



# ARLINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TOWN OF ARLINGTON

2026 Update



TOWN OF ARLINGTON  
**AmpUp!**  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

DRAFT FOR REVIEW MARCH 2026

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Thank you to everyone who participated in this community planning process by sharing your opinions and ideas at a meeting, by completing a survey, or by visiting the website.

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# INTRODUCTION

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## 01 | INTRODUCTION

### OVERVIEW

The Town of Arlington is an inner-ring suburb of Boston. Its attractive neighborhoods, three charming business districts, access to the Minuteman Bikeway, range of parks, and high-quality schools are among the features that contribute to its sense of community. A strong civic spirit extends to the many Town boards and committees comprised of resident volunteers

The Town's last Master Plan was adopted in 2015. That plan helped guide improvements including zoning changes, establishment of the affordable housing trust, development of a sustainable transportation plan, creation of a facilities department to manage Town-owned buildings, and many others. This update, now called the Comprehensive Plan, will chart the path for the next ten years and beyond.

The community's broad vision for its future and many of the goals remain similar to the 2015 plan. However, several areas of focus were emphasized throughout the extensive community outreach process conducted for this plan. The rising cost of housing, whether renting or buying, has elevated conversations about

affordability, supply, types, and locations of housing. The changing nature of the retail industry nationwide has impacted local businesses and restaurants, affecting Arlington's business districts and raising the importance of a strong economic development strategy. At the same time, many people would like to see the local economy include more commercial and industrial businesses to support jobs and diversify what the town offers. Equity and diversity, which relate to many aspects of life in Arlington, has become more central. The importance of climate change adaptation has been emphasized by the Town's commitment in 2018 to being carbon neutral by 2050 and targeting net zero emissions of greenhouse gases.

Arlington has ambitious goals that will require careful consideration of priorities and diverse perspectives. Limited funding for new initiatives, at least in the near-term, will require creativity and collaboration to make progress. This Comprehensive Plan responds to these realities by providing a clear framework for Town decision-making that supports coordinated action across departments to advance towards Arlington's shared vision.



## 01 | INTRODUCTION

### What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan, also called a Master Plan, provides a basis for decision-making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality. Massachusetts General Law (Chapter 41, Section 81D) establishes the topics which must be addressed: land use, economic development, housing, connectivity, historic and cultural resources, natural resources and open space, and public services and facilities. The plan must also contain goals and policies for the future growth and development of the community, as well as an implementation program. The Planning Board (the Arlington Redevelopment Board) adopts the Comprehensive Plan by a majority vote. The plan may be added to or changed from time to time.

### About This Plan

Arlington's Comprehensive Plan addresses this broad range of topics which are covered in its chapters. It is important to highlight that these topics are interrelated and cannot be considered in isolation. As one example, natural

resources and open space should be considered alongside housing, economic development, and public facilities and services. Likewise, housing or economic development should be considered alongside connectivity, historic and cultural resources, and regional markets and trends. In any particular issue or question, one topic or another may take precedence over another. The plan's overall vision and broad goals can be helpful to balance these considerations.

The Comprehensive Plan does not replace or supersede the Town's more specific plans such as the Arlington Housing Plan, Connect Arlington Sustainable Transportation Plan, Net Zero Action Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, and many others. The Comprehensive Plan is Arlington's highest-level policy document and illustrates the connections among issues. In many cases, the Comprehensive Plan endorses the continued implementation of recently completed plans. It may also recommend that older plans be updated or that new plans be undertaken to explore an issue in more detail and develop more extensive or specific recommendations.



## 01 | INTRODUCTION

### How to Use This Plan

While the Comprehensive Plan can be read straight through as a cohesive document, in practice it is more likely that users will consult a specific chapter or parts of the plan at different times. The Executive Summary and Community Vision sections are particularly useful the first time someone uses this plan. They should also be reviewed periodically to keep in mind the bigger picture within which specific topics fit.

- The **Executive Summary** provides a concise overview of key themes, major issues and recommendations, and the process used to create the plan. It can be used as a stand-alone summary of the Comprehensive Plan for those who want to learn more about its contents.
- **Community Engagement** describes how residents and other stakeholders helped shape this plan through their input and feedback. A series of in-person events, online activities, and informal outreach at community events provided many opportunities for people to participate how and when it was convenient for them.
- **Community Vision** sets forth the community-informed vision for the future of Arlington and the goals which support that vision. It also describes two plan themes, which weave through all the topics in this plan: equity and diversity, and sustainability and resiliency.
- **Trends Influencing Arlington** highlights key information and trends about Arlington that influence its present condition and future potential. Population and household characteristics are the primary focus of this chapter. Important information about other topics is found in the respective chapters and in the separate "Arlington Today" existing conditions report.
- **Strategies** for specific topics are contained in the next seven chapters. These strategies are the core of the Comprehensive Plan and provide guidance for department workplans and decision-making. Each chapter shares the same organization:
  - Overview of the topic within the local context;
  - Key issues and opportunities;
  - Relationship to other plan elements, as well as to the two overarching themes;
  - Goals and strategies to be pursued over the next five to ten years to make progress towards the goal;
  - Highlights of key existing conditions and trends.
- **Implementation** is the final chapter and provides a 'user-guide' for Town departments, boards, and committees who will carry out many of the plan's recommendations. A matrix assigns each of the plan's strategies to a specific Town department or other leader. It recommends a general timeframe for implementation while acknowledging that unforeseen opportunities or challenges may lead to strategies being started sooner or postponed until later. This matrix is intended to be a tracking tool over the lifespan of this plan to help understand what has been accomplished and what remains to be done.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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## 02 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### OVERVIEW

Community engagement was a core part of the comprehensive planning process, and directly informed the development of the plan each step of the way. Through public meetings and workshops, focus groups, and online engagement, residents shared their priorities, concerns, and aspirations for the future of Arlington. The collected feedback highlighted both what people value and where they see opportunities for improvement.

The first phase of the planning process focused on analyzing Arlington's existing conditions and developing a community-driven vision to guide the Plan. The second phase explored different topics and developed specific goals and strategies informed by the community visioning process. Additional input from community members and Town staff throughout the plan development and drafting phases informed the plan's topic specific content and helped refine its goals and recommendations.

### Planning Process & Timeline



*Visioning Forum, April 2025*



*Plan Development Workshop, October 2025*

## 02 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

A robust mix of in-person and virtual engagement activities was used to collect broad input from residents, municipal staff, and other stakeholders. Public workshops, focus groups, interviews, surveys, community canvassing, and an interactive project website provided multiple ways for stakeholders to share feedback and engage in ongoing dialogue throughout the planning process. This outreach built upon engagement conducted for other recent Town planning initiatives, maintaining continuity and incorporating insights gained from earlier efforts.



#### In-Person Community Engagement

- » 2 public workshops
- » 1 draft plan open house
- » 160+ attendees at in-person events
- » 5 focus groups with 85+ attendees
- » 20+ Advisory Committee pop-up events
- » 100+ paper surveys collected at pop-up events
- » 15 interviews with 30 staff across more than 20 Town departments



#### Online Engagement

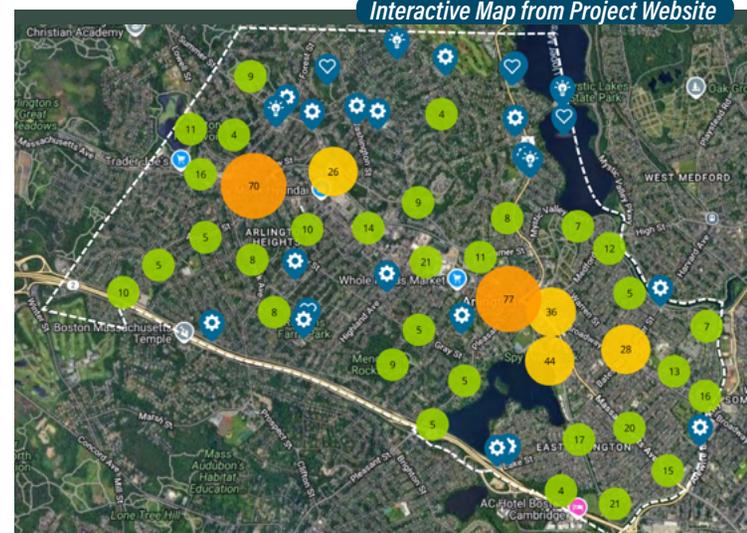
- » 4,000 project website visitors
- » 957 online contributors
- » 3,435 votes and 624 comments on interactive map
- » 533 vision survey responses
- » 496 responses to 2 quick polls



Town Day Pop Up Event, August 2025



Visioning Forum, April 2025



Interactive Map from Project Website

\* Note: in-person attendees for first 2 public workshops, will be updated after 3rd event. Online engagement through end of 2025, will be updated after 3rd event. - 7 -

## 02 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### AmpUp! Comprehensive Plan Update Advisory Committee:

The Town assembled a Comprehensive Plan Update Advisory Committee to bring a variety of perspectives to the planning process. Committee members helped to promote events and collected input from people at multiple pop-up events. They also provided feedback on draft materials to help guide the project team. The Committee met at least monthly throughout the span of the planning process.

### Public Meetings & Workshops:

Three interactive public meetings were hosted to share information about the process and to collect ideas and feedback. They included a kickoff visioning forum, a strategy development workshop focusing on preliminary strategy themes, and a draft plan open house to preview material prior to the formal adoption process. The strategy workshop also used Zoom to facilitate an online discussion. More than 160 people attended these events to share their ideas with the project team and each other.

### Surveys:

In addition to collecting public input at in-person events, the project team invited residents, business owners, and other stakeholders to participate in online surveys during key milestones of the planning process. A survey was conducted following each of the public workshops. Each survey mirrored the questions asked at the in-person workshops to allow those who were unable to attend the workshops to provide feedback, and allow for a greater response rate across more demographics. Almost 650 online survey responses were collected after the first two events and this feedback was combined with the in-person responses. Two short polls were offered on the project website and collected almost 500 responses.

### Project Website:

An interactive project website was used to provide more information about the comprehensive planning process and share updates along the way. The site included an interactive map to collect ongoing feedback from the community, hosted the surveys and quick polls conducted throughout the process, and posted all materials from the public workshops. The website allowed people to participate when and how it was convenient for them.



## 02 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Focus Groups:

Town staff and advisory committee members hosted five focus groups to hear about community priorities for specific topics and gather other feedback to inform the planning process. Focus groups allowed for targeted community discussion about open space and sustainability; historic, cultural, and arts resources; housing; economic development; and mobility and transportation. More than 85 people attended these discussions including members of Town boards and committees like the Conservation Commission, Tree Committee, Transportation Advisory Committee, Historical Commission, and others; representatives from the Arlington Housing Authority, the Housing Corporation of Arlington, and local museums; and other groups such as arts and cultural groups, business owners, and community organizations.

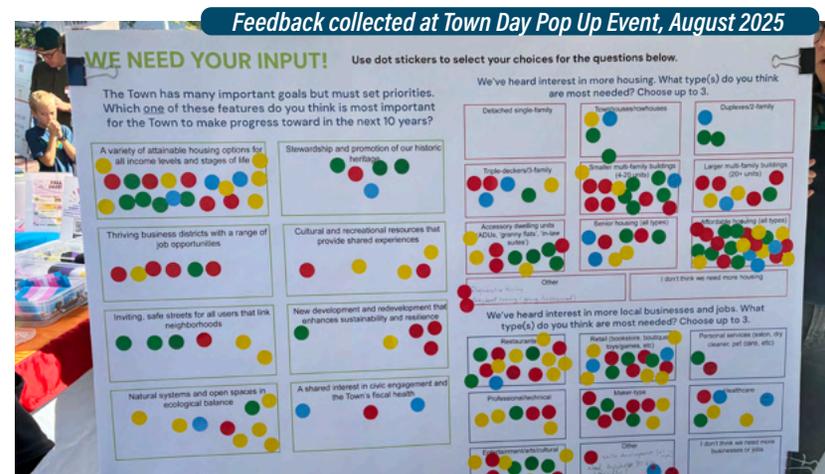
Two additional focus groups were held with residents of buildings owned by Arlington Housing Authority and Housing Corporation of Arlington. These small groups shared feedback and ideas about housing, streets and public spaces, accessibility, public services and programs, and local businesses.

### Pop-up Events & Outreach:

Pop-up events and canvassing were designed as informal ways for the project team to raise awareness about the comprehensive planning process, speak with residents, and collect feedback. A pop-up event was hosted at the 2025 Town Day. The project team handed out surveys, comment cards, and business cards with links to the project website. Mapping and Imagine Arlington 2035 headline exercises were also available for those who stopped by the pop-up. Advisory committee members canvassed at numerous events including Arlington's farmers market, National Night Out, and multiple summer concert and beer gardens throughout the summer and early fall. Hundreds of people spoke with committee members and/or filled out a survey.



Housing focus group, September 2025



Feedback collected at Town Day Pop Up Event, August 2025

### HOW IS THIS INPUT BEING USED?

The input collected throughout the planning process is used in combination with findings from the existing conditions analysis and conversations with Town staff across departments to:

- Capture community perspectives across a variety of topic areas
- Revise the plan's vision and goals
- Inform potential strategies
- Support implementation of the plan

## 02 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### WHAT WE HEARD

#### Visioning Phase

Extensive feedback highlighted how deeply valued Arlington's sense of community, civic and cultural institutions, small businesses, and beloved open and recreational spaces are within the community. Continuing to strengthen these assets was expressed as a core priority in envisioning Arlington's future. Addressing growing affordability challenges and remaining a welcoming community was another consistent theme shared across many voices. This was reflected in calls for a range of housing, more accessible transit and open spaces, and public services and amenities that serve all abilities and foster greater social connectivity.

Public input identified several areas in need of improvement and change. Making the three business districts more inviting places to visit and shop while improving economic development were recurring themes. Increasing the diversity of housing options and improving parks and open spaces were other topics consistently shared in collected feedback. Many participants also expressed aspirations for Arlington to advance its status as a regional leader in equity and sustainability and called for bold action to move these priorities forward.

#### IMAGINE ARLINGTON IN 2035

Participants were asked to imagine Arlington ten years from now, in the year 2035, and write a brief social media post or newspaper headline they would like to see. Commons themes included: 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, and strong community identity and active civic life.

Specific headline examples include:

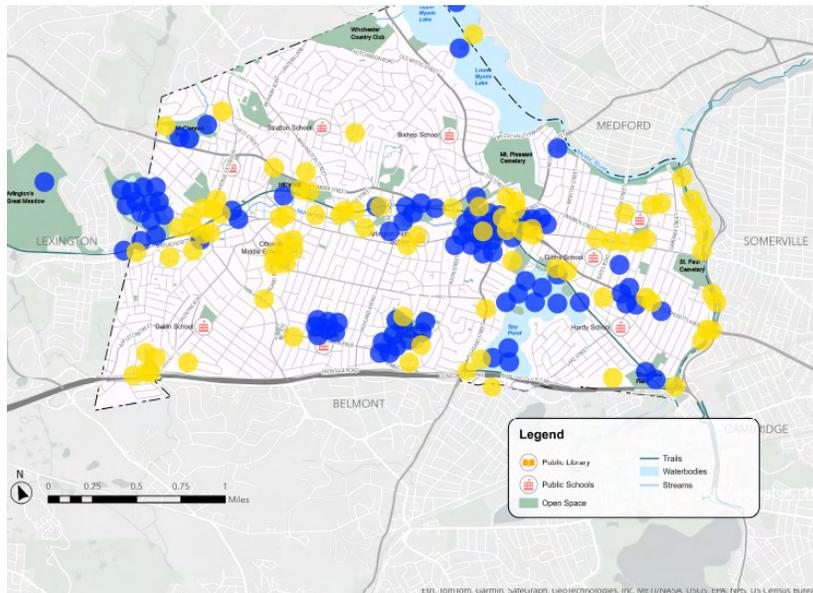
- **"Arlington: A model of equity and sustainability in 2035"**
- **"Small Business Booms in Arlington's Revitalized Downtown"**
- **"Safe, Walkable Streets in Every Neighborhood"**
- **"Arlington Aging Well" / "Arlington - Longevity Hub"**
- **"Arlington Center Achieves all 3-story minimum buildings on Mass Ave"**
- **"Arlington Thrives: Play and Stay in Arlington where Nature, Culture, and Community Engagement Co-exist"**
- **"Town celebrates tall trees and low rents"**
- **"Arlington named in top 10 communities in the U.S. for excellent quality of life and car-free living."**
- **"Small businesses flock to Arlington."**
- **"Spy Pond water deemed safe for the entire summer season!"**

## 02 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### WHAT WE HEARD

#### Strategy Development Phase

Feedback received during the strategy development process emphasized the importance of preserving existing commercial spaces and naturally occurring affordable housing. There was broad support for increasing density, especially along Massachusetts Avenue, provided that new development is context sensitive. Other key themes included balancing public realm improvements with parking and access needs, and increasing infrastructure for pedestrian and bicycle safety. Enhancing Arlington's natural landscapes and open spaces were also consistently identified as high priorities, along with continuing to advance the Town's climate resilience initiatives.



