

Arlington Housing Production Plan Community Engagement Plan

This Community Engagement Plan is an internal working document used by the consultant team, Advisory Committee (Housing Plan Implementation Committee/HPIC), and the Town of Arlington to guide public outreach and communications in coordination with major project milestones for the Housing Production Plan.

Key Project Information

Timeline	April 2021 to December 2021
Staff Contact	Jenny Raitt jraitt@arlington.ma.us 781-316-3091
Advisory Committee	Housing Plan Implementation Committee
Consultants	Barrett Planning Group LLC Judi Barrett; judi@barrettplanningllc.com Alexis Lanzillotta; alexis@barrettplanningllc.com Horsley Witten Group Nate Kelly; nkelly@horsleywitten.com Jeff Davis; jdavis@horsleywitten.com

Timeline of Community Engagement

ESTABLISHMENT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Timeline: Complete

The Town will finalize the identification of the Housing Plan Implementation Committee (HPIC) as the de facto Advisory Committee, with the possibility of bringing on additional members if needed.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #1

Timeline: May HPIC Meeting

During this first committee meeting, BPG/HW will:

- Discuss the HPIC's charge and individual roles;
- Provide a project timeline;

- Review Work Plan (to be given to HPIC in advance);
- Review question(s) for first virtual engagement opportunity; and
- Discuss focus groups and community forum

WEBPAGE UPDATE & ONLINE ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY

Timeline: Prior to Press Release

The HPIC's webpage should serve as a clearinghouse for project updates so that there is one agreed-upon place to direct people with questions. To start, the page should include:

- A brief outline of the project, including primary contact information, list of HPIC members, consultant information, and a project timeline;
- A link to an online Q+A opportunity (e.g., Padlet) with question(s) for public response; and
- Save-the-Date information about first community meeting.

BPG will prepare a large poster to be displayed in designated areas (depending on what is open to the public) that will include a QR code taking people to the HPIC webpage. This should be displayed at minimum from when the page is ready for public eyes until the first community meeting.

PRESS RELEASE #1

Timeline: By May 12, 2021

The first press release will explain the project, share the webpage, and promote the first community meeting.

FOCUS GROUPS

Timeline: Invitations out by May 10, 2021; Focus Groups conducted prior to Community Meeting

BPG/HW will conduct virtual, by-invite focus groups and interviews over a two-day period. Participants will be given several times to choose from and receive questions in advance. BPG/HW will provide a summary of takeaways to Town staff and the HPIC within two weeks after the focus groups.

COMMUNITY MEETING #1

Timeline: June 9, 2021

Town staff will introduce the project, HPIC, and consultants to attendees, and then the consultants will present existing conditions (including the current HPP and work achieved to date), a description of an HPP, community demographics and housing profile in Arlington, and initial takeaways from focus groups and feedback from the online Q+A. The meeting will include ample opportunities for public input, including polls and breakout group discussions facilitated by the consultants and HPIC members comfortable with leading a group. Barrett Planning Group will prepare the presentation, a draft agenda, and a flyer or graphic for distribution. At minimum this should be used in social media posts, but can also be printed and distributed by HPIC members.



ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #2

Timeline: June or July HPIC Meeting

During this meeting, BPG/HW will:

- Discuss feedback provided through focus groups, the online Q+A, and the first community meeting;
- Present preliminary Needs Assessment findings;
- Plan the second community meeting; and
- Review questions for online implementation survey (to be launched following second community meeting).

PRESS RELEASE #2/WEBPAGE UPDATE

Timeline: Two Weeks Prior to Community Meeting #2

The second press release will provide project updates, promote the second community meeting, and share information about the upcoming implementation survey. This will also serve as an update to the

MAJOR PROJECT MILESTONE

Draft Needs Assessment & Draft Goals Complete by August 6, 2021

Barrett Planning Group will provide the HPIC and Town Staff with a Comments Resolution Matrix to provide feedback on the Draft Needs Assessment.

project/HPIC webpage.

COMMUNITY MEETING #2

Timeline: September 2021

The second community meeting allows BPG/HW to present the findings of the Needs Assessment and draft goals. Participants will be able to provide input and will also be given information about the online implementation survey. Barrett Planning Group will prepare the presentation, a draft agenda, and a flyer or graphic for distribution. At minimum this should be used in social media posts, but can also be printed and distributed by HPIC members.

