

MBTA Communities Working Group

August 1, 2023

Meeting Summary

Attending: Vince Baudoin (remote), Rebecca Gruber, Shaina Korman-Houston, Kin Lau, Sanjay Newton, Stephen Revilak, Laura Wiener

Staff: Talia Fox, Claire Ricker

Approve meeting summaries from prior meetings

The working group approved summaries of their July 18th and July 25th meetings. Both summaries were approved by votes of 7--0.

Outreach

Ms. Ricker and Mr. Revilak will be at the library on Saturday, to hold office hours.

Mr. Newton and Ms. Ricker will be at the farmers market on Wednesday.

Review of Bonuses, Dimensions, Maps, and Planning Products

Mr. Newton suggests we begin by sharing our observations from the July 25th public forum.

Ms. Ricker says she heard a 60/40 split between opposition and support. Some speakers appreciated a bold plan, some felt we should do less, and some wanted the bare minimum. She felt there was divided feedback from the meeting.

Ms. Ricker felt there was a clear message about the 10' front yard setback being too small. Her department provided the working group with a memo which recommends 15' on Mass Ave and Broadway, and 15' in the neighborhood residential district.¹ Staff also recommend a 3.5 story limit in the neighborhood multi-family district, rather than four stories. We are still waiting to hear back from the state, regarding what we'll need to provide in order to demonstrate that a 15% affordability requirement is economically feasible.

Ms. Ricker has been working with (Environmental Planner) David Morgan on sustainability elements, and staff has submitted a memo to this effect. The memo suggests a modified version of the SITES criteria as a way to offer a bonus for open space and sustainable development. Staff's memo also

¹ The memo contained a table which recommended a 20' setback in the neighborhood residential, while the text of the memo recommended 15'. The working group was informed that the 20' in the table was a typo.

suggests considering some of the larger commercial parcels for the multi-family district. It's currently possible to develop mixed-use buildings on these parcels via special permit, and this would offer a by-right option. Ms. Ricker feels the open space bonus is more likely to work on larger parcels, and they'd also be attractive to affordable housing developers using Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), as LIHTC generally requires at least 25--40 units. Ms. Ricker notes that the larger parcels would be attractive to 40B developers too, and the town has less control over that process.

Mr. Baudoin asks Ms. Ricker to explain the thinking behind the 3.5 story limit for the neighborhood multi-family district. Ms. Ricker says it's one story higher than the 2.5 story limit for R1 and R2. During the forum, she heard speakers say that four stories was too tall for those neighborhoods. The half story provides extra room for the top floor, and gives families an option for expanding, adapting, and staying in place. She also felt that a four-story building on two parcels might be a bridge too far.

Mr. Lau disagrees with the 3.5 story proposal. He says that Arlington has many 4--5 story multi-family buildings with flat roofs. The flat roof can be white and reflective, which helps avoid heat islands. Mr. Baudoin says he's interested in providing a path for incremental increases. Mr. Lau suggests looking at buildings we already have. He'd like to push back on the proposal to increase the front yard setbacks. He's concerned that too large a setback requirement might prevent a project from penciling out, particularly for smaller developers. He also disagrees with the idea of pushing tree planting requirements onto developers. Mr. Newton disagrees with Mr. Lau, with regards to tree planting requirements. Regarding flat roofs, Ms. Gruber wonders if we could consider a maximum height of three stories. She notes that our bylaw contains an exception for average front yard setbacks: a builder can take the average of the existing front setbacks on a block, even if that's less than the minimum setback requirement.

Mr. Revilak had three take-aways from last week's forum. The first was front yard setbacks; a number of speakers asked for 15', and Mr. Revilak would like to honor that request. The second is height; a number of speakers felt that four stories was too tall for the neighborhood residential district. Finally, there was capacity. A number of speakers felt that a 12--15k unit capacity was too much. Mr. Revilak believes the model capacity is an overestimate, perhaps by a factor of two.

