

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

TOWN OF ARLINGTON

AmpUp! Meeting | June 26, 2025

Stantec

Tonight's Agenda

TOWN OF ARLINGTON

AmpUp!

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Agenda

1. Community Input Summary
2. Committee Activities
3. Existing Conditions Highlights

// COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY

Community Visioning Outreach

580+

Inputs So Far

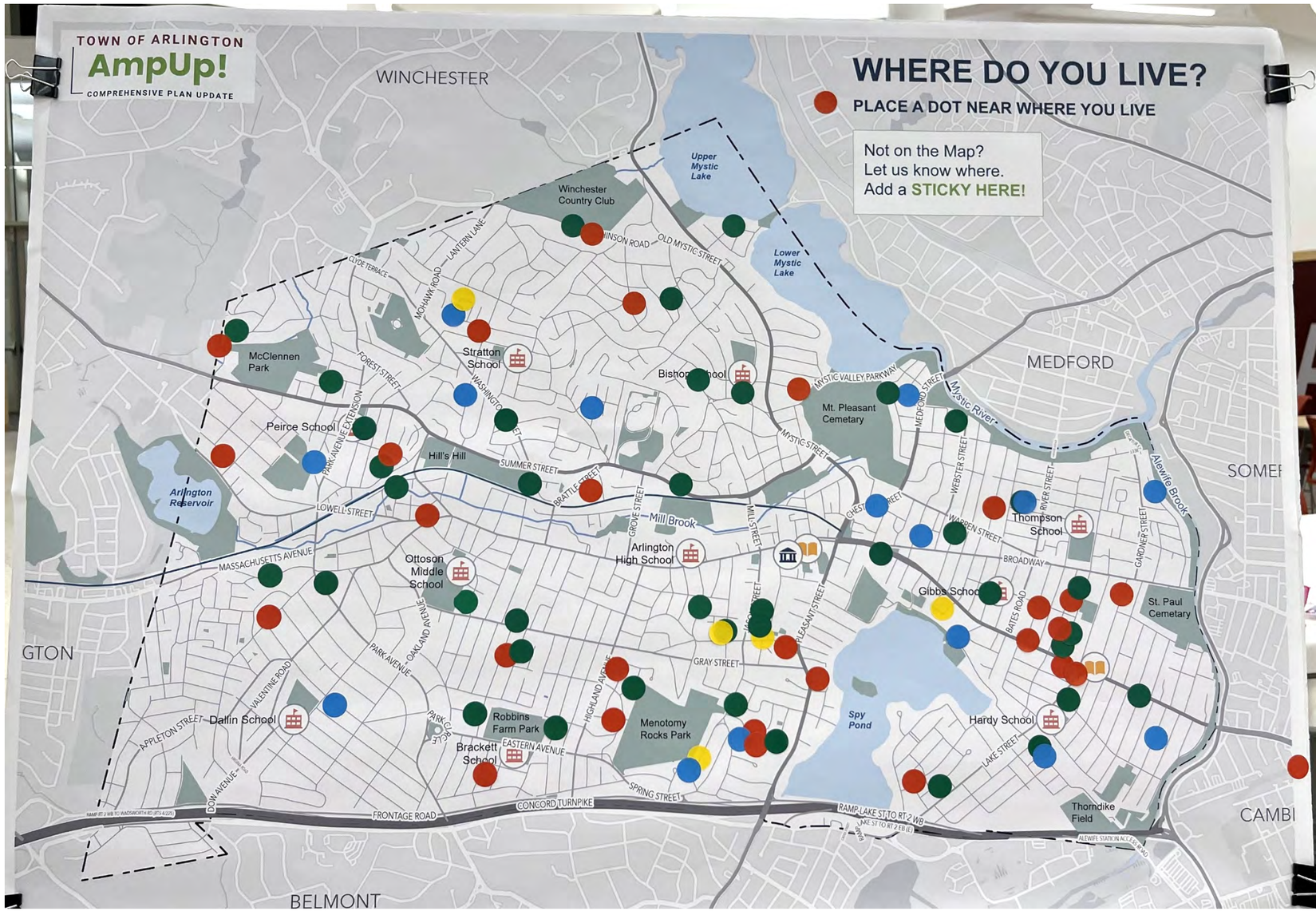
112

Kickoff Meeting Sign-ins

472

Online Survey Responses

Thru 6/15/25

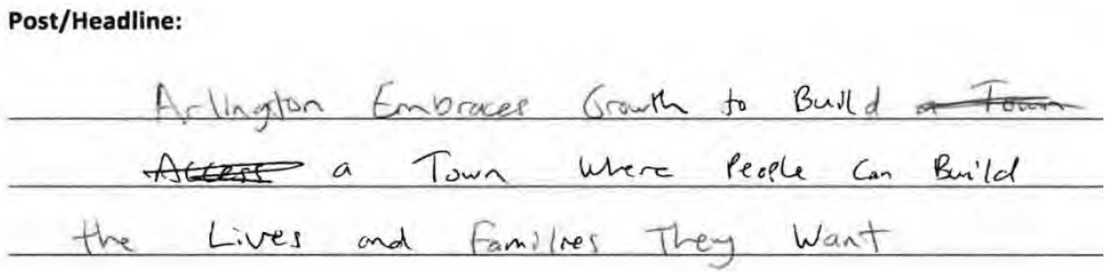


Geographic representation at kickoff meeting 4/3