● Important places      ● Places to change or improve

#### SHARED COMMUNITY PRIORITIES - KEY THEMES FROM PUBLIC INPUT

- **Increasing Housing and Addressing Affordability:** Many expressed the need for more housing that is affordable to a variety of income levels. Families, seniors, and young people just starting out are among those who struggle to find suitable options.
- **Prioritizing Mixed-use Development:** Many highlighted the need to encourage more mixed-use development in business districts and in industrial areas. Some felt that more mixed-use development could be a pathway for achieving greater housing equity.
- **Improving Walking, Biking, and Accessibility:** Enhancing the pedestrian environment and biking infrastructure was a top priority for many. Comments discussed the need to provide safer access to amenities and nature through well-lit streets, improved sidewalks, and “complete streets” designs. Improved bus service and transit access was also mentioned.
- **Enhancing Natural and Open Spaces:** Arlington’s green spaces, tree canopy, parks, and native species are important to many. Increasing accessibility and public education on environmentally conscious and more sustainable practices was also cited.
- **Strengthening the Economy and Businesses:** Priorities included reducing commercial vacancies, supporting existing businesses, and attracting new businesses.
- **Creating a Strong Community, Culture, and Quality of Life:** Many mentioned the need to strengthen and promote a strong community identity and to create greater community vibrancy through diverse public gathering places. Many also stressed inclusivity especially for seniors and people with disabilities.

What do you love most about Arlington?



What would you like to see change over the next ten years?





# COMMUNITY VISION

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## 03 | COMMUNITY VISION

### OVERVIEW

Feedback gathered during the visioning phase of the engagement process informed an update to the community vision for Arlington’s Comprehensive Plan. Developed in collaboration with the Comprehensive Plan Update Advisory Committee, the vision statement articulates an aspirational picture of what Arlington seeks to become over the next ten to twenty years. Together with the Comprehensive Plan’s goals and strategies, the vision provides overarching guidance to align Town planning, decision-making, and budgeting with the community’s desired outcomes



### VISION STATEMENT

**Arlington strives to be a welcoming town that supports a diverse population in a variety of housing options, fosters thriving business districts and vibrant neighborhoods, protects the natural environment, and encourages a strong shared sense of community and civic involvement. Key features will include:**

- » A variety of attainable housing options for all income levels and stages of life
- » Thriving business districts with a range of job opportunities
- » Inviting, safe streets for all users that link neighborhoods
- » Healthy ecologies and resilient open spaces
- » Stewardship and promotion of our historic heritage
- » Cultural, arts, recreational, and educational resources that provide growth and shared experiences
- » New development and redevelopment that enhances sustainability and resilience
- » A shared interest in civic engagement and the Town’s fiscal health



*Visioning Workshop, April 2025*

## 03 | COMMUNITY VISION

The community vision is supported by a set of goals for each topic that define more specific outcomes. These goals are updated from the 2015 Master Plan based on community input during the visioning phase of this planning process. The goals for each topic are accompanied by targeted strategies which provide the action plan for Town staff and others to implement.

### GOALS

LU

#### Land Use

- Increase the number and variety of residential and non-residential development opportunities
- Prioritize the redevelopment and productive use of underutilized parcels to advance community goals
- Encourage development that enhances Arlington's natural resources, built environment, and sustainability
- Attract development that supports and expands the economic, cultural, and civic vibrancy of Arlington's commercial areas

ED

#### Economic Development

- Improve regulatory processes to benefit local businesses
- Increase the build-out potential and value of commercial and industrial properties
- Promote Arlington's historic and cultural assets to support economic development
- Improve the customer experience through streetscape improvements, wayfinding, parking, and access upgrades
- Create and support organizational capacity related to economic development

H

#### Housing

- Continue to support implementation of the Arlington Housing Production Plan (2022) and the Fair Housing Action Plan (2021)
- Encourage mixed-use development that includes attainable housing options at all income levels, especially near transit and in established commercial areas
- Provide a variety of housing options for a range of incomes, ages, family sizes, and needs
- Allow multi-family housing compatible with the scale of existing residential neighborhoods
- Encourage sustainable new construction and renovation of existing structures

C

#### Connectivity

- Increase safety for all roadway users by enhancing pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access
- Manage traffic operations to improve safety, balance local and through trips, and address the needs of all roadway users
- Actively manage the supply of parking to support businesses, neighborhoods, and new development

## 03 | COMMUNITY VISION

### GOALS

HC

#### Historic & Cultural Resources

- Preserve and promote Arlington's historic heritage and its diverse arts and cultural resources
- Enhance and support historic business districts and neighborhoods with compatible redevelopment
- Provide well-maintained public spaces for year-round arts and cultural activities for all ages

NR

#### Natural Resources & Open Space

- Use sustainable and resilient approaches to improve air and water quality, mitigate flooding impacts, and restore ecological integrity
- Ensure that Arlington's neighborhoods, commercial areas, and infrastructure are developed and maintained to build resilience and mitigate climate change impacts
- Increase the town's tree canopy on public and private property
- Protect and enhance the physical beauty and natural resources of public and private lands in Arlington

FS

#### Public Facilities & Services

- Coordinate and efficiently deliver Town services
- Build, operate, and maintain public facilities that are attractive, cost-efficient, minimize environmental impact, and help connect Arlington as a community
- Direct public facility investments through a long-term capital planning process that anticipates future needs
- Maintain, beautify, improve our public parks, trails, play areas, and programming to meet the population's changing needs
- Support Arlington Public Schools and enhance educational opportunities for all

## 03 | COMMUNITY VISION

### OVERARCHING PLAN THEMES

Two overarching themes were heard frequently in public feedback and Comprehensive Plan Update Advisory Committee discussions. These themes are woven through the plan's goals and strategies to reflect their importance to the Arlington community and to highlight the interconnectedness of the plan's focus areas.

#### Equity and diversity:

Equity and diversity are central considerations, particularly in relation to equitable access to services, amenities, housing, and economic opportunities. Maintaining a welcoming and inclusive community with strong social connections and civic engagement is seen as essential for ensuring that all residents feel valued and supported.

#### Sustainability and resiliency:

Sustainability and resiliency were often discussed in an environmental context. Sustainability and resilience encompass the critically important and interconnected themes of climate change mitigation and adaptation, ecological health, sustainable building practices, social resilience, and other factors.



#### Supporting Equity and Diversity

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are important for the quality of life for all residents, particularly those from historically underserved and marginalized communities. This theme includes ensuring safe, inclusive access to resources and services such as Arlington's natural environments and public spaces, community facilities and events, social services, and education. Equitable access is broader than just physical access and includes language access and other forms of programmatic accessibility. These strengthen connections and create opportunities for residents of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. By prioritizing equitable access to opportunity, services, and decision-making, the Comprehensive Plan advances fair outcomes, fosters social cohesion, and supports long-term community resilience.



#### Integrating Sustainability and Resilience:

Sustainability and resilience are incorporated into all areas of the comprehensive plan to support Arlington in preparing for the future while addressing present-day needs. Prioritizing sustainability and resilience means sustainable building practices and environmental stewardship as well as economic adaptability and social connectedness. It means considering the long-term impacts of today's planning and development decisions to anticipate future costs or risks. By proactively planning for climate change, economic shifts, and other challenges, Arlington can better position itself to withstand and recover from disruptions for greater resilience.



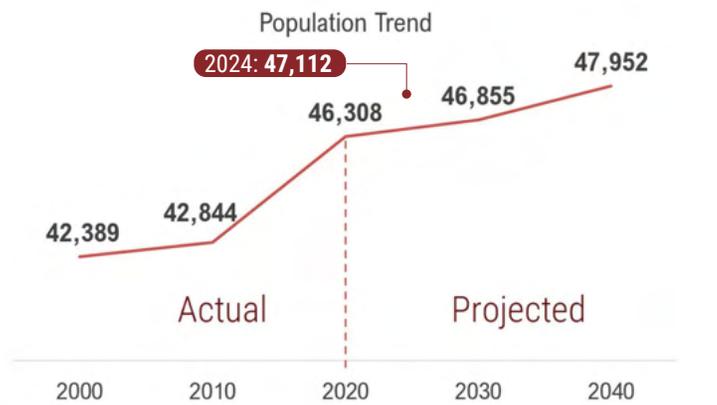
# TRENDS INFLUENCING ARLINGTON

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CONTEXT AND TRENDS | PEOPLE AND HOUSEHOLDS 

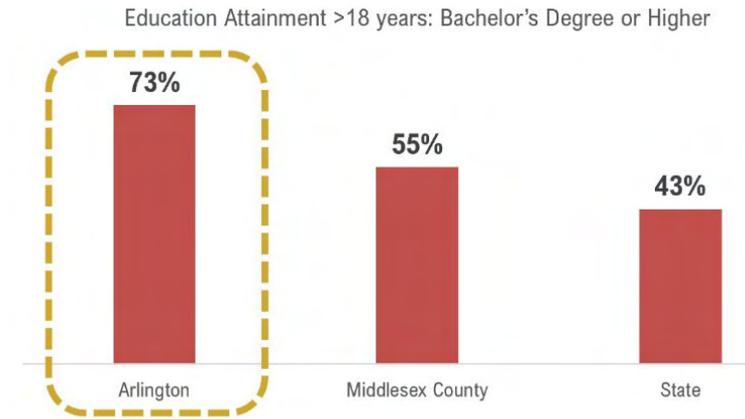
The following information is taken from the "Arlington Today" existing conditions report compiled during this planning process.

Arlington's population grew 8% from 2010 to 2020 . Recent estimates indicate continued growth.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census data 2000-2020; U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program (PEP), 2024; UMass Donahue Institute, v2024 Population Projections

Almost three-quarters of residents older than 18 years have a bachelor's degree or higher.



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5 Yr 2023

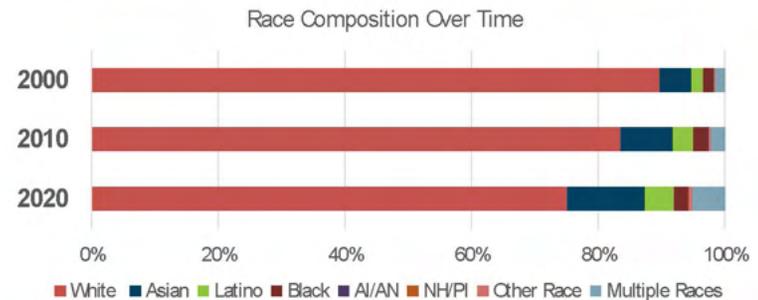
About one-third of households are one person living alone

Other household characteristics:

**31%** Households with children younger than 18 years

**29%** Households with someone 65 years or older

Arlington is becoming more diverse



CONTEXT AND TRENDS | HOUSING AND JOBS



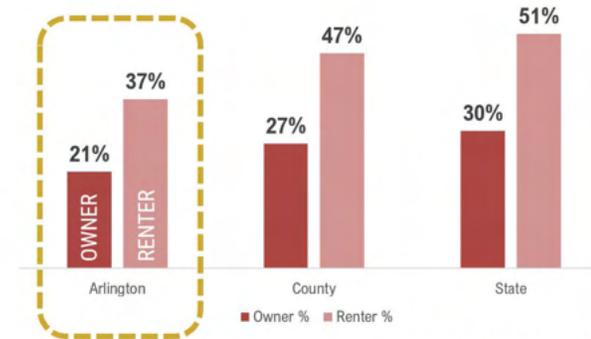
Arlington's housing stock increased by over **5%** since 2000, an average of about 50 new units each year.



Arlington's population grew by about 4,000 people from 2000 to 2020.

Over one-third of renters and one-fifth of homeowners are cost-burdened

Cost-Burdened Residents



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5 YR 2023

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

The number of Arlington residents in the workforce is approximately **2.5 times** greater than the number of local jobs.

**25%** Approximate share of local jobs in sectors driven by discretionary consumer spending (retail, hospitality, arts, and entertainment)

**20%** Local jobs in healthcare and social services

**\$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: American Community Survey (ACS) 5 YR 2023

## CONTEXT AND TRENDS | SUMMARY

- » Arlington's population has been growing since 2000 and becoming increasingly diverse. About 25% of the population identified as a race other than white in 2020, a 2.5 times increase since 2000. The current population of about 47,000 is still below Arlington's historic peak around 53,500 in the 1970 Census.
- » Housing affordability is a growing local concern – and a regional and statewide issue as well. Home prices, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic in the early 2020's, have increased considerably. This has enlarged the gap between the median housing cost and what the median household income can afford. Implications include residents feeling "trapped" in a home that no longer suits them well but who cannot afford to buy or rent something else, and people who cannot find the type of housing they want at a price they can afford in Arlington.
- » The local economy continues to be constrained by the limited amount of commercial or industrial land and types of spaces available in Arlington. This directly impacts the property tax base and means that homeowners provide the majority of property tax revenue.
- » Arlington Public Schools has seen a 17% increase in enrollment since the 2014-2015 school year (from 5,200 to 6,100 students). During this period, pre-K to fifth grade enrollment as a share of the total district enrollment decreased from 55% to 47%, while the share of middle school enrollment increased from 21% to 24% and high school enrollment increased from 23% to 29%. Individual school capacity dynamics will continue to be affected by enrollment trends.
- » Arlington is a built-out community which means that future growth, whether for housing or businesses, will require the redevelopment of existing sites and buildings.
- » Arlington's annual new growth tax revenue has averaged only about 1% in recent years, among the bottom third of Massachusetts' towns and cities.
- » Arlington does not exist in a bubble. It is influenced by the regional context of the greater Boston area. The housing and commercial real estate markets are two prime examples where the Town can only exert some influence since many of the dynamics are driven by factors outside the Town's control.

**Recognizing these challenges, this ten-year Comprehensive Plan addresses Arlington's long-term needs including creating more diversified housing choices; strengthening economic development; improving multimodal connectivity and safety; protecting natural, historic, and cultural resources; and keeping the strength and civic pride of our community front of mind.**



# LAND USE

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## 05 | LAND USE

### OVERVIEW

Land use refers to the location, type, and intensity of the various uses that make up Arlington. These include residential (ranging from single-family to multi-family), commercial, industrial, institutional, and municipal services as well as parks, open spaces, and the network of roads. Historic development patterns were shaped by landforms and the location of water resources, the evolution of the transportation and public utility infrastructure, and the eras in which growth occurred. More recent regulations about where different types of development can occur and what form it can take influence housing choices, transportation patterns, environmental resources, and access to community amenities.

As a predominantly residential suburb of Boston, most of Arlington's land consists of neighborhoods ranging from small lots with two- and three-family buildings to larger lots with single family houses. A small proportion of commercial and industrial uses are clustered primarily along the Massachusetts Avenue and

Broadway corridors. Open spaces in the form of parks, wooded areas, and water bodies are distributed throughout town. Arlington is a predominantly built-out community with very little remaining developable land. This means future growth opportunities will require the redevelopment of existing buildings and lots and could constrain the amount of new commercial and industrial development that may be possible.

Over the past two decades, development pressures have made clear that change in Arlington is inevitable. Proactive and intentional land use planning will help guide change in ways that support healthy neighborhoods, strengthen the local economy, enhance civic amenities, and improve quality of life for current and future residents.



## 05 | LAND USE

### KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### Issues

- » Arlington is a built-out community so new housing, commercial, and industrial development must happen through redevelopment of existing uses.
- » Very little land is zoned for commercial and industrial uses (6%) which limits non-residential property tax revenue and places more reliance on residential property tax revenue to fund the Town budget.
- » The limited supply of developable land requires choices among competing priorities. Strong demand exists for more housing while expanding commercial and industrial uses is important to support the Town's local economy.
- » New development sometimes conflicts with preserving historic character. Form, scale, and design quality of new development are important. It is also important to recognize that communities evolve over time and can integrate old and new in creative, interesting ways.

#### Opportunities

- » Recently adopted multi-family housing overlay districts along Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway encourage more housing near transit and local businesses.
- » The Town-owned Russell Common lot in Arlington Center is a prime location to consider how housing, commercial space, parking, and public events could be integrated.
- » Trail-oriented development along the Minuteman Bikeway could include commercial/industrial uses and higher-density housing options.
- » Vacant commercial spaces can help meet demand for more community gathering spaces, family-friendly restaurants, and businesses/activities for young professionals.

- » Embracing the "15-minute neighborhood" concept allows Arlington to build on its already walkable business districts by expanding convenient access to daily needs within a short walk or bike ride. This approach strengthens local businesses, reduces car dependence, and enhances overall quality of life.

### RELATION TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

- » **Economic Development:** Maximizing the value of the Town's limited commercial and industrially zoned land—within the context of regional market dynamics—will support economic development and fiscal health. Zoning can sometimes preclude modern or hybrid uses that do not fit neatly into a permitted use table. Strategies that address this will support entrepreneurs and new businesses.
- » **Housing:** Zoning regulations dictate the types of housing allowed in different locations. Allowing the next increment of housing intensity in neighborhoods is a gentle strategy that allows the market to respond to demonstrated needs.
- » **Natural Resources & Open Space:** Land use and zoning regulations support the preservation of existing open space and the addition of private open space within new development where feasible. They additionally facilitate the integration of other creative open space types such as roof gardens, courtyards, pocket parks, green roofs, or greenways.
- » **Connectivity:** Transportation infrastructure supports land uses by providing access via streets, sidewalks, trails, and transit. Increased development intensity near transit increases demand and can help to justify improved transit service, while helping to mitigate traffic impacts.
- » **Public Facilities & Services:** The location, types, and intensity of land uses impacts demand on public facilities and services.