Ms. Wiener asks about adjusting the rear setback in addition to the front. She asks what people see as the purpose for the 20' rear setback. Mr. Lau thinks we need to look at parcels, and how this will work. He'd like to take a more detailed look at setbacks. Ms. Ricker thinks trees are things that the public wants, and she advises the working group against precluding them. Mr. Newton says we're trying to do something across districts, rather than something piecemeal. Ms. Ricker wonders how difficult it would be to get a variance for setback requirements. Mr. Revilak thinks it would be hard. One of the variance criteria is that an applicant has to demonstrate that the literal enforcement of the zoning laws would create a hardship, owing to conditions of soil, shape, or topography that affect the parcel for which the variance is sought, but not the zoning district as a whole. Mr. Revilak says the Zoning Board of Appeals took that requirement very seriously, when he was a member of that board.

Mr. Baudoin says that trees are great, and he likes them. He thinks that housing people more efficiently in a developed area like Mass Ave will help prevent developers from clearing land further out. He thinks it's important to think about trees outside of Arlington. Mr. Baudoin notes that Mass Ave is a wide right of way, 100' wide in places. He thinks that making it wider goes against the principles of compact walkable urbanism. Ms. Korman-Houston thinks it's worth considering a smaller rear setback.

There's discussion about the current number of existing dwellings in the proposed district. Mr. Revilak made a rough estimate, based on the land use codes in the parcel list, and came up with around 2148 dwellings. Mr. Baudoin estimated 3000, via MHP's Residency tool. Taking those together, our back of the envelope estimate is between 2000--3000. Ms. Korman-Houston asks if those buildings could be built under Arlington's current zoning. Mr. Revilak answers in the negative. Mr. Lau thinks that we're looking at the ability to add another 5000 dwellings over time. He notes there were similar concerns from town meeting over Accessory Dwelling Units. Some town meeting members claimed that thousands of them would be built in no time at all. To date, there have only been six.

Mr. Baudoin thinks that SITES standards would be great for large projects, but he's concerned they might over-burden smaller ones. Ms. Ricker notes that the SITES standards would be for a bonus, and not a mandatory regulation.

Ms. Gruber asks about the 250' figure from the planning department's memo - defining the neighborhood district as 250' from the street midline. Ms. Ricker says that 250' works out to around two parcels on either side of Mass Ave and Broadway.

Ms. Gruber sees the need for better education and communication. During the public forum, she heard speakers that wanted to welcome new people to Arlington, but also didn't want the town to feel very different as the result of doing so. Ms. Gruber says this is the original problem we started with. Ms. Korman-Houston says that not everyone who lives in Arlington lives the same way. Ms. Gruber says that the people who lived on streets in the proposed district were concerned about them changing. They thought it might feel different if all of the properties were redeveloped. Mr. Lau disagrees. He says that Arlington is currently a community for dual-income households who can afford \$1,000,000 homes. People who can't do that aren't coming here, and people who work in the town can't afford to live here. Mr. Lau has a son, and says that his son won't be able to afford to live here.

Mr. Newton says he heard a clear direction from the Redevelopment Board: that we shouldn't include any commercially-zoned properties in the multi-family district. Ms. Gruber agrees with Mr. Newton. Ms. Gruber thinks it would be okay for the working group to suggest specific parcels to the ARB, but she doesn't think that should be part of the proposal. Mr. Revilak notes that one of Tuesday night's speakers had the same suggestion, and recommended specific parcels for inclusion. Mr. Baudoin says he's not inclined to change the group's position on omitting parcels that are currently zoned business or industrial.