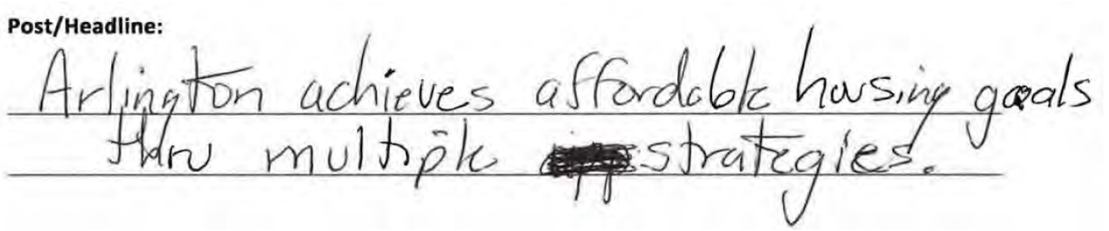
Headlines: Arlington in 2035

389 individual headlines collected:

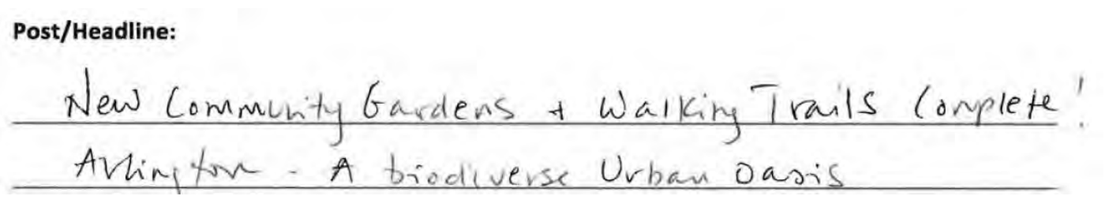
- Sustainability and climate resilience
- Affordable and inclusive housing
- Multi-modal transportation investment
- Economic vitality, strong local business community
- High quality of life and livability
- Enhancing open space and recreation opportunities
- An equitable and inclusive community
- Strong community identity and active civic life



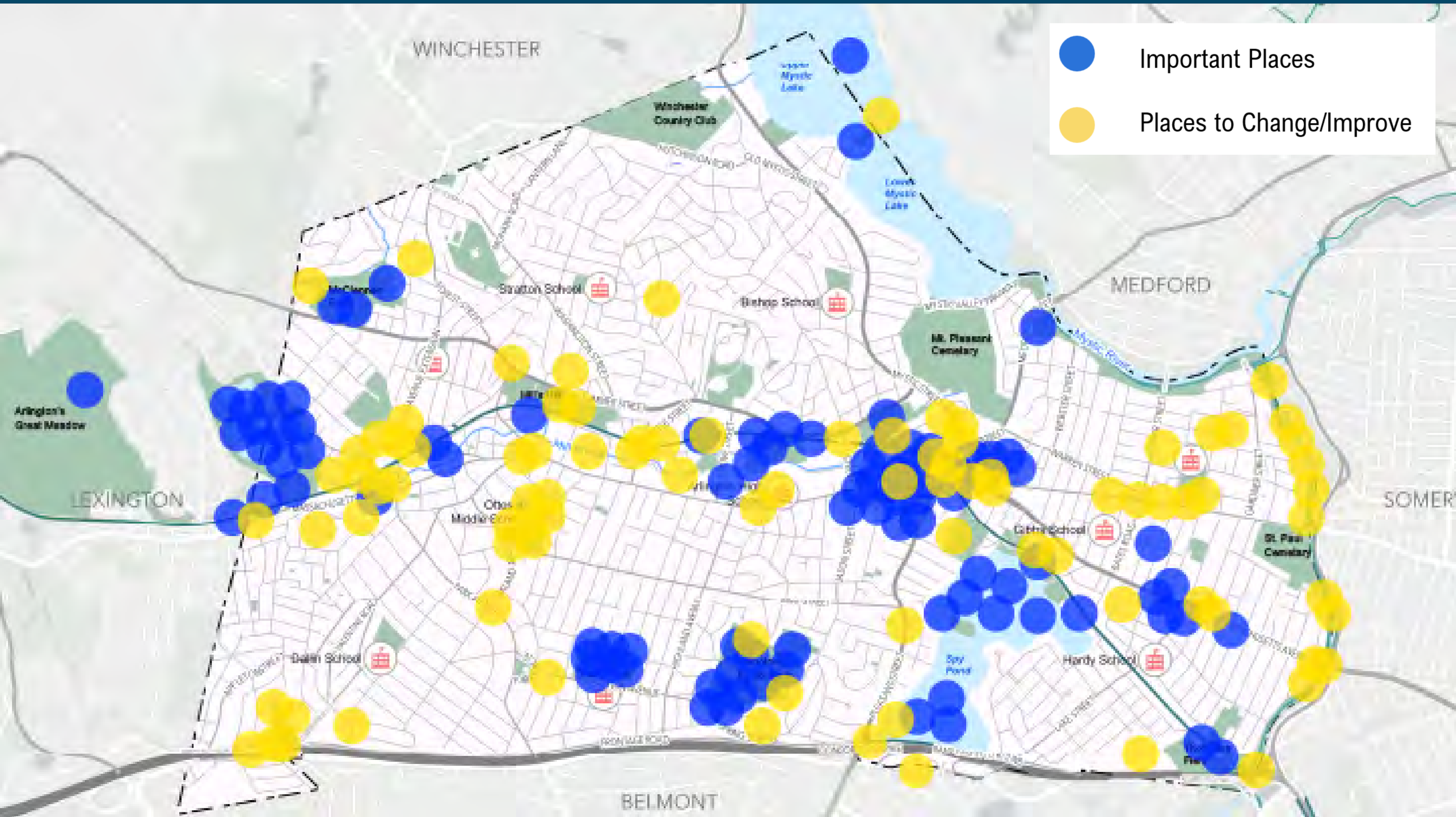
"Arlington: A town of opportunity, community, celebration, recreation and climate sustainability!"