## 05 | LAND USE

### STRATEGY SUMMARY

The land use strategies focus on promoting development that supports sustainable, inclusive, and economically viable growth across Arlington. While Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway are important corridors for this growth, they should not be the only locations where new housing and businesses are developed. Key strategies include encouraging mixed-use and mixed-income development, assessing strategic sites and Town-owned properties for redevelopment, and encouraging development near transit, the Bikeway, and

amenities like parks and schools. They also focus on increasing flexibility within zoning, streamlining the development review process, and incentivizing projects with advanced sustainable design features such as net zero energy. Collectively, these strategies aim to diversify housing and commercial options, grow the property tax base, and ensure that development aligns with community needs and priorities.



#### Supporting Equity and Diversity

- » Land use regulations and zoning that support a range of housing options and business types provide choices for current and future residents across different life stages, income levels, and lifestyle preferences.
- » Land use regulations and zoning shape the location of jobs and housing; their proximity to schools, parks, and transit; and their access to services. This influences who has access to these opportunities and how equitably they are distributed.



#### Integrating Sustainability and Resilience:

- » Concentrating housing and jobs near public transportation routes and the Bikeway helps to minimize additional vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and maximize pedestrian, bicycle, and transit options. Fewer miles driven, especially for short trips, helps lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- » Sustainable land use and development choices can enhance climate adaptation efforts. Climate-responsive design choices such as incorporating green infrastructure or increasing tree canopy can reduce the urban heat island effect and vulnerability to extreme heat. Integrating flood resilient strategies in flood hazard areas can reduce long-term environmental damage, minimize future recovery costs, and strengthen Arlington's capacity to withstand and recover from climate-related flooding.
- » The Specialized Energy Code adopted by Arlington requires high energy efficient performance for new residential and commercial buildings. The Fossil Fuel Free Bylaw requires new construction to be all-electric.

## 05 | LAND USE

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

#### GOALS:

- » Increase the number and variety of residential and non-residential development opportunities.
- » Prioritize the redevelopment and productive use of underutilized parcels to advance community goals.
- » Encourage development that enhances Arlington’s natural resources, built environment, and sustainability.
- » Attract development that supports and expands the economic, cultural, and civic vibrancy of Arlington’s commercial areas.

#### **LU-1. Conduct a strategic assessment of commercial corridors to encourage more redevelopment that can increase the amount of housing and commercial space.**

Assessment should include:

- Identify opportunity and/or catalytic sites (i.e., sites with a small building and large parking area, one-story non-historic commercial buildings, parcels with low tax value per acre, etc.).
- Evaluate development economics/project feasibility to identify potential financing gaps.
- Develop strategies to encourage private owners to intensify underused sites up to the permitted heights allowed by zoning.
- Engage with property owners, developers, residents, and other stakeholders as part of the planning process.
- Priority corridors to assess: Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway. Secondary corridors: Summer Street and lower Mystic Street, others as identified by DPCD staff.

#### **LU-2. Encourage more connections and trail-oriented development along the Minuteman Bikeway to leverage this asset in support of housing and businesses.**

- a. Trail as economic amenity: Focus on attracting compatible commercial and industrial-type uses.
- b. Trail as housing amenity: Consider rezoning residential parcels that directly abut the Minuteman Bikeway to higher density residential zoning.

#### **LU-3. Leverage Town-owned properties for redevelopment that adds housing and commercial uses responsive to community needs and interests.**

- a. Build on the Fox Library Housing Study (MAPC, 2025) to continue exploration of combining housing above a new library in East Arlington.
- b. Study development options for the Russell Common Lot in Arlington Center. The study should identify community goals for the space and consider options for commercial and housing development, public parking, and the Farmer’s Market.

#### **LU-4. Promote redevelopment opportunities across Arlington that help to add a variety of housing types and price points, support a variety of commercial uses, and grow the property tax base.**

*continued*

## 05 | LAND USE

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

**LU-5. Streamline the development review timeline for proposed projects.**

- a. Review the pre-application meeting process to address common issues early.
- b. Track length of project review by project type from application to final decision.

**LU-6. Conduct an audit of the Zoning Bylaw to align with modern uses and allow greater flexibility, especially in the Business and Industrial districts.**

**LU-7. Monitor new construction in the multi-family housing overlay districts to evaluate the diversity of housing types and levels of affordability achieved. If needed, consider zoning modifications to better promote the desired types of development.**

**LU-8. Further incentivize projects to implement net zero energy and climate adaptive strategies that accelerate progress towards the Town's climate goals.**

- a. Enhance and/or extend incentives related to clean energy technologies, net zero energy construction, and low-embodied carbon materials.
- b. Introduce incentives for development that exceeds requirements for stormwater management, reduces the heat island effect, and otherwise strengthens community climate resilience.

**LU-9. Continue to consolidate zoning districts to make the Town's Zoning Bylaw more user-friendly while still addressing community needs and desires.**

**LU-10. Explore allowing small, low-impact light commercial uses (corner store, coffee shop, professional services, etc) in residential zoning districts to add local-serving retail amenities in neighborhoods. Develop appropriate regulations to mitigate impacts (e.g. parking, noise, lighting) and increase benefits for the surrounding neighborhood.**

## 05 | LAND USE

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Almost half of Arlington's area is used for residential. One-third is either water or rights-of-way (public streets and sidewalks).

LAND USE CATEGORIES	AREA [ACRES]	PERCENTAGE [%]
Residential	1,738	49%
Commercial	100	3%
Multiple-Use	16	0.5%
Open Space and Recreation	498*	14%
Industrial	10	0.3%
Right-of-Way	764	21%
Water	432	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,570</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Town owns 226 acres in Lexington, MA which includes Arlington Great Meadows and a portion of Arlington Reservoir.

Source: GIS Data Set from Town's Website; Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Approximately 58% of Arlington's land area is zoned R0 or R1 which only permit single-family detached dwellings by-right

ZONING DISTRICT	AREA [ACRE]	PERCENTAGE [%]
R1 - Single Family	1,803	51%
R2 - Two Family	629	18%
OS - Open Space	271	8%
R0 - Large Lot Single Family	238	7%
I - Industrial	75	2.1%
R5 - Apartments Low Density	64	1.8%
R6 - Apartments Med Density	49	1.4%
B4 - Vehicular Oriented Business	30	0.8%
B3 - Village Business	28	0.8%
B1 - Neighborhood Office	26	0.7%
B2A - Major Business	22	0.6%
R4 - Town House	19	0.5%
R7 - Apartments High Density	19	0.5%
MU - Multi-Use	18	0.5%
B2 - Neighborhood Business	17	0.5%
PUD - Planned Unit Development	16	0.5%
B5 - Central Business	10	0.3%
R3 - Three Family	8	0.2%
T - Transportation	1	0.0%
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>3,570</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Town of Arlington GIS



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

6

## 06 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### OVERVIEW

The purpose of economic development is to create local jobs, help build prosperity for residents and local businesses, and generate revenue for the Town to support its services. The particular emphasis for economic development depends on the nature of the community. Arlington is primarily a bedroom community located between major jobs centers in Boston/Cambridge and the 128 Corridor. As such, the vast majority of its residents find employment in these two locations.

Twenty-five percent of Arlington-based employment is tied to consumer spending (retail, restaurants, arts and entertainment). Including health care services, nearly 50% of local jobs are in sectors used directly by residents. Other sectors such as construction and professional services are growing, but Arlington has very few

locations to allow these companies to continue to expand. Moreover, the scarcity of available locations for these types of businesses limits the ability to increase the non-residential share of the property tax base. Addressing this structural challenge is a key issue facing Arlington.

While a relatively small part of the local economy in terms of employment, the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector has an outsized impact on Arlington's perception. The Capitol Theatre has six movie screens while the Regent Theatre is a 450-seat performing arts and cultural venue for live shows. Four museums, local arts organizations, and other attractions bring visitors who contribute to the local economy.



## 06 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### Issues

- » Arlington has limited commercial and industrially zoned land.
- » The Town's economic development capacity is limited, as it relies on one staff member and several volunteer-led initiatives with small budgets.
- » The three business districts are primarily driven by consumer spending but offer inconsistent visitor experiences.
- » The regulatory review process is complex and unclear, especially for non-traditional business types looking to locate in Arlington.

#### Opportunities

- » There is a need for a more focused Town effort to support and market economic development and tourism.
- » Investments in district experience improvements can increase Arlington's appeal and competitiveness as destination for businesses and visitors.
- » Promoting ancillary neighborhood business development and work from home opportunities can help strengthen local businesses.
- » There are opportunities for trail-oriented development along the Minuteman Bikeway.
- » Arlington's vibrant arts and cultural scene offers opportunities to attract related business development.
- » Implementing a 15-minute neighborhood approach can support Arlington's local business network and create more vibrant, walkable districts where daily needs are met within a short walk or bike ride.

### RELATION TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

- » **Land Use:** Zoning regulations directly influence the types and locations of businesses, as well as the suitability of commercial properties to meet current and future market needs.
- » **Connectivity:** Transportation infrastructure affects ease of access and parking for customers, commutes for local workers, and truck access for service and loading.
- » **Housing:** More housing in an area means more customers for businesses, especially those who rely on foot traffic. Some businesses choose to locate based on housing availability and affordability for workers. A diversity of housing options and price points support worker recruitment and retention.
- » **Public Facilities & Services:** Quality public facilities and services help to attract and support businesses and visitors, enhancing economic development and tourism activities.

## 06 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### STRATEGY SUMMARY

The economic development strategies are intended to address the issues and opportunities identified in the "Arlington Today" existing conditions analysis and public input, including from the local business community. These include supporting the creation of clearer regulatory guidance and improved processes; promoting and amplifying existing businesses, arts, and entertainment throughout Arlington; identifying mechanisms to fund and manage key business

districts; and an approach to encouraging and supporting more commercial and industrial development. Near-term priorities include continuing the process of improving regulatory guidance for clarity and simplicity, and securing grant funding assistance to complete a detailed economic development strategy that can guide future efforts.



#### Supporting Equity and Diversity

- » Promoting and supporting Arlington's existing business districts helps maintain and attract a greater variety of jobs that are accessible to a range of skill sets and education levels.
- » Providing support for aspiring entrepreneurs through tools such as a regulatory "one-stop shop," streamlined online permitting, and access to flexible startup spaces will reduce barriers to entry and enable a more diverse pipeline of entrepreneurs.
- » Supporting home-based businesses creates opportunities for innovative and non-traditional business models while lowering overhead costs, which can help increase the diversity of entrepreneur and small business owners who may not be able to access or afford commercial/office space.



#### Integrating Sustainability and Resilience:

- » More local jobs with a range of skill and income levels can support a more diversified resident workforce and reduce the amount of commuting needed.
- » Investments in resilient infrastructure and adaptation strategies that safeguard the town from climate hazards/disasters allow businesses to recover quickly, protecting the local economy and tax base.
- » Modernizing vacant and outdated commercial storefronts in historic buildings and commercial districts supports more sustainable building operations and strengthens the resilience of historic and commercial assets.

## 06 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

#### GOALS:

- » Improve regulatory processes to benefit local businesses.
- » Increase the buildout potential and value of commercial and industrial properties.
- » Promote Arlington's historic and cultural assets to support economic development.
- » Improve the customer experience through streetscape improvements, wayfinding, parking, and access upgrades.
- » Create and support organizational capacity related to economic development.

#### **ED-1. Develop a Strategic Economic Development Plan to increase commercial and industrial-type development.**

Key considerations should include:

- Providing consistent, predictable funding to promote economic development initiatives including small business recruitment, tenant support, tourism, and visitor marketing.
- Evaluating organizational models to advance local economic development. Consider options to assemble and control parcels for commercial and industrial development, to establish development partnerships, and to encourage new commercial and light industrial development with appropriate incentives.
- Identifying ways to tap into the economic opportunities in the regional economy.
- Developing an approach to encourage renovation and leasing of vacant storefronts and buildings.

#### **ED-2. Complete further revisions to regulatory and permitting processes to clarify requirements and reduce unanticipated costs.**

#### **ED-3. Promote the Business Resource Guide in conjunction with Town-wide effort to integrate all licenses into an online permitting platform.**

- a. Review and update the guide on an annual basis in response to user feedback and changes in regulatory processes.

#### **ED-4. Develop and implement a cohesive marketing and communications strategy to increase awareness of Arlington as a competitive business location.**

- a. Grow Arlington's visitor economy to drive consumer spending.
- b. Develop and promote evening and nightlife activities for all ages throughout the year.

*continued*

## 06 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

**ED-5. Create a Placemaking Plan for Arlington’s distinct business districts that considers streetscape, public spaces, vacant storefronts, wayfinding, programming, art, history, and culture.**

Other considerations should include:

- Explore strategies to further incentivize good repair and active marketing of available commercial spaces in addition to the vacant storefront maintenance registry.
- Develop and implement comprehensive signage, wayfinding, and branding strategies for each business district and across Arlington.
- Enhance the appeal of existing business districts by adding plantings, shade trees, seating, and other amenities that support beautification and create inviting public spaces.
- Create a “Store-Back of Business Improvement Program” to improve business orientation to the Bikeway (façade treatments, outdoor seating, etc.)

**ED-6. Evaluate support among property and business owners in business districts to create a formal Main Street Association(s) or Business Improvement District(s) that would provide additional private sector-directed resources to support beautification, signage and wayfinding, and clean/safe programs.**

**ED-7. Expand the A-TED Committee’s focus on broad economic development initiatives to complement tourism-related efforts.**

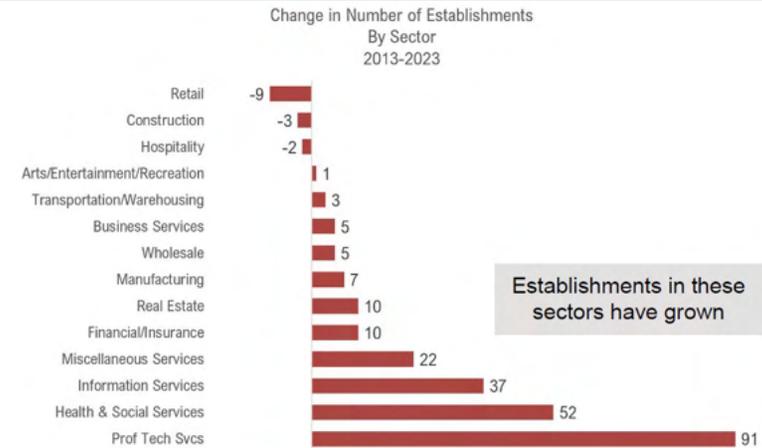
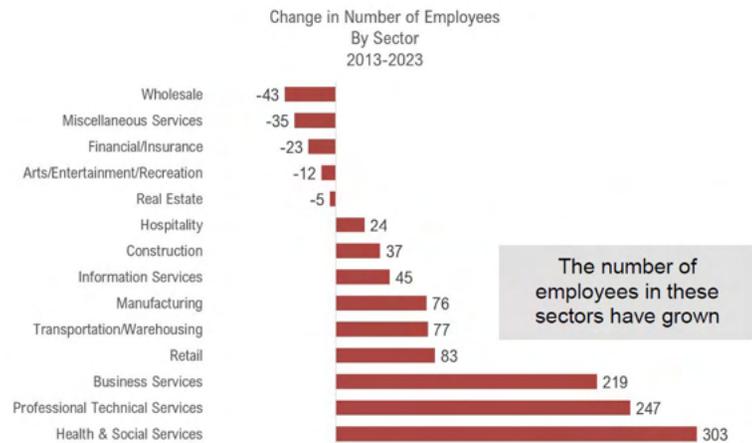
- a. Promote and develop business and industry for the purpose of strengthening the local economy, providing jobs, and expanding the tax base.
- b. Evaluate options to move from a “volunteer”-led model to a staff position for promotion, programming, and communications to maintain momentum and create consistency.

**ED-8. Create centralized town-wide communications and marketing of businesses and events to increase awareness and engagement with existing businesses across the community.**

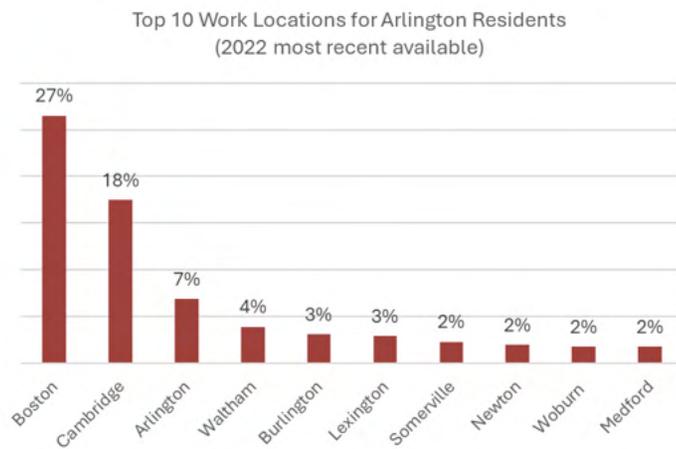
## 06 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Added almost 250 new businesses and more than 1,300 employees since 2013. Office-based industries experienced the greatest growth in both jobs and establishments over the last decade.



Over 90% of residents commute outside Arlington for work.



