

# Welcome to the Arlington Housing Plan Meeting-in-a Box, Round 2!

Thank you for agreeing to host a community conversation for your friends and neighbors! This kit has prepared kit includes the basic materials you need to conduct your meeting and provide feedback to the Town. You should find the following items in the packet. If something is missing, please contact Kelly Lynema, Senior Planner, Department of Planning and Community Development, at [KLynema@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:KLynema@town.arlington.ma.us).



**Instructions for you, the host:**

- Process Overview
- Sample Meeting Agenda
- Sample Invitation

**Materials for you to distribute at the meeting:**

	Title	Page Numbers
Sheet A	Sign-in Sheet for Facilitators/Note Takers	p.7
Sheet B	Sign-in Sheet for Participants	p.9
Sheet C	Meeting Agenda	p.11
Sheet D	Arlington Housing Plan Overview	p.13-14
Sheet E	Discussion Worksheets	p.15-23

Remember to bring enough copies of each sheet for your participants!

**Additional items you will need:**

- Pens/pencils
- Flip chart (or other paper for taking notes), markers, and tape
- Return envelope

# Instructions for Meeting Host

## Process Overview

### 1. Invite

- Identify people or groups that you want to invite to your Meeting in a Box. (Plan on one facilitator for every 8-12 people in a small-group discussion).
- Send the meeting invitation via e-mail or mail or call invitees.

### 2. Remind

- Call and/or e-mail the people you invited 1-2 days before the scheduled meeting.

### 3. Set up

- Select a location where all participants can comfortably sit, ideally in a circle.
- Sort copies of meeting materials into sets for participants.
- Have enough pens/pencils available.

### 4. Maintain Sign-in Sheets

- Make sure facilitators and note-takers sign in on Sheet A (p.7)
- And, ask attendees to sign in on Sheet B (p.9). There is space on Sheet B to ask to be added to a list for future information about the Arlington Housing Plan.

### 5. Facilitate

- Lead a small-group discussion, making sure the meeting stays on topic and all discussion questions are answered.

### 6. Return

- Collect all materials, including the individual worksheets and feedback sheets from each participant, and make sure each sheet is labeled with the meeting code (see details under "Host Instructions").
- Package them together and return the response packet to the address provided on the return information sheet. Please recycle any unused materials.

## Group Logistics

These meetings are designed to encourage conversation. The host is responsible for coordinating all aspects of the meeting. If you host a large meeting, we suggest that you break into groups of 8-12 people and ask for a facilitator and note-taker for each group. The facilitator (who could also be the host) is responsible for keeping the conversation focused and ensuring everyone has a chance to speak. The note-taker takes notes throughout the discussion. If you do break into groups, please name/number the groups and indicate this on the discussion notes.

## Suggested Meeting Schedule


The agenda and instructions below are guidelines for you as facilitator.

### Welcome & Introductions (10 - 15 Minutes)

After distributing the meeting agenda (Sheet C, p.11), take a few minutes at the beginning of the meeting for introductions. Ask people to tell something about themselves in addition to their name (e.g., their neighborhood, any affiliations, their interest in the Arlington Housing Plan, etc.) so that everyone gets a better sense of who is participating and why.

### Meeting Overview


Briefly review the information on the meeting agenda (Sheet C, p.11).  
Go over the purpose of the meeting with participants:

 Hand out **Sheet C**.

- To increase participation in providing suggestions regarding goals and strategies for the 2021 Housing Plan.
- To include as many voices as possible in the Arlington Housing Plan process.

### What is the Arlington Housing Plan?

Briefly review the Arlington Housing Plan overview (Sheet D, p13-14).


 Hand out **Sheet D**.

### Meeting Input

Explain how meeting input will be used. Suggested text: "The Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development and Housing Plan Implementation Committee will use public input to develop goals and strategies for the Arlington Housing Plan. These goals and strategies must follow state requirements but should also address Arlington's unique needs, which is why resident participation is so important."

