



MBTA Communities Working Group

Date: February 2, 2023

Time: 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Location: Remote participation via zoom

PRESENT: Steve Revilak, Mette Aamodt, Sanjay Newton, Ramie Schneider, Shaina Korman-Houston, Laura Weiner, Kin Lau, Vincent Baudoin, Claire Ricker, Kelly Lynema

VISITORS: Susan Stamps, Steve Moore, Mary Ellen Aronow

Meeting Summary

1. Introduction

Claire discussed how Governor Healy is approaching the state's housing crisis, the need for the working group, and timeline. Working Group members shared what motivated them to volunteer for the Working Group.

It was clarified that a 40R district would meet the criteria for Section 3A, and that incentives or bonuses can be provided to incentivize the provision of affordable housing or ground floor commercial as part of the zoning.

Kelly shared the meeting goals of kicking off the process by which the Town develops zoning compliant with Section 3A (MBTA Communities); for the group to become acquainted with the purpose, goals, and priorities of the project; and to understand each other's experiences with regard to housing, zoning, planning, architecture, outreach, engagement, and communications.

2. Refresher: What questions do you have about MBTA Communities?

Kelly provided a review of Arlington's multifamily housing and zoning history, how Section 3A specifically applies to Arlington, and what the Town has heard during the preliminary survey that was conducted after the November info session. Discussion followed.

The group was encouraged by the number of positive responses and bigger picture thinking about connections to transit and economic development.

3. Purpose of the Working Group: What are your expectations of this working group?

Kelly noted that the Action Plan has been submitted to the state and asked for feedback. Members commented that the priority for zoning related to Section 3A is to connect multifamily housing to transit, and cautioned against trying to do too much with one instrument. While the eventual zoning to come out of this process may achieve goals in the Master Plan, Housing Production Plan, Connect Arlington, and Net Zero Action Plan, having a clarity of purpose will be key to communicating the changes in a way that the community will understand.

Working Group members shared their specific interests and goals for the group:

- Understanding the community vision for multifamily housing
- Exploring underutilized public and private property
- Ensuring zoning enables developable projects, not just zoning on paper.
- Understanding what restrictions (dimensional or through bonuses) may need to be lifted to encourage multifamily development.
- Finding ways to overcome Arlington's small parcel sizes
- Creating a framework for small, medium, and larger developers to do projects in Arlington.
- Research into what other communities are doing, and how missing middle housing is being explored and promoted throughout the country.
- Testing out draft zoning and fixing it.
- Conducting meaningful public outreach to ensure broad participation.
- Ensuring that appropriate visuals and public participation methods are developed and promoted.
- Understanding MBTA commitment to providing and improving services to compliant communities.

The overall phases of the project were described:

- First, determine where the district should be. Working group members noted that even before diving into locations, a visioning process would be necessary. Kelly will set up a meeting with the Working Group to begin this process within the next two weeks.
- Second, once a district location(s) are selected, understanding whether there should be one district, multiple districts, and subdistricts.
- Finally, working through the technical details of the zoning, such as whether a map change or a zoning overlay should be created, what kinds of bonuses should be incorporated (if any), and what should be subject to site plan review.

4. Future meeting schedule and next steps: When do you want to meet? What do you want to work on?

Kelly offered to follow up via email with a poll to set the next meeting date.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.