6% increase in Arlington residents working from home from 2018.

**48%**

Arlington residents report working from home at least part of the week

#### Recent Studies/ Plans

- » Economic Analysis of Industrial Districts (2020)
- » Arlington Heights Action Plan (2019)
- » Local Rapid Recovery Plan, Arlington Heights (2021)



**HOUSING**

**7**

## 07 | HOUSING

### OVERVIEW

The housing stock that makes up Arlington's neighborhoods plays a profound role in how people live and experience the town. It shapes the physical, economic, and social fabric. Arlington's well-established and relatively compact neighborhoods have helped foster the vibrant and dynamic community the Town supports today. They include historic houses, small- and large-lot single family, and two- and three-family houses. Along Massachusetts Avenue and parts of Pleasant and Mystic Streets, larger multi-family buildings are scattered among smaller scale businesses and housing. Over the past twenty years, Arlington has seen housing development driven by both regional demand and its appeal as a place to live. While this has allowed the community to grow, high demand accompanied by rising home prices and rents has also increased challenges in housing affordability for many households.

Community input highlighted this housing pressure. Many people see the need for more housing and a broader range of options to ensure Arlington remains a welcoming and diverse community. Through its land use and development

policies, the Town can respond to today's housing pressures while laying the foundation for long-term community resilience and affordability.

The Town has recently taken several steps to address housing through its zoning bylaw. The multi-family housing overlay districts were adopted in 2023-2024 to incentivize more housing near high-frequency bus stops. The Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaw was modified in 2025 to align with Commonwealth regulations and encourage more development of these small units.

In addition, the Arlington Housing Authority (AHA) and the Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA) are the two largest providers of income-restricted affordable housing in town. The AHA portfolio includes senior and family housing, and it also administers the Housing Choice Voucher program. HCA is a non-profit that manages affordable units, social service programs, and a homelessness prevention grant program.



*Housing in Arlington*

## 07 | HOUSING

### KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### Issues

- » Housing costs are largely driven by regional market demand, rising construction costs for new housing, property taxes, and other factors, many of which are not in the Town's control.
- » The increasing cost of housing and associated expenses (taxes, maintenance, home insurance, renovations, etc.) are making Arlington less affordable and inaccessible as a place to live, especially for low and middle income households.
- » Since there is little to no undeveloped land on which to build more housing, redevelopment of existing sites and increased density is needed to increase the housing supply.
- » The high demand and strong market for multi-family is putting pressure on Arlington's older industrial buildings and the limited amount of land zoned industrial or business.

#### Opportunities

- » The recently adopted Multi-Family Housing Overlay Districts along Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway increase opportunities for new housing, a portion of which must be affordable.
- » Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are now allowed in all residential and business districts. These small houses can provide an income stream to help homeowners and offer lower cost options for tenants.
- » There are sites throughout Arlington, including many along Massachusetts Avenue, that could be redeveloped into taller buildings to add more housing near bus routes and local businesses.
- » Community input suggests general interest in more two- and three-family houses, small multi-family buildings (4-12 units), and smaller single-family "starter" houses.

### RELATION TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

- » **Land Use:** Zoning regulations directly affect the type, location, and affordability of housing, while housing goals often drive updates to land use policy.
- » **Economic Development:** A diverse and affordable housing supply supports workforce retention, attracts employers, and sustains local businesses. Housing costs influence labor availability, household spending, and long-term economic competitiveness.
- » **Connectivity:** Housing location and density affect travel behavior, transit use, traffic congestion, and infrastructure demand.
- » **Historic & Cultural Resources:** Arlington's older housing stock, whether recognized as historic or not, contributes to the character of many neighborhoods.
- » **Natural Resources & Open Space:** The Town's conservation lands, water bodies, parks and recreational facilities are scattered throughout all neighborhoods and are highly valued by residents of all ages. Adding housing near parks and open spaces can increase access to these resources for more people.
- » **Public Facilities & Services:** Housing growth and demographic trends drive demand for schools, parks, utilities, public safety, and human services. The type and scale of housing influence capital planning, operating costs, and service delivery needs.

## 07 | HOUSING

### STRATEGY SUMMARY

Housing strategies focus on expanding “missing middle” housing options, both in terms of affordability and type. Housing affordable to households earning 80-120% of the Area Median Income, often called workforce housing, is increasingly rare today, as are new housing types in between large single-family houses and large multi-family buildings. Other strategies focus on streamlining development processes and leveraging policy tools to encourage mixed-income and

transit-accessible neighborhoods. The proposed recommendations establish a comprehensive framework to address current housing challenges through expanded zoning regulation updates and targeted incentives. By integrating core principles of equity and sustainability, these measures aim to secure long-term housing attainability for Arlington residents across all socio-economic levels.



#### Supporting Equity and Diversity

- » Stable, well-maintained housing that is affordable for the occupant is foundational to public health, social equity, and community well-being.
- » High housing costs disproportionately affect low-income households, seniors, people with disabilities, and renters. Households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs have less money available for food, medicine, transportation, and other basic needs, and experience greater housing instability.
- » The location of housing determines access to high-quality schools, jobs, transit, parks, healthy food, and services.
- » Rising rents and property values (which increase property taxes) can displace long-term residents, disrupting social networks and cultural ties.
- » Home renovations and retrofits that improve accessibility and support aging in place allow older adults and people with disabilities to remain safely in their homes for longer.



#### Integrating Sustainability and Resilience:

- » Energy-efficient retrofits and new construction reduce energy costs for owners and renters while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- » The Specialized Stretch Code and Fossil Fuel Free Bylaw adopted by Arlington require highly energy efficient, all-electric new construction.
- » Renovating older homes for energy efficiency advances net zero goals
- » Arlington's smaller and older homes tend to be more affordable but are also ripe for teardown/redevelopment. Preserving them reduces emissions associated with demolition and new construction while maintaining naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH).

## 07 | HOUSING

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

#### GOALS:

- » Continue to support implementation of the Arlington Housing Production Plan (2022) and the Fair Housing Action Plan (2021).
- » Encourage mixed-use development that includes attainable housing options at all income levels, especially near transit and in established commercial areas.
- » Provide a variety of housing options for a range of incomes, ages, family sizes, and needs.
- » Allow multi-family housing compatible with the scale of existing residential neighborhoods.
- » Encourage sustainable new construction and renovation of existing structures.

#### **H-1. Amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow for a greater range of housing types in a variety of locations throughout town to increase the housing supply.**

Examples of “missing middle” housing to encourage in more areas:

- Allow two-family and duplex dwellings by-right in the R0 and R1 districts. Update the residential design guidelines to illustrate examples.
- Allow three-family and townhouse dwellings by-right in the R2, R3, and R4 districts. Update the residential design guidelines to illustrate examples.

#### **H-2. Update the 2022-2027 Affordable Housing Trust Action Plan.**

#### **H-3. Maintain Arlington’s designation as a Housing Choice Community through housing production and implementation of best practices that promote sustainable housing development.**

#### **H-4. Continue to evaluate the features of an Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) to expand the range of attainable housing options throughout Arlington.**

#### **H-5. Extend features of the multi-family overlay districts to business districts to encourage mixed-income multi-family development.**

Zoning aspects to consider extending to other districts:

- Additional floor if higher percentage of units set-aside as affordable housing.
- No minimum lot size, frontage, or open space requirements.

#### **H-6. Study the economics of the Town’s affordable housing requirement for projects over six units to determine whether the percentage required (15% currently) or the affordability level (up to 60% AMI) should be changed to create more housing and/or increase range of affordability.**

*continued*

## 07 | HOUSING

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

**H-7. Create a framework for tiered affordability that encourages projects to include housing at multiple affordability levels, including “missing middle” workforce incomes (typically 80-120% AMI) .**

**H-8. Identify stable, recurring funding source(s) to support housing development with units at a range of affordability levels.**

Explore options such as:

- Affordable Housing Trust – identify stable annual funding stream.
- Community Preservation Act – dedicate share of funds to Affordable Housing Trust.
- Other sources – evaluate the economics of new development linkage or impact fees, real estate transfer fees, etc.

**H-9. Revise Zoning Bylaw regulations to encourage creativity with infill development conditions\* and allow flexibility regarding irregular lots, minimum lot size, minimum lot frontage, and other dimensional regulations.**

**H-10. Ensure housing policy fully supports net zero development and renovation, energy efficiency, energy affordability, and climate adaptation and resilience, as outlined in the Net Zero Action Plan and other related plans.**

- Ensure economically and socially disadvantaged residents are connected with the resources to take advantage of the benefits (lower energy costs, etc.).

**H-11. Expand efforts to promote and share funding resources that help offset the cost of sustainable construction practices, including housing renovations.**

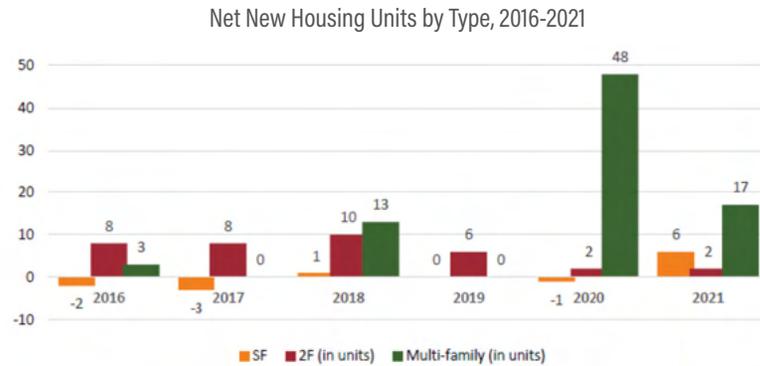
**H-12. Explore opportunities to increase the development of accessory dwelling units (ADU) including options that reduce costs and permitting timelines for ADU projects.**

\* Infill development is new construction or reuse that takes place on previously developed land within built-up areas like Arlington.

## 07 | HOUSING

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Arlington's housing stock increased by over 5% since 2000, driven by multi-family development and redevelopment

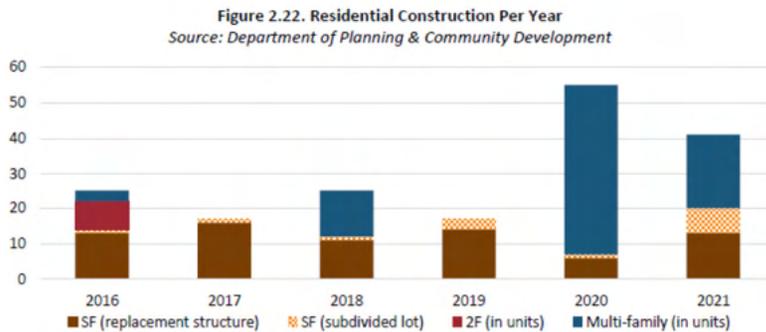


Source: 2022 Housing Production Plan

Residential development has slowed over the past decade, with about 1,000 units permitted between 2014 and 2023—86% multi-family and 14% single-family.



Most net new units can be attributed to multi-family developments.



Source: 2022 Housing Production Plan

#### Recent Studies/ Plans

- » MBTA Communities Report (2023)
- » Arlington Housing Plan (2022)
- » Fair Housing Action Plan (2021)
- » Residential Design Guidelines (2020)
- » Report on Demolitions and Replacement Homes (2019)



# CONNECTIVITY

## 08 | CONNECTIVITY

### OVERVIEW

Arlington is an inner ring suburb with easy connections to regional roads, neighboring towns, and to the job centers of Cambridge, Somerville and Boston to its east. This transportation connectivity has long made Arlington a desirable place to live, especially as coupled with its leafy neighborhood streets, business districts, and plentiful amenities. Arlington residents enjoy comparatively good access with few true bottlenecks that often plague neighboring communities. Route 2 and Arlington’s major arterial roads generally operate well, but not without challenges. Its pedestrian and bicycle networks are filling out and are generally well used, with more than a quarter of all trips by non-driving modes. Transit access is comparably good as well-used buses provide access to many destinations, and the lack of direct subway access—for good or bad—has limited the types of development seen in Cambridge and Somerville.

As an active, engaged community, Arlington has seen how focused dedication to connectivity and mobility concerns has borne fruit. The Minuteman Bikeway is a national best practice trail and is attracting increasing use and associated development. Arlington has been adding on-street bicycle and transit infrastructure to serve all users. Safety initiatives and plans are in the works or completed for many of Arlington’s critical corridors. The pressure is always there

to do more on neighborhood, commercial, and arterial streets. Within its local resources and using state and federal funds as available, the Town continues to make progress. At times these changes are met with hyperlocal resistance, concerns about parking and traffic impacts, and the ongoing demands for maintenance and capital resources. Compared to some neighboring towns and cities, Arlington has been slower to adopt town-wide traffic calming measures. Simply put, Arlington cannot do it all and is often required to prioritize the immediate. Recent plans such as Connect Arlington have admirably established preferences and identified critical multimodal network gaps and locations for improvements.

The Comprehensive Plan allows Arlington to put its transportation plans in a broader context. While there are critical mobility needs, limited resources should serve larger ends. Transportation investments should also advance other goals such as land use, economic development, equity, and sustainability. Connectivity strategies build heavily on previously identified recommendations but also strongly support overall plan recommendations. Prioritizing improvements in areas where Arlington wants to see change, such as between Summer Street and Massachusetts Avenue, both solve existing connectivity issues while greatly supporting the ongoing evolution of the area.



*Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington Center*

## 08 | CONNECTIVITY

### KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### Issues

- » Arlington is a built-out community with limited space to add or widen its existing transportation infrastructure beyond localized changes.
- » Competing demands for limited roadway space persist and are growing, with traffic, parking, transit, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure each requiring tradeoffs.
- » The need to maintain and expand Arlington's multimodal infrastructure is growing faster than the resources needed to achieve its goals.
- » Almost three-quarters of all trips are still taken in a vehicle, even for shorter trips.
- » The processes to complete improvements can be cumbersome, often requiring approval by multiple governing entities.

#### Opportunities

- » Arlington enjoys considerable public support for improving connectivity and access—though not always in agreement on the details.
- » Arlington's physical layout featuring multiple business districts, walkable neighborhoods, and well-loved local amenities provides many focal points around which to complete improvements and make connections.
- » Many of Arlington's roadways offer the ability to reduce vehicular capacity to integrate other modes within the rights-of-way.
- » Access to the Minuteman Bikeway can be improved, particularly in Arlington Heights, to better leverage this distinct amenity.
- » Tree-lined streets offer shade and encourage pedestrian movement within and between residential and business districts.

- » Arlington continues to make significant advances in building out bus, bicycle, and safety infrastructure with many adopted policies in place allowing staff to react quickly and guide new efforts.
- » MBTA buses and proximity to nearby regional subway connections (Alewife) are leveragable opportunities, though recent service cuts have impacted convenience.

### RELATION TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

- » **Land Use:** Transportation policy and investments should be guided by land use policies supporting and improving specific parts of Arlington.
- » **Housing:** Arlington's high-quality local and regional access is a contributor to rising housing costs as people seek to live in a well-connected place. Transportation demands, especially parking, should not limit housing growth. The overnight parking ban has historically been a limiting factor in housing development.
- » **Economic Development:** Identified growth areas, such as Massachusetts Avenue, Broadway, and the area between Massachusetts Avenue and Summer Street, require more and better connections for all transportation modes while respecting each place's local character. This can improve access for both workers and customers. Within the business districts, signage and wayfinding should connect parking to local destinations.
- » **Natural Resources & Open Space:** Streets and sidewalks provide an opportunity for trees and landscaping. Green infrastructure improvements such as rain gardens, pervious surfaces, and reduced pavement enhance sustainable stormwater management.
- » **Public Facilities & Services:** Arlington should continue to plan for increased investment to expand connectivity options and provide for their maintenance at desirable levels. Attractive, safe pedestrian and bicycle access to parks, schools, and other public facilities is important to provide equitable access.

## 08 | CONNECTIVITY

### STRATEGY SUMMARY

Connectivity strategies build upon prior planning efforts, including Connect Arlington and the Town’s Complete Streets\* initiatives, and focus on creating a safer, more connected, and equitable multimodal network. Key priorities include eliminating traffic fatalities, closing pedestrian and bicycle network gaps to better connect neighborhoods to local and regional activity centers, and modernizing corridor designs to more effectively balance the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, commercial vehicles, and drivers. The strategies additionally strengthen parking management to better serve residential and commercial areas and call for enhanced coordination and advocacy with the MBTA to improve local bus service and connections.

Together, these strategies advance equity, climate resilience, and fiscal stewardship, while reinforcing the goals of the plan’s other chapters. The connectivity strategies will help achieve land use, economic development, housing, and other important goals. They address current transportation challenges and support Arlington’s long-term connectivity and capacity for future growth.

\*Complete streets are designed to safely and accessibly accommodate all travel modes—walking, biking, driving, and transit—for people of all ages and abilities.



#### Supporting Equity and Diversity

- » Multimodal transportation networks provide safe and affordable options for people who cannot or choose not to drive, including seniors, children and teens, people with disabilities, and low-income households.
- » Transportation infrastructure and facilities should be physically accessible, well-distributed, and inclusive to support equitable access for all residents. Thoughtful design and investment ensure that historically underserved areas have streets that are safe to walk or bike along, reliable transit, and other active transportation options.
- » Transportation infrastructure links neighborhoods to jobs, schools, healthcare, open spaces, and recreational facilities, thus reducing connectivity and mobility barriers and disparities.



