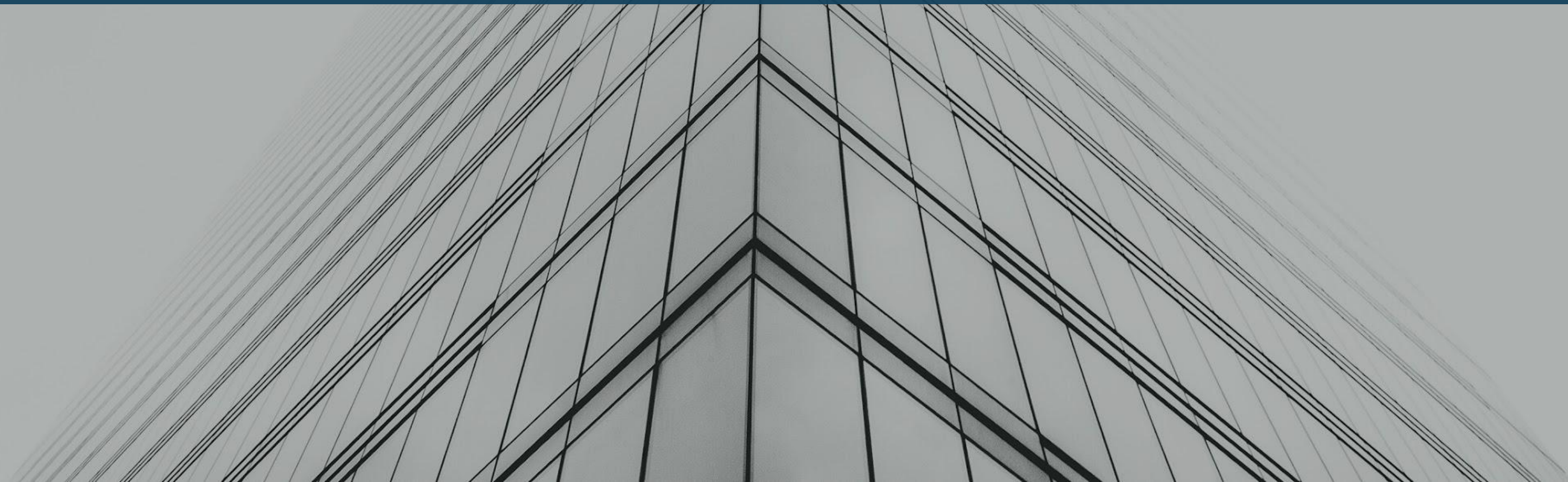


# Building the Base to Support Zoning Amendments

Presented by Jennifer Raitt, Executive Director  
Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

Getting it Right: How Municipalities Can Achieve Housing Goals  
Massachusetts Municipal Association Annual Meeting & Trade Show  
January 20, 2023



