



Improving our Development Review Process
Article 80 Modernization

Public Meeting, February 29, 2024



**boston planning &
development agency**

Zoom Controls to Listen to Interpreters



(EN) Look for the interpretation icon (globe) at the bottom of your screen and select the language you want to hear.

(Caboverdean) Djobe íkune di interpretason (un globu) na parti inferior di tela y sesiona bu língua ki bu kre skuta reunion.

(Kreyòl Ayisyen) Chèche ikòn entèpretasyon ki gen fòm (glob) anba ekran ou an epi seleksyone lang ou vle tande a.

(Español) Busque el ícono de la interpretación (globo) en el borde inferior de su pantalla y seleccione el idioma en el que desea escuchar.

(Tiếng Việt) Tìm biểu tượng phiên dịch (hình quả địa cầu) ở phía cuối màn hình của bạn và chọn ngôn ngữ bạn muốn nghe.

(简体中文) 查找屏幕底部的翻译图标(地球仪), 然后选择您想听到的语言。

(繁體中文) 查找屏幕底部的翻譯圖標(地球儀), 然後選擇您想听到的語言。

Access Translated Presentation Materials

(EN) The project presentation has been translated and is available on the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) website at:

(Caboverdean) Aprizentason di prujétu dja foi traduzidu y sta disponível na pájina di internéti di Ajénsia di Planiaméntu y Dizenvolviméntu di Boston (BPDA):

(Kreyòl Ayisyen) Prezantasyon pwojè a te tradui epi li disponib sou sitwèb Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) nan:

(Español) La presentación del proyecto se tradujo al español y está disponible en el sitio web de la Agencia de Planificación y Desarrollo de Boston (BPDA) en:

(Tiếng Việt) Bài trình bày dự án đã được dịch sang tiếng Tây Ban Nha và có sẵn trên trang web của Cơ quan Kế hoạch và Phát triển Boston (BPDA) tại:

(简体中文) 该项目演示文稿已翻译成西班牙语, 可在波士顿规划和发展局 (BPDA) 网站上查看:

(繁體中文) 此專案簡報已翻譯成西班牙語, 可在波士頓規劃和發展局 (BPDA) 網站上查看:



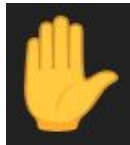
<https://bit.ly/7ls>

Zoom Meeting Info + Tips

- **The BPDA will be recording this meeting** and posting it on the BPDA's project webpage. If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.
- **Zoom controls are available at the bottom of your screen.** Clicking on these symbols activates different features.
- **Use raise hand function** (dial *9 if joining by phone) **and wait to be called upon to unmute** (dial *6 if joining by phone) before asking your question or providing comment.



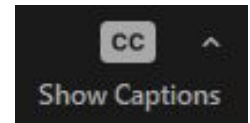
Mute/unmute



Raise hand to get in line to ask a question or provide comment



Turn video on/off



Turn on captions

Please Ask for Clarification!

Ask questions in the chat along the way – our staff are available to answer during the presentation!

Ask for us to clarify any terms or concepts we discuss – we want to make sure that what we cover is accessible to everyone so you can all share your informed feedback!

Intro Poll

Help us understand who we are joined by in this virtual room tonight

1. What neighborhood do you live in?
2. What's your affiliation?
 - Community member, civic/ neighborhood association member, advocate, public employee, developer
3. What's your housing situation?
 - Own the home I live in, Rent my home, Live in dorm, Live with family or friends, Unhoused
4. What's your race/ethnicity?

If you can't get the poll to work, feel free to use the chat

Meeting Overview

Meeting Schedule:

- 6:00- 6:30 pm - Presentation
- 6:30- 8:00 pm - Questions & Answers

Presenters:

- **Devin Quirk**
BPDA Deputy Chief of Transformation and Development
- **Nupoor Monani**
BPDA Deputy Director of Master Planning and Policy
- **Kristiana Lachiusa**
BPDA Deputy Director of Community Engagement

Meeting Code of Conduct

- All attendees are expected to respect one another and any differences of opinion.
 - We welcome differences of opinions, including opinions that differ from those of BPDA staff.
 - Always assume good intentions when any contradictions or disagreements are made.
 - Constructive comments and opinions should be aimed at topics, not people.
- Comments or questions from the public will be limited to 2 minutes of speaking time.
 - These time limits will be strictly enforced

Agenda

1. Context
2. What We've Done and Heard So Far
3. Emerging Themes and Ideas
4. Next Steps
5. Questions and Discussion

What is Article 80?