### Group Discussion Guidelines

- Review the suggested discussion guidelines or ask the group to brainstorm guidelines that will help everyone to participate. Ask if anyone has any questions and if everyone agrees to the discussion guidelines. Clarify as needed and address any concerns. Ask if the group needs anything else to help stay focused and have an effective meeting.
- Suggested discussion guidelines:
  - Everyone should have an equal opportunity to talk and be heard.
  - Keep the conversation on topic.
  - Listen to others and avoid criticizing.
  - Respect limited time and keep your answers to the point.
- Be honest and try to understand other viewpoints.
- It's ok to disagree.
- Try not to interrupt the facilitator or other group members.
- Cell phones on silent.

 Hand out **Sheet E**.

### **Discussion Prompts (60 Minutes)**

Hand out Sheet E (p.15-23). The discussion should take approximately 60 minutes (likely 20-25 minutes for the first question and 35-40 minutes for the second question). **The discussion prompts should occupy most of the meeting time.** Begin by going over Question 1 with your attendees.

#### **Prompt 1: 2016 Plan Goals - Where Are We?**

The 2016 Housing Production Plan included six qualitative goals. In this exercise, you will be asked to review these goals and consider whether they are still applicable and have relevance to this plan update.

1. Read the goals out loud ask if anyone has questions.
2. Give participants a couple of minutes to think about each goal and list answers on their worksheet before beginning to go around the group for answers. Participants may fill out the worksheet as individuals or in pairs, whichever they prefer. **Let them know they do not need to respond to each goal.**
3. Ask for a volunteer to start the go-around. Ask for one or two thoughts per person. Then go around the group from that person. It's ok to pass if a person is not ready when it's their turn. Once you get around the circle, be sure to go back to anyone who didn't speak yet. After everyone has spoken, go back to anyone who has an additional thought that didn't come up.
4. During this time, the note-taker should write down each of the thoughts, ideally on a flip chart or large piece of paper taped to the wall so everyone can see. Alternatively, the note-taker can type and project onto a screen if available. Ask the note-taker to use participants' words rather than edit or change them.
5. You – the host – are also a participant and you can share your opinions as an equal member of the discussion, but make sure everyone has a chance to express his/her opinion.
6. After everyone has had a chance to speak, briefly review all thoughts the group generated. Then, ask the participants to write on their worksheet the three 2016 goals that are most relevant to this plan from among all the thoughts generated during the discussion. Remind them that they can pick thoughts they initially offered or those that other people offered.

**NOTE: This is not an attempt to build a group agreement on the top ideas. There is no need to try to get the group to agree.**

**Prompt 2: 2021 Goals and Strategies Brainstorm**

This housing plan will include both overarching goals as well as specific strategies in support of those goals. DHCD has specific requirements for what these goals and strategies must address, so in this next exercise we will review these requirements and brainstorm goals and strategies that both follow these requirements and are specific to Arlington.

Repeat the above process for the second discussion prompt. **Let participants know they do not need to respond to each DHCD strategy but are encouraged to think about them all.** After everyone has had a chance to speak, briefly review all thoughts the group generated. Then, ask the participants to write on their worksheet the top three goals or strategies that this plan update should cover. they can pick thoughts they initially offered or those that other people offered

**Wrap-Up** (15 minutes)

If you have divided participants into small groups, reconvene the larger group. See if there are any issues or concerns that seemed to be mentioned by many participants in the meeting.

**Next Steps**

**Sorting Meeting Materials**

After the meeting, package up the materials for return. Sort the materials into sets, keeping like items together:

- Sign-in sheets (**Sheets A and B**)
- Group discussion materials (if you had more than one group, keep each group’s materials together):
- Group discussion notes
- Participant worksheets (**Sheet E**)

Assign a code to your meeting following the instructions below. **Enter this code into the appropriate boxes on all the materials that you will need to return to the Town.**

FIRST THREE SPACES: Your initials

NEXT FOUR SPACES: Month and day of your event (e.g., “0418” for April 18th)

The code box is always located at the top of the page and it looks like this:

Code:
-------

Information for Meeting Host  
ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN

**Meeting Summary**

Write up a summary of meeting notes. The summary can be bullet points listing the main ideas participants. If possible, try to group the ideas by type or theme. Provide highlights of the meeting.