Ms. Wiener and Ms. Korman-Houston submitted a proposal about affordable housing bonuses. Ms. Wiener noted that we'd talked about a one-story bonus for providing more affordable housing than

required. She says that each story increases efficiency and sustainability. Ms. Wiener suggests we could capture some of that for additional affordable housing. Ms. Korman-Houston has been assuming that the state would allow us to keep our 15% affordability requirement. With the bonus, the higher you build, the more affordable housing you'd get. She says that construction costs are typically around \$350/square foot, but you do get efficiencies from more floors. For example, you only have to build one basement and one roof, and you only have to purchase the land once. Affordable housing brings in less rent, and the question is where the turning point is. Based on Arlington rents for new buildings, Ms. Korman-Houston thinks the turning point is around 25% affordable at 80% Area Median Income (AMI), and 20% affordable at 60% AMI. She thinks that Arlington's 60% AMI requirement should be used for the bonus units, and that HUD affordable rents for the area are similar to market rents in existing (not new) apartments. Ms. Gruber asks Ms. Korman-Houston if she was considering an affordable housing bonus for the neighborhood multi-family district. Ms. Korman-Houston says the bonus is straight math, and could apply anywhere. The group needs to decide.

Mr. Newton asks if this analysis would hold for smaller projects, like six, ten, or fifteen units. Ms. Korman-Houston thinks the math is good for eighteen to twenty units, or larger. But things really change for projects smaller than that. Mr. Newton asks if there's a different bonus we could put together for smaller projects. Ms. Korman-Houston says she'd have to run the math. Mr. Lau thinks the magic number is 24 units, and affordable housing development doesn't make sense at smaller scales. He says these buildings typically require lots of 100'x200' and around four stories in height. Ms. Korman-Houston suggests having some bonus available for smaller projects -- it will either get used or not. She says the current proposal involves tiers of 15% at base zoning, then +7.5% for one additional story of development, then +2.5% for a second story. Ms. Korman-Houston thinks we could also go with 15%, then +5% and +5%. Ms. Gruber suggests going with +7.5% and +2.5%, if the math will work.

Mr. Lau says he's reluctant to go with less than four stories by right. Buildings shorter than four stories aren't required to have elevators, there are fewer accessibility requirements, and fewer options for aging in place. Mr. Newton says we're trying to put together a package, where the different pieces work together. He thinks the applicability of bonuses will change over time, and the analysis will have a shorter lifetime than the zoning itself. He thinks the bonuses will need to be periodically revisited. Mr. Newton also had concerns about what might be precluded in the setbacks. He's sensitive to the concern for getting less housing, but he wants fellow residents to feel excited about this proposal.

There's back and forth discussion about open space and setbacks.

Mr. Baudoin says he could support a 15' front setback requirement, but not 20'. He thinks 20' would be too substantive.

There's a motion to endorse 15' front yard setbacks in the neighborhood residential district. Motion passes 6--1 (Mr. Lau voted in the negative).

Mr. Baudoin thinks we're trying to force buildings back away from the street, in the hope that someone will use that space to provide a public benefit. He thinks that buildings on Mass Ave and Broadway are very low for the width of the street. Mr. Baudoin would prefer a 10' front setback on these streets, and have trees planted in the right of way. Ms. Gruber asks if SITES recommends a specific setback. Mr. Newton thinks it depends more on how the space is used. Mr. Revilak regularly travels down Broadway. There are a number of pillbox apartments along the street, with 15' setbacks. One has a tree in the front yard, and the others have lawns. Mr. Revilak thinks this feels okay. He tends to prefer small setbacks -- to him that feels like the building is stepping out to greet you -- but he thinks the 15' setbacks on these apartments are okay. Mr. Newton suggests offering setback relief when using SITES, because they have to meet other standards. Mr. Revilak has been looking at new construction in Somerville, and he's really impressed with the rain gardens that are being incorporated into projects there. He'd like to see something similar in Arlington. Ms. Korman-Houston asks if the setback could vary with the width of the street. For example, having larger setbacks on narrower streets. There's discussion about who would enforce standards like SITES. (It would be town staff, in one capacity or another.) Mr. Baudoin suggests not making setback relief part of site plan review.

There's a motion to endorse 10' front yard setbacks for residential buildings on Mass Ave and Broadway, and 0' setbacks if there's ground floor commercial. The motion fails, 3--4 (Ms. Gruber, Mr. Newton, Mr. Revilak, and Ms. Wiener voted in the negative).