“Article 80” is a section of the Boston Zoning Code. It governs procedures related to the regulatory review of development projects. Currently, these procedures apply to projects that include at least 15 units of housing, or are larger than 20,000 square feet.

Development Review brings together various stakeholders to collectively assess the impacts of development projects and to determine the appropriate mitigation and community benefits.



Who is involved?



City of Boston/BPDA

Manage the public process associated with development review, including design review



Community Members

Provide feedback on the proposed project; offer suggestions for how to mitigate project impacts



Project Proponents (Land owners, Developers, Institutions, etc.)

Propose a project and work with the City and community to shape it

How and Why are We Improving Our Development Review Process?

Article 80 Modernization is an effort led by the BPDA and supported by two consultant teams to review, analyze, and recommend improvements to the technical code, operations, and community engagement practices related to our development review process.

Where did this come from?

- **Community members, developers, and BPDA staff** all agree that the BPDA's Article 80 development review process is outdated, unpredictable, and lacks transparency.
- **Mayor Wu**, in her 2023 State of the City speech and Executive Order, charged the BPDA with creating and implementing a reformed development review process that improves how communities, developers, and the BPDA work together to shape the city.

Mayor Wu's Vision for the BPDA



- Update and modernize our zoning code to be more predictable, such as Childcare, ADUs
- **Modernize Article 80 code and process for staff, developers, and community members**



- Plan for growth and the future through neighborhood and citywide initiatives, such as Squares + Streets and Design Vision
- Establish new Planning Advisory Council



- Improve coordination and communication across agencies and with Boston residents
- **Create community process for Article 80 that is consistent, inclusive, and predictable**



- A new mission and charter for Resilience, Affordability and Equity
- Legally end Urban Renewal and replace it with modern tools
- Ensure public land serves public good

Project Goals: Improving our Development Review Process

A successful development project and review process is one that...



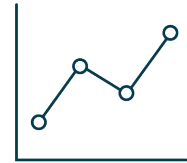
Advances citywide goals of **affordability, resilience, equity.**



Aligns with the **planning vision** for the area.



