

From: Curtis Rising
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 11:14 AM
To: Gail Hunter <HunterG@manchester.ma.us>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] - Input to the MBTA Zoning task force

Gail Hunter - Please convey this message to the MBTA zoning task force and anyone else, as appropriate.

First, I want to thank the task force for its efforts. I apologize that I have not been able to attend or participate in this project thus far, as I have had a health issue. I wanted to send three observations about the current MBTA Zoning project.

1) In looking at the map currently posted on thecricket.com ("MBTA Zoning Task Force narrows its scope"), I see a yellow circle of half-mile radius with the center point at the train station. There is a village half of the circle, (generally) North of the tracks. There is an ocean half of the circle, (generally) South of the tracks. The North side of the tracks is a very small, already-dense village with high climate vulnerability and limited parking. South of the tracks, there is a sparsely-settled district with large lots. The exceptions to this are that North of the tracks there are some larger lots in the Spy Rock Hill area and that South of the tracks there are some smaller lots on Tappan Street. Currently, the task force's narrowing effort has led to all of the potential rezoning being on the North side of the tracks. I would challenge the task force and our town to ensure that, if we were to proceed with fitting our town to the MBTA's plan, that there is a balance and not a complete imbalance between housing development efforts in the two halves of this half-mile circle. The current proposal is not fair and looks bias to me. If the assumption is that larger, sometimes multi-acre, single-family estates cannot be divided or developed, we need to look at the roots and implications of this assumption. Are we protecting estates that have the most housing potential at the expense of the village? I understand that some of the rezoning may happen outside of the circle but I think that we will regret it if the housing development efforts inside the circle are not more equally distributed across the tracks.

2) We should add a layer to the mapping and publicizing of rezoning proposals, how we display housing development potential going forward.

Having served on the Conservation Commission, I know the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act, the Riverfront Area prohibitions and the specific town conservation rules that are enforced. The town would have a better sense of the suitability of the specific districts and the viability of the overall rezoning proposal and housing potential if the wetlands and other environmental policy layers were mapped over the rezoning proposals, and if the proposals were not entirely defined by property lines. Because this rezoning and development would be long-term, mapping these environmental protections needs to be dynamic and include climate trends, sea level rise projections and other environmental change data. Our decision making needs to fully

account for significant future changes to this coastal town.

3) I would like to understand the rationale for excluding the entire General District, a 94.8 acre area. Wouldn't this district or part of it provide some MBTA-aligned housing opportunities? As an example, #8 of the task force's "Guiding Principles for Selecting Districts" is "Consider residential use above first floor commercial uses." It seems that not including the General District, or at least some of it, limits the town's options.

Again, thank you for your work. I hope to attend upcoming meetings.

Best,
Curtis Rising
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Manchester, MA