

**From:** Rachel Curtis

**Sent:** Monday, September 11, 2023 1:57 PM

**To:** Rachel Zsembery; Eugene Benson; Kin Lau; Stephen Revilak; Ashley Maher

**Cc:** Claire Ricker; Jim Feeney; MBTA Communities; Eric Helmuth; Stephen DeCoursey; Len Diggins; John Hurd; Diane Mahon

**Subject:** Arlington's MBTA Communities Working Group Proposal

Dear Arlington Redevelopment Board Members,

I am writing to you as a resident of Arlington, regarding the proposal submitted to you by the MBTA Communities Act Working Group. Appreciating the importance and complexity of this issue, I have educated myself by watching the July 25th public hearing online, attending a Working Group meeting as well as a community information session, and engaging with Arlington Residents for Responsible Development. While I am heartbroken at the prospect of my home becoming a casualty of this plan, I understand that there is a greater good to consider.

Based on what I have learned, I want to raise several concerns about the plan and the Working Group's process:

- I am very supportive of increasing the units of affordable housing in Arlington, but much less enthusiastic about a 6:1 ratio of what seem likely to be million-dollar condos to affordable units.
- I echo the women who spoke at the July meeting and cautioned us about Mass Ave resembling Central Square in Cambridge with its random acts of development.
- Some argue that this plan will encourage people to use public transportation and own fewer cars. I think that's much more likely in a truly high-density environment like the one being developed right by Alewife in Cambridge. Based on my experience renting the apartment in my house, most high-income people expect the amenity of two parking spaces. I was at the Working Group meeting when the .5 parking spot/unit requirement for developers was discussed. There was no rigorous interrogation of it. Instead, the focus was on what the members of the group could all agree on. I anticipate that elimination of the overnight, on-street parking ban will be the town's response to the lack of parking provided by developers. This means that the side streets in orange zones will be filled with not just the cars of people who work on Mass Ave and the customers who frequent the businesses (the current situation) but also residents. Currently, we have cars parked on both sides of our street all day making it hard to drive down the street in a car, much less an emergency vehicle. This will get much worse. Developers need to share a greater share of the burden on parking demands.
- The fact that Arlington is BOTH hurrying this process to meet the deadline of the Fossil Fuel Ban Pilot Program and submitting a plan to you that vastly over complies with the state requirement for Arlington should concern us all. Deciding to go far beyond the state's mandate should be accompanied by rigorous inquiry and a deliberate process. My observation of the process to date and the fact that I was first informed of it by the town last week, make me question if either of those things are in place.

I implore you to do one of two things: 1) scale back this plan both to limit the adverse impact on current residents and to ensure Arlington streets remain safe; or 2) slow down the process, do some substantive analysis (beyond Utile modeling), engage the community in a meaningful way based on what we now know, and revise the proposal accordingly.

Sincerely,

Rachel Curtis  
9 Trowbridge Street