ONLINE IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY

Timeline: Launched Following Community Meeting #2; Open for Two Weeks

This survey will outline each draft goal as well as strategies for consideration. Respondents will be asked to rank the strategies, and the findings of this survey will inform the draft implementation plan.

BPG will prepare a large poster to be displayed in designated areas (depending on what is open to public) that will include QR codes taking people to the survey and the project/HPIC webpage. This should be displayed at minimum from when the survey is ready until the third public meeting.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #3

Timeline: HPIC September Meeting

During the final advisory committee meeting, HPIC members will discuss potential recommendations and provide suggestions for the final community meeting.

MAJOR PROJECT MILESTONE

Draft Strategies & Implementation Plan Complete by September 10, 2021

Barrett Planning Group will provide the HPIC and Town Staff with a Comments Resolution Matrix to provide feedback on the Draft Implementation Plan.

PRESS RELEASE #3/WEBPAGE UPDATE

Timeline: Two Weeks Prior to Community Meeting #3

The final press release will provide project updates and promote the final community meeting. This will also serve as an update to the project/HPIC webpage.

COMMUNITY MEETING #3

Timeline: October 2021

BPG/HW will present the draft implementation plan to the public, including an overview of the public input and that led to its development. Barrett Planning Group will prepare the presentation, a draft agenda, and a flyer or graphic for distribution. At minimum this should be used in social media posts, but can also be printed and distributed by HPIC members.

MAJOR PROJECT MILESTONE

Draft Housing Production Plan by October 15, 2021

Barrett Planning Group will provide Town Staff with a Draft Housing Production Plan to present to the Select Board and Arlington Redevelopment Board.

JOINT PRESENTATION TO SELECT BOARD & ARLINGTON REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

Timeline: By October 29, 2021

Barrett Planning Group will prepare the presentation and a draft agenda. Town staff will lead the presentation, with consultants available for questions.

Outreach

MEDIA OUTREACH

As outlined previously, Barrett Planning Group will draft three press releases (also to be posted to the project/HPIC webpage).



TARGETED COMMUNITY GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND TOWN DEPARTMENTS

Keeping a running list of community groups and organizations that should receive announcements about the HPP is critical. Organizations can be asked to distribute announcements to their members or post on their website, online calendar, or social media presence. This list should include those that have physical or digital newsletters or email distribution lists. Identifying an HPIC member that will be the primary contact and reach out to the group/organization will ensure that everyone is contacted. Note that contact information (emails, phone numbers, etc.) is available in a separate file.

List of Targeted Community Groups, Organizations, and Town Departments

ArCS Cluster	Calvary Church, United Methodist
Arlington 360	Caritas Communities
Arlington Assessor	Century 21
Arlington Boys and Girls Club	Chamber of Commerce
Arlington Community Development Block Grant Program	Church of Our Savior
Arlington CDBG Subcommittee	Drikung Meditation Center
Arlington Community Preservation Act Committee	East Arlington Livable Streets (EALS)
Arlington Council on Aging	East Arlington Merchant's Group
Arlington Department of Public Works	Envision Arlington
Arlington Disability Commission	Envision Arlington Diversity Task Group
Arlington Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Equitable Arlington
Arlington EATS	Fenway Health / AIDS Action Committee
Arlington Fights Racism	Fidelity House
Arlington Fire Department	First Baptist Church of Arlington
Arlington Gardens	First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington
Arlington Health and Human Services	FoodLink
Arlington Health Department	Greater Boston Legal Services
Arlington Heights Neighborhood Action Plan Committee	Highrock Covenant Church
Arlington Historical Commission (AHC)	Homelessness Task Force
Arlington Historic Districts Commission (AHDC)	Housing Corporation of Arlington
Arlington Housing Implementation Committee	Institute for Human Centered Design
Arlington Housing Authority & Property Managers	Mass Senior Action Council - Malden
Arlington Human Rights Commission	Metro North Workforce Board
Arlington Inspectional Services	Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Arlington Master Plan Implementation Committee	Park Avenue Congregational Church
Arlington Municipal Vulnerability Committee	Respond, Inc.
Arlington Planning & Community Development	Sotheby's
Arlington Police Department	St. Agnes Parish
Arlington PD, Homelessness Task Force	St. Athanasius the Great Greek Orthodox Church
Arlington PD, Mental Health Clinician	St. Camillus
Arlington Public Schools	St. John's Episcopal Church

