

Dear Redevelopment Board,

I write in support of the 40B development at 1021 and 1045 Mass Avenue. Unfortunately, I have a conflict with tonight's meeting and so offer my thoughts in writing rather than in person.

This development addresses several important needs in our community. First, it will provide accessible market rate housing that could e.g., serve someone who is interested in downsizing but wants to stay in Arlington. Over the years I've talked to many people in this situation. They have equity in the house they plan to sell and so can afford a market rate unit, but there are almost no places for them to move to in Arlington. When people in this situation are forced to move to other towns Arlington loses out---we lose the active engagement of our older residents and (more crudely) we lose economically as residents without children in the school system add to the tax base.

The second need it addresses is to provide 13 affordable home ownership opportunities, which is very rare in the Boston area. 90% of the racial wealth gap in America is a direct result of de jure racist housing policies by federal, state, and local governments. It is critically important that we create more opportunities for people to build wealth in our community by offering more opportunities for people to buy into our community.

Opponents will likely claim that someone making 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) is still "well off", but the truth is that even someone at 100% or 120% of the AMI cannot afford to live in Arlington. When people in this income range are priced out of Arlington, we all lose. A town where only the very wealthy can afford to live here is not a vibrant community.

I understand the sadness that comes with the removal of mature trees. Mature trees are majestic and beautiful, and they make us happier. But we shouldn't kid ourselves that this is an issue of carbon sequestration. If we fail to build additional houses in Arlington (a well-developed community with access to public transit) the climate trade-offs are worse because the alternative is to build further out -- tearing down even more mature trees and necessitating more driving.

A final thing to note is that this project is really cool looking, with a gym, adequate bike storage, and common courtyard. This is exactly that kind of project I would love to see more of in Arlington. In fact, I would love to move to such a development when the stairs in our old house get too difficult for us. I hope the ARB decides to vote in its favor.

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