"Best small business, great community and easy access by bike, Arlington is the great town for families"



Small Group Discussion Summary



Online Interactive Map

387

Contributions

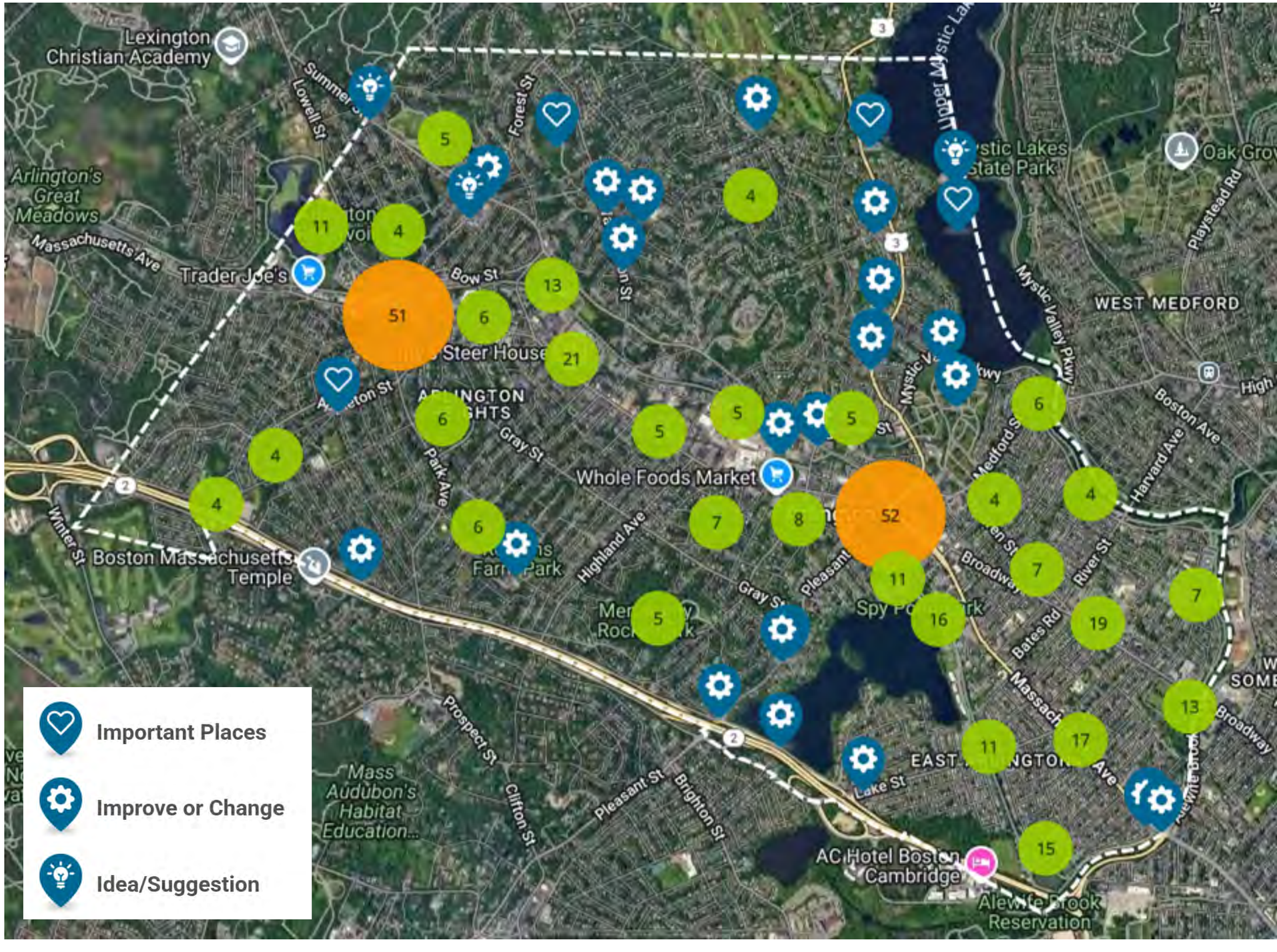
1,765

Votes

127

Contributors

Thru 6/15/25



Public Input: Important Places + Places to Change

IMPORTANT PLACES

- Arlington Reservoir
- Minuteman Bikeway/ Path
- Business districts
- Robbins Farm Park and other parks
- Spy Pond
- Robbin’s Library

PLACES TO CHANGE/IMPROVE

- Arlington Center
- Broadway Corridor
- East Arlington
- Transportation: roads, sidewalks, biking, parking
- Fox Library
- Alewife Brook
- Park and recreation improvements
- Industrial districts, Arlington Heights, underutilized parking lots, Poet’s Corner, others

Survey Input: 1-3 Topics Most Important for Town's Future?

Comprehensive Plan Topics

1. Economic development
2. Open space and recreation
3. Transportation
4. Housing
5. Land use and development
6. Sustainability and climate resilience
7. Town services and facilities
8. Natural and cultural resources

Top 4 rated close together

Using This Public Input

- Informs changes to 2015 vision statement and goals
- Helps to identify priorities generally shared by community members



// COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Comprehensive Plan's Relation to Other Plans

Comprehensive Plan provides overall long-range policy direction – necessarily broader

- Topic-specific plans support elements of comp plan and provide more detail



MGL Chapter 41 Section 81D

Meeting in a Box

Questions for AmpUp! members to take to **other boards, committees, and groups** – as conversation starters:

- What issues or topics does your board/committee most often discuss or hear about recently?
- What issues or topics do members think will be important for the Town to consider in the next few years?
- Where do you see opportunities to work toward mutual goals with other committees?
- Do you see any potential tensions with what other committees want to achieve?



Online form to submit feedback summaries: https://tinyurl.com/AmpUp-MIAB

Pop-Up Questions

Questions for AmpUp! members to take to **other community events** – to quickly capture opinions:

- What do you think Arlington most needs over the next 10 years?
- 1 or 2 other simple questions?



Revising the Vision and Goals Based on Public Input

- What does the public input collected so far suggest about changes to the vision and goals?



Vision from 2015 Plan

a vision for arlington

Arlington's Master Plan envisions civic connections that encourage social interaction and foster a sense of community. The plan considers a range of critical topics by focusing on how they contribute to these connections:

- Open spaces and corridors that link neighborhoods
- Thriving business districts
- Living and working opportunities for all
- Stewardship and promotion of our historic heritage
- Cultural and recreational resources that provide shared experiences
- Natural systems in ecological balance
- A walkable public realm where residents meet their neighbors
- A shared interest in community-wide fiscal health

Revising the 2015 Vision…

a vision for arlington

?

Arlington will be a connected community with housing for all, thriving neighborhood centers, and a strong sense of community. Key features will include:

- Open spaces and corridors that link neighborhoods
- Thriving business districts
- Living and working opportunities for all
- Stewardship and promotion of our historic heritage
- Cultural and recreational resources that provide shared experiences
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Goals from 2015 Plan

MASTER PLAN

Preserve and advance the Town's fiscal stability.

LAND USE

1. Balance housing growth with other land uses that support residential services and amenities.
2. Encourage development that enhances the quality of Arlington's natural resources and built environment.
3. Attract development that supports and expands the economic, cultural, and civic purposes of Arlington's commercial areas.

TRAFFIC & CIRCULATION

1. Enhance mobility and increase safety by maximizing transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access and other alternative modes of transportation.
2. Manage congestion safely and efficiently by improving traffic operations.
3. Manage the supply of parking in commercial areas in order to support Arlington businesses.

HOUSING

1. Encourage mixed-use development that includes affordable housing, primarily in well-established commercial areas.
2. Provide a variety of housing options for a range of incomes, ages, family sizes, and needs.
3. Preserve the "streetcar suburb" character of Arlington's residential neighborhoods.
4. Encourage sustainable construction and renovation of new and existing structures.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Support conditions that benefit small, independent businesses.
2. Maximize the buildout potential of commercial and industrial properties.
3. Promote Arlington's historic and cultural assets as leverage for economic development.
4. Improve access to public transit and parking.

Goals from 2015 Plan

HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

1. Maintain, protect, preserve, and promote historic and diverse cultural resources in all neighborhoods.
2. Provide attractive, well-maintained spaces for residents to meet, play and grow.
3. Provide space for arts and cultural activities for all ages.