Arlington Public Schools, ELL Program	St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church
Arlington Public Schools, Food Services	Support Arlington Center
Arlington Recreation Department	Support Arlington Heights
Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB)	Sustainable Arlington
Arlington Residents for Responsible Redevelopment	Triangle Inc.
Arlington Veteran Service Officer	Trinity Baptist Church
Arlington Youth Counseling Center	Steve McKenna & The Home Advantage Team
Boston Church of Christ	Zoning Board of Appeals
Brigham Square	

Methods

During the first committee meeting, BPG/HW, Town staff, and the HPIC can determine which methods will work best for this engagement. In addition to the methods outlined above, other techniques worth exploring include:

Posters: Posters are generally 24x36 or 18x24 and typically require mounting on/clipping to foam core and an easel for display at Town Hall, schools, libraries, and other locations. Barrett Planning Group can prepare and print these posters, but any printed visual materials would need to be delivered all at once and to one point of contact. As such, any posters would need to be prepared and approved at the outset of this process.

Email List: E-News can be distributed to individuals' emails collected during public input events or any other existing email lists the Town may have access to.

Email Signature: Town Staff and HPIC may consider adding brief "advertisements" to their email signatures, encouraging people to visit the project website or an upcoming public event (this would be attached to all outgoing e-mail messages).

"Arlington is updating its Housing Plan! Visit the [Housing Plan Implementation Committee page](#) to learn more!"

Town's Website: Post information/updates about the project on the Town's website and calendar of events page that directs people to the project website.

Social Media: Postings should come from the Town's Facebook page and Twitter account, and HPIC members should share directly from these posts to increase activity and visibility. A list of posts can be prepared ahead of time for continuous and consistent messaging.

Personal Announcements/Piggyback at Other Meetings: Town Staff and HPIC members frequently participate in other town meetings or community group events. Asking for an opportunity to make announcement about an upcoming event or public input opportunity can help spread the word to individuals that might not have heard otherwise.



Town Bulletin Boards/Alerts: Barrett Planning Group will be preparing flyers for the community meetings. These can be printed and displayed on bulletin boards around Town. During the first committee meeting, HPIC members and Town staff can sign up for distributing flyers for each of these events based on their community connections.

Messaging

To ensure that all Advisory Committee members are sharing the same message about the HPP and the update process, the following are primary talking points to use as an “elevator speech.”

- **Ensure your voice is heard.** An HPP is both data-driven and shaped by the community. Everyone is invited to participate through an open and transparent process.
- **Support the Town's prioritization of affordable housing!** Town Meeting recently voted to establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund (2020) and a Real Estate Transfer Fee (2021) as a revenue source for this fund. These measures affirm the Town's commitment to increasing affordable and middle-income housing opportunities, and the Housing Plan will build on this momentum.
- **Engage in Town-wide conversations relating to fair housing and equity in Arlington.** The Town's in-progress Fair Housing Plan will likely inform the recommendations of the Housing Plan, and the scheduled July Community Conversation on Fair Housing will also meaningfully support this effort. The link between barriers to fair housing and affordable housing should be further explored as Arlington examines its role in addressing broader inequities.
- **The Housing Plan provides guidance to Town staff, commissions, boards, and other groups on the continued progress toward the housing goals of the Town's 2015 Master Plan and the 2016 Housing Production Plan.** While there has been progress toward these goals and recommendations (e.g., the establishment of an Affordable Housing Trust, recently approved Real Estate Transfer Fee, and zoning bylaw amendments to allow mixed-use and certain parking reductions, etc.), other zoning amendments relating to housing production were paused to allow for further public engagement. Contributing to this current effort will allow the Town to re-examine some of these previously identified strategies that have not yet been implemented and consider them with additional community input.
- **The Housing Plan, once approved by DHCD, will serve as an HPP and ensure that the Town's Zoning Board of Appeals decisions on comprehensive permit (i.e., 40B) applications will be deemed “consistent with local needs.”** This means that if the ZBA denies a comprehensive permit for one or up to two years, the Housing Appeals Committee will uphold this decision.