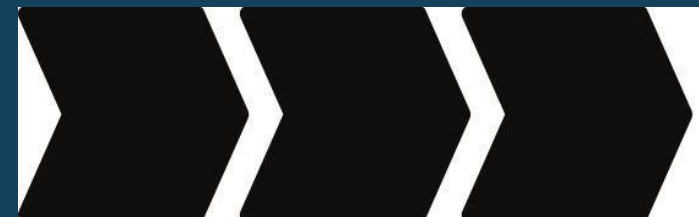
## Plans that inspire and reach

We have a vision for the communities where we work

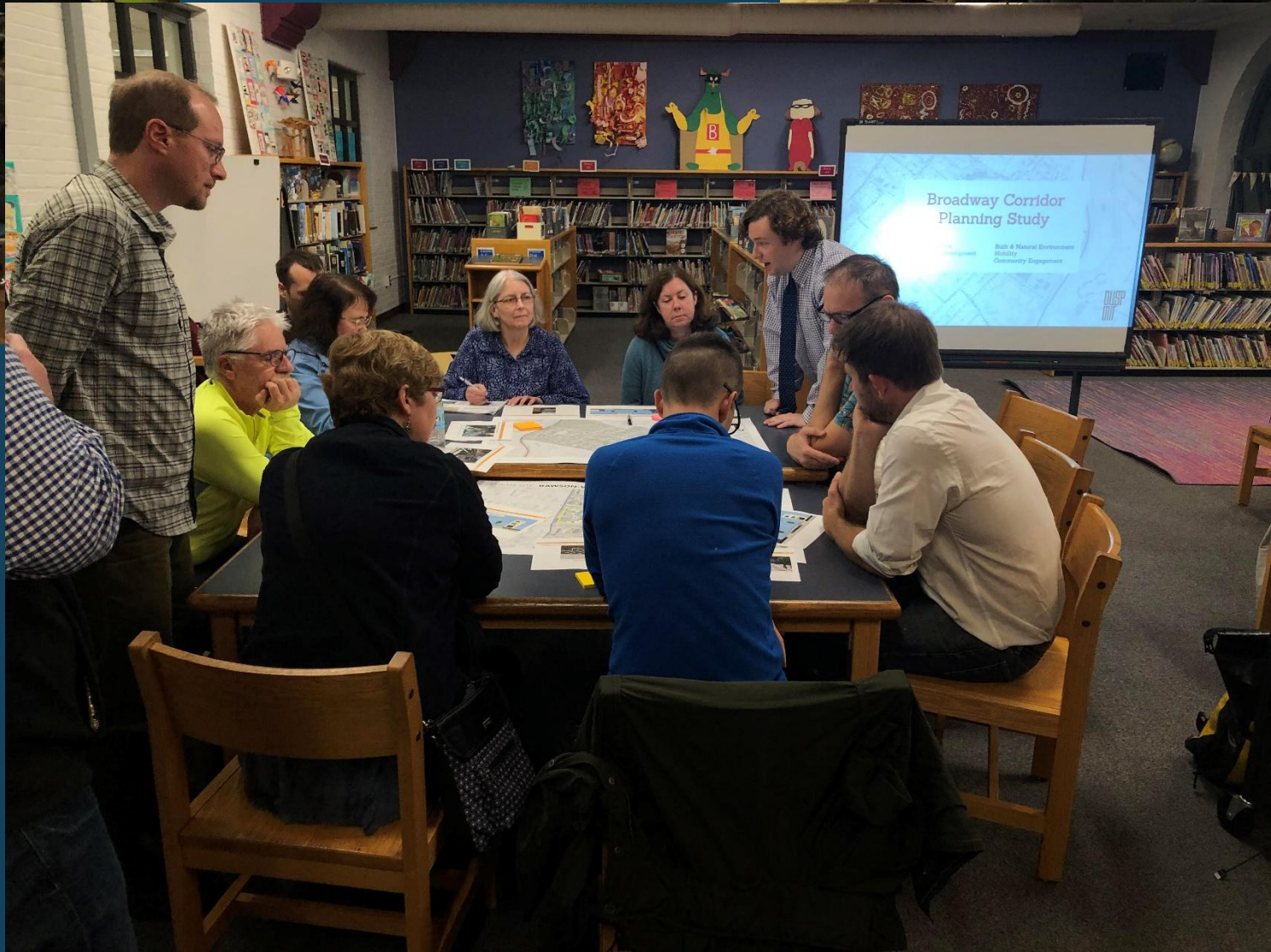
We understand how making changes can lead to positive outcomes that would not have happened otherwise.













## Exclusionary history and place

- The design of past processes and products led to poor and disparate outcomes.
- Municipal leaders can help communities move beyond rhetoric and resistance.

## Cultivate Allies

Re/ build trust and your base  
Co-create the story of change



## Tell a story

We are, as a species, addicted to story. Even when the body goes to sleep, the mind stays up all night, telling itself stories.

- Jonathan Gottschall

*The Storytelling Animal:  
How Stories Make Us Human*



## Start with a good question

Once people have been able to talk about the things they really believe in and care about, they may be more willing to talk about what is complex and difficult.





