

Inner Core Committee

A subregion of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council including 21 cities and towns:

Arlington • Belmont • Boston • Brookline • Cambridge • Chelsea • Everett • Lynn • Malden • Medford • Melrose • Milton • Needham • Newton • Quincy • Revere • Saugus • Somerville • Waltham • Watertown • Winthrop

ICC June Meeting

June 19, 2019

Attendees:

Erin Zwirko, Arlington
Amelia Najjar, Boston
Jeff Roberts, Cambridge
John DePreist, Chelsea
Michael Vivaldi, Everett

Evan Spetrini, Malden
Emma Schnur, Melrose
James Freas, Newton
Tech Leng, Revere
Steve Magoon, Watertown

1. FY20 Work Plan + Co-chair Vote

- Unanimous vote in favor of Co-chairs John DePriest, Chelsea, and Dan Bartman, Somerville, serving in FY20
- Unanimous vote in favor of the FY20 Work Plan

2. coUrbanize

- [Karin Brandt](#), founder
- Technology company with the goal of re-envisioning community engagement for planning and development
 - BU study finds that meeting participants are overwhelmingly white, older, opposed to housing development
 - coUrbanize: Who isn't participating? How do we find them? How can we lower the barriers to participation? Seek out silent supporters (silent either at meetings or at home)
- coUrbanize offers a community engagement platform designed for planning projects to make information accessible and collect constructive input
 - Users with real names can comment (not anonymous)
 - Inappropriate materials is filtered out
 - Developers or planners can respond directly
- Online and real life integration
 - Create feedback loops so at meetings people already feel heard and listened to
 - Text-in participation while on the go or at meetings (silent supports may be there but not feel comfortable speaking out)
- Analytics
 - Every comment
 - Visitors

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- Followers
- Can be attached to a deliverable; shared with boards and others
- 300+ projects
 - 23% negative input; 77% positive and neutral based on sentiment analytics
 - comments tend to be more constructive and thought out
 - Prompts are framed more visionary: What should be preserved or improved, rather than what don't you like
- Users
 - Google allows you to gather imperfect data on representation
 - coUrbanize does not ask about demographics because it can raise the barrier to participation, but can assess how many participants use the service by language
- Platform can be coupled with streets teams to draw people to the platform for larger planning projects; streets teams are organized by the client
- Launch strategy
 - Soft launch with thought leaders and neighborhood influencers, have them start a conversation and invite their neighbors and connections
 - People need to find an ongoing dialogue and see that the project team is engaged and responsive to be motivated to participate
- Use
 - Tailored to different planning projects and processes
 - Tailored solution design for each project; proposal development; content collection and population; launch process
 - Pricing: \$499/month; varies based on scale of project, community, feature functionality, timeline, etc.

3. Visualizing Zoning in Arlington

- Goal: Amend dimensional regulations to facilitate mixed-use and multifamily development along key corridors and transit-oriented locations
- Work: zoning audit, parcel analysis, lot size and density
- Started with GIS analysis to understanding conforming and non-conforming lots; explored how status would change with tweaks to bylaw
- Used local development examples to illustrate dimensional regulations so people could better visualize
- Site buildout analysis to illustrate how dimensional regulations eat away at buildable area and limit development
 - Yard and open space requirements
 - Max height

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- Height buffer
- FAR
- Parking
- Major communication tool to help people understand complex concepts simply and quickly
- Importance of context in presenting to the public, particularly with online imagery and content
- See Cambridge's website next week with some similar examples for the Affordable Housing Overlay

4. Sharing Housing Stories in Salem

- Project background
 - Inclusionary zoning
 - Public awareness around housing need and tools through strategic engagement and messaging/communications materials
- Workshop
 - Invite-only to housing supporters and potential supporters
 - Discussion of how to respond in the face of vocal opposition, including using data to myth-bust (see housing concern and response flipbook)
- Homes for Salem! [video](#)
 - Goal of raising awareness of unmet housing need in the City and empathy for residents facing housing challenges
 - Video designed in four parts, each can be released separately
 - Shared on City and MAPC sites and social media; several thousand views

5. Other + Next Steps

- Submit Field Visit TAP proposal
- Summer break
- September bimonthly meeting
 - Agenda TBD
 - Calendar holds for all FY20 meetings have been sent; please hold the dates