



## Statement in Support of Arlington Redevelopment Board MBTA Communities Proposal STM Article 12

The Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO) is a broad-based, non-partisan, interfaith, multiracial power organization rooted in Greater Boston's neighborhoods and congregations. GBIO is made up of 60 dues-paying member institutions (congregations, unions, and community organizations), of which more than 20 have members living in Arlington. Many of us who reside in Arlington are taking part in GBIO's Housing Justice campaign.

We define housing justice as the ability for all people to have safe, healthy, and clean homes in their communities. Therefore, we seek to improve housing access and quality for groups that have been unfairly denied it, and to support financing, zoning, and ownership policies that help to close racial and class disparities in the housing market.

In order to address the multifaceted crisis of housing in the Boston area, the GBIO housing justice campaign has four objectives: 1) safe and dignified state public housing; 2) access to quality housing for returning citizens; 3) more funding for affordable housing and homeownership; and 4) increasing housing supply.

Regarding the fourth objective, GBIO supports meaningful implementation of the MBTA Communities Act, with the aim not only to increase housing supply throughout the state, reducing upward pressure on housing prices, but also to redress the history of exclusionary zoning in Boston suburbs.

Arlington GBIO members support the Arlington Redevelopment Board's proposal for the Article 12 of the Fall 2023 Special Town Meeting (MBTA Communities Overlay District) to enact changes in Arlington's zoning by-laws that will allow for more multi-family housing to be built by right. **We support an article that goes beyond the minimum capacity required by law in order to encourage the construction of a meaningful number of additional homes of various sizes beyond the number already present in Arlington.**

Arlington needs more housing and a wider range of housing options. Multi-family housing will help us welcome households that currently are not able to afford or stay in Arlington. This includes young singles, young families, and senior citizens. Smaller homes can help us create a more diverse community.

We appreciate the town's commitment to maintaining current (and incentivizing higher) zoning requirements for affordable housing. **We further encourage the town to enact affordability incentives and requirements to the maximum extent allowed under MBTA Communities Act and to actively pursue all future avenues for increasing the stock of affordable housing throughout town in future zoning policies.**

The Massachusetts housing crisis will not be solved with one policy change or in one community. However we believe that approving this article is one concrete step Arlington should make to do our part in diversifying the housing stock throughout the Commonwealth.

For these reasons, **Arlington GBIO members strongly urge Town Meeting to vote yes on the Arlington Redevelopment Board's proposed text for STM Article 12.**

— GBIO Arlington