

From: Joanne Cullinane

Sent: Sunday, March 17, 2024 12:09 PM

To: Shaina Korman-Houston; Claire Ricker; Eugene Benson; Kin Lau; Stephen Revilak; Rachel Zsembery

Subject: VOTE NO on Article 34

Dear members of the Redevelopment Board and Planning Department,

I'm writing to urge you to vote against putting Article 34 before Town Meeting. The process by which the town's response to the MBTA-C act unfolded, with limited public participation and a small non-representative working group, and a first draft that could have doubled the population of Arlington, was unnecessarily chaotic and contentious. The damage to our community and sense of trust in fair process is still raw.

Now we have a proposal that is even more rash. Article 34 seems designed to accomplish what the mbta overlay was unable to do due to public opposition - open up huge swaths of town land to developers for for-profit speculation and possibly double the population within an uncertain time frame. This Article is too big, too broad, too unstudied. It appears before you despite zero attempts at public outreach. It is disheartening that anyone would think such a sweeping change should be voted on by a small group of residents while the larger public remains unaware of its details.

Article 34 would lead to more tree loss with the associated environmental impact that brings to our town, in exchange for more expensive units and more cars as it does not even ask for growth to be near what little mbta service the Town has. It would put enormous pressure upon our infrastructure, police, fire department, and schools. This would promote none of the commercial growth we'd need to offset increased costs to the Town.

Nor does it ask for any of the new units to be affordable. Unlike with the mbta act, when proponents *suggested* that development would help residents of Arlington who need rent relief, the proponents of this article stated at your last meeting that 'even if the units are not affordable they would help free up more affordable units elsewhere.'

The idea that more high end units in Arlington would open up less expensive housing *where lower income workers need them* is far from certain. Furthermore, it belies a lack of concern for *our town as a community*: a community needs a healthy diversity of ages, classes, and occupations to thrive and we have a duty to try to preserve that to whatever extent we can.

While new market rate units might put slight downward pressure on rents for comparable luxury buildings (of which we have quite a few in Arlington), such development has been shown to *increase* rents in nearby lower-priced housing by over 6.7% -

<https://newrepublic.com/maz/article/179147/case-against-yimbyism-yimbytown-2024>. This would make Arlington more of an exclusive enclave for the rich and *price even more residents out of a town* they may have grown up in or spent many years of their life contributing to.

I sympathize with those who see huge single families go up on large lots in certain areas of town. That has, however, never been the case for most of Arlington, a very dense town where most lots are small and most house sizes modest.

The MBTA overlay represented a decision to concentrate development near the one bus route we have in town rather than in areas where McMansions are sprouting up. Now it behooves us to see how that decision plays out even if some people wish that we had spread the overlay out to include areas that are a bit less dense and where the McMansions sprout. That decision has been made and the Town must see how it plays out. The MBTA overlay could easily cause more fiscal and environmental harm than anticipated and it would be folly to allow an even larger overlay because some wish the first one had been written differently.

Thank you,
Joanne Cullinane
69 Newland Rd