**Returning Materials**

Please mail, scan and e-mail, or hand deliver all participant and group response materials **within seven (7) days** to:

Kelly Lynema, Senior Planner  
Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development  
730 Mass. Ave Annex  
Arlington MA 02476

**THANKYOU!**

CODE:
-------

**SHEET A. Facilitator and Notetaker Sign-in Sheet**

Role	Group	Name	E-mail and/or Phone (in case clarifications are needed)
Facilitator			
Note-taker			
Facilitator			
Note-taker			





CODE:

**SHEET B. Participants Sign-in Sheet**

Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Name	E-mail and/or Phone	Would you like to receive e-mail updates about the Arlington Housing Plan?
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No



**SHEET C**

# **Arlington Housing Plan**

## **Participant Meeting Agenda & Information**

### **Part One: Welcome and Introductions**

- Who's in the room?
- What is the Arlington Housing Plan?
- Meeting overview
- Meeting purpose
  - To encourage small group conversations about Arlington today and Arlington's housing future
  - To identify goals from the 2016 Housing Production Plan that are still relevant today
  - To brainstorm goals and strategies for the 2021 Housing Plan that both meet DHCD criteria and address Arlington's specific housing needs and opportunities
  - To find common ground, if possible, about actions the Town could take to provide affordable housing

### **Part Two: Discussion Prompts**

- 2016 Plan Goals: Where Are We?
- 2021 Goals & Strategies Brainstorm

### **Part Three: Wrap Up**

#### **Group Discussion Guidelines**

To have a productive conversation where everyone feels welcome to participate, please use these guidelines.

- Everyone should have an equal opportunity to talk and be heard.
- Keep the conversation on topic.
- Listen to others and avoid criticizing.
- Respect limited time and keep your answers to the point.
- Be honest and try to understand other viewpoints.
- It's ok to disagree.
- Try not to interrupt the facilitator or other group members.
- Cell phones on silent, please.



**SHEET D**

# Arlington Housing Plan

The Arlington Housing Plan is a five-year plan that will update the Town’s 2016 Housing Production Plan. The heart of the Arlington Housing Plan is a housing needs analysis, which identifies housing needs and barriers to housing. A draft housing needs analysis was completed in September 2021 and is under review by the Housing Plan Implementation Committee (HPIC) and Town staff. The next step of this process is to develop goals and strategies in response to the analysis of housing needs, which is the primary purpose of this gathering. Some key findings of the needs assessment are noted below.



- In response to demand for homeownership opportunities in the Boston area’s exceptionally high-cost market, Arlington has slowly lost some of its rental supply, e.g., through condominium conversion of two-family homes.
- Arlington is attracting higher-income households as the Boston-Cambridge labor market is priced out of many suburbs inside and along Route 128, such as Lexington, Winchester, Belmont, and Brookline, and nearby cities such as Somerville.
- Non-elderly householders living alone are more common in Arlington than many of the affluent towns around it or the cities and towns Arlington tracks as comparison communities.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the Greater Boston area,<sup>2</sup> one-person households tend to be dominated by people 65 and over, but this is not the case in Arlington.
- Arlington has made small gains in racial or ethnic diversity, but Black or African Americans make up a much smaller percentage of the total population in Arlington than in the Greater Boston as a whole. The Latino population is also small, and even though Arlington has seen growth among Asian households and families, the overall picture of Arlington is that of White, middle- and upper-income homeowners.

<sup>1</sup> Belmont, Brookline, Medford, Melrose, Milton, Natick, Needham, North Andover, Reading, Stoneham, Watertown, and Winchester. Source: Town of Arlington Fiscal Year 2021 Town Manager’s Annual Budget & Financial Plan.

