Prioritize improvements for new and existing sidewalks.

That will leave \$17,000 in CDBG planning funds. Some may be used for help with zoning changes such as legal review. If the funds are not used they can be rolled over to next year, though not for planning or public services. They can be used for affordable housing or public facilities. Please let me know if you would like more information or to discuss this further.

Cc: Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager
Anna Whitten, Grants Administrator