There's a motion to endorse 15' front yard setbacks for residential buildings on Mass Ave and Broadway, with 0' setbacks if there's ground floor commercial. Motion passes, 4--3 (Mr. Baudoin, Ms. Korman-Houston, and Mr. Lau voted in the negative).

There's back and fourth about parking. Mr. Revilak reports that one of the ARB members expressed a preference for one space per dwelling unit, with the option for a 75% reduction via a transportation demand management plan. Mr. Revilak also notes that the compliance model interpreted the minimum parking requirement of zero as "no parking is built in the district at all", and that resulted in an over-estimate of capacity. The group agreed to using a minimum of 0.5 spaces/dwelling to model capacity, thinking that would more accurately reflect what gets built. The group still prefers a minimum of zero and a maximum of one space per dwelling, as discussed in a previous meeting.

Mr. Lau thinks it will be important for us to have an accurate count of existing dwelling units in the proposed district, so we understand the increase in capacity as well as the capacity itself.

There's discussion about heights, and what to do about the transition from the four-story neighborhood multi-family district, to existing 2.5 story districts. Mr. Revilak suggests a lower limit on multi-family parcels that border non-multi-family ones, in order to taper the height down. Ms. Ricker will work on a proposal for this.

Discuss working group report

Mr. Newton is interested in taking the lead on drafting the working group's final report. Mr. Baudoin, Ms. Gruber, Ms. Wiener, and Mr. Revilak are interested in helping out.

Next steps

The working group will definitely meet on August 15th.

The group may have an August 8th meeting, but this is still TBD.

Meeting adjourned.

Summary of Decision Points

This section lists decisions made and votes taken during the meeting of the MBTA Communities Working Group.

- The July 28th DPCD memo to the working group suggested considering larger commercial parcels for inclusion in the multi-family districts. The working group discussed this proposal, but decided not to do so. Working group members felt they'd been given a clear direction by the Arlington Redevelopment Board to omit parcels in the Business and Industrial districts. This decision was made without a formal vote.
- Shaina Korman-Houston and Laura Wiener provided the working group with a memo regarding affordable housing bonuses. The memo contained a 15% + 7.5% + 2.5% proposal, but there was also discussion of 15% + 5% + 5%. Members of the working group expressed a preference for 15% + 7.5% + 2.5%, assuming it was economically viable. This decision was made without a formal vote.
- Working group members supported the idea of having a (perhaps) different set of affordability bonuses that would be suitable for smaller projects, where economic and cost factors are significantly different. This decision was reached without a formal vote.
- The working group supported having 15' front yard setbacks in the neighborhood multi-family district, by a vote of 6-1 (Mr. Lau Voted in the negative).
- The working group declined a motion to support 10' front yard setbacks in the Mass Ave/Broadway district, by a vote of 3-4 (Ms. Gruber, Mr. Newton, Mr. Revilak, and Ms. Wiener voted in the negative).
- The working group supported having 15' front yard setbacks for residential-only buildings in the Mass/Ave Broadway corridor, by a vote of 4-3 (Mr. Baudoin, Ms. Korman-Houston, and Mr. Lau voted in the negative).

- The working group recommends using a minimum parking requirement of 0.5 spaces per dwelling unit, for modeling district capacity. This recommendation comes after realizing that a minimum parking requirement of 0 causes the model to assume that no parking is built in the district, and space not taken up by parking leads to an inflated capacity figure. (In terms of actual policy, the working group still supports minimum of 0 spaces/dwelling, and a maximum of 1 space/dwelling). This decision was reached without a formal vote.

Documents Reviewed

- *MBTA Communities Zoning Recommendations* memo from the Department of Planning and Community Development, dated July 28, 2023.
- *Criteria for Environmental Bonus in MBTA Communities Zoning* from David Morgan, Environmental Planner, dated July 31, 2023.
- *Affordable Housing Bonus Draft Proposal* from Laura Wiener and Shaina Korman-Houston, dated July 31, 2023.