<sup>2</sup> In this Housing Plan, “Greater Boston” refers to the Boston Metropolitan Area, which generally includes the communities inside and along Interstate Route 495.

## ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN “MEETING-IN-A-BOX” WORKSHEETS

Additionally, Arlington is beginning to lose class diversity, an observation commonly noted during the public engagement process of this plan.

- Neighborhoods within Arlington differ in terms of household, family, racial, and income characteristics.
- Arlington is redeveloping. Most new single- and two-family housing construction in Arlington occurs due to demolition and replacement with larger or in any case, more expensive single-family homes.<sup>3</sup> Redevelopment of older housing stock brings higher asset value to the community, but not necessarily a net increase in housing units. To a lesser extent, new housing growth in Arlington does occur in the form of multifamily infill opportunities, both market-rate and affordable.

The assessment of Arlington’s housing needs incorporates data from sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, housing market reports, municipal records, information about the community’s infrastructure, transportation, and zoning, and community interviews. Building on an analysis of the supply and demand of affordable housing and potential barriers to further housing development, the Arlington Housing Plan will set quantitative and qualitative housing production and preservation goals. It will then outline a plan for achieving them through specific recommendations and action steps.

The Arlington Housing Plan could help the Town work toward, achieve, and remain at or above the 10 percent affordable housing minimum under the state’s Affordable Housing Law, Chapter 40B. It will require approval by the Select Board and Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB), and eventually the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Once approved, the plan will be in effect for five years (2021-2026).

For more information about the Arlington Housing Plan, contact Kelly Lynema, [KLynema@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:KLynema@town.arlington.ma.us), or Judi Barrett, Barrett Planning Group LLC, [judi@barrettplanningllc.com](mailto:judi@barrettplanningllc.com).

---

<sup>3</sup> In an R0 or R1 district, a single family home can only be replaced by another single-family home, and in R2-R7 and B districts the only residential structures allowed by right are single- or two-family homes or group home for supportive services.

**ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN “MEETING-IN-A-BOX” SHEET E**

**Discussion Prompt 1: 2016 Goals – Where Are We?**

CODE:
-------

Please review the 2016 HPP goals and comment on their continued relevance for this plan. You are encouraged to brainstorm individually before discussing as a group. You do not need to respond to each 2016 goal but are encouraged to think about many as you can.

2016 HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN GOALS	STILL RELEVANT? WORTH BRINGING INTO 2021 PLAN? OTHER COMMENTS?
GOAL 1. Update existing housing and produce more, diverse housing for extremely-low to middle-income households to address documented local need.  STILL RELEVANT? Yes/No/Unsure	
GOAL 2. Encourage mixed-income housing through mixed-use development in business districts.  STILL RELEVANT? Yes/No/Unsure	
GOAL 3. Integrate affordable units in a broader range of housing types into the fabric of Arlington’s existing neighborhoods through redevelopment of certain underutilized properties and re-use of existing buildings.  STILL RELEVANT? Yes/No/Unsure	

**ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN “MEETING-IN-A-BOX” SHEET E**

**Discussion Prompt 1: 2016 Goals – Where Are We?**

Please review the 2016 HPP goals and comment on their continued relevance for this plan. You are encouraged to brainstorm individually before discussing as a group. You do not need to respond to each 2016 goal but are encouraged to think about as many as you can.

2016 HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN GOALS	STILL RELEVANT? WORTH BRINGING INTO 2021 PLAN? OTHER COMMENTS?
<p>GOAL 4. Foster an aging- supportive community via housing choices that enable older adults to thrive in Arlington as they age.</p> <p>STILL RELEVANT? Yes/No/Unsure</p>	
<p>GOAL 5. Ensure zoning allows flexible approaches to achieve housing affordability and livability.</p> <p>STILL RELEVANT? Yes/No/Unsure</p>	
<p>GOAL 6. Increase capacity to facilitate housing production by allocating funding, staff, and other resources to relevant activities, and by educating the community about housing needs.</p> <p>STILL RELEVANT? Yes/No/Unsure</p>	



## ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN “MEETING-IN-A-BOX” SHEET E

### Discussion Prompt 1: 2016 Goals – Where Are We?

Complete AFTER the discussion on Prompt 1: 2016 Goals - Where Are We?

