

From: Janice Brodman

Sent: Monday, October 2, 2023 12:25 PM

To: Jim Feeney; Claire Ricker; Rachel Zsebery; Eugene Benson; Kin Lau; Stephen Revilak; Ashley Maher; MBTA Communities; Eric Helmuth; Stephen DeCoursey; Len Diggins; John Hurd; Diane Mahon

Subject: Vote Against the redistricting proposals

As a resident of Arlington and as someone who has been committed to affordable housing for many decades, I strongly urge you to vote against the current redistricting proposals. These proposals fail to accomplish affordable housing goals while promoting more expensive and dense housing in Arlington. Specifically:

1. Most grievous: The proposed changes do **not** promote affordability. Instead, they **promote more expensive housing** than existing comparable units, raising the cost of renting or owning a home here.
2. These plans far **exceed** the Act's requirements of 2,046 units. This is irresponsible because even 100% compliance has significant risks and hardships. To do more than what is required is reckless and irresponsible. Worse yet, Arlington, unlike many other towns, has not conducted good studies with accurate data to determine impact and create maps/scenarios. e.g., to determine the effects on schools, existing affordability, real estate taxes (which affects affordability), and more. So neither we who live in Arlington, nor the working group, know what negative effects these proposals will have.
2. This is the largest change in zoning in our lifetime! The proposed changes will **significantly** affect every person living in Arlington. Yet the town, and the MBTAWG Working Group, have failed to ensure that people living in Arlington know the proposal for "over compliance" and its implications. This failure is evident as when people do hear about it, most are extremely concerned.
3. The town has failed to ensure that the range of voices in Arlington are represented on the Working Group. This is, sadly, all too familiar: the people who have time and are strongly motivated by a particular perspective run roughshod over the views of others. In this case, the working group is a small group of pro-"market rate" density advocates appointed by the planning dept. This small group is trying to increase the amount of expensive housing and density with very little impact (and possibly negative impact) on affordability. Instead of following the dictates of this small interest group, many other groups should be included in the planning process, e.g., those involved in: affordable housing, open and green spaces, historic districts and preservation, business and retail stores, Arlington public schools, Arlington finance committee, and others.
4. The working group process has changed proposals so often, and without specifics, it's been virtually impossible for people in Arlington to know what's actually going on or what they are for or against.
5. Complying with the law is necessary. Over-complying without adequate information, without input from most of those living here, without recognizing the negative impacts, is outrageous. We can always increase density if we find that plans work well and negative impacts can be handled. We cannot go back and "un-densify" when we discover the negative impacts are tremendous and the plans don't even improve achievement of affordable housing goals.

I hope that you will vote **against** the proposals and, at the very least, promote a more inclusive discussion and involvement in a plan.

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