



January 23, 2014

Dear Rep. Garbally and Rep. Rogers,

Sustainable Arlington acts on a local level to promote climate stabilization and other important environmental goals. For almost 15 years, our members have been actively engaged in a range of initiatives to mitigate climate change and improve the local environment, including recent efforts establishing Arlington's first rain garden and working with the Mystic River Watershed Association on additional rain garden in some of Arlington's public spaces to reduce runoff and prevent flooding. Arlington Public Works leads a Stormwater Awareness series specifically to draw attention to what residents can do to help mitigate flooding. Preventing increased flooding is an important environmental goal for us and for our community, especially since climate change is likely to exacerbate flooding.

The Cambridge-based planned additional hotel development in the Alewife flood zone may have irreversible consequences to our East Arlington residents. The City of Cambridge is conducting a vulnerability assessment to help guide adaptation planning around the impacts of climate change, including flooding. The study's projected completion is in six months. Sustainable Arlington would like to know, how will the results of this assessment be adequately factored into stormwater management for the development if the permitting for the project is allowed to go through before the study is completed?

Do our elected officials feel confident that this increased displacement of stormwater has been sufficiently planned for? If East Arlington residents experience increased flooding, already a costly problem, will they be compensated by the developers? Will Arlington taxpayers bear the costs associated with increased flood damage? Will the property values in East Arlington decline? Will there be health and safety issues (e.g., standing water, increased mosquito populations) that will strain our public health services? Will our most vulnerable residents, those living in some of our more affordable housing, for example, be disproportionately impacted by flooding?

East Arlington is particularly vulnerable to the effects of flooding. With less permeable ground to absorb stormwater in Cambridge as the result of large-scale commercial development, what do the floodplain and topographical maps tell us about where this water will end up? What safeguards and regulations exist at the state level that protect one community from the consequences of development in an adjacent community?

Sustainable Arlington would like to hear from our Representatives on this matter.

Respectfully,

Arlington Vision 2020's Sustainable Arlington