

From: Linda Reese

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 2:03 PM

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

Subject: MBTA Communities Working Group Proposal(s)

Good Afternoon,

I apologize for the length of this email. I tried to do it as bullet points. (At least it is shorter than the 51 page WG proposal? :-))

I am writing to express my strong opposition to any path but the minimum 2046-unit increase required by state law for the MBTA Overlay as mandated by the state.

After much listening to the Working Group Meetings and reading of proposal(s) I believe creating such a large overlay given '**by right**' is too big of task and doesn't allow for Arlington to make any corrections from any unforeseen negative consequences.

A few of the points that I believe the town would like to address before agreeing to the current proposal are:

- **Education:** Paramount to Arlingtonians and a primary reason people choose Arlington, where would the new elementary school go? I know Arlington used to have a lot more children, but we also used to have up to 36 children in a class room. (not sustainable today) and no cafeteria as kids went home for lunch in Spring and Fall and ate at their desks in the winter . (Also not able to revert to for obvious reasons). We need to be able to have time to have our school growth keep up with population growth, hence I support starting with the 2046 unit overlay.

The Working Group as taken on an enormous project in trying to create 'as many as possible' vs therequired 2046 units. They have not been able to pay attention to what I feel are significant details such as:

- **Safety:** In the zero lot line buildings along Mass Ave and Broadway, per fire code, the exit doors must open outwards. The older buildings have a 3 foot set back to protect the pedestrians. I personally have already been hit by a door walking past a newer building in East Arlington. I also think it puts the Town at a liability risk, especially if someone slips on ice stepping down onto town property (sidewalk). (Note the step down form the Preschool just west of the HS). *Doesn't a 3 foot exit door set back not only make sense but also allow the buildings to fit in with current architecture?*
- **Historical Homes:** Although the Working Group has decided to not include Historical Districts from the overlay, the overlay does include Historical Homes, and these also should be excluded.
- **Honor.** Arlington has always honored it's heroes, from Uncle Sam to Jason Russell to LT John Connors, Seal Team 4, KIA. (His birth town of Scituate is building a larger than life bronze statue to honor him, and as a resident of Arlington when he was killed, we, too have a memorial). I believe, like historical homes, the proposal should also specifically include protection for memorials.

- **Registered vs Recorded Land.** The Working Group apparently did not have time to research Arlington's recorded vs registered land. Registered land (which is in the overlay) requires significantly more legal work and filing *specifically* to build condos. Per the Land Court in Boston, Approval to develop multi family on Registered Land requires processing through the Land Court (Suffolk County Superior Court House). Recorded land does not. I was informed by an attorney at the Land Court that I would require legal representation to navigate the paper work if I wanted to build condos on registered land. If the working group was not aware of this restriction, I am concerned as to what else might be missed. I believe a slower/smaller approach is prudent as support no more than the 2046 dwelling overlay. In the mean time *registered land should be removed from the proposed overlay.*
- **Inconsistent Goals:** The Working Group specifically stated they wanted 4 stories or higher as this is when an elevator must be added, which is beneficial to disabled and elderly. However, the proposal also has NO requirement for parking "in an endeavor to encourage using public transportation". It is the same people who require an elevator (disabled, elderly, lung problems, heart trouble, etc) who require a car to do errands and get to doctor's appointments. Not only are those goals inconsistent, but hypocritical as many, if not all, working group members have a car.

If we want to encourage less dependence on fossil fuels, perhaps consider requiring charging stations with the parking spots? At a minimum, I feel we need to start this process slower so we can correct any unforeseen consequences of this decision. ie. for example, With no parking, and if later Arlington allows overnight/residential parking, where will the teachers park at Gibbs school? (They currently overflow the parking lot on to the streets)

Please read the proposal carefully (I know, it's 51 pages long) as well as the 4 page Zoning Articles (where, as ***not mentioned in the proposal***, it states if owned property extends into the neighborhood overlay, the Mass Ave/Broadway overlay supersedes which means it's giving '**by right' the authority for someone to build a 6 story building in the neighborhoods**, something we as residents are repetitively told wouldn't happen.)

Please ask the Working Group to come up with a proposal that not only allows the town to correct (or advance quickly), ie, start with 2046 potential dwellings, but that also addresses the above mentioned issues.

Please vote no to the current proposal(s).

Sincerely,

Linda Atlas
Third Generation East Arlington Resident