#### Integrating Sustainability and Resilience:

- » Transportation-related emissions accounted for approximately 36% of Arlington’s overall greenhouse gas emissions (2022 inventory conducted for the Net Zero Action Plan). Transportation infrastructure that offers attractive, connected, and safe options for walking, biking, and taking the bus reduces reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, especially for short local trips, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.
- » Electric vehicle charging networks encourage the use of EVs rather than gasoline-powered vehicles, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- » The reduction of unnecessary paved area for cars can add green space and/or pervious surfaces that help to reduce the heat island effect and increase stormwater absorption.

## 08 | CONNECTIVITY

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

#### GOALS:

- » Increase safety for all roadway users by enhancing pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access.
- » Manage traffic operations to improve safety, balance local and through trips, and address the needs of all roadway users.
- » Actively manage the supply of parking to support businesses, neighborhoods, and new development.

#### **C-1. Adopt a townwide Vision Zero policy to identify and implement strategies to eliminate pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities.**

- a. Develop neighborhood traffic calming toolkit to support Vision Zero policy.
- b. Address complex intersection conditions such as five-way stops, wide pedestrian crossings with difficult topography, and high-volume pedestrian and bicycle crossings (e.g., Park Avenue intersections at Lowell Street, Paul Revere Road, and Appleton Street).

#### **C-2. Formalize multimodal networks and close gaps to connect neighborhoods, activity centers, and regional connections.**

- a. Establish multimodal priorities for key corridors to guide planning and design efforts, balancing pedestrian, bicycle, freight, transit, and parking needs.
- b. Develop a unified design approach for Massachusetts Avenue and for Broadway.

#### **C-3. Implement recommendations in local transportation plans to prioritize multimodal, equitable, and safe transportation investments.**

- a. Continue implementing Connect Arlington and Complete Streets priority recommendations, prioritizing safety improvements to eliminate fatalities.
  - i. Conduct a five-year progress review (2027).
  - ii. Conduct ten-year update of Connect Arlington (2032).
- b. Provide regular design and construction updates on ongoing transportation improvements.

#### **C-4. Create and maintain a five-year roadway construction project list to plan for multimodal improvements, traffic calming, and green infrastructure along with roadway surface and utility improvements.**

- a. Establish a design budget within the DPCD to design transportation improvements in-house and implement them with DPW.

#### **C-5. Study existing north-south roadways between Summer Street and Massachusetts Avenue (Mill Street, Grove Street, Brattle Street, Forest Street) and explore potential new connections to increase pedestrian and bicycle access to the Minuteman Bikeway and to distribute vehicles across more intersections.**

*continued*

## 08 | CONNECTIVITY

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

**C-6. Complete a comprehensive review of the overnight parking ban and recently adopted Overnight Parking Permit Program for Residents so on-street supply can support housing and businesses while reducing the need for on-site parking areas.**

**C-7. Develop Parking Benefits Districts in Arlington Heights and East Arlington to use parking revenue for local transportation and public realm improvements, using Arlington Center's Parking Benefits District as a model.**

**C-8. Update the Town's aging business district parking studies to better understand current usage, opportunities, and issues within a broad context.**

**C-9. Increase number of electric vehicle charging locations in and near business districts to support Arlington's goal of 100% carbon neutrality by 2050.**

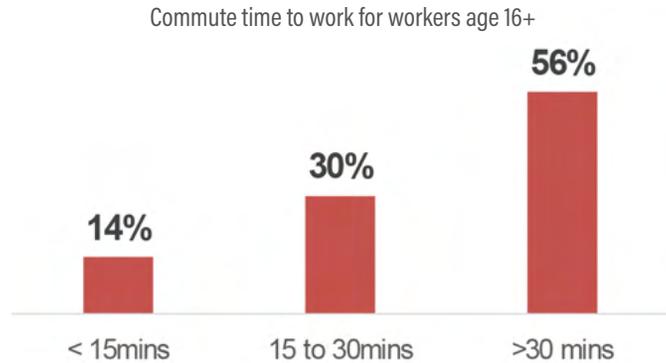
**C-10. Collaborate with neighboring communities and state leads to advocate with the MBTA to improve local service, such as:**

- More frequent and dependable service on high-ridership bus routes.
- Implement bus priority where congestion impacts buses, in the form of transit-signal priority, queue jumps, and bus lanes as necessary.
- Create connections from Arlington Center and Arlington Heights to Alewife, Harvard Square, and the Green Line at Tufts.
- Improve bus connections to nearby communities, including Boston, Cambridge, Watertown, and Waltham.
- Improve mobility connections for residents, commuters, and visitors through the future redevelopment of Alewife MBTA station.
- Study Red Line Extension feasibility.

## 08 | CONNECTIVITY

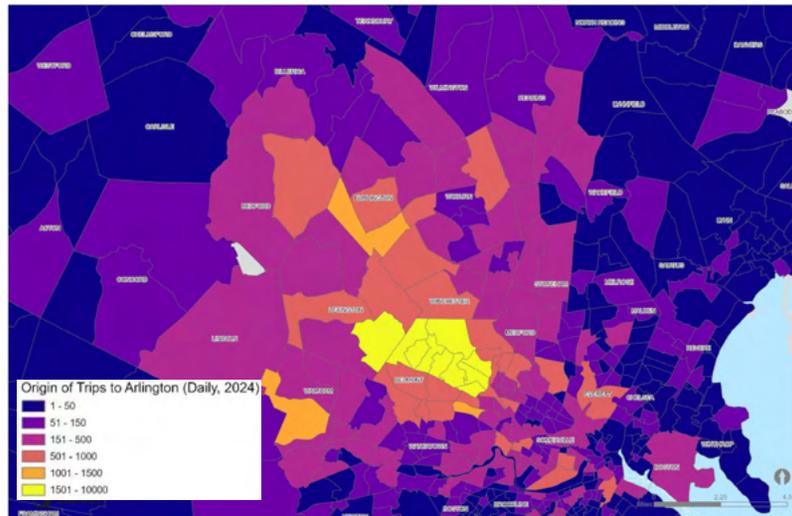
### EXISTING CONDITIONS

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



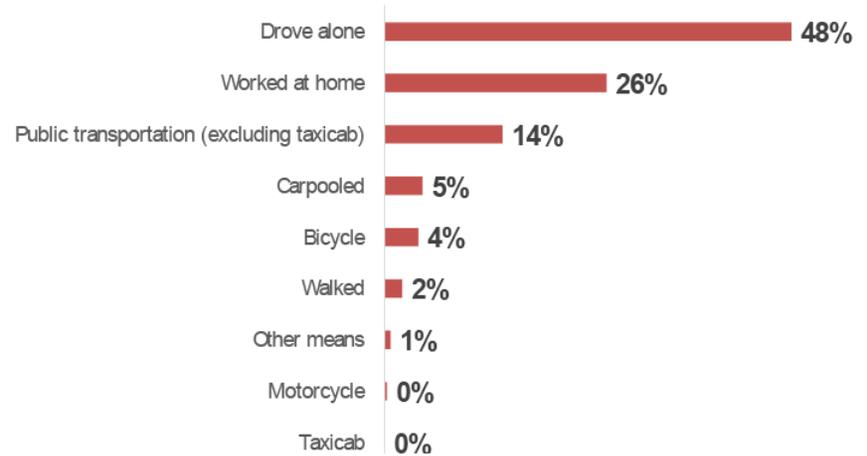
50% of trips to Arlington originate outside of Arlington

Origins of Trips to Arlington Daily, (Fall, 2024)



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

Workers age 16+ years by means of transportation to work



#### Recent Studies/ Plans

- » Mass Ave/Appleton re-design (2024)
- » Minuteman Bikeway Planning Project (2022)
- » Feasibility Study for a Mystic River Path Connection to Minuteman Bikeway (2022)
- » Connect Arlington (2021)



# HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

## 09 | HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### OVERVIEW

Arlington has a long history to preserve and celebrate, and this history and culture are part of its appeal for many residents. Originally inhabited by the Massachusetts Tribe, the land that is now Arlington was settled by colonists in the 1630s as the Village of Menotomy. While its role in the opening days of the Revolutionary War are perhaps most well-known, Arlington's history also includes a prominent role in farming, milling, and the ice industry; the artist Cyrus Dallin and other prominent residents; and the Prince Hall Cemetery for Black Americans among others. Arlington's historic buildings, sites, artifacts, and landscapes preserved and promoted by organizations like the Arlington Historical Society and the Old Schwamb Mill contribute to its distinct sense of place and provide a visible connection with its past.

Arlington's network of civic institutions and community organizations, local businesses and restaurants, and beloved public spaces foster a vibrant and dynamic local culture. The Town and local organizations support a wide range of arts and cultural programming and events throughout the year. These initiatives, along with other cultural offerings, are consistently cited as a top reason both long-term and new residents choose to live in and remain part of the community. Arlington depends on several community-led organizations and many volunteers to help document, preserve, and promote its local history and cultural assets. Continued effort to maintain and elevate these assets is needed to further enrich community life, support economic vitality, and help connect residents to the past and to each other. The Town can help facilitate greater coordination and support of these efforts to optimize resources in service of shared goals.



Capitol Theater

## 09 | HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### Issues

- » Arlington's three business districts have historic character but many commercial buildings require renovation and modernization. Preserving significant historic details while doing so and integrating new development into these districts are significant issues to address.
- » Teardowns and new development impact the historic character of neighborhoods, yet more housing is needed to address noted challenges in the limited supply and increasing cost of housing.
- » While several local museums and institutions collaborate to promote each other and share information, a shared townwide calendar is needed to promote the full range of events, exhibits, and programs offered.
- » There is limited space for cultural organizations and programming - this is both a local and regional issue.
- » Insufficient funding, staffing, and facilities hinder historic preservation and cultural initiatives.
- » Deferred maintenance of historic properties results in greater expense in the long run, and raises the risk of demolition by neglect.
- » A heavy reliance on volunteers to advance historic and cultural initiatives affects program consistency and sustainability.
- » Many of the Town's historic buildings and community spaces are not accessible for everyone.

#### Opportunities

- » A lively arts and culture scene is driven by four museums, the Capitol and Regent Theatres, the Arlington Friends of Drama performance space, the Arlington Philharmonic Society, and many other organizations which provide enrichment, entertainment, education, and more.
- » Centralized town-wide communications and marketing of events would increase awareness and engagement with existing resources across the community.
- » Increased coordination, collaboration, and fundraising among historic and cultural organizations could maximize the potential of shared resources.
- » Vacant commercial spaces could help meet demand for more venues and shared spaces to support community gathering and cultural activities.

#### RELATION TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

- » **Economic Development:** Historic sites and cultural assets and programming attract visitors, support tourism, and boost local businesses.
- » **Natural Resources & Open Space:** Cultural landscapes and historic parks overlap with open space preservation. Maintaining these areas protects both ecological and cultural values.
- » **Land Use, Housing:** Historic buildings, districts, and landscapes shape the look and feel of several Arlington neighborhoods. Integrating historic preservation into housing and development strategies encourages adaptive reuse of older structures and promotes diverse housing options while retaining architectural character.
- » **Public Facilities & Services:** The Town owns and maintains several historic buildings and landscapes. Securing adequate funding to protect them is an ongoing challenge.

## 09 | HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### STRATEGY SUMMARY

Historic and cultural resource strategies focus on preserving the Town's distinctive heritage while enriching community life, supporting tourism, and contributing to the local economy. Key themes include expanding arts and cultural programming, coordinating marketing and communications across historic and cultural organizations, and increasing accessibility and engagement across different

groups. Strategies additionally aim to address sustained funding and coordinated efforts between Town staff and community partners to better protect, elevate, and increase engagement with Arlington's historic and cultural resources for years to come.



#### Supporting Equity and Diversity

- » Cultural resources create opportunities to reflect the history and contributions of all community groups. Inclusive preservation and programming ensure that diverse histories are recognized, celebrated, and accessible to everyone.
- » Greater recognition and appreciation for the full range of Arlington's historic resources can expand the diversity of the stories told and perspectives shared. Examples include the area's Indigenous history and Squaw Sachem's role in the founding of Menotomy, as well as the Prince Hall Cemetery on Gardner Street, the only Black Masonic cemetery in the country.
- » Improving accessibility in both the built environment and programming enhances inclusivity and expands participation for all community members.



#### Integrating Sustainability and Resilience:

- » Maintaining and adaptively reusing historic structures, rather than tearing them down and rebuilding, preserves their embodied carbon—the total carbon footprint of its materials and construction process—and reduces demolition waste.
- » Historic structures can be sensitively modernized to improve energy efficiency while maintaining their character.
- » Expanding access to cultural amenities, historic sites, and community events fosters social cohesion, civic pride, and mental well-being—factors that contribute to social resilience and a sense of inclusion.

## 09 | HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

#### GOALS:

- » Preserve and promote Arlington's historic heritage and its diverse arts and cultural resources.
- » Enhance and support historic business districts and neighborhoods with compatible redevelopment.
- » Provide well-maintained public spaces for year-round arts and cultural activities for all ages.

#### **HC-1. Update the Arlington Arts and Culture Plan.**

Key considerations should include:

- Integrate considerations for physical and programmatic accessibility and inclusion.
- Consider how arts and culture can be further integrated into the business districts to enrich the visitor experience.
- Explore the potential for developing new arts spaces like performance spaces and multipurpose indoor facilities.

#### **HC-2. Continue to seek funding to preserve, conserve, and enhance Town-owned historic resources and materials, including Town Hall and Robbins Library.**

#### **HC-3. Expand on existing self-guided tour programs in the Cultural District and in other parts of Arlington to share local resources with the community and visitors.**

#### **HC-4. Increase signage to educate the public and increase awareness of Arlington's Indigenous history, ice harvesting, and other aspects of its social and economic heritage.**

#### **HC-5. Consult existing historic surveys and inventories to guide preservation and adaptation of identified historic residences, commercial structures, and neighborhood and business districts.**

- a. Increase knowledge about historic surveys, inventories, and other resources among board members and staff.
- b. Increase administrative support to maintain and update historical databases.

#### **HC-6. Promote awareness of best historical preservation practices and educational resources for homeowners and business owners of identified properties.**

*continued*

## 09 | HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

**HC-7. Create a single, coordinated marketing and communications strategy to promote local assets and cultural events and programming.**

**HC-8. Identify and pursue additional funding sources to create a staff position to lead local arts and culture efforts and strengthen the Town's position as a leader in the cultural community.**

**HC-9. Increase diversity of people involved in event planning processes for public arts and cultural programming and participation.**

**HC-10. Promote the artist live-work program to increase the supply of creative maker spaces and attainable housing for artists.**

**HC-11. Identify collaborative opportunities for public art and culture installations in public and private spaces throughout Arlington.**

- a. Integrate temporary or permanent public art into transportation infrastructure and capital planning process.
- b. Include community-use public spaces in renovated and new municipal buildings that can be used for rehearsals, performances, and/or arts instruction.
- c. Collaborate with property owners and the arts and culture community to install more public art on private property.

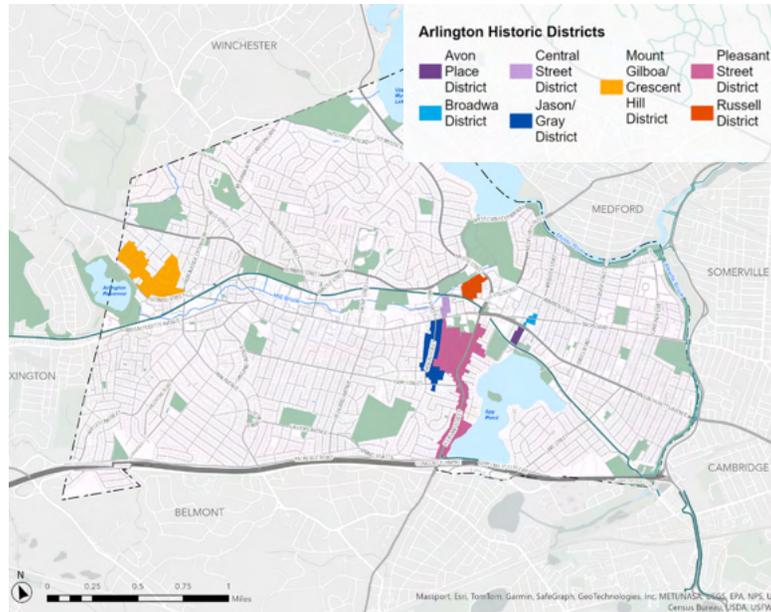
**HC-12. Continue implementing ADA self-evaluation recommendations to remove barriers to accessing and enjoying historic resources and arts and cultural facilities.**

**HC-13. Pilot a block party and cultural festival program to promote free public events throughout Arlington.**

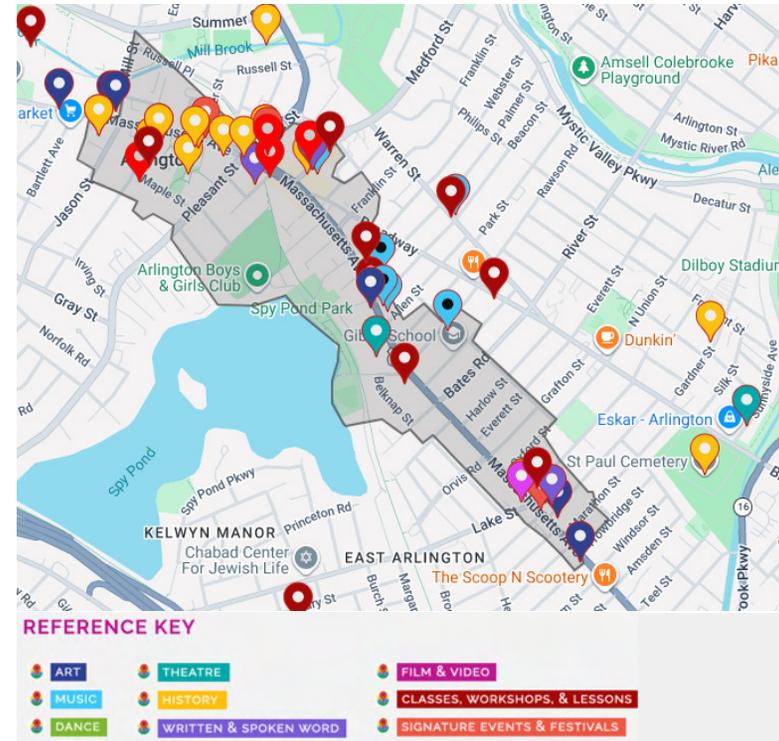
## 09 | HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

63 listed sites on the National Register of Historic Places, 7 historic districts, and over 300 other historic properties



Arlington Cultural District runs from Arlington Center to Capitol Square in East Arlington.



