



TOWN OF ARLINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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MEMORANDUM

Date: February 18, 2021

To: Arlington Select Board members

From: Jennifer Raitt, Director of Planning and Community Development

cc: Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager

RE: Warrant Article 81 – Resolution/ Broadway Corridor Design Competition

The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) has reviewed the proposed resolution to have “*Town Meeting vote to allow the Town to plan and sponsor a design competition to encourage new housing and mixed-use construction in the Broadway Corridor area of Arlington.*” This warrant article intends to advance the findings from the *Building a Better Broadway – Planning Study for the Broadway Corridor, Arlington, MA* conducted by students taking part in the Fall 2019 MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning Practicum 11.360. DPCD developed the project with the course professors and worked with students for the semester. The final report is available here: www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument?id=49936.

After having reviewed a number of Arlington projects in this area of East Arlington, DPCD noted a void of any in-depth analyses and recommendations to help guide planning in the neighborhood. Working with the students and community members provided us with fresh perspectives on ways to address a number of challenges and opportunities along the corridor.

The report includes an analysis, summarizes community engagement, and makes recommendations for improving mobility, housing, and quality of life along the corridor. The students focused on three main goals to shape the report’s recommendations: rethinking safety and walkability on the street; maintaining a healthy housing supply in the surrounding neighborhoods; and improving and preserving the corridor’s vibrancy and residents’ quality of life. The students presented their report to the Arlington Redevelopment Board at a public meeting in December of 2019 which was well received by the Board.

The Department is eager to return to further planning along this corridor, beyond the student contributions and recommendations emerging from the long-range transportation plan. A design competition would be a unique way to engage people in that continued planning process. The Department is supportive of this resolution as a mechanism to advance findings in the report and, more importantly, to continue the necessary discussion about the vitality of this corridor and neighborhood in East Arlington.