

# Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation

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# Introduction

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## Research questions for ABCDC:

1. What do residents know about urban planning, community development and/or about the ABCDC's resources?
2. What barriers do residents face in learning about or becoming involved in community development?
3. Are the ABCDC's messages to the residents effective or is ABCDC suffering from the “backfire effect?”

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# Key Secondary Research Findings

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**Affordable  
Housing Shortage**



**ABCDC's Work**



**Barriers to  
Involvement**

# Survey Procedure

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**Our Goal:** Answer our three Research Questions pertaining to...

1. Awareness
2. Barriers
3. Messaging

**Procedure:** Qualtrics survey for current Allston-Brighton residents.

No knowledge of ABCDC necessary.

ABCDC and partners provided a list of potential participants.

20 total responses, 17 of which were valid.

April 9th- 20th, 2022.

# Survey Results

## Research Question One: Knowledge

Good working knowledge of urban planning in Boston. (Have you heard of: BPDA, Article 80, & the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Assessment)

## Research Question Two: Barriers

Survey failed to pinpoint specific barriers faced by respondents. Only **33.3%** of respondents identified as being involved with ABCDC.

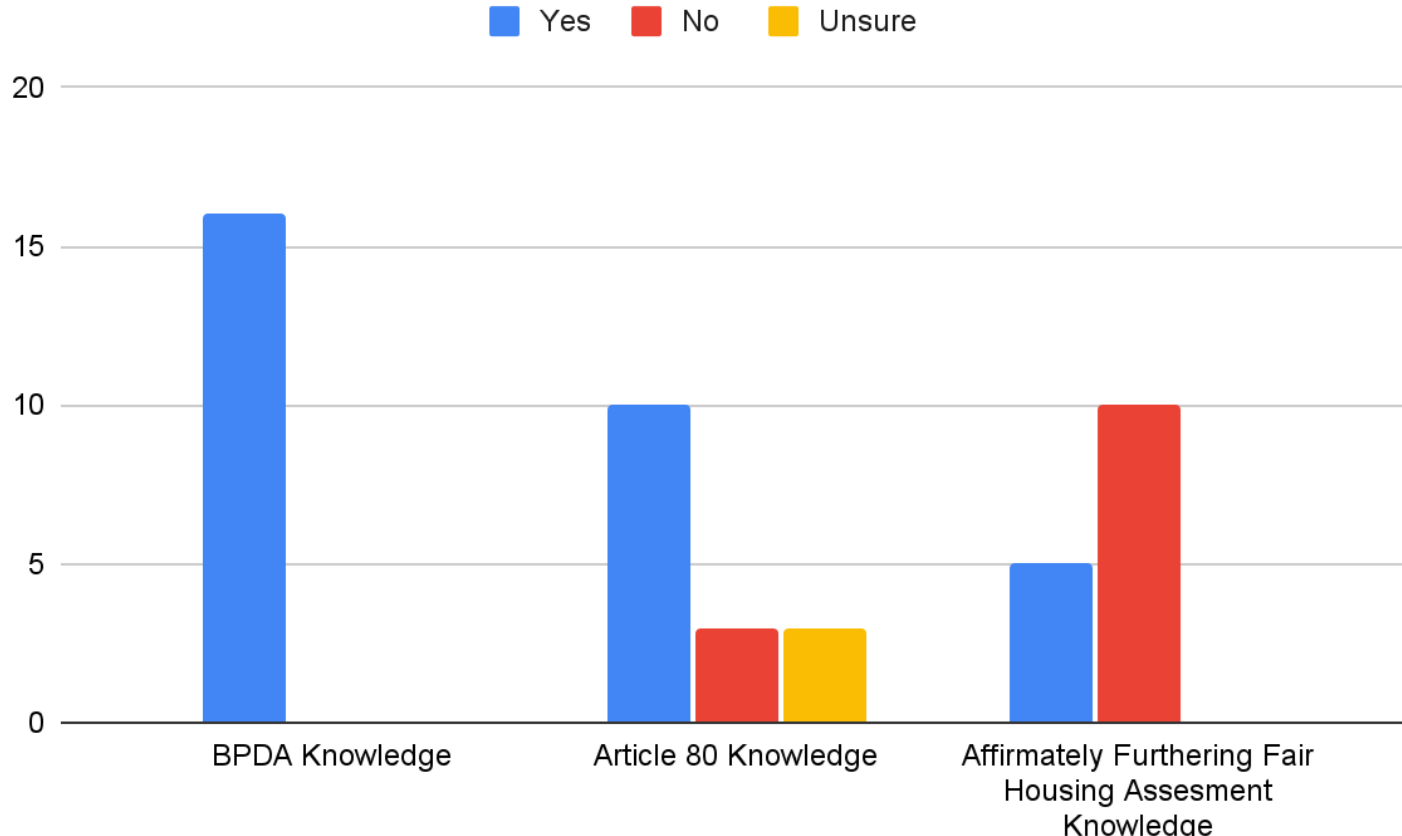
## Research Question Three: Messaging

**80%** have received messages from ABCDC.

**66.7%** have attended at least one of their workshops. **80%** of those attendees found those workshops to be informative.

**Inspiration does not equal future involvement**

# Community Knowledge on Urban Planning



# Focus Group Procedure

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- Reached out to 20 individuals
- Proposed 2 dates for Focus Group

## Result:

- 1 Focus Group April 18
- 2 out of 3 participants came
- Both serve on ABCDC's affordable housing action committee
  - [Familiar with ABCDC]



# Focus Group Results

## **Research Question Two: Barriers**

- Technology, time, and language are key barriers.

## **Research Question Three: Messaging**

- Participants prefer human-focused and community-first messaging.

## Q2: Technology, time, and language are key barriers.

**“I think** like the technology that people need is a barrier to accessibility. You definitely need like, computer, sometimes a printer, which I don't know about you, but I don't know anyone under like 35, who has a printer.”

**“In non-COVID** times, you have to get the paperwork notarized, which is like another thing that you have to find time to do. And when you're someone like me—for many years, I was working two, three jobs—how do you find time to go to a bank during open hours to get something notarized?”

## **Q2: Technology, time, and language are key barriers.**

**“I definitely** get overwhelmed when it's just a bunch of jargon. [A]rchitects, developers, lawyers, they use this like, very academic way of speaking, and use words that like, aren't common language for folks who don't have those backgrounds. And that can be intimidating for sure.”