TOWN OF ARLINGTON

MASSACHUSETTS 02476

781 - 316 - 3090

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

To: MBTA Communities Working Group (MBTACWG, "Working Group")
Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB)

From: Claire V. Ricker, AICP - Director of Planning and Community Development

Date: July 28, 2023

RE: MBTA Communities Zoning Recommendations

Introduction:

I am writing to provide additional information to the Working Group following your joint meetings with the ARB on July 24th and 25th and ahead of your August 1st meeting. This memo provides my suggested revisions to the proposal voted on by the Working Group on July 17th meeting, based on additional feedback received from the ARB and the public.

Proposal:

Subdistricts:

Mass Ave – properties with frontage on Mass Ave

Broadway – properties with frontage on Broadway

Neighborhood – properties within ~250' measured from the midline of Mass Ave or Broadway

Dimensional Controls:

Subdistrict	Setbacks			Stories
	Front	Side	Rear	
Mass Ave	15'	5'	20'	4
Broadway	15'	5'	20'	4
Neighborhood	15'	10'	20'	3.5

Bonuses:

Commercial – height and setback bonus for ground floor commercial

Affordable – height bonus for exceeding 15% affordable housing

Environmental – height bonus for "SITES Gold" certifiable (100 points)

Subdistrict	Bonuses			Max Stories (after Bonus)
	Commercial	Affordable	Environmental	
Mass Ave	+2 and 0' Front	+1	+1	6
Broadway	+1	+1	+1	5
Neighborhood	--	--	--	3.5

Discussion:

Setbacks:

Research has shown that a ten-foot setback may be enough to plant an ornamental tree, but in order to support and sustain a shade tree, a space of at least 15' by 15' is recommended. A minimum 15-foot setback for all properties in the zone will allow for the developer or future owner/tenants the opportunity to plant a tree. 15-foot setbacks are contextual to the neighborhoods currently under the overlay we're proposing, as well as being responsive to the urgent need to expand Arlington's urban tree canopy in East Arlington and along commercial corridors.

Other uses in the setbacks that the Working Group was concerned about at their July 17th meeting can be governed by definitions already included in the Zoning By-law (ZBL), and by clearly disallowing parking in the front setback under any conditions. The Working Group may also consider adding a permeable surface percentage to be applied to the setback, for example: Setback is required to have at minimum 50% permeable surface and 50% landscaped open space. DPCD also recommends that the "useable open space" requirement for currently conforming properties not apply to the MBTAC overlay district.

DPCD agrees that a zero-setback bonus makes sense for a project proposing street level commercial; DPCD recommends a step back at the fourth floor of any project as is currently required in the ZBL.

SITES Rating System for Development

The United States Green Building Council (USGBC) has several certification levels for real estate project development, the most well-known is LEED. While LEED was developed to guide building and neighborhood design, the central message of the SITES program is that any project holds the potential to protect, improve, and regenerate the benefits and services provided by healthy ecosystems. SITES provides guidance and incentives that can transform land development and management practices towards regenerative design. The SITES Rating System, and specifically its site-specific performance benchmarks, is based on the concept of ecosystem services; an understanding of natural processes; best practices in landscape architecture, ecological restoration, and related fields; and knowledge gained through peer-reviewed literature, case-study precedents, and SITES pilot projects. By achieving these benchmarks, a project will contribute to maintaining, supporting, and enhancing natural systems and the essential services they provide. DPCD recommends that an "open space bonus" be granted to developers whose projects achieve 85 points under the SITES rubric and be certifiable at the "gold" level (100 points) whether the developer seeks official SITES commissioning certification or not.

More information about SITES criteria can be found at <https://sustainablesites.org>.