Is **transparent, clear, and easy to engage with.**

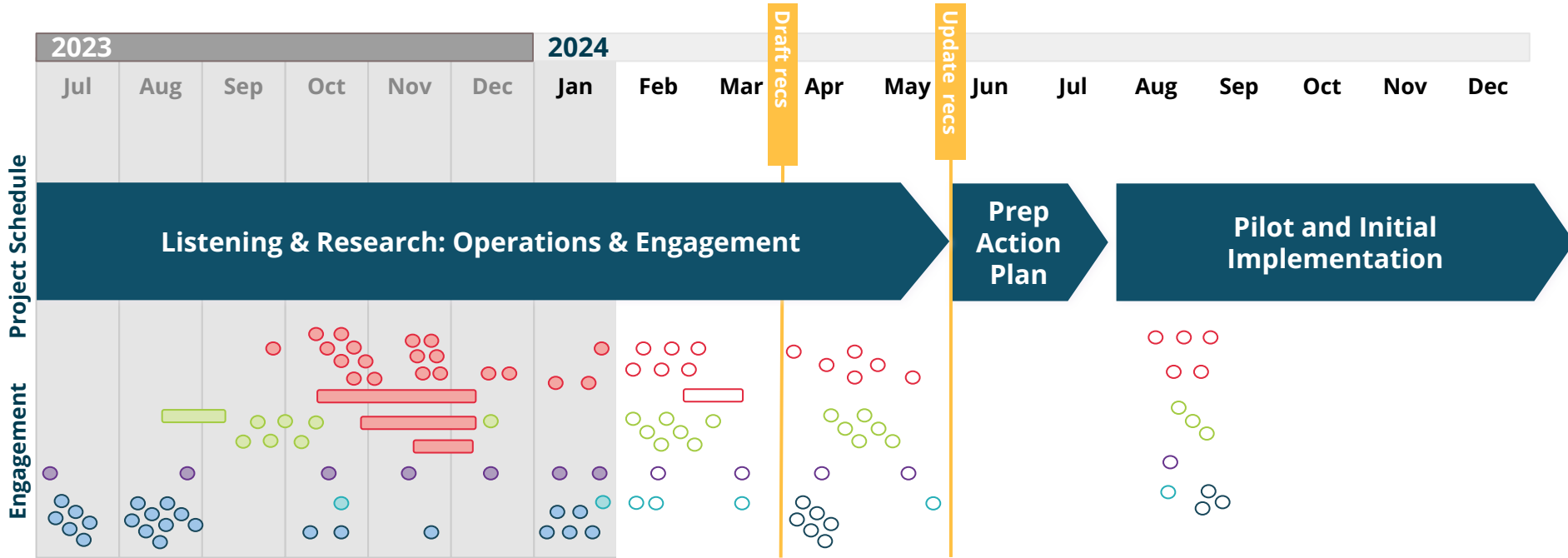


Embraces growth while creating a **predictable process.**

What We've Done and Heard So Far

July 2023 - Now

Timeline and Summary of Engagement To Date



Engagement Key

- Community stakeholders
- Development community
- A80 Steering Committee
- City Leadership and Electeds
- City Staff
- Survey
- Direct engagement

Past and Ongoing Outreach

Communications




Improving Our Development Review Process Article 80 Modernization Public Meetings

The BPDA's [Article 80 Modernization](#) project team will host a pair of public meetings (with identical presentations) to share the results of engagement, analysis, and peer cities research conducted during phase 1 of the project.

In-person: [Article 80 Modernization Public Meeting](#)
Wednesday, February 28, 2024 | 6:00 PM-8:00 PM
Bruce C. Boling Municipal Building, 2nd Floor - School Committee Room, 2300 Washington Street, Roxbury, MA 02119

Email/Newsletter



Public Meeting

Article 80 Modernization

The BPDA team will host a pair of public meetings to share information about the Article 80 Modernization project. This is an initiative that the BPDA is leading to improve the way the City reviews new development projects. Results from the first phase of this project are now available on the project webpage.

Meeting 1 (In-Person):


FEBRUARY Location:
WED 28 Bruce C. Boling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington St., Roxbury, MA 02119 (2nd floor - School Committee Room) 

Meeting 2 (Virtual):

FEBRUARY Zoom Link: bit.ly/2zdcE7N
THURS 29 Toll Free: (833) 568-8864
6:00PM - 8:00 PM Meeting ID: 161 641 9023 

Newspaper Ads

Interpretation will be provided in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Portuguese, and Cabo Verdean Creole. [View all translation services](#)



Survey to improve the BPDA's Development Review Process

Please answer these questions to help us understand how you want to be involved in shaping new development projects in Boston.


- Are you interested in shaping and learning about current or new development projects coming to your neighborhood?
 - Yes
 - No
- Are you able to get involved and when you do, do you feel heard in shaping new development projects that come to your neighborhood?
 - Yes
 - No
- What prevents your participation in learning about and sharing your thoughts about development projects? Select all that apply
 - Not interested
 - Do not have the time
 - Meetings are not accessible
 - Timing of meetings
 - Location of meetings
 - Lack of childcare
 - Do not know where the meetings are
 - No or limited access to the internet
 - No or limited access to a computer or smart phone
 - Personal barriers (transportation, work, family)
 - Meetings are not welcoming
 - Lack of diversity in meetings
 - Language or cultural barriers
 - Meeting content is confusing
 - Meetings do not feel worth attending
 - Topics are not relevant to me
 - I don't see how my input can be used

Meetings are organized to be sensitive to these barriers.

Surveys

BPDA survey shows strong support for broader development review procedures

By Chris Lovell, Reporter Correspondent
January 30, 2024



BPDA chief Arthur Jentson and Mayor Huo testified at a State House hearing last week. Photo by Jeremiah Robinson/Mayor's Office

Too many left out of process, agency says

The city's review process for new developments has long been a tug-of-war among stakeholders, often pitting the surrounding community against petitioners for zoning exemptions. But a new survey by the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) shows both camps united in dissatisfaction with the current process, as well as a mismatch between the residents most typically engaged and the city's overall population.

In the bottom of the survey, the BPDA asked community participants and developers about experience with projects subject to Article 80 review, another portion, aimed at people not currently engaged, asked about community barriers to participation.

Press

Help us improve the Article 80 Development Review Process

We want to hear from you! Share your thoughts, feedback, and experience with us about the current Article 80 process.

Scan code for survey 

Follow link for survey <https://bit.ly/A80survey>

Our Goal: Create a predictable and transparent process for our City's growth that builds trust with communities.

