

To: Arlington Redevelopment Board
MBTA Communities Working Group
From: Kin Lau
RE: Elevator Requirements

I am writing to you all with an update to information I provided the MBTA Communities Working Group during the course of their work.

The report and presentation of the MBTA Communities Working Group states “the Building Code requires that buildings that are 4 stories or taller have an elevator and meet other accessibility requirements.”

It is builder best-practice and the market which has made 4 stories the height at which new buildings have elevators, not the building code. In my years of experience, I have not seen a modern building of 4 stories built without elevators. I have also spoken with the Building Inspector and confirmed that in recent years, all buildings of 4 stories or more have had elevators.

The MBTA Communities Working Group proposal recommends a by-right maximum height of 4 stories in all sub districts. The MBTA Communities Working Group heard from community members that a lack of housing with elevators and other accessibility features is a barrier to residents with different abilities finding housing, and a barrier for seniors looking to downsize and stay in Arlington.

In practice, the reasoning of the Working Group remains sound, but I felt it was important to correct this inaccuracy directly with the ARB and to ask the Working Group to amend the wording of their report.

Sincerely,
Kin Lau