Source: artsarlington.org

**31** Historic preservation projects funded through Arlington's Community Preservation Act (CPA)

**37** Archaeological sites documented by a 2023 Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey that represent at least 10,000 years of human history.

#### Recent Studies/ Plans

- » Archaeological Townwide Reconnaissance Survey (2023)
- » Town-owned Historic Properties Survey (2022)
- » Historic Preservation Survey Master Plan (2019)
- » Community-Wide Historic Resource Survey (2019)
- » Arts and Culture Action Plan (2017)



# NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE

10

## 10 | NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE

### OVERVIEW

Arlington's diverse but limited open space and natural ecosystems are highly valued community resources that enhance quality of life and enrich the built environment. They provide crucial ecological and public health benefits along with a variety of leisure opportunities that can be enjoyed by all ages. In addition, man-made outdoor spaces such as paths, trails, and gardens invite people to actively use and enjoy open spaces while fostering social interaction and community connection.

Since Arlington is a densely developed community where opportunities to add new open space are virtually non-existent, the preservation, stewardship, and

thoughtful adaptation of both natural resources and open spaces are critical to sustaining their benefits and meeting evolving community needs. Moreover, many factors affecting open space and natural resources, such as water quality issues and the impacts of climate change, extend beyond municipal boundaries, which make it essential to consider changes to local policies and practices within a broader regional context. While Arlington may have limited capacity to create new open spaces, the Town can strategically and creatively leverage existing assets to better align resources with community needs.



Spy Pond Park and Playground

## 10 | NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE

### KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### Issues

- » Arlington’s densely developed built environment limits opportunities for new or expanded open spaces.
- » Dense development patterns and impervious surfaces like driveways, parking lots, and rooftops exacerbate stormwater runoff and flooding, placing local water bodies at risk.
- » Arlington’s water resources are impacted by land use and water management practices in neighboring communities. Combined sewer overflows (CSOs) from neighboring communities impact water quality of local water bodies such as Alewife Brook.
- » Climate change will continue to pose ongoing risks to natural resources and open spaces, driven by rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events.

#### Opportunities

- » Leveraging private development projects can create additional public and private open spaces and tree canopy through public-private partnerships.
- » Arlington can strengthen its existing open space and natural resource areas by investing in nature-based infrastructure and other resilience improvements to improve quality and its capacity to withstand and recover from climate hazards.
- » Increased collaboration and partnerships with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) and neighboring municipalities will address shared goals such as improving water quality of local waterways, including Alewife Brook and Mill Brook.

- » Expanding public open space and recreation offerings will provide greater access for all ages and abilities.
- » Arlington has many active volunteer groups who help to protect and maintain local conservation areas, parks and recreation facilities for the benefit of all users.

### RELATION TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

- » **Land Use, Housing:** The future design, development, and placement of housing and other land uses impact the natural environment and overall climate resilience. Integrating green space and trees into residential and commercial areas increases livability while balancing density with environmental protection.
- » **Connectivity:** Trails, greenways, and tree-lined streets support walking, biking, and other active transportation options, improving safety, reducing reliance on automobiles, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- » **Economic Development:** Well-maintained open spaces and healthy natural systems enhance property values, attract businesses and visitors, and support sectors such as recreation, tourism, and the green economy.
- » **Public Facilities & Services:** Green infrastructure can complement traditional gray infrastructure systems by managing stormwater, reducing maintenance costs, and extending the lifespan of built infrastructure.

## 10 | NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE

### STRATEGY SUMMARY

Natural resource and open space strategies focus on protecting and enhancing Arlington's natural and built environments while advancing sustainability and climate resilience. Key themes include continued leadership in environmental stewardship, integration of low-impact development and green infrastructure, and proactive responses to climate-related challenges such as flooding, urban heat, and water quality impacts. The strategies emphasize strengthening Arlington's open spaces, waterways, and tree canopy, particularly in neighborhoods with fewer existing resources, to promote environmental equity, public health, and ecological function.

Additionally, the strategies aim to balance stewarding resources to meet evolving community needs and the realities of the Town's staff capacity and budget limitations. The effective management of natural resources and open spaces requires sustained investment, cross-departmental collaboration, and partnerships with community stakeholders and neighboring municipalities. Finally, the strategies highlight the importance of education and outreach to support residents, developers, and Town staff in adopting practices that improve resilience, biodiversity, and quality of life.



#### **Supporting Equity and Diversity**

- » The equitable distribution and inclusive design of open spaces help ensure that residents of all ages, incomes, and abilities can benefit from environmental and recreational amenities.
- » Expanding the tree canopy throughout town brings the benefits of nature to areas where larger open spaces or parks are not feasible.
- » Access to high-quality open space contributes to healthier lifestyles and helps reduce health and climate disparities across neighborhoods.



#### **Integrating Sustainability and Resilience:**

- » Continuing investments in green infrastructure and restoring Arlington's natural resources will increase Arlington's ability to manage stormwater runoff and mitigate, adapt to, and recover from increasing precipitation and other extreme weather events.
- » Maintaining a healthy and robust tree canopy reduces heat island effect and vulnerabilities to extreme heat. It also enhances air and water quality and supports local biodiversity.
- » Open spaces and access to nature foster public health (physical and mental) and social connections which strengthen overall community resilience.
- » Native species enhance the resilience of natural ecosystems and open spaces by improving tolerance to heat, flooding, and extreme temperatures, and helping protect against invasive species. Native plants also typically require less maintenance than non-native alternatives.

## 10 | NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

#### GOALS:

- » Use sustainable and resilient approaches to improve air and water quality, mitigate flooding impacts, and restore ecological integrity.
- » Ensure that Arlington's neighborhoods, commercial areas, and infrastructure are developed and maintained to build resilience and mitigate climate change impacts.
- » Increase the town's tree canopy on public and private property.
- » Protect and enhance the physical beauty and natural resources of public and private lands in Arlington.

**NR-1. Continue to be a leader in sustainability and resiliency issues to preserve and enhance natural resources, reduce energy usage, and improve quality of life.**

**NR-2. Continue to implement recommendations in the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). Complete an update in 2032 to maintain eligibility for funding programs.**

**NR-3. Require the use of low impact development and climate adaptive strategies in municipal and private development projects.**

- a. Provide definitions and examples of these strategies to relevant Town departments and the general public.

**NR-4. Prioritize projects that mitigate the urban heat island effect especially in neighborhoods with the highest impacts.**

- a. Increase the tree canopy using appropriate native and climate adaptive species.
- b. Limit new and reduce existing impervious surfaces using green infrastructure strategies such as rain gardens, to the extent feasible.
- c. Integrate water play elements and other creative cooling solutions into new public playground and recreation areas.

**NR-5. Continue to address flooding hazards especially along Mill Brook and Alewife Brook using a combination of natural and built strategies and policy measures.**

**NR-6. Improve water quality issues by implementing structural and non-structural stormwater management solutions.**

- a. Focus on Mill Brook, Spy Pond, McClennen Pond, and Hills Pond within Arlington.
- b. Work with neighboring communities to address shared water bodies such as Alewife Brook and Arlington Reservoir.

*continued*

## 10 | NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

**NR-7. Install native and/or climate adaptive plantings on public properties.**

- a. Implement maintenance standards for public lands.

**NR-8. Protect, enhance, and diversify the urban tree canopy, including street trees and trees on public lands.**

- a. Plant and maintain a variety of native, drought- and salt-tolerant street tree species.
- b. Focus on neighborhoods and streets with less existing tree canopy.

**NR-9. Regularly update street tree maintenance plans and policies to reflect best practices.**

- a. Align funding and staff capacity with maintenance needs.
- b. Gradually replace invasive Norway maple and Callery/Bradford pear trees with more appropriate street trees.
- c. Consider sidewalk design and material options to mitigate surface displacement and promote stormwater infiltration.

**NR-10. Expand educational resources about sustainability and resiliency measures to share with residents and developers.**

- a. Provide education and programming to encourage greater adoption of the recommendations of the Sustainable Landscape Handbook and related landscape practices.
- b. Provide information about creating rain gardens and other stormwater management practices.
- c. Enhance education for developers and homeowners on the requirements of the Fossil Fuel Free Bylaw and Specialized Stretch Code.
- d. Explore additional funding sources, including Town operating funds, to sustain a part-time Energy Advocate position.

**NR-11. Explore both Town-sponsored and homeowner/neighborhood-based approaches to invasive species management.**

**NR-12. Incorporate local environmental topics into the Arlington Public Schools curriculum to introduce important ecological and climate adaptation ideas and resources to Arlington's youngest residents.**

## 10 | NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

**61%** Open space is owned by the Town of Arlington and State (DCR)

Over **550** Acres  
 Publicly held open space make up Arlington's open space network

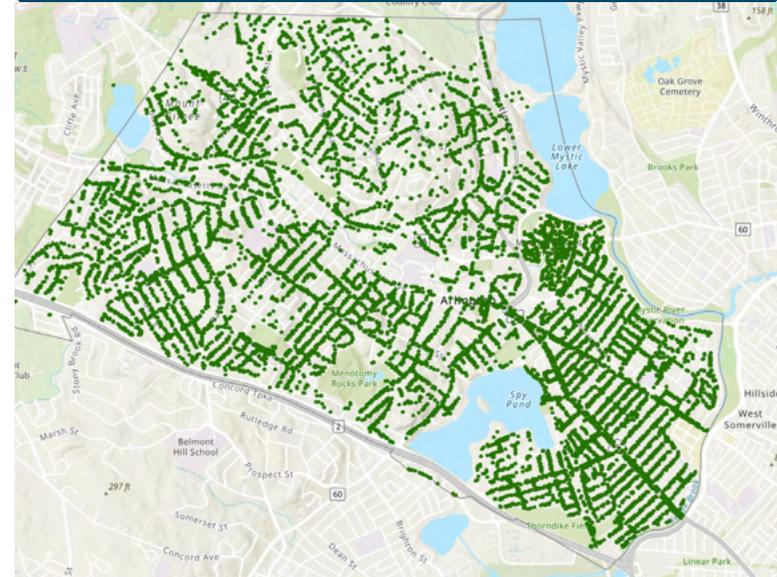
 **72%** Open & recreational spaces are protected

Arlington's Community Preservation Act (CPA) has supported 35 open space and recreation projects since its adoption in 2016

 **14** recreational projects funded

 **21** open space projects funded

Arlington has over 10,000 public shade trees and aims to plant 300 new trees annually.



 **10,000 +** public shade trees  
**300** annual goal for new tree plantings

#### Recent Studies/ Plans

- » Public Land Management Plan (2023)
- » Open Space and Recreation Plan (2022)
- » Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020)
- » Mill Brook Corridor Report (2019)



# PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

## 11 | PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### OVERVIEW

Public facilities are any Town-owned property designated for public use or providing a base of operations for municipal services. These include buildings like Town Hall, schools, and libraries; parks and playgrounds; water and sewer infrastructure; and local roadways and sidewalks. Arlington offers many services and programs for people of all ages including public education, police and fire, recreation programs, senior services, solid waste disposal, health and human services, and others which contribute to quality of life.

These facilities and services are increasingly expensive to maintain and costly to expand. Town buildings range from historic buildings like Town Hall and Robbins Library to new facilities like the DPW building and high school. Aging buildings and infrastructure like roads and underground pipes accrue maintenance needs which require investment. As Arlington's population has grown, usage of public services and facilities has increased. Alongside this, there is a continued awareness of the Town's "structural deficit" in regard to its budget, resulting from an imbalance in the local tax basis and high demand and expectations for quality services.

Although Arlington benefits from the efficiencies of a relatively compact development pattern, the Town continues to face significant challenges in funding public facilities and services. As discussed in the Economic Development chapter, limited remaining developable land and a relatively small non-residential tax base constrain revenue growth and create a heavy reliance on residential property taxes. Combined with continued population growth, a rising share of older residents, and increasing costs for infrastructure, maintenance, and service delivery, these factors suggest that Arlington's fiscal pressures are likely to persist in the coming years. Despite these challenges, the Town can take a proactive role in managing public facilities and services responsibly, sustainably, and in ways that reflect community priorities. The Town maintains a strong bond rating and keeps debt service within a manageable range, both of which are important for continued fiscal health.

*Arlington High School*



## 11 | PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### Issues

- » Limited funding, staff capacity, and available facilities exist to support increasing demands for public services.
- » Staff shortages and budget constraints have impacted the ability to maintain, improve, and expand Town infrastructure and facilities.
- » Aging historic facilities like Town Hall and Robbins Library require maintenance and upgrades to continue serving the public and meeting local needs.
- » Community interest in more and different recreational programming has increased over the last ten years, especially for families and adults.
- » Athletic fields are in high demand for a variety of users. This creates scheduling conflicts compounded by weather-related closures. Overused fields cannot be rested without disrupting scheduling but this degrades field quality over time.

#### Opportunities

- » Arlington has a highly engaged community committed to seeing the Town thrive.
- » Continued energy efficient renovations will reduce operating costs and make progress toward Town's net zero goals.
- » Studying field usage patterns and interests will help the Town identify next steps to balance many considerations, including the changing needs of different age and demographic groups and the protection of sensitive natural resources.

### RELATION TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

- » **Land Use, Housing:** The location, intensity, and timing of development, including housing, influence demand for public facilities such as schools, public safety, roads, and utilities. In turn, the capacity of public facilities helps guide where and how growth should occur.
- » **Economic Development:** High-quality public facilities and reliable services are critical to attracting and retaining businesses and supporting a strong local economy. Municipal infrastructure investments can also catalyze private investment and redevelopment.
- » **Natural Resources & Open Space:** Parks, playgrounds, and green infrastructure are public facilities that provide recreational, ecological, and climate resilience benefits. Their maintenance and improvement requires adequate funding and staffing.
- » **Connectivity:** Roadways, sidewalks, transit, and bicycle infrastructure are essential for providing access to public facilities and services like schools, municipal buildings, parks, and emergency services. These facilities rely on safe and efficient connectivity networks for access and operations.

## 11 | PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### STRATEGY SUMMARY

Public facilities and services strategies are intended to strengthen Arlington’s ability to deliver high-quality public facilities and services in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner. Collectively, these actions emphasize improved coordination across departments, greater use of technology and data to enhance efficiency, proactive asset management, and long-term cost control through

life-cycle planning and energy-efficient investments. The strategies additionally address staffing capacity and service delivery improvements, while advancing overall resilience and equitable access to parks, recreation, and school facilities, positioning the Town to meet current needs and plan effectively for future demands of a growing population.



#### Supporting Equity and Diversity

- » Access to public facilities and services such as recreation, education, and human services directly affects health outcomes and social equity. Adapting these in response to changing population characteristics will help residents feel welcome and supported.
- » Public facilities should be physically accessible, well-distributed, and inclusive to support equitable access for all residents. Accessible programming also considers language access, cultural appropriateness, and other factors.
- » Age-friendly strategies should be integrated into public facilities and services to promote wellbeing and social equity.



#### Integrating Sustainability and Resilience:

- » Energy efficiency retrofits and renewable energy installations will help the Town meet its net zero goals.
- » Green infrastructure and weather-proofing investments enhance the capacity of public facilities to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- » Resilient public buildings and services support a community’s emergency preparedness and the continuity of services during extreme weather events. Public facilities like schools, libraries, and community centers may be able to serve as resilience hubs or cooling/warming centers during emergencies.
- » Transitioning the Town’s vehicle fleet to electric vehicles will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fuel and maintenance costs over the long-term.

## 11 | PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

#### GOALS:

- » Coordinate and efficiently deliver Town services.
- » Build, operate, and maintain public facilities that are attractive, cost- efficient, minimize environmental impact, and help connect Arlington as a community.
- » Direct public facility investments through a long-term capital planning process that anticipates future needs.
- » Maintain, beautify, and improve our public parks, trails, play areas, and programming to meet the population's changing needs.
- » Support Arlington Public Schools and enhance educational opportunities for all.