## Share the meeting design / engagement planning space

Get creative:

- One-on-one meetings/ interviews
- Focus groups
- House meetings/ meetings in a box
- Neighborhood meetings
- Discussion panels
- Door hangers
- Video with survey option
- Interactive website
- Lightning polls and surveys
- Community-wide forums



# Describe Levels of Decision Making and Process

  
Low  
Sharing  
Knowledge/  
Information/  
Reporting

  
Low-Mid  
Requesting  
Input/  
Accepting  
Feedback

  
Mid-High  
Building Buy-In/  
Trade Offs/  
Negotiating/  
Mediating

  
High  
Group  
Consensus/  
Agreement  
Recommending  
Executive  
Decision

  
Highest  
Group  
Consensus/  
Agreement  
constitutes  
Decision



# Describe the Status Quo and How it will Change

- ▶ Describe the last recodification of the bylaw and how many amendments have been passed since that time.
- ▶ Explain who the bylaw helps or hurts in its current form.
- ▶ Describe what makes the bylaw outdated in the context of local/ state policies and plans.
- ▶ Bring in new voices to the conversation to help define what's missing from the bylaw.

**Realize that not everyone sees the status quo in the same way.**

**To:** ZoningRecod@town.arlington.ma.us

**Date:** 08/02/2017 12:35 PM

**Subject:** Comment on Recodification

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Arlington already has 40,000 people living in 4 square miles. Do we really need more people?



# A Close Call



## Redevelopment board pushes vote amid zoning typos, omissions

By Abbi Matheson

Posted Jan 11, 2018 at 5:19 PM

Updated Jan 11, 2018 at 5:19 PM

Zoning recodification may not be on the February Special Town Meeting warrant. At the Arlington

and members expressed concern over the  
awed at the hearing.

22 where they will either have to vote to  
ew warrant article for April's Town

### Responses to Comments Received from Citizens' Group and public compiled by Zoning Recodification Working Group members and Town staff

*Please note that the following concerns are stated as they were presented by the commenter.*

1. *Concern:* Changes to Map 1.5 Removed language regarding registration for nonresident property owners; the Town Clerk informs us that no one has ever registered under this provision. New 1.5 appears to combine existing 12.01 (changes to Bylaw) and 3.04 (changes to zoning map).  
*Response:* Not required under MGL Chapter 40A and we would not object to this being added back in, but we view this as unnecessary.
2. *Concern:* Permitted Uses 5.2 Government uses allowed in all districts added for usability and consistency with State Law. No longer includes criteria where use is only permitted by special permit. No longer mentions criteria defining principal and accessory uses, and other issue where a commercial property may become a residential property.  
*Response:* This is not necessary. The Town does permit certain government uses and that is why it is allowed in all districts.
3. Table of Use Regulations 5.4.3 Residential Districts. Table has been rearranged and a few uses consolidated. Religious and educational uses have been removed, in conformance with case law.
  - a. *Concern:* Original Table footnotes A through D appear to be missing.  
*Response:* Footnote A is in Exceptions to Minimum Lot Size, Frontage, Open Space, and Side Yard Requirements in R0, R1 and R2 Districts are in 5.4.2 (B) as noted on all tables.

