

From: Monalisa Hota
Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2023 10:46 AM
To: MBTA Communities
Subject: Questions about MBTA Rezoning proposal

Hello,

I have been pondering over this proposal for a while because it is a good idea to be able to accommodate people from all classes and have options for Arlington residents to downsize or buy their first homes. However, there are some aspects of this proposal that I don't fully understand, which I would like to ask.

1. What is the actual need of going so much over the required limit at this point in time when the state calculated the number based on some criteria? Is it not possible to roll out a smaller version of this expansion proposal (that meets the minimum requirement), learn from that experience and then reconvene to expand further or not. This seems to be a more cautious approach in my opinion as there are always possibilities of mistakes and room for improvement but I would love to know the reasons.
2. As for selection if the zone for rezoning, were the 8000+ parcels if single/detached units considered for building 2 families and multi families by right? The area marked for building up in this proposal is already quite packed with 2 or more family units. Why make it more congested why not simply double up or more the single family lots?
3. Connected with the above is the question of connectivity to walkable area if town and to the public transport. Has the idea to use small vans or small electric vehicles to connect the parcels further away from Mass Ave been considered? It could perhaps be paid by the residents or the town could support it or raise funds for it. That was the distribution of new builds can spread across the town instead of over-densifying the already dense stretch.

Comments:

1. I am very concerned about the aesthetics of the town and while I won't argue against building modern looking buildings (even though my personal preference is to see spaces that blend in nicely with the old/historic appearance), I do have problems with the new buildings that look dull/lack creativity/unappealing and uninviting. This is one aspect I am sure would be hard to control if builders decide to build away in our beautiful backyards and front yards. It would be too hard to stare at a such constructions for me, unfortunately.
2. This and been shared before and I agree that the proposal does not guarantee affordable housing. That seems like an assumption because builders may chose to build a very expensive 4 unit complex, for example.

3. This is also shared before and I agree that this proposal could potentially cause a lot of unnecessary waste as builders may be tempted to tear down perfectly fine old homes in favor of more units. Terrible for the environment.

4. MBTA for me means from here to Harvard square. Most other places take much longer to reach with changes, and don't seem worth the time/effort. Most places in Boston take double the time compared to driving. So we choose to spend 33 min on road than over an hour by MBTA, that is when it is on time which is not the case all the time. I am not sure what the appeal would be for people to move into Arlington to use the MBTA. I think they will have to use cars. Hence, I am not sure how exactly overcrowding mass Ave would be helpful in keeping CO2 emissions low. I think the public transport would have to be really really made dependable and appealing to have a real impact on climate. I would like to know more about how people travel and how it helps or not through a survey if possible in the future.

Thanks a lot for all the hard work on this proposal. I really appreciate it. Unfortunately, I don't agree with going over limit for the concerns stated above. I think Arlington can always reconvene a few years later to reassess and move for the next rezoning plan.

Lisa Hota
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