Of the six goals discussed from the 2016 HPP, what do you think are the **top three** goals most relevant today after hearing what others had to say?

1.

---

---

---

2.

---

---

---

3.

---

---

---



## ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN “MEETING-IN-A-BOX” SHEET E

CODE:

### Discussion Prompt 2: 2021 Goals & Strategies Brainstorm

Please review the DHCD criteria in the left-hand column for requirements for HPP qualitative **GOALS**. Use the right-hand column to write down any questions *and* to brainstorm plan goals that are suitable for Arlington and meet DHCD criteria. You do not need to respond to each criterion but are encouraged to think about as many as you can.

BRAINSTORM: 2021 QUALITATIVE GOALS	
DHCD REQUIREMENT	PARTICIPANT SUGGESTIONS TO ADDRESS
<p>Mix of types of housing consistent with local and regional needs that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Is affordable to range of incomes including extremely low income, low-to-moderate-income, and moderate income</li><li>▪ Provides for a range of housing including rental, homeownership, and other occupancy arrangements, if any, for families, individuals, persons with special needs, and the elderly, and</li><li>▪ Is feasible within the housing market in which they will be situated.</li></ul>	

**ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN “MEETING-IN-A-BOX” SHEET E**

**Discussion Prompt 2: 2021 Goals & Strategies Brainstorm**

Please review the DHCD criteria in the left-hand column for requirements for HPP **STRATEGIES** to meet the previously described goals. Use the right-hand column to write down any questions *and* to brainstorm strategies that are suitable for Arlington and meet DHCD criteria. You do not need to respond to each criterion but are encouraged to think about as many as you can.

<b>BRAINSTORM: 2021 STRATEGIES</b>	
<b>DHCD REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>PARTICIPANT SUGGESTIONS TO ADDRESS</b>
1. Identification of zoning districts or geographic areas in which the municipality proposes to modify current regulations for the purposes of creating SHI Eligible Housing developments.	
2. The identification of specific sites for which the municipality will encourage the filing of Comprehensive Permit applications.	
3. Characteristics of proposed residential or mixed-use developments that would be preferred by the municipality (e.g., cluster developments, adaptive re-use, transit-oriented housing, mixed-use development, inclusionary housing, etc.); <i>and/or</i>	

**ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN “MEETING-IN-A-BOX” SHEET E**

**Discussion Prompt 2: 2021 Goals & Strategies Brainstorm**

Please review the DHCD criteria in the left-hand column for requirements for HPP **STRATEGIES** to meet the previously described goals. Use the right-hand column to write down any questions *and* to brainstorm strategies that are suitable for Arlington and meet DHCD criteria. You do not need to respond to each criterion but are encouraged to think about as many as you can.

<p>4. Municipally owned parcels for which the municipality commits to issue requests for proposals to develop SHI Eligible Housing; <i>and/or</i></p>	
<p>5. Participation in regional collaborations addressing housing development.</p>	
<p><b>OTHER/WHAT’S MISSING?</b></p>	<p><b>PARTICIPANT SUGGESTIONS TO ADDRESS</b></p>



**ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN “MEETING-IN-A-BOX” SHEET E**

**Discussion Prompt 2: 2021 Goals & Strategies Brainstorm**

Complete AFTER the discussion on Prompt 2: 2021 Goals & Strategies Brainstorm.

After hearing what others had to say, what do you think should be the **top three** goals or strategies for this 2021 Housing Plan?

1.

---

---

---

2.

---

---

---

3.

---

---

---