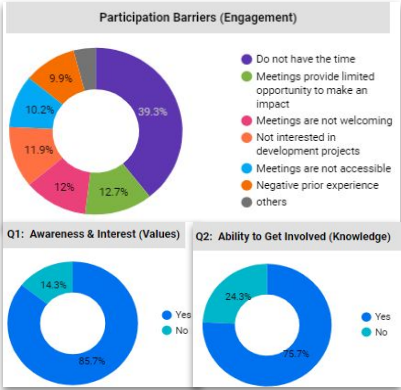
Scan the barcode or follow the link to participate in a brief survey.

Learn more here: <https://bit.ly/improvingA80>



During Public Meetings

Engagement



Discussion Question 1: Initial Reactions to the Ideas

Ideas I'm excited about

- #1** It is important to get feedback from the public, especially from the people who are most affected by the changes.
- #3 & 4 & 5** Communicating the city's position, Boston has to make it work, but that's not the only way to do it.
- #4** Same, but less sure how this would work.
- #5 - much needed!**
- #6** This seems to be the most realistic, as it would require discussion and input from the public.
- #7 and 8** It is important to get feedback from the public, especially from the people who are most affected by the changes.
- #9** The excited most about the idea of community, equity and affordability.
- #4 is crucial**
- #10** I'm excited about 1, 6, 7, 10, 11!



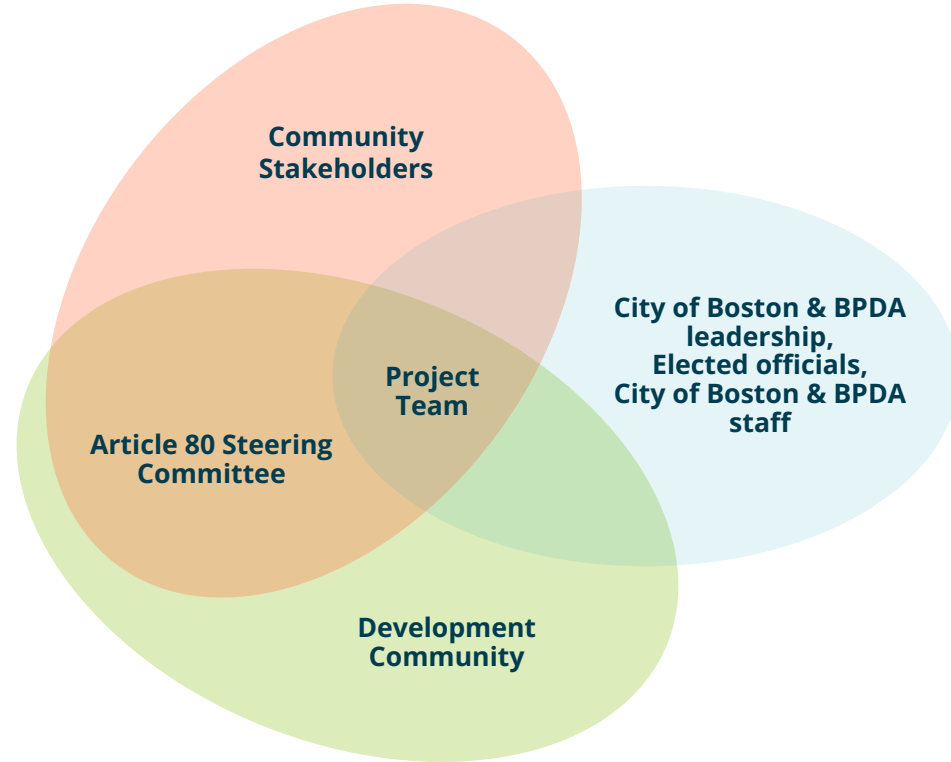
Intercept Surveys

Focus Groups

Engagement is at the Core of the Project

Phase 1 activities so far (Aug-Jan)

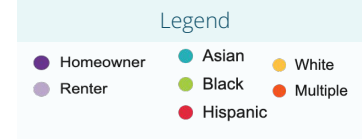
- **2,500 survey responses across 3 efforts**
 - Impact Advisory Group member & existing participants: 978 responses
 - New participant survey: 1,420 responses
 - Developer experience survey: 97 responses
- **44 focus groups**
 - Impact Advisory Group members, Community Leaders, and Advocates
 - New participants & community members
 - City of Boston & BPDA staff
 - Other public agencies
 - Trade Unions
 - Developers, consultants, attorneys
 - Institutions
 - Steering Committee meetings