## Q3: Participants preferred human-focused and community-first messaging.

**“I think** the term urban planning is scary. I personally have spatial relation issues, so like the idea of trying to build anything, for me, is just overwhelming... But when you see it on a human level, as just trying to have input into what's going on, in your neighborhood, around you, and in your city, I think that's much easier.”

**Instead of *urban planning* use terms like *community planning* or *community development*.**

***Focus Group Results***

## **Q3: Participants preferred human-focused and community-first messaging.**

**“I have** a lot of friends who are artists who do their crafts, but then also have jobs at cafes, restaurants, and bars. And they struggle a lot to make rent. They get to a point where, they're just straight up leaving Boston and going to other cities, whether it's Philly, where it's kind of similar to Boston, but way cheaper, or it's New York, where they're paying, like pretty much the same rent as they would in Boston but just having more opportunities. So that's a huge thing for me like, how can we keep Austin Brighton more sustainable in the arts and music scene as it has been for many decades? How can we keep those talented folks here?”

***Focus Group Results***

## **Q3: Participants preferred human-focused and community-first messaging.**

**“I do** volunteer work, where I meet a lot of at risk-people who are homeless and need housing... These are people I see every day, people who need housing, people who are living under bridges and in far worse conditions... Like seeing the actual people who need the housing and seeing the families that need the housing really kind of pushed me, really increased my drive, and helped me stop seeing it from an academic lens and start just seeing it as people needing places to live.”

**People and community are primary motivators.**

***Focus Group Results***



# Strategies and Suggestions

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- ABCDC needs to craft messaging that positions urban planning and community development as relevant to all Allston-Brighton residents
- The organization should also seek to improve interest among its own members

# Limitations

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**Recruitment strategy:** All of our participants were recommended by ABCDC. Some participants were directly involved with the organization.

**Low response rate:** Survey (n=17), Focus Group (n=2).

**Research design:** We set out to answer many questions. If we had pulled back a bit, we may have gained richer insights.

**Communication issues:** It was unclear at various points exactly what data ABCDC was missing or searching for



# Conclusion

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- Increase relevance of urban planning to residents
- Increase dissemination of messaging materials
- Work on reaching out to more residents

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# Thanks!

**Do you have any  
questions?**

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