

AHOD Resolution  
Submitted: Guillermo S. Hamlin

To see if the Town of Arlington will adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS Eighty-eight percent of Arlington's housing units (all types) were built prior to 1980

WHEREAS Arlington residents participating in the 2020 Housing Production Plan community engagement sessions consistently expressed issues with housing instability and a need for more affordable housing;

WHEREAS the shortage of affordable housing in Arlington harms very-low, low, moderate, middle, and upper-middle income residents, especially renters;

WHEREAS the Arlington Housing Plan 2022 recommended but didn't explicitly endorse the Affordable Housing Overlay District as an urgent measure.

WHEREAS the Arlington Housing Plan 2022 was adopted by ARB on 1-24-2022

WHEREAS the Arlington Housing Plan 2022 was adopted by the Select Board on 4-20-2022

WHEREAS the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) approved the Arlington Housing Production Plan (HPP) pursuant to 760 CMR 56.03(4) on 6-13-2022.

WHEREAS the price of homes for sale in Arlington, like those in the rest of the Boston area, have increased over the past ten years;

WHEREAS 230 Arlington households are assisted through the Arlington Housing Stability Program [AHSP];

WHEREAS meeting Chapter 40B affordability and unit creation standards will not alone address Arlington's housing needs;

WHEREAS Affordable Housing Overlay Districts (AHODs) have proven to increase affordable housing. Cambridge, Somerville and North Reading are Greater Boston communities that have passed AHOD bylaws and regulations;

WHEREAS establishing an AHOD will promote the public good by supporting the development of housing that is affordable to households earning at or below 120% of the area median income.

WHEREAS numerous communities have found that incremental increases in density, limited increases in height, and relaxation of certain other zoning limitations for residential developments in which all units are made permanently affordable to households earning at or below 120% of the area median income is achievable without stressing municipal infrastructure;

WHEREAS AHODs would serve to incentivize the reuse of existing, buildings in order to create AHOD Projects that are more compatible with established neighborhoods and align with Arlington's design objectives;

WHEREAS communities have seen significant benefits when AHOD Projects are permitted as-of-right, subject to non-binding advisory design consultation procedures that follow all design objectives;

WHEREAS AHODs will promote affordable housing objectives, promote greater socioeconomic diversity, and ensure a more equitable distribution of affordable housing town-wide;

WHEREAS- Arlington has passed the Community Preservation Act and continues to seek passage of the real estate transfer fee which, along with Arlington's Affordable Housing Trust, can provide subsidy funds to promote AHOD development;

WHEREAS Arlington, a MBTA community, is required to have zoning that provides for at least 1 district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right;

WHEREAS having denser and smaller housing units around businesses, public transportation, and schools near Boston/Cambridge is more environmentally efficient;

WHEREAS creating significant additional affordable housing, with varying tiers of affordability, will provide housing opportunities for current and future Arlington residents, including people who live in AHA properties

WHEREAS housing density may also increase economic development and thus Arlington's goals for its commercial tax base.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Arlington affirms the Affordable Housing Overlay District as a means to mitigate the worst of Arlington's housing crisis or act on anything relative thereto.

Sources:

<https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/37568/Combined-Reports-November-15-2022-Special-Town-Meeting-with-Supplements-120522>

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/61619/637909762217270000>