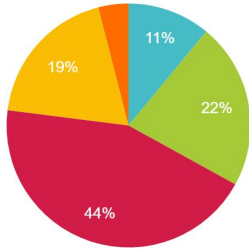
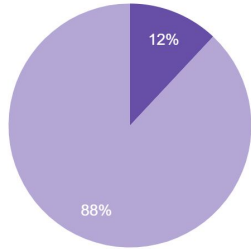
Community Survey Results

Link to [Community Survey Analysis](#)

Key results: Respondent demographics vary by method of outreach. Relying on traditional methods of outreach excludes many Bostonians. Changing the BPDA's outreach methods could expand the population that takes part in our processes to be more representative of the City. Respondents from all surveys recognized flaws in the current process: its lack of consistency and difficulty to engage with. Developers and IAG members agreed that advisory groups need to be updated. Existing and new participants agreed that new engagement methods should be incorporated.



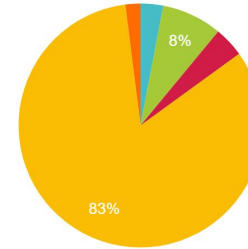
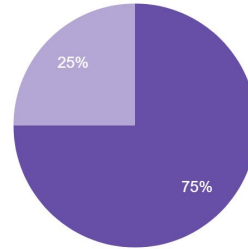
New Participants Survey (1,420 responses)



88% Renters
80% People of color
Younger residents -
40% under 35, 22% over 55

- 86% of respondents are interested in participating.
- The biggest reason respondents cannot participate is because they **do not have the time** to attend.
- Meetings aren't accessible for many reasons, including timing, awareness, and digital access.

IAG Member & Existing Participant Survey (978 responses)



75% Homeowners
80% White residents
Older residents -
56% over 55

- 77% would like **more options** for engagement
- Only 27% understand how their input is currently used
- 82% agree that the BPDA should adopt a more **standardized mitigation** approach
- Over 50% agree that **Impact Advisory Groups are not transparent** and do not reflect the community at large

Developer Experience Survey Results

Key results: 97 responses (collected from a list of ~400 current and recent project proponents, including developers, institutions, attorneys, and consultants). Respondents emphasized the need for predictability in process, timelines, and mitigation.

- Timing and predictability are the most important issues
- Feedback isn't always shared the right time
- Mitigation process is inconsistent
- Impact Advisory Groups don't always provide productive or beneficial feedback

Survey Prompt	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
The timeline to process my application was predictable	4%	10%	86%
Where comments on my project conflicted, BPDA staff helped reconcile these so that I had a path forward for my project	17%	19%	64%
The City's approach to mitigation is consistent from project to project	11%	24%	65%
Feedback from the project's Impact Advisory Group (IAG) or other applicable advisory groups was beneficial in determining appropriate mitigation for the project	26%	36%	38%

Focus Group Summary

"One of the ways we do not communicate well is on the impacts of the process: **what did change through your engagement? We don't report on the post-project...we just keep moving on to the next project.** And because we have so much work and are so busy, we don't stop to consider that feedback loop."

- BPDA Staff

"There is typically no agenda issued in advance, nor discussion of what needs to be decided and how decisions will be made... The result is that **each meeting regurgitates the same issues every time, rather than advancing a set of clear issues and goals** which people can work towards, eventually moving to next steps. This discourages participation."

- Community member

"**What IAG members are supposed to do and how an IAG should function is very unclear** and rarely if ever addressed. There appears to be **no public expectations** set by the BPDA for IAG member participation."

- Community member



Peer City Research Results: Summary

Cities Studied

Engagement Best Practices - Baltimore, Philadelphia, Seattle, Toronto, Vancouver

Mitigation - Atlanta, Cincinnati, Denver, Detroit, Miami, Philadelphia, Portland (OR), San Francisco, Seattle, Vancouver

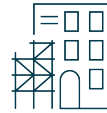
Operations & Code - Denver, Ft Worth, Minneapolis, NYC, Oakland, Pittsburgh, Portland (OR), San Diego, Seattle

Examples of innovative practices



Planning Review Panel (Toronto)

- Citywide community body that reviews projects
- Selected by lottery for two-year terms



Incentive zoning (Seattle, Miami)

