

# ADVISORY GROUP INFO SESSION

April 27, 2026



Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON

# AGENDA

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**1** WELCOME + INTRODUCTIONS

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**2** WHAT IS ARTICLE 80?

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**3** ROLE OF ADVISORY GROUPS

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**4** BEST PRACTICES

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**5** ACTIVITY

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**6** NEXT STEPS

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*5 mins*

## Welcome! Let's get to know each other...

**Please share:**

- Your name and any preferred pronouns
- In a few words describe what you love most about your neighborhood

# PLEASE ASK FOR CLARIFICATION



Please raise your hand and ask questions along the way!



Clarify any terms or concepts, we want to everyone to understand



Ask us to slow down if needed. You can also take breaks as needed

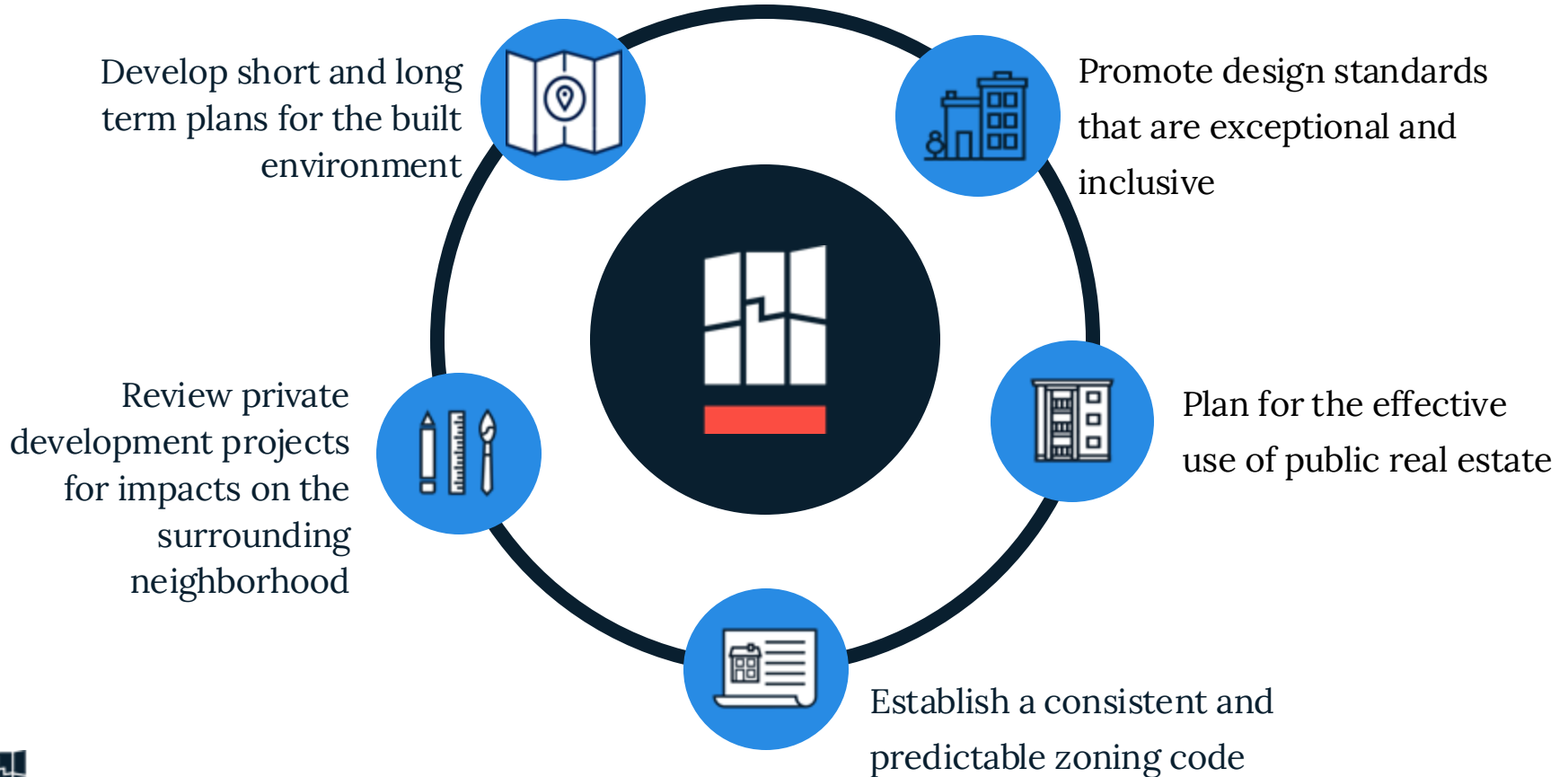
# Let's Break It Down

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What do we mean by Article 80?



# WHAT DOES THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT DO?



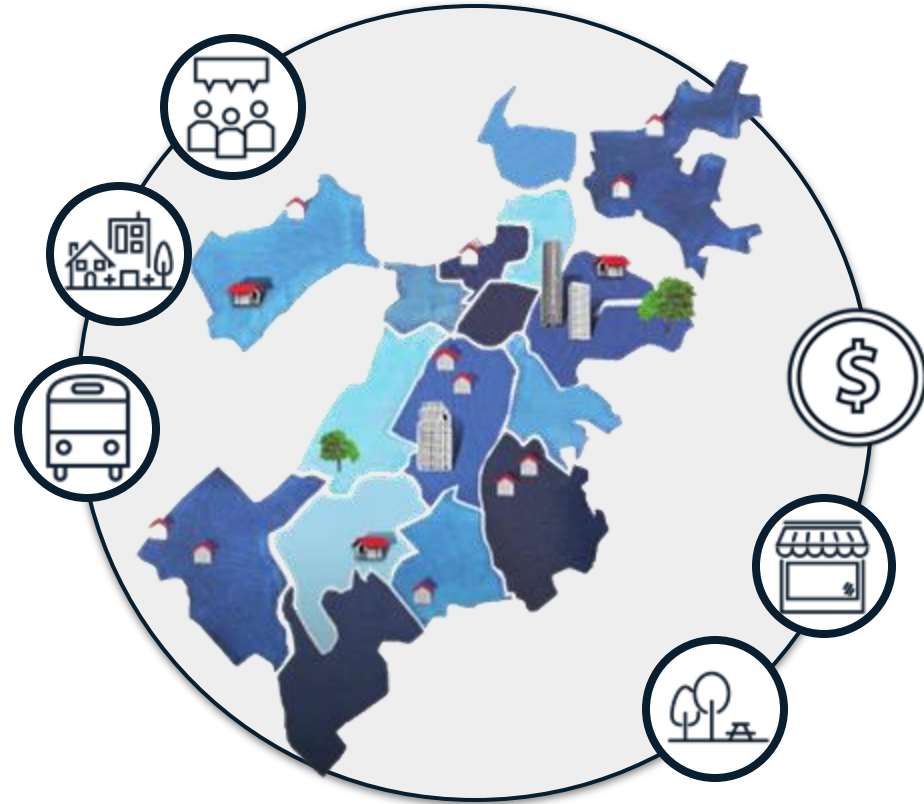
# WHAT IS PLANNING?

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*The process of shaping the physical, social, and economic future of a place through decision-making, design, and policy.*

It involves engaging communities to develop a shared vision using tools to guide growth, manage change, and improve quality of life and long-term sustainability of communities.



# WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT REVIEW?

*The process where the City reviews the design, use, and physical or social impacts of proposed development projects*



## **Did you know?**

Even projects that don't go through Article 80 often still have City staff review their design

# WHAT IS ARTICLE 80?



Article 80 is a **section of the zoning code that sets the rules of review** for buildings across the city that are above 20,000 sq ft, or more than 15 units of housing

The **City reviews the project's impacts** on transportation, public realm, the environment, and any historic resources



Article 80 also describes how the **community learns about and shares their feedback** about these projects

# TYPES OF ARTICLE 80 PROJECTS

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## LARGE PROJECTS

adding/constructing  
>50,000 sq ft

## SMALL PROJECTS

Adding/constructing  
20,000 - 49,999 square  
feet and/or 15+ net new  
residential units

## PROJECT TYPES

## INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLANS

Include projects for  
academic and medical  
campuses

## PLANNED DEVELOPMENT AREAS

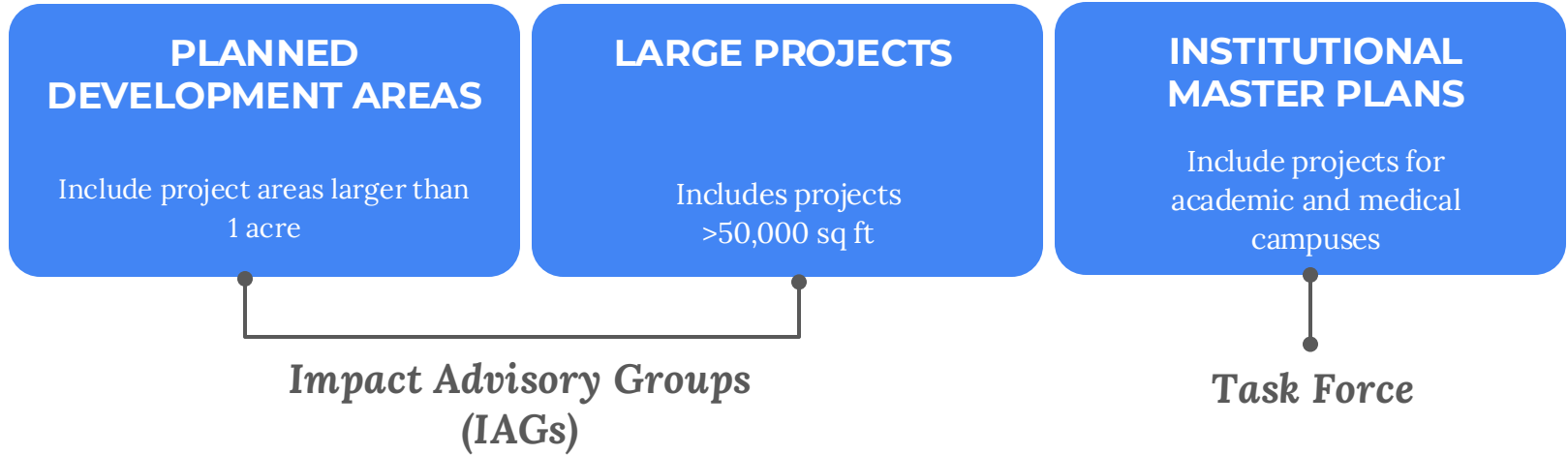
Include project areas  
larger than 1 acre



# TYPES OF ARTICLE 80 PROJECTS WITH ADVISORY GROUPS

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*All projects include an opportunity for community review and feedback through public meetings and comment letters. Some project types also have advisory groups made up of community members.*



# ADVISORY GROUP ROLES

What is your role as an Advisory Group member?

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# ADVISORY GROUPS HAVE TWO MAIN ROLES

Advisory Groups were established by an [Executive Order](#) in 2000. The role includes two focus areas:

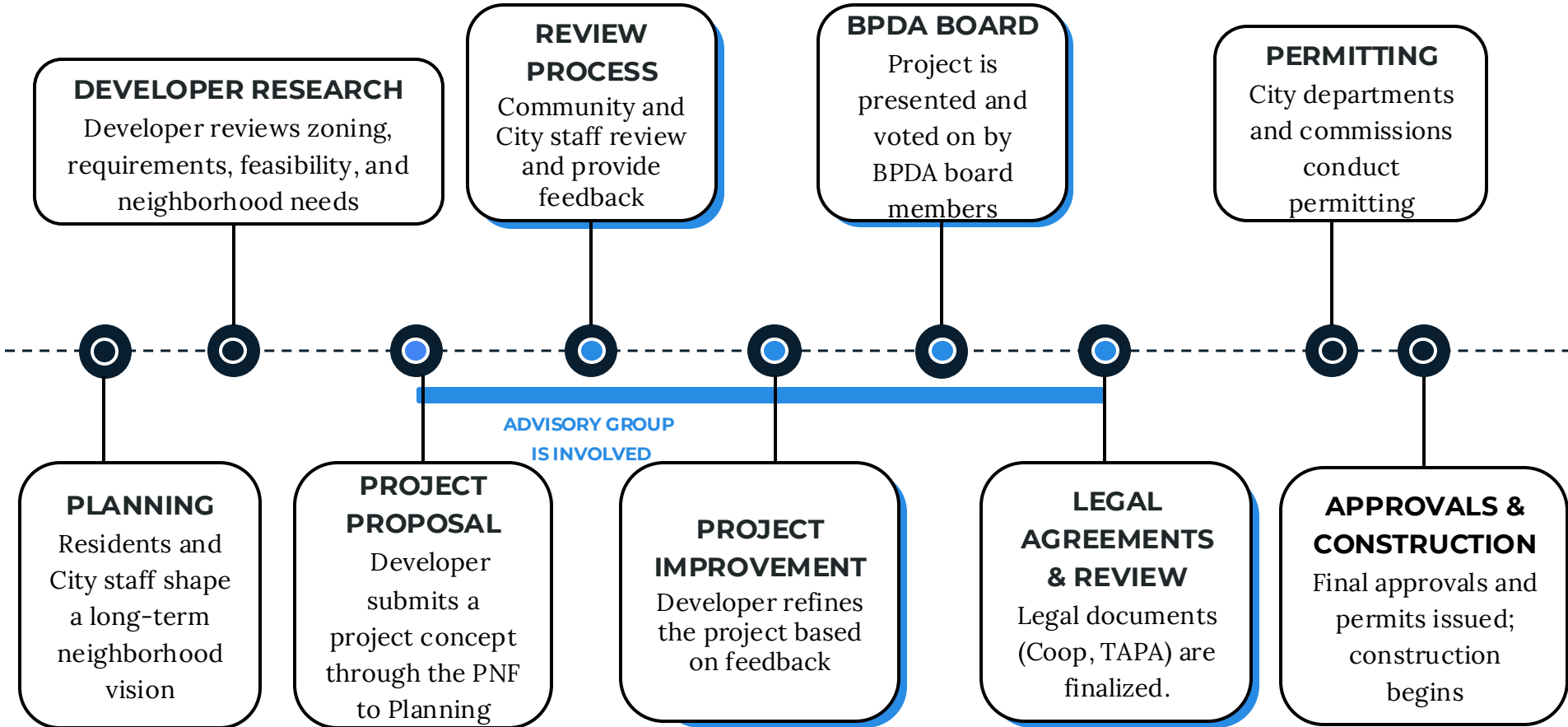


**REVIEW AND  
ASSESS THE  
PROJECT'S IMPACTS**



**RECOMMEND  
MITIGATION TO  
OFFSET THE  
NEGATIVE IMPACTS**

# WHEN ARE ADVISORY GROUPS INVOLVED?



## HOW ADVISORY GROUPS ARE INVOLVED



You will be invited to attend or asked to review the following:

1. Review the Project Notification Form (PNF)
2. Scoping Sessions (optional)
3. Attend Public Meeting(s) (optional but recommended)
4. Attend Impact Advisory Group meeting(s)
5. Confirm contents of the Cooperation Agreement