NATURAL RESOURCES & OPEN SPACE

1. Use sustainable planning and engineering approaches to improve air and water quality, reduce flooding, and enhance ecological diversity by managing our natural resources.
2. Mitigate and adapt to climate change.
3. Ensure that Arlington's neighborhoods, commercial areas, and infrastructure are developed in harmony with natural resource concerns.
4. Value, protect, and enhance the physical beauty and natural resources of Arlington.
5. Treasure our open spaces, parks, recreational facilities and natural areas.

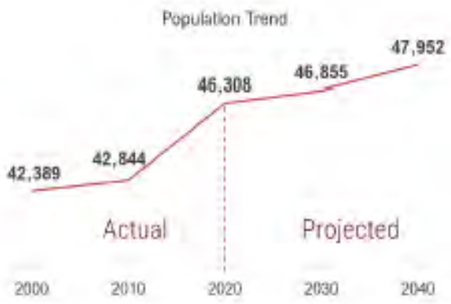
PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

1. Coordinate and efficiently deliver town services.
2. Build, operate, and maintain public facilities that are attractive and help to minimize environmental impact and that connect Arlington as a community.
3. Balance the need for additional revenue with ability and willingness of property owners to pay to maintain current services or for new expenditures and investments
4. Guide public facility investments through a long-term capital planning process that anticipates future needs.
5. Expand recreational and athletic facilities, programs, and opportunities, for all residents.
6. Maintain and beautify our public parks, trails, play areas, and streetscapes.

// EXISTING CONDITION HIGHLIGHTS

PEOPLE AND HOUSEHOLDS

Arlington's population grew 8% from 2010 to 2020



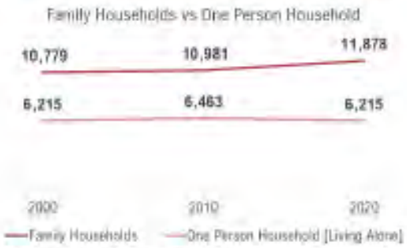
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial Census data, Urbana Champaign Institute VISTA Population Projections

The share of the population age 65+ has increased since 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial Census data, Urbana Champaign Institute VISTA Population Projections

The number of family households has increased since 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial Census data, American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2022

Average household size has increased too



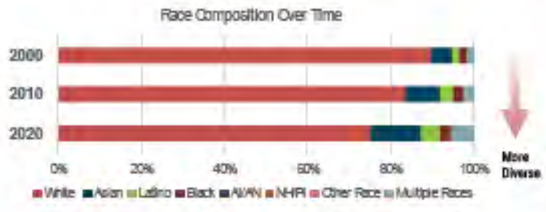
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial Census data, Esri Projection

» **32%** of households are one person living alone

» **31%** of households have children younger than 18 years

» **29%** of households include someone 65 years or older

Arlington is becoming more diverse



HOUSING AND ECONOMICS

Arlington's housing stock increased by over 5% since 2000

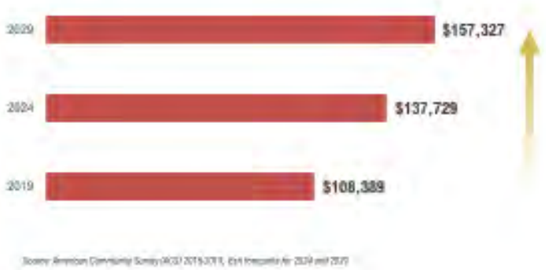
20,461 | 2022

19,411 | 2000

45% Single-family units

While median household income has grown faster than inflation, over one-third of renters and one-fifth of homeowners are cost-burdened

Median household income



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2015-2019, Esri forecasts for 2024 and 2029

Cost Burdened Residents



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 1 YR 2023

» Cost-burdened households pay more than 30% of household income on housing costs.

» **$998,000** - Median single-family home price in 2024, up 56% since 2018.

» **$2,043** - Median monthly rent in 2023, up 18% since 2019.

Source: U.S. Census, Realtor

Arlington has fewer jobs than employed residents; 25% of residents work from home, up 400%+ from 2010

1,200 + Businesses

10,000 Average Annual Jobs

$693 M Total Annual Wages

Source: U.S. Census Bureau decennial Census

NATURAL RESOURCES & SUSTAINABILITY

About one-sixth of Arlington is open space



16%
Open Space
+183 acres at Arlington Great Meadows in Lexington

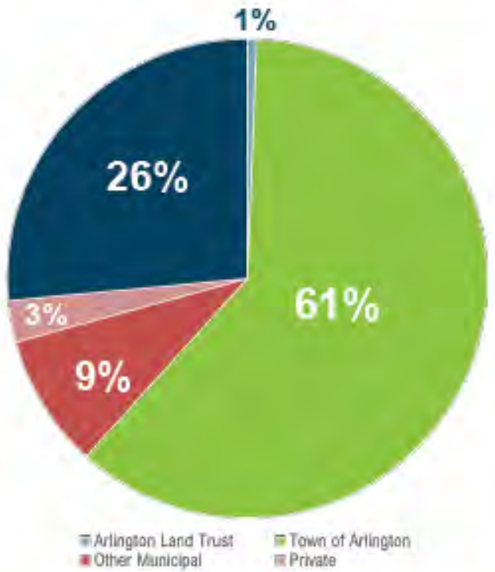
Climate Change Impacts



» **Residential buildings** and **passenger vehicles** are the **largest source** of Arlington's greenhouse gas emissions

