

Inserted at the request of Joanne Cullinane, precinct 21



October 2, 2023

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Town of Arlington
730 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476

Dear Member of the Arlington Redevelopment Board,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce has long been committed to the prosperity and growth of our local businesses and the vitality of our community. We believe that updated zoning ordinances that encourage economic development can play a pivotal role in fostering a vibrant and sustainable community.

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce believes that the MBTA Working Group's proposal presents a strong plan for both housing and commercial growth. Arlington's existing and future small businesses will benefit from an increased customer base and foot traffic resulting from additional housing units.

The Chamber supports incentivizing mixed-use development - on both the first and second floors - of five and six-story buildings along Broadway and Mass Ave respectively. Arlington is in need of higher quality commercial space to attract a desirable mix of retail and commercial businesses. However, we urge the board to consider increasing the first floor percentage requirement on zero foot setback buildings and incentivize second floor commercial space to create an active ground floor design and promote a lively pedestrian streetscape. We are concerned that, in most cases, the 60% requirement will result in spaces that are too small for the types of businesses and retail that support needs of the local population.

The Chamber also supports the idea of excluding parcels on Mass Ave., east of Orvis Road, from MBTA communities overlay in favor of a future master plan focused specifically on protecting small businesses, reinforcing the area's character, and requiring standards for quality storefronts.

In closing, we thank you for your dedication to our community and working to achieve smart growth options that both meet the MBTA Community guidelines and increase housing availability in the town of Arlington. Given the small portion of available commercial space in our town, we ask the select board to maintain their focus on preserving available spaces for business and enhancing those available in the future, and leveraging zoning changes to lower

the barriers for economic development. We also urge you to consider those aspects of the upcoming zoning changes that will support future economic growth to not only accommodate population growth, but also to create a thriving and dynamic economic climate that makes Arlington a desirable place to live, work, shop, and visit.

Sincerely,

Beth Locke

Beth Locke
Executive Director
on behalf of Chamber Board of Directors