

From: Diane Krause

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 1:01 PM

To: Claire Ricker; Rachel Zsembery; Melisa Tintocalis; Kin Lau; Stephen Revilak; Eugene Benson

Cc: Jim Feeney

Subject: MBTA Communities Zoning Plan

Claire Ricker, Director Planning and Community Development
Redevelopment Board Members

Dear Ms. Ricker and Board Members,

I am an Arlington resident and I am concerned by what the working group has proposed for compliance with the MBTA Zoning rule.

Why is the capacity so much more than what is required? Yes, I read the report and it states capacity doesn't mean that's what will be built, but why is this number so high? Why isn't one of the options before the ARB 100% compliance with the requirement, and not overcapacity?

The report talks about being in favor of street trees and it does agree to 15 ft. setbacks, but also allows developers to build to 6 stories, not 4, with no setbacks if the developer adds commercial space on the first floor/street level. —How does this make any sense from an environmental perspective? I strongly oppose granting this option. We have a couple of apartment buildings near Stop & Shop on Mass Ave. with empty commercial space on the first floor, space that appears quite small and useless. Maintaining 15 foot setback will enable some small area of green space and give any trees a better chance to grow, instead of the small space between street and sidewalk that most street trees have now to survive. We need to be considering how to add trees and green space and pocket parks into our plans, not figuring out how we can reward developers to build bigger and taller buildings with no restrictions.

Commercial zones. I admit it appears that commercial zones have been left intact, although trying to see details on the maps provided is difficult. It's hard to tell what has been converted to residential/MBTA. I think everyone in Arlington would like to see growth of business, and more options for new businesses. And yet it appears that existing businesses would now be surrounded by areas zoned for residential use only. —So no business would be able to expand it's footprint? Or a new business would have to fit into an existing footprint? This seems extremely short-sighted. And dooms the town to not adding any significant, creative solutions to bringing more business into Arlington.

I don't understand why the focus isn't on adding units closer to the Alewife T Station. If we don't want more cars on the roads, shouldn't units be in walking distance to the T? Bus service along Mass Ave. has deteriorated significantly and doesn't seem like a great option. This is another reason not to add more capacity than required.

I agree Arlington needs more housing options, particularly low and middle income options. This plan does nothing to address this need. The condos that will be built will be expensive, with little or no setback requirements, as far as I can tell. When I hear things like allowing a 4 (or 6) story apartment building on the south side of Paul Revere Road instead of the much lower north side it seems like the working group didn't even look at existing landscape with what they're proposing. Is it true that historical buildings like Old Schwab Mill are included in the MBTA Residential Zone? Why? That just is wrong, and i don't think I have to explain why it's wrong.

We seem to be rushing to a decision this Fall in order to get into some fossil-free program. Is it worth it to rush such an important zoning decision? I strongly oppose what the working group has proposed. I strongly oppose giving developers the opportunity to build with little or no setback restrictions. I want to see a plan that addresses climate change and includes more green space. I strongly oppose any plan with more capacity than what is required. I strongly oppose a plan that limits business growth in Arlington.

Thank you for reading my comments.

Diane Krause
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