» **231 buildings vulnerable** to potential damages **caused by a 100-year or 500-year flood event**

Types of Open Space by Ownership



» 61% of open space in owned by the Town of Arlington

» 56% is permanently protected

Water and Forest Resources



2 Watersheds

5 Lakes and Ponds [including 1 reservoir]

1 River & Several Brooks



~245 Park Acres
98% of residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park



6+ Miles of Trails and Greenways



Arlington's Great Meadows [~183 acres]

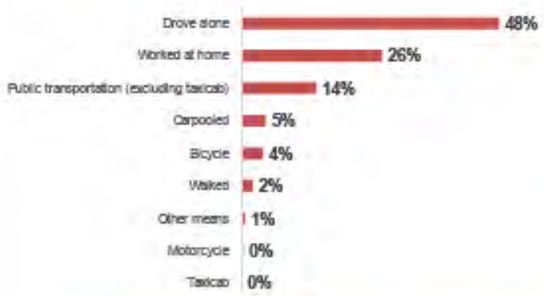
Mt. Gilboa [~11 acres]

Alewife Brook & Mystic River Reservations [32 acres]

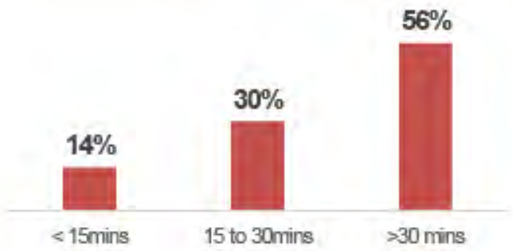
Sources: MassGIS; 2022 Arlington Open Space & Recreation Plan; ParkServe, Trust for Public Land, 2020 Arlington Hazard Mitigation Plan.

TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC SERVICES

Workers age 16+ years by means of transportation to work



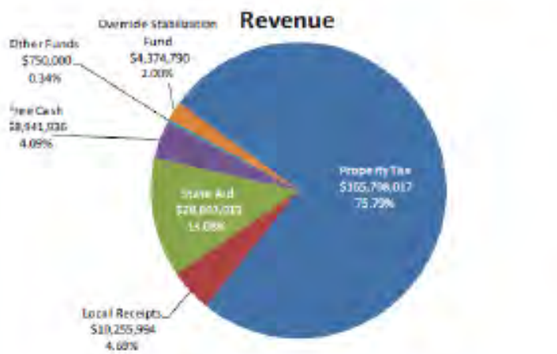
Commute time to work for workers age 16+

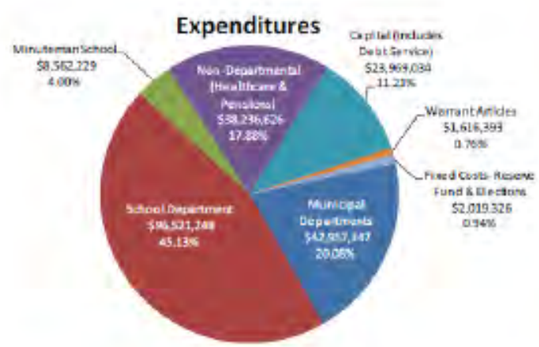


» Over half of Arlington's working residents drive to work and commute over 30 minutes

» 14% commute to work via public transportation and 6% walk or bike to work

Arlington's Municipal Budget





Public Services

Police
3 Police Departments, 65 sworn officers

Fire
1 Fire Station. The Department also staffs a Class 1 Rescue/Ambulance and staffs 76 EMTs.

Water
130 miles of water main

Sewer
100 miles of sewer main

Public Schools
11 public schools serving **6,113 students** in Arlington Public School District. Total enrollment has increased about 6% since 2021.

National Register of Historic Places
63 sites, 1 national historic district, 7 local historic districts