- Directly connects PDA-like zoning relief to specific mitigation amounts and affordability requirements



Concurrent Review (All cities)

- Conducts all review processes and votes (e.g. zoning, parks, design) simultaneously
- Consolidates public hearings, avoids duplication of steps, emphasizes collaboration
- Typically applies to a subset of projects



Staff Review Committees (Denver, Oakland)

- Assigns cross-departmental staff to a project review team
- Reduces the inconsistencies that come from individual staff preference
- Clarifies the role of staff and departments in review process

Summary of Key Takeaways

Surveys + Focus Groups

- Methods matter
- Issues are the same on all sides, but solutions vary
- Advisory groups need to be updated
- Process should have clear feedback loops

Peer City Research

- There isn't one consistent best practice for community engagement
- Boston is a clear outlier when it comes to mitigation
- All cities studied provide a "concurrent review" track

Emerging Themes + Ideas

These early ideas are based on recurring themes and issues and are not ordered by priority. Many of them are mutually exclusive, meaning not all will advance to the recommendation or implementation stage. Any ideas that advance will receive additional study and community engagement.

<p>1. Prioritize projects that align with City policies</p>	<p>2. Recalibrate Article 80 thresholds in response to ongoing zoning reform</p>	<p>3. Communicate the City's intention about development projects early and often</p>	<p>4. Introduce new inclusive methods and formats of engagement different from traditional public meetings</p>	<p>5. Reform advisory groups to build trust and generate more impactful and targeted input</p>	<p>PROJECT GOALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advances Resilience, Equity, Affordability Aligns with Planning and Zoning Transparent and Easy to Engage Predictable and Consistent
<p>6. Establish a predictable approach for determining mitigation and community benefits</p> 	<p>7. Create clear standards and thresholds for Planned Development Area eligibility and approval</p>	<p>8. Revise Institutional Master Plan procedures to better serve the needs of institutions and communities</p>	<p>9. Minimize uncertainty by aligning approvals with design development process</p>	<p>10. Ensure consistency and coordination between A80-related permitting departments</p>	<p>11. Establish clear, transparent performance tracking and approval (and rejection) standards</p>

We Want to Hear From You!

Please share your questions, reactions, ideas on this first phase of the project!

We want to know:

- Did we miss anything?
- Which of these ideas do you like most and why?
- Which ideas do you have questions about?
- Any other comments or feedback!

Please limit your remarks to 2 minutes to allow others an opportunity to comment!

What's Next

Next Steps

Where can I find more information?

- **Visit the project webpage:** <https://bit.ly/improvingA80>
- **Email Questions:** article80modernization@boston.gov



How can I provide feedback?

- **Share your feedback by Friday, March 29th:**
<https://bit.ly/BigIdeasFeedback>
- **Add comments on the form via our project webpage**
<https://bit.ly/improvingA80>



Stay Informed!

Sign Up to Receive Our Newsletter + Email Updates

See our “Get Involved” page at <https://www.bostonplans.org/about-us/get-involved>

The screenshot shows the 'Get Involved' page of the Boston Planning & Development Agency website. The page has a dark blue header with the agency logo and navigation links. A sidebar on the left lists various sections like 'About The BPDA', 'Who We Are', and 'Contact Us'. The main content area is titled 'Get Involved' and contains a sign-up form. The form includes fields for Email, Confirm Email, First Name, Last Name, Street Address, Address Line 2, City, State (set to Alabama), Zip, and Phone. Below these fields is a section for neighborhood selection with a grid of checkboxes for various areas like Allston, Back Bay, and Beacon Hill. At the bottom of the form, there is a section titled 'I'm interested in: (optional)' with checkboxes for Development Projects, Institutional Planning, Urban Renewal, Downtown & Neighborhood Planning, Climate Change Planning & Sustainable Development, and Zoning Notices & Updates. An orange arrow points from this section to a larger, detailed view of the same section on the right.

This block provides a detailed view of the 'I'm interested in: (optional)' section of the sign-up form. It features a title 'I'm interested in: (optional)' followed by six checkboxes and their corresponding labels: 'Development Projects' (checked), 'Institutional Planning', 'Urban Renewal', 'Downtown & Neighborhood Planning', 'Climate Change Planning & Sustainable Development', and 'Zoning Notices & Updates'. The 'Development Projects' checkbox is highlighted with a red box, and an orange arrow points from the 'Get Involved' page to this section.

Thank you!