Commercial Properties

To best facilitate short-term housing development in response to the current crisis, DPCD recommends SOME parcels currently zoned for business be included in the MBTAC zone on Massachusetts Avenue. As these are larger parcels with more capacity, the likelihood of these parcels siting 40B development instead of an ARB reviewable MBTAC development is not insignificant, and regardless of MBTAC zoning the Town will remain subject to 40B development for the foreseeable future. These larger parcels will also support utilization of the proposed bonuses, especially for open space, as the increased by-right allowable height should allow for more landscaped open space at the street level and on the building itself as vertical landscape and/or green roof. Multi-use is currently only developable in B districts via

special permit from the ARB with projects requiring a 20,000ft² parcel to build up to 5 stories. A parcel smaller than 20,000ft² is only allowed to build up to 4 stories. Furthermore, there are Floor Area Ratio maximums that also serve to curtail the overall size of projects.

DPCD recommends that business properties on parcels greater than 15,000ft² be evaluated for inclusion in the MBTAC zone. Parcels of that size are attractive to affordable housing developers who need larger parcels to build more units such that they can finance development deals. For example: To qualify for public funding via the sale of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), developments are generally expected to construct 30 units *at minimum* to make the project financially feasible and attractive to public funders.



TOWN OF ARLINGTON
MASSACHUSETTS

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

To: MBTA Communities Working Group

From: David Morgan, Environmental Planner

Date: July 31, 2023

Subject: Criteria for Environmental Bonus in MBTA Communities Zoning

Town plans reflect the need for development criteria that consider sustainability, climate resilience, and ecological land management.¹ Residents have underscored their support for these goals in conversations about MBTA Communities and made specific requests that the Town incorporate such aims in the zoning criteria. The Department of Planning and Community Development has explored options to this end and finds the SITES rating system by the Sustainable SITES Initiative to be the best framework to apply in the context of an MBTA Communities. The proposed bonus is of one additional floor for a Gold-level certifiable development on the SITES scale.

Like its companion rating system LEED, SITES has become a standard for landscape design and construction. SITES emphasizes the design, construction, and maintenance of outdoor spaces but, through its synergies with LEED, also ensures healthy and sustainable buildings. SITES is evaluated across ten categories and the system has a maximum score of 200 points.² A checklist of SITES prerequisites and credits is attached to this memo.

The criteria align well with Arlington's existing bylaws and regulations. The Town's requirements ensure that compliance with SITES is easily within reach. Major developments are already typically asked to manage precipitation beyond the baseline, to provide bike and pedestrian friendly transit options, and to landscape with ecologically appropriate species—all of which are SITES criteria.

The proposed MBTA Communities zoning is further compatible with SITES. Prerequisites like protecting floodplain function, conserving aquatic ecosystems, and conserving habitats for sensitive species are accomplished owing simply to the location of MBTA Communities zoning districts. Additional SITES points are awarded for redevelopment of degraded parcels, infill

¹ The Arlington Master Plan, Net Zero Action Plan, Hazard Mitigation Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, and Public Land Management plans have action items related to working with private actors to realize the Town's goals on these topics.

² Site context (13 points), Pre-design assessment and planning (3), Site design – Water (23), Site design – Soil + Vegetation (40), Site design – Materials Selection (41), Site design – Human Health + Well-Being (30), Construction (17), Operations + Maintenance (22), Education + Performance Monitoring (11), Innovation or Exemplary Performance (9)

development, connection to multimodal transit networks, and preserving historic features, all of which are applicable to the districts.

SITES is a suitable system for this context because it incentivizes outcomes that the Town wishes to see but does not yet have the capacity to require. For example, residents have requested features like public, accessible site use (e.g., in the form of pocket parks) be required in the MBTA Communities districts. SITES helps to realize this goal by awarding points to the creation of open space where residents can sit in landscaped outdoor areas, enjoy green streetscapes, and enjoy the benefits of those amenities, like physical activity, mental restoration, enhanced social connection, and equitable site use. Beyond the existing Stormwater Bylaw, Arlington's Engineering Division advises redevelopment projects to manage precipitation on site beyond the baseline and finds that designs can be achieved easily and cost-effectively that meet the 95th percentile precipitation event, in part through the design of functional stormwater features as amenities (e.g., rain gardens). Both best practices are SITES credits.