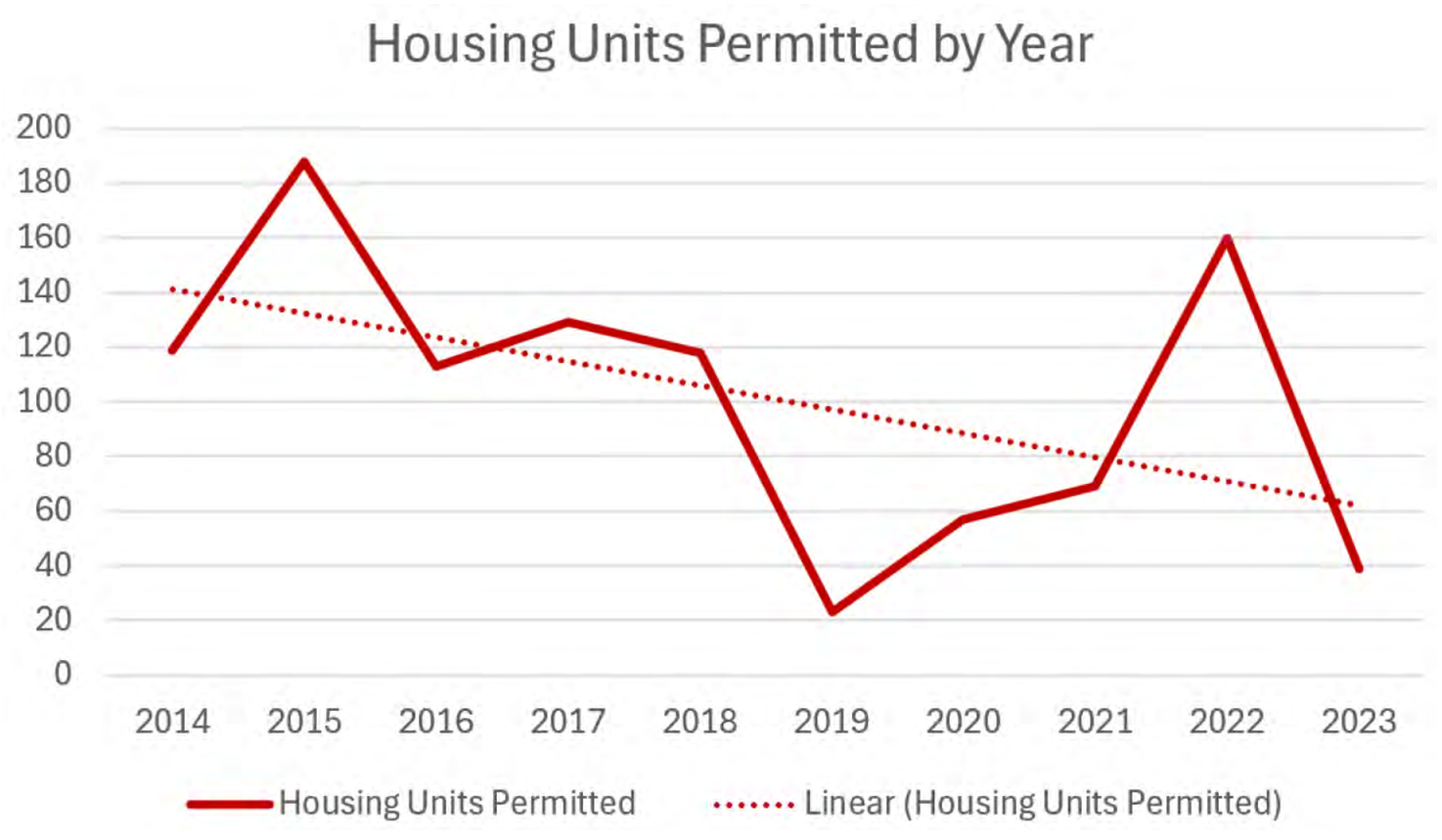
Source: MassGIS, GIS data set from Town of Arlington, DESE School & District Profiles

Historic Resources in Arlington
» 1 national historic district
» 7 local historic districts
» 63 historic sites

Sources: MassGIS; 2023 Arlington Annual Report; Data from Town of Arlington, DESE School & District Profiles, 2019-2022 American Community Survey.

Land Use and Housing

- Only 4% of Arlington is zoned commercial (B1-B5) and only 2% is zoned industrial (I)
- Over past decade, number of housing units permitted annually has trended downward
  - 86% 2+ units, 14% single-family units
  - Among 2+ units: 84% in buildings with 5+ units and 15% in duplexes



Economy and Jobs

- Healthcare and social services is the largest employment sector (21%)
- Several sectors are driven by consumer spending – “experience” is critical for retail, food and beverage, hospitality
- Key challenge for economic growth is limited space availability
- Most residents work outside Arlington – but work from home remained high since pandemic