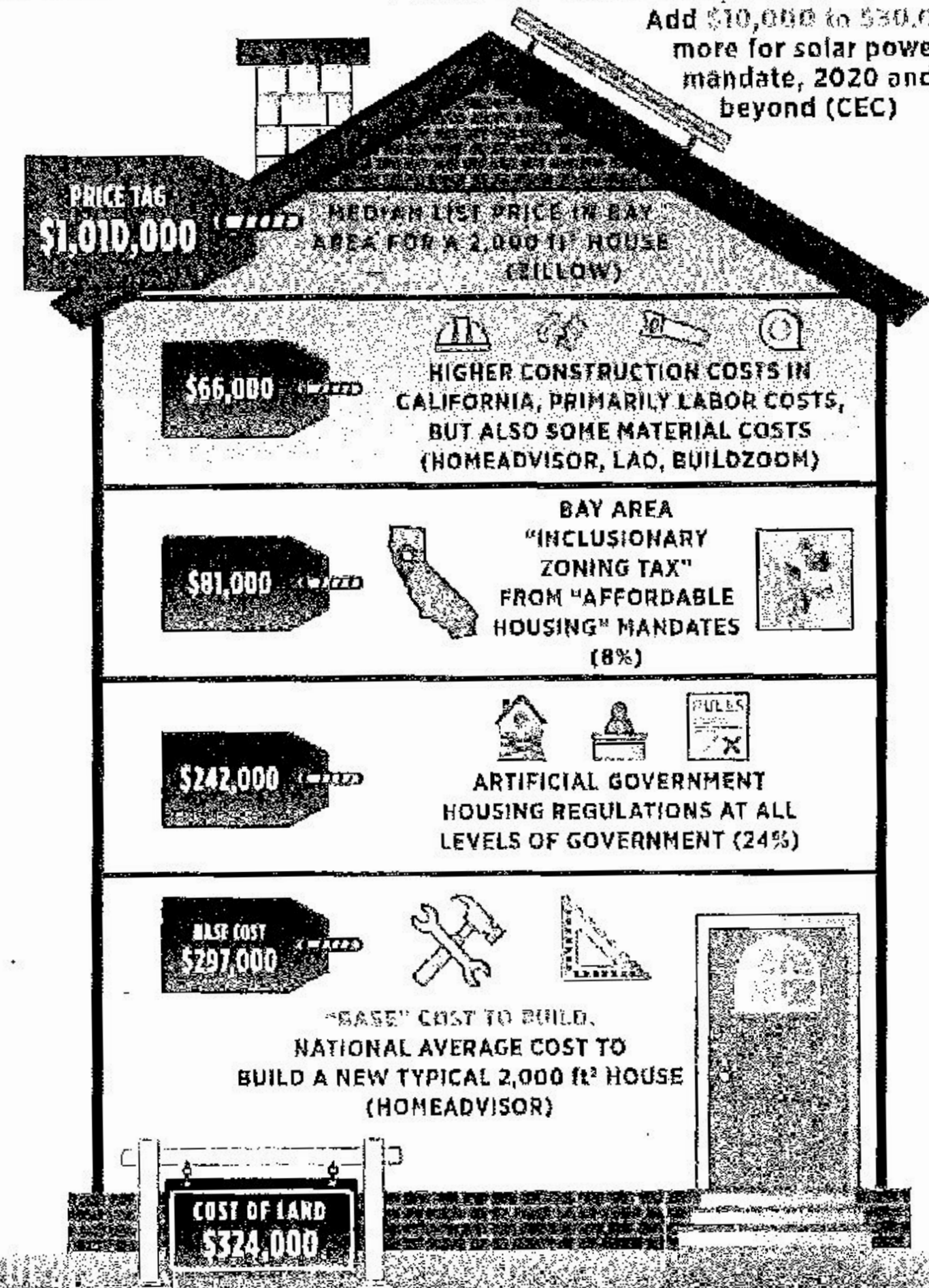


Tell a story

Leverage data and work in the evidence

## COST BREAKDOWN FOR A TYPICAL NEW HOUSE IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

Add \$10,000 to \$30,000 more for solar power mandate, 2020 and beyond (CEC)





# Describe the Status Quo and How it will Change

- ▶ More affordable, available housing options are needed
- ▶ Accessory Dwellings are small and can be an important source of reasonably priced housing within reach for people who cannot afford a single-family home or larger unit.
- ▶ Keep options within reach

# Effective Advocacy and Communication Measures

Use Data/  
Evidence of Why  
Change is Needed

Map out a  
Timeline,  
Communications,  
and Outreach Plan



# Effective Advocacy and Communication Measures

Work with an  
Advisory/ Working  
Group

Develop Clearly  
Defined Goals

# Effective Advocacy and Communication Measures

Establish Regular Opportunities to Discuss the Amendment

When Ready to Adopt:  
Clarify the Status Quo  
and Why/ How  
Changes will be  
Beneficial



# Effective Advocacy and Communication Measures

When Ready to Adopt:  
Be Prepared to be  
Responsive and  
Flexible, within the  
Scope of an  
Amendment

Short-Term Changes vs  
Long-Range Plans  
(Think: Springboard for  
More Policy Change)

THANK YOU!



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