

MBTA COMMUNITIES

ZONING FOR MULTIFAMILY HOUSING IN ARLINGTON



Community Visioning Kit for Multifamily Housing in Arlington

Welcome! Thank you for agreeing to host a community conversation for your friends and neighbors! This 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, Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development, klynema@town.arlington.ma.us.

Instructions for you, the host:

Process overview (pg. 2)

Annotated meeting agenda (pg. 3)

Final Steps: submitting your meeting materials to DPCD (pg. 4)

Sample Invitation (pg. 5) (don't forget to attach the MBTA Communities Overview pdf!)

Materials for you to distribute at the meeting:

	Title	Number of Pages
Sheet A	Sign-in Sheet for Participants	1
Sheet B	Meeting Agenda	1
Sheet D	My Vision (participant worksheets)	1 double-sided page 1 map

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.
- **Make sure to share the MBTA Communities / Section 3A info sheet with your invitation!**

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
- Ask attendees to sign in on Sheet B. There is space on Sheet B to ask to be added to a list for future information about the Arlington Housing Plan.

5. Facilitate

- Share an overview of Section 3A (MBTA Communities) legislation and what it means for Arlington.
- Lead a small-group discussion, making sure the meeting stays on topic and all discussion questions are answered.
- Use the PDF of topical maps and graphics to guide the questions about each topic.

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 meeting is designed to take about two hours from start to finish. 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.

Annotated Meeting Agenda

 Hand out **Sheet B.**

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

PART ONE: WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS (10 – 15 minutes)

1. Who's in the room?

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 multifamily housing, etc.) so that everyone gets a better sense of who is participating and why. No need to spend too much time on this activity.

2. Meeting overview and purpose

Briefly review the information on the meeting agenda.

3. What is MBTA Communities?

Allow a few minutes for people to ask clarifying questions about the MBTA Communities / Section 3A overview (Sheet D) that was sent before the meeting. There is a FAQ available on the Town's MBTA Communities page to help answer questions. That said, remind people that the purpose of the meeting is to understand the community vision and have a group discussion about where in Arlington multifamily housing should be located.

PART TWO: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (15 minutes per question, 60 minutes total).

 Hand out **Sheet D.**

4. Explain how input from this meeting will be used

The Department of Planning and Community Development and MBTA Communities Working Group will use public input to explain the community vision for multifamily housing in Arlington. The outcome of these meetings, along with responses at the March 9 public meeting and the communitywide survey, will help us develop scenarios that best fit what we hear from participants in this process.

5. Discussion

a. Explain 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.

b. Discussion questions

Give participants a few minutes to answer the first question on their worksheets before beginning the discussion questions. During discussion, a note-taker should write down comments and questions, ideally on a flip chart or large piece of paper taped to the wall so everyone can see. After everyone has had a chance to speak, briefly review all thoughts the group generated.

PART THREE: WRAP-UP (5 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.

Final Steps: Submitting your meeting materials to DPCD

Collect and sort the meeting materials.

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

Sign-in sheets (**Sheet A**)

Group discussion materials (if you had more than one group, keep each group's materials together):

Group discussion notes

Participant worksheets (**Sheet D**)

Label the meeting materials.

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., "0324" for March 24th)

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

Code:

Write up a summary of the 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.

Return the meeting materials within seven (7) days.

Please mail, scan and e-mail, or hand deliver all participant and group response materials to:

Kelly Lynema, Assistant Director

Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development

730 Mass. Ave, Town Hall Annex

Arlington MA 02476

THANK YOU!

Sample Invitation

Use this template as a guide for your meeting invitations. You can include this language in an email, send invitations in the mail or use it as a guide to invite people over the phone.

You're Invited!

What: MBTA Communities: Multifamily Housing in Arlington Visioning Session

Where: [your info here]

When: [your info here]

RSVP by: [your info here]

RSVP to: [your info here]

MBTA Communities, or Section 3A of MGL Ch 40A, is a new state law that requires the 175 Massachusetts communities served by the MBTA to create a district where multifamily housing of three or more units is allowed by right, meaning without a special permit. **The attached MBTA Communities / Section 3A overview provides additional information about the law and what it means for Arlington.**

The Department of Planning and Community Development and the MBTA Communities Working Group have invited us to host a meeting using their **Multifamily Housing Visioning Kit** so they can hear from us as they work on the development of this district.

This meeting is designed to help the Town understand community priorities and visions for the best locations for multifamily housing. In the long run, when Arlington and the other MBTA communities create these districts, we will be working to combat the housing crisis and offering more diverse types of housing within our community – housing that suits the needs of those seeking starter rental and ownership homes to those looking to downsize within the community.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Explain the MBTA Communities Law and how it applies to Arlington;
- Understand community members' visions for multifamily housing in town;
- Identify opportunities to balance multiple needs in Arlington: housing, economic development, access to community resources, etc.; and
- To include as many voices as possible in the MBTA Communities planning process.

We look forward to hearing from you! For more information about the process, please visit tinyurl.com/MBTACommunitiesArlington .