**FS-1. Continue to facilitate and improve regular interdepartmental meetings to discuss projects and issues that involve multiple departments.**

**FS-2. Leverage technology to provide more efficient governance. Integrate systems to create a one-stop shop for public services including dog licensing, bill pay, tax collections, parking meters, parking tickets, report a concern, etc.**

**FS-3. Account for the life-cycle costs of projects during the design phase.**

- a. Balance initial construction, ongoing maintenance, and replacement timeline costs.
- b. Align funding and staff capacity with maintenance responsibilities.
- c. Implement maintenance standards for public lands.

**FS-4. Continue progress toward eliminating building-related emissions to meet Arlington's net zero goals and reduce operating costs.**

**FS-5. Continue a regular building and facility inspection process to proactively identify future repairs and upgrades.**

**FS-6. Develop project metrics such as improving service delivery and reducing emergency repairs.**

**FS-7. Consider making the curbside composting program a Town-provided service for all residents.**

**FS-8. Evaluate options to increase public works staffing to provide more regular and proactive maintenance.**

*continued*

## 11 | PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

**FS-9. Increase programming to support vulnerable populations and provide social services to enhance social resilience in the face of climate change and other impacts.**

**FS-10. Complete the Master Field Study and consider priority recommendations for athletic field uses.**

**FS-11. Consider increasing program and field fees to help offset rising costs to maintain parks and recreation facilities.**

**FS-12. Complete a five-year update to the Net Zero Action Plan to identify the next phase of progress toward the Town's climate goals.**

**FS-13. Implement the Climate Leaders Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap to help meet the goals of the Net Zero Action Plan in public schools.**

**FS-14. Continue implementation of APS Five-Year Strategic Plan (2023-2028) and update when needed.**

**FS-15 . Reconstruct Ottoson Middle School.**

**FS-16. Invest in the redevelopment of the Edith Fox Library in East Arlington.**

**FS-17. Maximize occupancy and utility of underused Town-owned spaces.**

- Reevaluate Town and School rental programs and policies.
- Modernize the Town Hall auditorium's acoustics and A/V.

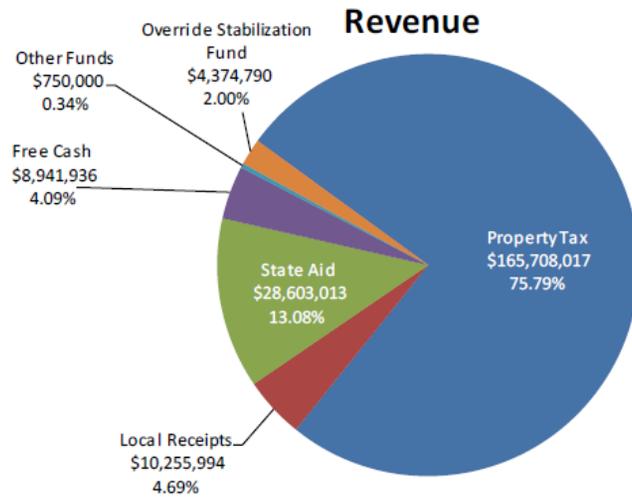
**FS-18. Prepare a Facilities Master Plan for all Town-owned buildings.**

**FS-19. Develop a Zero Waste Master Plan to help Arlington meet statewide goals to reduce waste by 90% by 2050.**

# 11 | PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

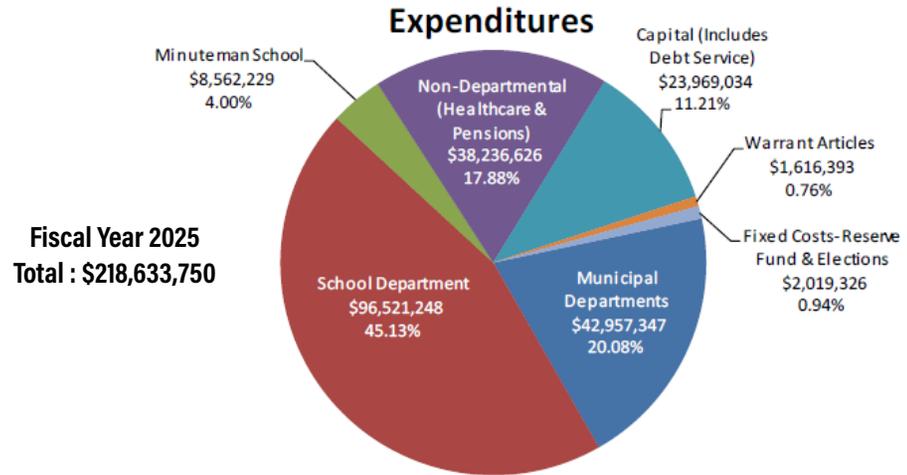
## EXISTING CONDITIONS

75% of Town's revenue comes from local property taxes



Source: Fiscal Year 2025 Town Manager's Annual Budget & Financial Plan

School Department generates the largest expense - nearly 50%



Fiscal Year 2025  
Total : \$218,633,750

Source: Fiscal Year 2025 Town Manager's Annual Budget & Financial Plan

- 
**Police**  
 3 Police Departments, 65 sworn officers

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

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- 
**Water**  
 130 miles of water main

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- 
**Sewer**  
 115 miles of sewer main

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- 
**Public Schools**  
 11 public schools (pre-K to 12) serving 6,113 students in Arlington Public School District. Total enrollment has increased about 6% since 2021.

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- 
**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.

~\$166,205,000

Total tax levy in Fiscal Year 2025, of which 94.7% was residential. 4% was commercial and industrial.

### Recent Studies/ Plans

- » Climate Leaders Decarbonization Roadmap (2024)
- » Public Land Management Plan (2023)
- » Athletic Courts Needs Assessment (2023)
- » Age- and Dementia-Friendly Action Plan (2022)
- » Fields and Playgrounds Feasibility Study (2021)
- » Net Zero Action Plan (2021)
- » Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020)
- » Open Space and Recreation Plan (2022)



# IMPLEMENTATION

12

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### OVERVIEW

The Comprehensive Plan provides overall guidance for the Town of Arlington over the next decade and beyond. The strategies outlined in the previous chapters and summarized below provide a flexible structure for Town staff and others to adapt as unforeseen opportunities and challenges present themselves. This feature allows the plan to be a living document throughout its lifespan rather than one that ages quickly as specific actions are completed.

### IMPLEMENTATION ROLES

While Town departments will be the primary lead on many strategies, others will play an important role in implementation as well. Town Meeting (legislative branch), Select Board (executive branch) and Town Manager, and the Arlington Redevelopment Board (the Town's Planning Board) play key roles that are described below. In addition to those, residents and business owners can support the plan's implementation by advocating for strategies that are most important to them.

**Town departments:** Arlington has staff in 16 departments plus the Town Manager's office. These departments carry out the daily activities of the Town, support boards and committees, and undertake longer-term planning and design projects. The Comprehensive Plan provides guidance to Town departments to help inform annual budgeting, work planning, and to align individual projects and initiatives with the plan's broad vision and goals. The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) will have a primary responsibility to implement recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan and to coordinate efforts with other departments, boards, and committees.

**Town Meeting:** Town Meeting is the legislative branch of Arlington, comprised of 252 representatives from 21 precincts. Annual Town Meeting is held once per year in the spring, typically late April and May. Town Meeting is responsible for adopting changes to the text and map of the Zoning Bylaw and as such will play an important role in the implementation of land use, housing, and economic development strategies.

**Select Board and Town Manager:** The Select Board is the executive branch of Town government. It hires a professional town manager who administers the daily operations of government. The Select Board and Town Manager, together with the Finance Department, Capital Planning Committee, and individual departments, is responsible for the Town's annual budget. The budget funds staff positions, department work plans, and Arlington Public Schools. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) outlines major capital projects that require funding. Both the Town budget and the CIP are important tools for implementing recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan, touching all elements of the plan but especially related to public facilities and transportation.

**Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB):** The ARB serves as the Town's Planning Board and special permit granting authority for Environmental Design Review. It reviews development applications and interprets zoning to either permit or deny projects. It plays a significant role in housing, economic development, and land use implementation.

**Town Boards and Committees:** Arlington benefits from many civic-minded residents who volunteer for the 50+ boards and committees. These bodies will play a role in implementation, some with a formal regulatory role and others in an advisory capacity.

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### NEAR-TERM PRIORITIES

The following strategies have been identified as near-term priorities for the Town to begin implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Some of these are already underway and others will start within the next one to two years. Completion of these strategies will demonstrate progress and build momentum for ongoing implementation over the life of this plan.

- » **LU-6. Conduct an audit of the Zoning Bylaw to align with modern uses and allow greater flexibility, especially in the Business and Industrial districts.**
  - The ARB is currently evaluating zoning in the Arlington Heights business district (mostly B3: Village Business) to identify potential modifications. Their next priority is to evaluate zoning in the East Arlington business district (a mix of B2A: Major Business, B3: Village Business, and R6: Apartments, Medium Density).
- » **H-1. Amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow for a greater range of housing types in a variety of locations throughout town to increase the housing supply.**
  - In recent years, Town Meeting has passed the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaw and the Multi-Family Housing Overlay (MBTA Communities) bylaw. Other efforts such as legalizing more housing options like two- and three-family homes in R0 and R1 zoning districts have failed to garner enough support, though each effort has had more support than the previous. Given the acute housing pressure that Arlington is facing, continued efforts to educate, listen, and build support are needed to tackle this challenge.
- » **H-2. Update the 2022-2027 Affordable Housing Trust Action Plan.**
- » **C-1. Adopt a townwide Vision Zero policy to identify and implement strategies to eliminate pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities.**
  - This strategy is also recommended in the Connect Arlington Sustainable Transportation Plan. Formally adopting a Vision Zero policy will establish the Town's commitment to improving safety for all roadway users and support implementation of related projects. Funding sources will be needed to implement improvements.
- » **ED-1. Develop a Strategic Economic Development Plan.**
  - This strategy is needed to develop a more detailed action plan specific to Arlington's economic development assets, needs, and challenges. It should focus on increasing the Town's non-residential property tax base and defining Arlington's role in the regional economy. This plan should be developed within the next two years to take advantage of the current real estate cycle in which life sciences, office, and retail are in slower growth periods.
- » **FS-10. Complete the Master Field Study and consider priority recommendations for athletic field uses.**
  - Parks & Recreation staff in DPW are overseeing this evaluation of the Town's athletic fields, their usage, and identifying unmet needs. Critical issues include competing interests for the same space, overuse of fields leading to deteriorating conditions, and limited funding and staff for required maintenance.
- » **FS-12. Complete a five-year update to the Net Zero Action Plan to identify the next phase of progress toward the Town's climate goals.**
  - Climate and resiliency staff in DPCD are currently working on this update. A public meeting was held in Fall 2025 and the revised plan is anticipated in Spring 2026.

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### ZONING-RELATED STRATEGIES

The Comprehensive Plan makes several recommendations related to zoning. These land use, housing, and economic development strategies are intended to facilitate development that aligns with the community's vision and goals, grows the local property tax base, and expands the housing supply. The ARB, supported by DPCD staff, and Town Meeting have the primary responsibility to implement these strategies.

Zoning-related strategies are listed below as a convenient reference:

LU-2. Encourage more connections and trail-oriented development along the Minuteman Bikeway to leverage this asset in support of housing and businesses.  
b. Trail as housing amenity: Consider rezoning residential parcels that directly abut the Minuteman Bikeway to higher density residential zoning.

LU-5. Streamline the development review timeline for proposed projects.

LU-6. Conduct an audit of the Zoning Bylaw to align with modern uses and allow greater flexibility, especially in the Business and Industrial districts.

LU-9. Continue to consolidate zoning districts to make the Town's Zoning Bylaw more user-friendly while still addressing community needs and desires.

LU-10. Explore allowing small, low-impact light commercial uses (corner store, coffee shop, professional services, etc) in residential zoning districts to add local-serving retail amenities in neighborhoods. Develop appropriate regulations to mitigate impacts (e.g. parking, noise, lighting) and increase benefits for the surrounding neighborhood.

H-1. Amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow for a greater range of housing types in a variety of locations throughout town to increase the housing supply.

H-4. Continue to evaluate the features of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) to expand the range of attainable housing options throughout Arlington.

H-5. Extend features of the multi-family overlay districts to business districts to encourage mixed-income multi-family development.

H-10. Revise Zoning Bylaw regulations to encourage creativity with infill development conditions and allow flexibility regarding irregular lots, minimum lot size, minimum lot frontage, and other dimensional regulations.

ED-2. Complete further revisions to regulatory and permitting processes to clarify requirements and reduce unanticipated costs.

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### ABBREVIATIONS

DPCD - Department of Planning and Community Development  
 DPW - Department of Public Works  
 HHS - Health and Human Services  
 DEI - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

ABAC - Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee  
 ACAC - Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture  
 AHT - Affordable Housing Trust  
 ARB - Arlington Redevelopment Board  
 A-TED - Arlington Committee on Tourism and Economic Development  
 CEFC - Clean Energy Future Committee  
 ConComm - Conservation Commission  
 CPAC - Community Preservation Act Committee  
 HC - Historic Commission  
 HDC - Historic Districts Commission  
 OSC - Open Space Committee  
 PRC - Parks and Recreation Commission  
 TAC - Transportation Advisory Committee  
 ZBA - Zoning Board of Appeals

The list of partners included in the implementation matrix highlights those most related to the strategy but is not an exhaustive list of all potential partners.

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The following implementation matrix organizes the Comprehensive Plan's strategies by goal. The matrix assigns responsibility for each strategy to Town departments and partners with a recommended timeframe for implementation. Progress will be reviewed periodically to ensure continued alignment with community needs. As noted in the introduction, this plan was developed to allow for flexibility and mid-course adjustments as conditions change.

Timeframes noted are subject to change

- Ongoing
- Short-term: 1-3 years
- Mid-term: 4-6 years
- Long-term: 7+ years

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | LAND USE

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
<p><b>Goals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Increase the number and variety of residential and non-residential development opportunities.</li> <li>» Prioritize the redevelopment and productive use of underutilized parcels to advance community goals.</li> <li>» Encourage development that enhances Arlington’s natural resources, built environment, and sustainability.</li> <li>» Attract development that supports and expands the economic, cultural, and civic vibrancy of Arlington’s commercial areas.</li> </ul>				
<p><b>LU-1. Conduct a strategic assessment of commercial corridors to encourage more redevelopment that can increase the amount of housing and commercial space.</b>  <b>Assessment should include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify opportunity and/or catalytic sites (i.e., sites with a small building and large parking area, one-story non-historic commercial buildings, parcels with low tax value per acre, etc.).</li> <li>• Evaluate development economics/project feasibility to identify potential financing gaps.</li> <li>• Develop strategies to encourage private owners to intensify underused sites up to the permitted heights allowed by zoning (3-6 stories).</li> <li>• Engage with property owners, developers, residents, and other stakeholders as part of the planning process.</li> <li>• Priority corridors to assess: Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway. Secondary corridors: Summer Street and lower Mystic Street, others as identified by DPCD staff.</li> </ul>	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Mid	N
<p><b>LU-2. Encourage more connections and trail-oriented development along the Minuteman Bikeway to leverage this asset in support of housing and businesses.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Trail as economic amenity: Focus on attracting compatible commercial and industrial-type uses.</li> <li>b. Trail as housing amenity: Consider rezoning residential parcels that directly abut the Minuteman Bikeway to higher density residential zoning.</li> </ol>	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Mid	Y (LU-2b)

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | LAND USE

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
<p>LU-3. Leverage Town-owned properties for redevelopment that adds housing and commercial uses responsive to community needs and interests.</p> <p>a. Build on the Fox Library Housing Study (MAPC, 2025) to continue exploration of combining housing above a new library in East Arlington.</p> <p>b. Study development options for the Russell Common Lot in Arlington Center. The study should identify community goals for the space and consider options for commercial and housing development, public parking, and the farmer’s market.</p>	DPCD	ARB, Town Manager, Department of Libraries, Facilities Department	Short/Mid	N
<p>LU-4. Promote redevelopment opportunities across Arlington that help to add a variety of housing types and price points, support a variety of commercial uses, and grow the property tax base.</p>	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Ongoing	N
<p>LU-5. Streamline the development review timeline for proposed projects.</p> <p>a. Review the pre-application meeting process to address common issues early.</p> <p>b. Track length of project review by project type from application to final decision.</p>	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Short	N
<p>LU-6. Conduct an audit of the Zoning Bylaw to align with modern uses and allow greater flexibility, especially in the Business and Industrial districts.</p>	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Short	Y
<p>LU-7. Monitor new construction in the multi-family housing overlay districts to evaluate the diversity of housing types and levels of affordability achieved. If needed, consider zoning modifications to better promote the desired types of development.</p>	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Short	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | LAND USE