# WHAT IS AN IMPACT?

## ENVIRONMENTAL

- Heat
- Flooding
- Wind
- Shadows
- Noise



## SOCIAL/ ECONOMIC

- Amount of and type of community space
- Housing affordability
- Job creation
- Tax revenues



## TRANSPORTATION

- Street safety
- Parking
- Traffic and travel times



## INFRASTRUCTURE

- Capacity of existing water, sewage, energy, and electrical utility systems



# WHAT IS MITIGATION VS. COMMUNITY BENEFITS?



## MITIGATION

Mitigation is provided by a proposed project to **offset any negative impacts** of the proposed project in the area around the project. Mitigation can include changes to building design, other in-kind improvements, or monetary contributions.



## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Community Benefits are voluntary contributions to enhance the neighborhood and the city that **go above and beyond offsetting a project's negative impacts**. They are guided by planning goals and city priorities.

# LET'S LOOK AT A FEW EXAMPLES



## ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

### **Mitigation:**

Ex: Changing the shape of the building to minimize shadows on a nearby open space

### **Community Benefit:**

Ex: Sending a check to a neighborhood based non-profit doing work supporting environmental sustainability



## TRANSPORT

### **Mitigation:**

Ex: Update the curb cuts leading to the project site to meet accessibility standards

### **Community Benefit:**

Ex: Building a new heated bus shelter nearby



## OPEN SPACE

### **Mitigation:**

Ex: Replacing any trees cut down during construction

### **Community benefit:**

Ex: Planting additional trees beyond what was originally there

# WHAT IS **NOT** PART OF THE ROLE



## FEEDBACK ON THE PROJECT ITSELF

Any comments about the project that are not tied to impacts, should be brought to the public meeting or you can include those in your written comment letter



## COMMUNITY BENEFITS NOT TIED TO PROJECT IMPACTS

Discussion of ways the project can enhance the surrounding area can be brought to public meetings or your written comment letter

**Let's Practice!**

# WHAT IS MITIGATION VS. COMMUNITY BENEFITS?



**Bluebike station next to new building to  
accommodate new residents**

Mitigation

Community  
Benefits

# WHAT IS MITIGATION VS. COMMUNITY BENEFITS?

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## New gallery space

Mitigation

Community  
Benefits

# WHAT IS MITIGATION VS. COMMUNITY BENEFITS?

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## Relocation assistance for an existing small business

