

Since January, the Redevelopment Board and residents have been asking for the promised Visualizations and Shadow studies, to better understand how the proposed zoning changes will impact neighborhoods. We have repeatedly been told that MAPC was working on them and they would be made available soon.

They finally did appear, belatedly, at Monday's hearing. What we saw was deeply disappointing. Rather than a meaningful visualization of an actual Arlington location, we were shown some casual artist's sketches of a fictional neighborhood in a fictional city. Nothing about the streets, the settings, the scale of the surrounding buildings bore any resemblance to Arlington. It was a Sim City fantasy world.

A few particular criticisms:

- Most of the background buildings have been depicted as large three story flat roofed structures in order to suggest a uniformity of shape and scale. In reality, these side streets feeding the main corridors are residential with one and two family homes
- All of the lots are shown as being square, with generous setbacks. In reality, many lots have a narrow dimension
- The example building shown does not even conform with the MAPC vision of an extended street wall with minimal gaps. Instead we are shown an isolated building surrounded by open landscaped lots
- Many of the sidewalks shown in these images are unnaturally wide for Arlington
- The residential model is a careless edit of the mixed use business district version. The artist even left in the sidewalk cafe
- The residential model has zero setback front yards
- The balconies overhanging the sidewalks are inconsistent with Arlington's zoning laws.
- The upper story setbacks are not reflective of the proposed changes

The only thing 'Arlington' about these drawings is the small label in the lower corner.

Ten depictions of the same building from slightly different angles is not useful content. It is simply filler material to hide the shallowness of the submitted work product.

The shadow study examples are even worse. Also set in some Sim City neighborhood, they lack any dimensional information. Some of the shadows shown

are clearly inaccurate for our latitude - perhaps it was meant to be Sim City, Florida. The only useful information to be obtained from this 'study' is that winter shadows are longer than those of summer.

As a resident, I am disappointed that our tax dollars have been wasted on this useless nonsense. For our Board members, I hope that your professionalism has been offended by such an unsatisfactory work product being submitted from our consultant so late in the decision process. It adds nothing to our understanding of these proposed zoning changes and the impact on Arlington neighborhoods. It also raises questions of the technical expertise of our consultants and how seriously they have attempted to understand Arlington's neighborhoods beyond some lines on a zoning map.

If a developer applying for a special permit for a single building had submitted such materials for consideration, I expect that the Board would have politely told him to come back when it had been done properly. In this case, with the serious overhaul of our zoning laws and the intrinsic character of the town at stake, it is orders of magnitude more important to be deliberate in the approval process and to get it done right.



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