

Members of SLIPAC,

I am writing to provide some thoughts and support I have for the proposed zoning changes in South Lincoln that stretch from the MBTA station and mall to my home on Greenridge Ln. As a very new resident I unfortunately have little historical perspective on the progression of zoning and development in Lincoln but I have done my best to understand some of the more recent plans. While I may not be able to comment on the past I feel the need to do my part to help envision the future ahead.

Prior to moving to Lincoln we lived in Somerville. We were only able to move here due to the presence of the relatively affordable but still \$500k+ condos. In their present form these communities could not be more different. Still there were some scaled down similarities that drew us specifically to South Lincoln such as access to the commuter rail and the ability to walk to businesses at the mall. Incidentally these similarities have emerged as trends amongst people in my "Millennial" peer group which recently achieved the distinction of becoming the largest living adult generation. 40% of Millennials are African American, Latino, Asian or racially mixed. Immigrants are a driving force behind population growth trends. The motivation for sending you my thoughts is in large part due to reflections I've had after settling into a town that severely lacks diversity (racial, economic, cultural, educational attainment, etc.). Thanks to Planning Board presentations I now know that 38% of Lincoln families are among the top 3% of income earners in the country, a sobering figure when you consider how so many working families are being left behind. The ability of a community to grow requires periodic self-reflection and re-evaluation to determine how it will plan for the future. That time is right now.

No generation is without struggle, but in a post 2008 world we have grappled with issues of economic disparity and misfortune that drastically impacted our outlook. These changes are now guiding local and regional planning and development. We are not averse to more dense and compact living arrangements or the sharing of public space. We are increasingly shunning automobiles as a primary means of transportation in favor of mass transit and spontaneous ride/car sharing. The impacts of climate change are rapidly becoming apparent and will only become more dire as my generation ages. We have lived in and are living through a time of great technological advancement, shifting consumer trends and economic dislocation. This has been a growing issue in Greater Boston and it is being accelerated by the COVID pandemic.

According to the 2019 Greater Boston Housing Report Card the region has not acceptably kept up with its responsibility of increasing housing supply. It currently depends on older housing stock and we have effectively run out of buildable land. Our neighboring towns are largely single family oriented. This issue is exacerbated in Lincoln due to what can only be described as exclusionary and unjust zoning practices. These zoning practices are a significant hindrance to the growth of a town not doing its part to assist with regional housing needs. It stifles the ability to represent locally our shifting demographic trends.

Whatever past and present decisions that led to the existing affordable and multi-family housing in South Lincoln and beyond deserve praise and did their part to address problems that existed at the time. A whole new set of circumstances and problems now exist which require the kind of vision I believe SLIPAC is capable of steering. Please consider that educating the public is an important part of gaining momentum. (ex. 200 new units doesn't mean 200 new cars and parking spaces, new medium and larger scale developments strengthen our compliance with legal obligations, the conservation land Lincoln so deeply values forces tough decisions when it comes to smart development, etc.). Residents may be unfamiliar with the ability to leverage both existing programs and potential new measures that may develop as a result of future political administrations. Critically, awareness should be raised on how development is tied to zoning requirements we formulate and how we have the ability to steer the ship on extracting concessions from potential developers.

I personally envision a South Lincoln that is affordable across all income levels, physically accessible to people of all ages and ability. There can be options for any household makeup and structure. A stretch goal of 20% affordable units can be made if it is an economically viable option. It can be a place that more accurately represents the unstoppable shifting trends in society. Renters, owners, and local businesses will be able to sustain each other in a space that has been built to the highest achievable environmental standards. I'd love to see an out of town visitor arrive at the train station to take a dockless bike on a shared street to deCordova. Maybe someone on their way to Codman Farm could pull their car into a town owned charging stall powered by solar canopies.

The town is no stranger to change having seen the construction of Hanscom in the 1940s and the big shift from agricultural land use in the following years. Construction of a new state of the art school indicates to me a clear support for investment in the future. The town has a moral obligation to be bold in facilitating Lincoln's next steps. Thank you for the work you do for the town and for volunteering your time.

Sincerely,

Chris McCarthy

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