Mitigation

Community  
Benefits


# WHAT IS MITIGATION VS. COMMUNITY BENEFITS?



**20% of new housing units will be affordable**  
(meeting the Inclusionary Zoning requirement)



Mitigation



Community  
Benefits

# MATCH THE IMPACT TO THE POTENTIAL MITIGATION



Addition of new residents

New shade on nearby garden

Small business displaced

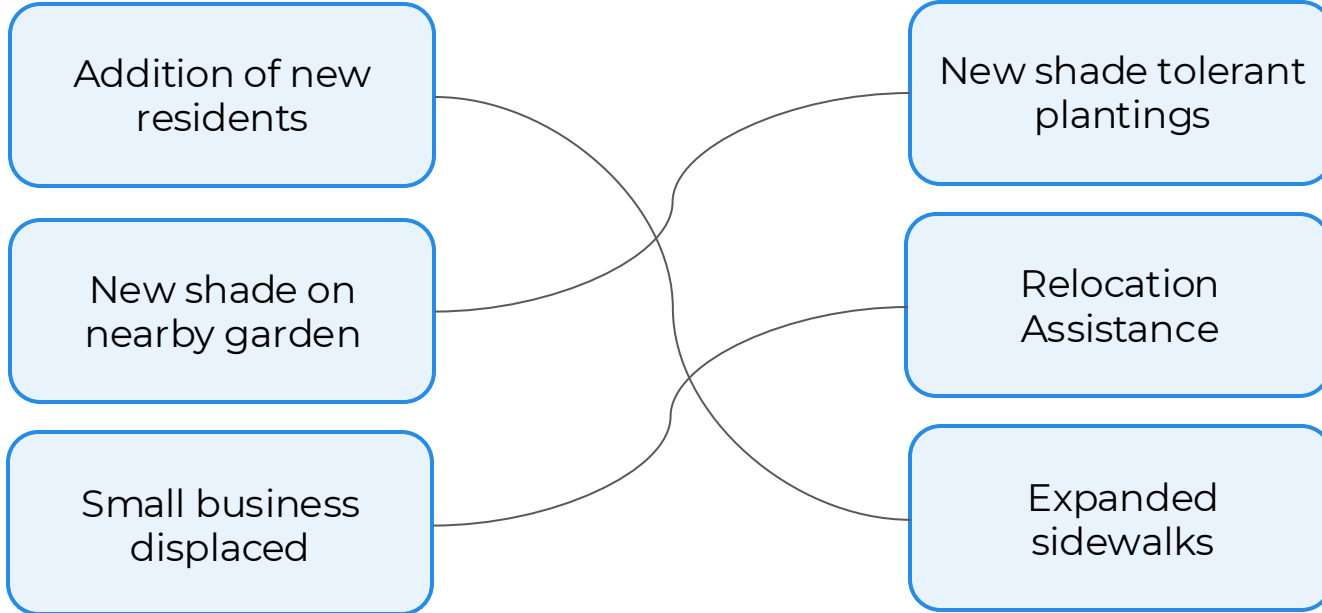
New shade tolerant plantings

Relocation Assistance

Expanded sidewalks

# CONNECT THE IMPACT TO POTENTIAL MITIGATION

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# **BEST PRACTICES**

Some suggestions to help you be most effective as a member of an advisory group

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# BEST PRACTICE #1

## 1 CONSIDER WHAT A PROJECT CAN AND CANNOT DELIVER

Each building is part of a larger whole and every project has constraints.

As you consider impacts and mitigation, remember that not every project can deliver everything your neighborhood needs.



# BEST PRACTICE #2

## 2 BE PREPARED AND REVIEW PROJECT DOCUMENTS

### PROPOSAL SUMMARY

- Project Description
- Site and Surroundings
- Early Engagement Report
- Displacement Disclosure

\* The developer starts meetings with this context

### IMPACT ANALYSIS

- Zoning Analysis
- Transportation Summary
- Climate Change Resilience
- Affirmatively Further Fair Housing Self Assessment



Let's look at an example [here](#)

# BEST PRACTICE #3

## 3 PROVIDE EFFECTIVE WRITTEN COMMENTS

- Bring your local experience
- Focus on your scope
- Offer solutions
- Keep it concise
- Reference City policies and planning

“The proposal reflects an auto-dependent site design and fails to address the anticipated increase of thousands of daily riders on MBTA services. A consideration of a new or relocated Red Line headhouse and a commitment to “put pedestrians first”

*Why is this a good example?  
Points out an impact, is specific, and offers a preferred mitigation approach*

# BEST PRACTICE #4



## 4 KEEP MEETINGS PRODUCTIVE

- Be brief and stay on topic
- Ask direct and clear questions
- Reference submission documents

### EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- How does this project advance planning goals for my neighborhood and the city?
- How does this project propose to offset the new shadow impact on the park next door?
- How do you plan to mitigate new walking, driving, and biking trips?

# BEST PRACTICE #5

## 5 WORK AS A GROUP BUT OFFER YOUR UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES

### SHARING CONTACT INFO

PMs will share contact information for each member for communication, unless you request your information is not shared

### COMMENT LETTERS

While we encourage collaboration, we do not expect consensus. We value your unique perspective and encourage you to write individual comment letters



# THANK YOU

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We appreciate your time and hope you enjoyed this presentation!

**HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?**

[PlanningEngagement@boston.gov](mailto:PlanningEngagement@boston.gov)

**OR VISIT:**

[bostonplans.org](http://bostonplans.org)