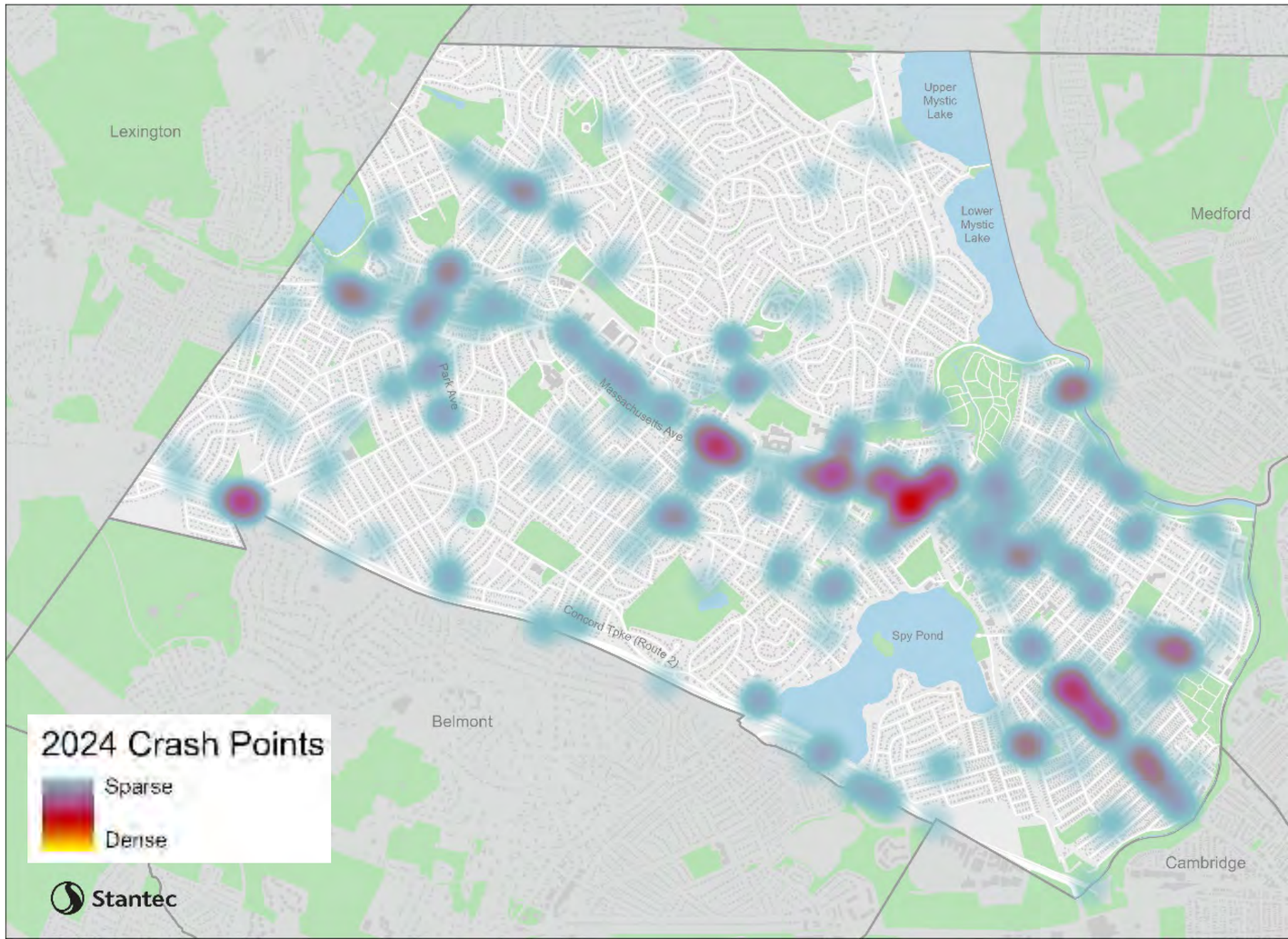
Open Space and Recreation

- Almost half of Arlington’s open space is owned by the Town. One-third is owned by private entities (non-profits, land trust, etc.)
- Almost three-quarters of Arlington’s open space is protected.
- Robbins Farm Playground – Town’s first universal design playground renovation



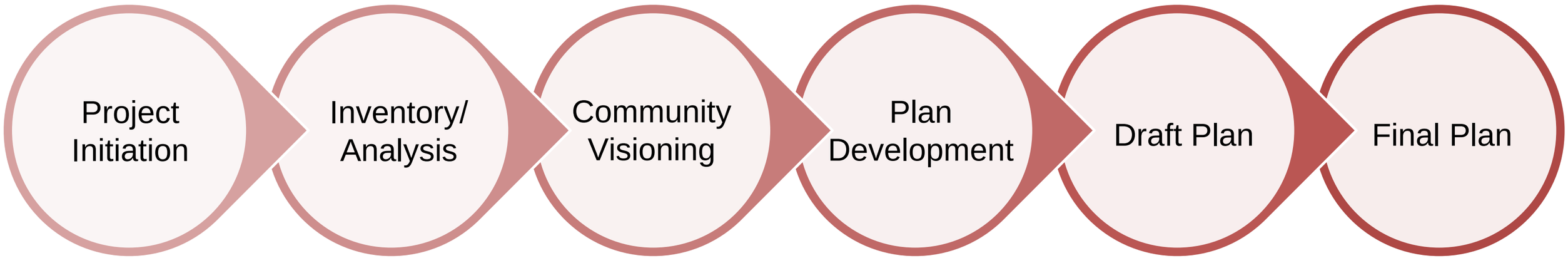
Mobility

- Connect Arlington plan… Complete Streets prioritization… Broadway Corridor Re-Design… Mass Ave/Appleton… Park Ave…
- Safety a major concern, especially for vulnerable road users like pedestrians and bicyclists



// NEXT STEPS

Our Planning Process





Public Engagement in Three Phases



Next Steps

- Continue reviewing public input and feedback from other committees as AmpUp! members continue their outreach
- Revisit vision and goals from 2015 plan – what's changed?
- Begin exploring topics in more detail
- This fall: next phase of public engagement focused on topics and developing draft strategies