

## Action Plan for MBTA Communities

**Description Area** Please read the Section 3A Guidelines before attempting to complete this form. Please note: Action Plan Forms must be submitted by a municipal official with authority to act on behalf of the municipality on matters of zoning, such as the municipal CEO or planning director.

### Section 1: Identification

**Description Area** The Section 3A Guidelines establish zoning metrics that apply uniquely to each MBTA community based on its local transit stations, existing housing stock, population, and developable land. This section of the Action Plan helps to identify the transit stations that determined each community's category. Appendix 1 of the Section 3A Guidelines lists each community's category and minimum multi-family unit capacity requirement.

**1.1 MBTA Community Name** Arlington

**1.2. Community Category** Adjacent community

**1.3. Multifamily Unit Capacity Requirement** 2046

**1.4. Does this municipality have any MBTA rapid transit stations within its boundaries?** No

**1.5. Does this municipality have any MBTA commuter rail stations within its boundaries?** No

**1.6. Does this municipality have any other MBTA transit stations that are located outside of its municipal boundaries that may have "developable station area" within them?** No

**1.7. Please provide the name of the person filling out this form** Claire Ricker

**1.7a. Title** Director, Department of Planning and Community Development

**1.7b. Email Address** cricker@town.arlingotn.ma.us

**1.7c. Phone Number** (781) 316-3090

**1.8 Please provide the name of the municipal CEO** Sandy Pooler

**1.8b Mailing address of municipal CEO** 730 Massachusetts Avenue  
Arlington, MA 02476

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**1.8c Email address of municipal CEO** spooler@town.arlington.ma.us

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**1.9. Please briefly describe other members of the core team developing the multi-family zoning district.** Staff include Claire Ricker, DPCD Director and Kelly Lynema, DPCD Assistant Director, and Teresa Marzilli, Engagement Coordinator. An eight-member MBTA Communities Working Group of the Arlington Redevelopment Board has been established to guide this process, comprised of Arlington residents including two Redevelopment Board members, and residents including architects, urban planners, and individuals with expertise in housing, outreach, and development.

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## Section 2: Housing Overview

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**2.1. Does this municipality have any established housing related goals or strategies from municipal planning documents, such as a Housing Production Plan, Master Plan, or Economic Development Plan?** Yes

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**2.1a. Please briefly describe any relevant strategies, goals, or objectives, and the work that has been done to date.** Arlington's Master Plan (2015) sets forth the following housing goals:

- Encourage mixed-use development that includes affordable housing, primarily in well-established commercial areas.
- Provide a variety of housing options for a range of incomes, ages, family sizes, and needs.

The Master Plan also recommended completion of a Housing Production Plan, which was accomplished in 2016 and updated in 2022. The HPP, along with the Connect Arlington Sustainable Transportation Plan, the Net Zero Action Plan, and the Fair Housing Acton Plan, specifically recommends that the Town adopt zoning to comply with M.G.L. c40A, Section 3A. Other key relevant strategies include:

- Updating the regulations of the R2, R3, and R4 districts to allow three-family dwellings and townhomes by right.
- Actively implement the Connect Arlington plan by focusing on active transportation options for new development and amending current parking requirements and parking design standards for residential projects.
- Explore options to establish a 40R "Smart Growth" overlay district.
- Improve development opportunities along major corridors and incorporate density bonuses for increased affordability.
- Consider options for discouraging single-story commercial buildings in the Town's business and mixed-use districts.
- Increased the amount of land zoned for multifamily development and/or reorganize existing multifamily districts.
- Provide for "Missing Middle" zoning along minor collector streets in walkable residential neighborhoods.

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**2.2. Is this municipality currently working on any other planning for housing?**

Yes

**2.2a. Please briefly describe the housing work underway.**

The Arlington Affordable Housing Trust completed their Action Plan in 2022, and is actively working on allocating local funding to the production of affordable housing. A collaboration of trustees, residents, staff, and members of the Arlington Redevelopment Board are working on the development of an Affordable Housing Overlay to advance to Special Town Meeting simultaneously with MBTA Communities Zoning.

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### **Section 3: Preliminary Zoning Strategies**

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**3.1. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following zoning strategies is this community most likely to use for compliance? (Select all that apply)**

c. A new 40R or other overlay zoning district

**3.1c. Please briefly describe the potential district and location. Optional: Attach any supporting documents that show planning work the community has already done for this district(s).**

In November, DPCD staff held a public educational and listening session to describe MBTA Communities, the planning process proposed for Arlington, and suggest several options for preliminary feedback from the community. These options are included in the presentation slides (attached), and consist of the following potential scenarios:

- An overlay district along Arlington's primary commercial corridors (Mass Ave and Broadway)
- An overlay district set back 50 to 100' from Arlington's commercial corridors to maintain commercial activity along the corridors
- Multiple overlay districts distributed across towns within each neighborhood, with higher density subdistricts including height bonuses for ground floor commercial
- An overlay district adjacent to the Minuteman Bikeway and other shared use paths
- Overlay districts within a proximity of bus lines and or bus stops
- Overlay districts within a proximity of parks and open space

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**File**

<https://massgov.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14092725147>

**3.2. What non-housing characteristics are important for this community to consider in its 3A zoning district?**

Maintaining and supporting growth in the Town's limited commercial districts; encouraging walkability, transit ridership, and active transportation; creating increased demand and more frequent bus service to and from town; distributing districts equitably across town; walkability and access to open space and recreational opportunities; preserving and expanding the Town's street tree canopy; supporting diverse range of incomes, ages, and racial/ethnic backgrounds; and achieving more than just compliance by accomplishing goals and objectives from other recent plans.

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## Section 4: Action Plan Timeline

**Description Area**

This section creates a framework to input preliminary plans for a zoning adoption process. On the table below, please use Column 1 (from the left) to describe a task, Column 2 to input a start date, and Column 3 to input a finish date. Every community must provide a timeline for the below-listed tasks. Additional space is provided for any other tasks that a community wishes to list. DHCD will review proposed timelines for feasibility before approving an Action Plan. Public outreach  
 Developing zoning  
 Applying DHCD's compliance model to test for density and unit capacity  
 Holding planning board hearings  
 Holding legislative sessions and adopt compliant zoning  
 Submit District Compliance application to DHCD

**Description Area**

Task

**Description Area**

Start

**Description Area**

Finish

**Short Answer**

Create and convene Working Group

Dec 10, 2022

Oct 31, 2023

**Short Answer**

Public Outreach

Nov 10, 2022

Oct 31, 2023

**Short Answer**

Develop zoning scenarios, test with compliance model

Feb 01, 2023

Apr 30, 2023

**Short Answer**

Public feedback on scenarios

May 01, 2023

Jun 30, 2023

**Short Answer**

Finalize preferred zoning, test with compliance model

Jul 01, 2023

Aug 15, 2023

**Short Answer**

Redevelopment Board hearings for Town Meeting

Sep 01, 2023

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Oct 15, 2023

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**Short Answer**

Special Town Meeting to adopt compliant zoning

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Oct 15, 2023

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Oct 31, 2023

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**Short Answer**

Submit District Compliance application to DHCD

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Nov 01, 2023

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