Even with such strong alignment, it will be necessary to adapt the SITES scorecard for use in Arlington. Certain landscape features to be conserved or enhanced under SITES are not present in the MBTA Communities districts—healthy soils and appropriate vegetation, special status species, to name a couple—while, at the opposite end of the spectrum, some criteria are not required under SITES that are essential to Town goals, such as reducing urban heat island effects. In addition to the standard scorecard, a modified SITES checklist that has been tailored for use in Arlington is attached to this memo for your consideration.

DPCD requests that a one floor bonus be awarded within the MBTA Communities districts for developments that meet a SITES minimum score of 100 of 200 (Gold Level). The modified checklist is tailored to Town plans and priorities and instead has a maximum score of 100. Minimum compliance across all categories will achieve 76 points. Gold Level compliance is set at 80 points.

DPCD recommends that site plan review for SITES compliance and ongoing reporting be received, assessed, and recorded by Department staff. Successful implementation of these criteria will require that new owners be appraised of the requirements. DPCD recommends that notice of the requirements run with the land and be recorded with the title for the property.

To: MBTA Communities Working Group
 From: Laura Wiener and Shaina Korman-Houston
 RE: Affordable Housing Bonus Draft Proposal
 Date: 7/31/2023

The Working Group voted to include a height bonus (of one story) for affordable housing above the 15% required in the present Zoning Bylaw. This assumes that EOHLC (formerly DHCD) allows the Town to increase the inclusionary zoning over 10%.

The per unit cost to build a 4-story building is greater than for a 5 or 6 story building, because some of the costs are fixed (i.e. land cost) and some may go up but not as much (i.e. soft costs like architectural fees; and some construction costs like site work, foundations, elevators, and the roof). Therefore, building higher is a more cost-efficient way to provide housing. It is also more environmentally sustainable in that it uses less land per unit. It costs an estimated 10 – 12% per floor to increase the kind of moderately-sized building we anticipate would be common in this district from a 4-story building (40 units) to a 6-story building (60 units). This compares with 33% increase in units. We propose that some of those cost savings would make it financially feasible for a developer to provide additional affordable units, with lower rents for income-qualified residents.

This proposal is to offer a single story bonus for providing an additional 7.5% affordable units, and a two-story bonus for providing 10% affordable units, over what is required by our current zoning bylaw, up to 2 additional stories along Mass. Ave, up to one or two additional stories along Broadway, and one additional story in the neighborhoods, resulting in the following:

Mass. Ave. Multi-Family District

Assumption:

Units/floor	10	Total					
	Stories	Total Units	Required 15%	Bonus 7.5%	Bonus 2.5%	Affordable	% Aff.
Allowed by right	4	40	6	0	0	6	15%
+1 story	5	50	8	4	0	12	22.5%
+2 stories	6	60	9	5	1	15	25%

Broadway Multi-Family District

Units/floor	10	Total					
	Stories	Total Units	15%	Boost 7.5%	Boost 7.5%	Affordable	% Aff.
Allowed by right	3	30	5	0	0	5	15%
+1 story	4	40	6	3	0	9	22.5%
+2 stories	5	50	8	4	1	13	25%

Currently, the average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in Arlington is approximately \$2,875. Comparing only to newer apartment buildings, however, suggests \$3,500 is a better comparable rent for projects developed under MBTA Communities zoning. Affordable rents, as defined by Arlington’s Inclusionary Development bylaw (60% area median income) are \$2,004. At these levels, the proposed density bonuses with affordability requirements should be attractive enough to attract market rate developers to take advantage of the bonuses.

	units	Required 15%	Boost 7.5%	Boost 2.5%	Increased Income
Floors 1-4	40	6	0	0	
Floor 5	50	8	4	0	17.50%
Floor 6	60	9	4	2	19.50%