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
<p>LU-8. Further incentivize projects to implement net zero energy and climate adaptive strategies that accelerate progress towards the Town's climate goals.</p> <p>a. Enhance and/or extend incentives related to clean energy technologies, net zero energy construction, and low-embodied carbon materials.</p> <p>b. Introduce incentives for development that exceeds requirements for stormwater management, reduces the heat island effect, and otherwise strengthens community climate resilience.</p>	DPCD	ARB, ZBA, CEFC	Mid	N
<p>LU-9. Continue to consolidate zoning districts to make the Town's Zoning Bylaw more user-friendly while still addressing community needs and desires.</p>	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Mid	Y
<p>LU-10. Explore allowing small, low-impact light commercial uses (corner store, coffee shop, professional services, etc) in residential zoning districts to add local-serving retail amenities in neighborhoods. Develop appropriate regulations to mitigate impacts (e.g. parking, noise, lighting) and increase benefits for the surrounding neighborhood.</p>	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Mid	Y

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
<b>Goals:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Improve regulatory processes to benefit local businesses.</li> <li>» Increase the buildout potential and value of commercial and industrial properties.</li> <li>» Promote Arlington’s historic and cultural assets to support economic development.</li> <li>» Improve the customer experience through streetscape improvements, wayfinding, parking, and access upgrades.</li> <li>» Create and support organizational capacity related to economic development.</li> </ul>				
ED-1. Develop a Strategic Economic Development Plan to increase commercial and industrial-type development. Key considerations should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing consistent, predictable funding to promote economic development initiatives including small business recruitment, tenant support, tourism, and visitor marketing.</li> <li>• Evaluating organizational models to advance local economic development. Consider options to assemble and control parcels for commercial and industrial development, to establish development partnerships, and to encourage new commercial and light industrial development with appropriate incentives.</li> <li>• Identifying ways to tap into the economic opportunities in the regional economy.</li> <li>• Developing an approach to encourage renovation and leasing of vacant storefronts and buildings.</li> </ul>	DPCD	Town Manager, A-TED	Short	N
ED-2. Complete further revisions to regulatory and permitting processes to clarify requirements and reduce unanticipated costs.	DPCD	Inspectional Services, ARB, ZBA	Short	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
<p>ED-3. Promote the Business Resource Guide in conjunction with Town-wide effort to integrate all licenses into an online permitting platform.</p> <p>a. Review and update the guide on an annual basis in response to user feedback and changes in regulatory processes.</p>	DPCD	Select Board, Town Manager, ARB,	Ongoing	N
<p>ED-4. Develop and implement a cohesive marketing and communications strategy to increase awareness of Arlington as a competitive business location.</p> <p>a. Grow Arlington’s visitor economy to drive consumer spending.</p> <p>b. Develop and promote evening and nightlife activities for all ages throughout the year.</p>	DPCD	A-TED, Town Manager	Mid	N
<p>ED-5. Create a Placemaking Plan for Arlington’s distinct business districts that considers streetscape, public spaces, vacant storefronts, wayfinding, programming, art, history, and culture.</p> <p>Other considerations should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore regulatory options such as commercial property maintenance codes and vacant storefront registries to encourage good repair and active marketing of available commercial spaces.</li> <li>Develop and implement comprehensive signage, wayfinding, and branding strategies for each business district and across Arlington.</li> <li>Create a “Store-Back of Business Improvement Program” to improve business orientation to the Bikeway (façade treatments, outdoor seating, etc.).</li> </ul>	DPCD	Town Manager, A-TED, DPW	Mid	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
ED-6. Evaluate support among property and business owners in business districts to create a formal Main Street Association(s) or Business Improvement District(s) that would provide additional private sector-directed resources to support beautification, signage and wayfinding, and clean/safe programs in Arlington’s business districts.	DPCD	Town Manager	Long	N
ED-7. Expand the A-TED Committee’s focus on broad economic development initiatives to complement tourism-related efforts. a. Promote and develop business and industry for the purpose of strengthening the local economy, providing jobs, and expanding the tax base. b. Evaluate options to move from a “volunteer”-led model to a staff position for promotion, programming, and communications to maintain momentum and create consistency.	DPCD	A-TED	Short	N
ED-8. Create centralized town-wide communications and marketing of businesses and events to increase awareness and engagement with existing businesses across the community	DPCD	A-TED,	Short	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | HOUSING



GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
<b>Goals:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Continue to support implementation of the Arlington Housing Production Plan (2022) and the Fair Housing Action Plan (2021).</li> <li>» Encourage mixed-use development that includes attainable housing options at all income levels, especially near transit and in established commercial areas.</li> <li>» Provide a variety of housing options for a range of incomes, ages, family sizes, and needs.</li> <li>» Allow multi-family housing compatible with the scale of existing residential neighborhoods.</li> <li>» Encourage sustainable new construction and renovation of existing structures.</li> </ul>				
H-1. Amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow for a greater range of housing types in a variety of locations throughout town to increase the housing supply. Examples of “missing middle” housing to encourage in more areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow two-family and duplex dwellings by-right in the R0 and R1 districts. Update the residential design guidelines to illustrate examples.</li> <li>• Allow three-family and townhouse dwellings by-right in the R2, R3, and R4 districts. Update the residential design guidelines to illustrate examples.</li> </ul>	DPCD	ARB	Short	Y
H-2. Update the 2022-2027 Affordable Housing Trust Action Plan.	DPCD	AHT, ARB	Short	N
H-3. Maintain Arlington’s designation as a Housing Choice Community through housing production and implementation of best practices that promote sustainable housing development.	DPCD	ARB	Ongoing	N

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | HOUSING



GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
H-4. Continue to evaluate the features of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) to expand the range of attainable housing options throughout Arlington.	DPCD	ARB, AHT	Short	Y
H-5. Extend features of the multi-family overlay districts to business districts to encourage mixed-income multi-family development. Zoning aspects to consider extending to other districts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional floor if higher percentage of units set-aside as affordable housing.</li> <li>• No minimum lot size, frontage, or open space requirements.</li> </ul>	DPCD	ARB	Mid	Y
H-6. Study the economics of the Town's affordable housing requirement for projects over six units to determine whether the percentage required (15% currently) or the affordability level (up to 60% AMI) should be changed to create more housing and/or increase range of affordability.	DPCD	ARB, AHT	Mid	N
H-7. Create a framework for tiered affordability that encourages projects to include housing at multiple affordability levels, including "missing middle" workforce incomes (typically 80-120% AMI).	DPCD	ARB, AHT	Mid	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | HOUSING

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
<p>H-8. Identify stable, recurring funding source(s) to support housing development with units at a range of affordability levels.            Explore options such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordable Housing Trust – identify stable annual funding stream.</li> <li>Community Preservation Act – dedicate share of funds to Affordable Housing Trust.</li> <li>Other fees – evaluate economics of new development linkage or impact fee, real estate transfer fee, etc.</li> </ul>	DPCD	Town Manager, Finance Committee, CPA, AHT	Mid	N
<p>H-9. Revise Zoning Bylaw regulations to encourage creativity with infill development conditions and allow flexibility regarding irregular lots, minimum lot size, minimum lot frontage, and other dimensional regulations.</p>	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Mid	Y
<p>H-10. Ensure housing policy fully supports net zero development and renovation, energy efficiency, energy affordability, and climate adaptation and resilience, as outlined in the Net Zero Action Plan and other related plans.</p> <p>a. Ensure economically and socially disadvantaged residents are connected with the resources to take advantage of the benefits (lower energy costs, etc.).</p>	DPCD	CEFC	Short	N
<p>H-11. Expand efforts to promote and share funding resources that help offset the cost of sustainable construction practices, including housing renovations.</p>	DPCD	CEFC, Inspectional Services	Ongoing	N
<p>H-12. Explore opportunities to increase the development of accessory dwelling units (ADU) including options that reduce costs and permitting timelines for ADU projects.</p>	DPCD	Inspectional Services, ARB, ZBA	Short	N

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | CONNECTIVITY



GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
<b>Goal:</b> » Increase safety for all roadway users by enhancing pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access. » Manage traffic operations to improve safety, balance local and through trips, and address the needs of all roadway users. » Actively manage the supply of parking to support businesses, neighborhoods, and new development.				
<b>C-1. Adopt a townwide Vision Zero policy to identify and implement strategies to eliminate pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities.</b> a. Develop neighborhood traffic calming toolkit to support Vision Zero policy. b. Address complex intersection conditions such as five-way stops, wide pedestrian crossings with difficult topography, and high-volume pedestrian and bicycle crossings (e.g., Park Avenue intersections at Lowell Street, Paul Revere Road, and Appleton Street).	DPCD	Select Board, Town Manager, DPW	Short	N
<b>C-2. Formalize multimodal networks and close gaps to connect neighborhoods, activity centers, and regional connections.</b> a. Establish multimodal priorities for key corridors to guide planning and design efforts, balancing pedestrian, bicycle, freight, transit, and parking needs. b. Develop a unified design approach for Massachusetts Avenue and for Broadway.	DPCD	Select Board, Town Manager, DPW	Mid	N
<b>C-3. Implement recommendations in local transportation plans to prioritize multimodal, equitable, and safe transportation investments.</b> a. Continue implementing <i>Connect Arlington</i> and Complete Streets priority recommendations, prioritizing safety improvements to eliminate fatalities. i. Conduct a five-year progress review (2027). ii. Conduct ten-year update of <i>Connect Arlington</i> (2032). b. Provide regular design and construction updates on ongoing transportation improvements.	DPW	Select Board, DPCD, TAC, ABAC	Ongoing	N

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | CONNECTIVITY



GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
<p>C-4. Create and maintain a five-year roadway construction project list to plan for multimodal improvements, traffic calming, and green infrastructure along with roadway surface and utility improvements.</p> <p>a. Establish a design budget within the DPCD to design transportation improvements in-house and implement them with DPW.</p>	DPW	DPCD, Capital Planning Committee	Mid	N
<p>C-5. Study existing north-south roadways between Summer Street and Massachusetts Avenue (Mill Street, Grove Street, Brattle Street, Forest Street) and explore potential new connections to increase pedestrian and bicycle access to the Minuteman Bikeway and to distribute vehicles across more intersections.</p>	DPCD	DPW, ABAC, TAC	Long	N
<p>C-6. Complete a comprehensive review of the overnight parking ban and recently adopted Overnight Parking Permit Program for Residents so on-street supply can support housing and businesses while reducing the need for on-site parking areas.</p>	Town Manager	Select Board, DPCD, DPW, Police	Short	N
<p>C-7. Develop Parking Benefits Districts in Arlington Heights and East Arlington to use parking revenue for local transportation and public realm improvements, using Arlington Center's Parking Benefits District as a model.</p>	DPCD	Select Board, Town Manager, Police, DPW	Short	N
<p>C-8. Update the Town's aging business district parking studies to better understand current usage, opportunities, and issues within a broad context.</p>	DPCD	DPW	Mid	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | CONNECTIVITY



GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
C-9. Increase number of electric vehicle charging locations in and near business districts to support Arlington's goal of 100% carbon neutrality by 2050.	DPCD	DPW, CEFC, Facilities	Mid	N
<p>C-10. Collaborate with neighboring communities and state leads to advocate with the MBTA to improve local service, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More frequent service on high-ridership routes.</li> <li>• Implement bus priority where congestion impacts buses, in the form of transit-signal priority, queue jumps, and bus lanes as necessary.</li> <li>• Create connections from Arlington Center and Arlington Heights to Alewife, Harvard Square, and the Green Line at Tufts.</li> <li>• Improve bus connections to nearby communities, including Boston, Cambridge, Watertown, and Waltham.</li> <li>• Improve mobility connections for residents, commuters, and visitors through the future redevelopment of Alewife MBTA station.</li> <li>• Study Red Line Extension feasibility.</li> </ul>	Town Manager	Select Board, DPW, DPCD, TAC	Ongoing	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES



STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
<p><b>Goals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Preserve and promote Arlington's historic heritage and its diverse arts and cultural resources.</li> <li>» Enhance and support historic business districts and neighborhoods with compatible redevelopment.</li> <li>» Provide well-maintained public spaces for year-round arts and cultural activities for all ages.</li> </ul>				
<p>HC-1. Update the Arlington Arts and Culture Plan.            Key considerations should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate considerations for physical and programmatic accessibility and inclusion.</li> <li>• Consider how arts and culture can be further integrated into the business districts to enrich the visitor experience.</li> <li>• Explore the potential for developing new arts spaces like performance spaces and multipurpose indoor facilities.</li> </ul>	ACAC	DPCD	Mid	N
<p>HC-2. Continue to seek funding to preserve, conserve, and enhance Town-owned historic resources and materials, including Town Hall and Robbins Library.</p>	Historical Commission, DPCD	Facilities, Town Manager	Ongoing	N
<p>HC-3. Expand on existing self-guided tour programs in the Cultural District and in other parts of Arlington to share local resources with the community and visitors.</p>	ACAC	Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission	Short	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES



STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
HC-4. Increase signage to educate the public and increase awareness of Arlington's Indigenous history, ice harvesting, and other aspects.	Historical Commission	DPCD, ACAC	Mid	N
HC-5. Consult existing historic surveys and inventories to guide preservation and adaptation of identified historic residences, commercial structures, and neighborhood and business districts. a. Increase knowledge about historic surveys, inventories, and other resources among board members and staff. b. Increase administrative support to maintain and update historical databases.	Historical Commission	Historic Districts Commission, DPCD	Ongoing	N
HC-6. Promote awareness of best historical preservation practices and educational resources for homeowners and business owners of identified properties.	Historical Commission	Historic Districts Commission, DPCD	Ongoing	N
HC-7. Create a single, coordinated marketing and communications strategy to promote local assets and cultural events and programming.	ACAC	A-TED, Chamber of Commerce	Mid	N
HC-8. Identify and pursue additional funding sources to create a staff position to lead local arts and culture efforts and strengthen the Town's position as a leader in the cultural community.	ACAC	Town Manager, DPCD	Long	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES



STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
HC-9. Increase diversity of people involved in event planning processes for public arts and cultural programming and participation.	ACAC	DPCD, DEI	Ongoing	N
HC-10. Promote the artist live-work program to increase the supply of creative maker spaces and attainable housing for artists.	ACAC	DPCD	Ongoing	N
<p>HC-11. Identify collaborative opportunities for public art and culture installations in public and private spaces throughout Arlington.</p> <p>a. Integrate temporary or permanent public art into transportation infrastructure.</p> <p>b. Include community-use public spaces in renovated and new municipal buildings that can be used for rehearsals, performances, and/or arts instruction.</p> <p>c. Collaborate with property owners and the arts and culture community to install more public art on private property.</p>	ACAC	Recreation Department, DPW, Town Manager, Schools, DPCD	Short	N
HC-12. Continue implementing ADA self-evaluation recommendations to remove barriers to accessing and enjoying historic resources and arts and cultural facilities.	DPW	Town Manager, Facilities	Ongoing	N
HC-13. Pilot a block party and cultural festival program to promote free public events throughout Arlington.	DPCD	Town Manager, Police, DPW	Mid	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE



GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
<b>Goals:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Use sustainable and resilient approaches to improve air and water quality, mitigate flooding impacts, and restore ecological integrity.</li> <li>» Ensure that Arlington's neighborhoods, commercial areas, and infrastructure are developed and maintained to build resilience and mitigate climate change impacts.</li> <li>» Increase the town's tree canopy on public and private property.</li> <li>» Protect and enhance the physical beauty and natural resources of public and private lands in Arlington.</li> </ul>				
NR-1. Continue to be a leader in sustainability and resiliency issues to preserve and enhance natural resources, reduce energy usage, and improve quality of life.	Town Manager	DPCD, DPW, Facilities, Recreation, CEFC	Ongoing	N
NR-2. Continue to implement recommendations in the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). Complete an update in 2032 to maintain eligibility for funding programs.	DPCD	Recreation, DPW, OSC, Con Comm	Ongoing	N
NR-3. Require the use of low impact development and climate adaptive strategies in municipal and private development projects. a. Provide definitions and examples of these strategies to relevant Town departments and the general public.	DPCD	DPCD, ARB, ZBA, CEFC	Short	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE



GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
<p>NR-4. Prioritize projects that mitigate the urban heat island effect especially in neighborhoods with the highest impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increase the tree canopy using appropriate native and climate adaptive species.</li> <li>b. Limit new and reduce existing impervious surfaces using green infrastructure strategies such as rain gardens, to the extent feasible.</li> <li>c. Integrate water play elements and other creative cooling solutions into new public playground and recreation areas.</li> </ul>	DPCD	DPCD, DPW Recreation	Short	N
<p>NR-5. Continue to address flooding hazards especially along Mill Brook and Alewife Brook using a combination of natural and built strategies and policy measures.</p>	DPCD	DPW, ARB	Ongoing	N
<p>NR-6. Improve water quality issues by implementing structural and non-structural stormwater management solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Focus on Mill Brook, Spy Pond, and Hills Pond within Arlington.</li> <li>b. Work with neighboring communities to address shared water bodies such as Alewife Brook and Arlington Reservoir.</li> </ul>	DPCD	DPW, Con Comm	Ongoing	N
<p>NR-7. Install native and/or climate adaptive plantings on public properties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement maintenance standards for public lands.</li> </ul>	DPCD	Select Board, Con Comm, Recreation	Short	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE



GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
<p><b>NR-8. Protect, enhance, and diversify the urban tree canopy, including street trees and trees on public lands.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Plant and maintain a variety of native, drought- and salt-tolerant street tree species.</li> <li>b. Focus on neighborhoods and streets with less existing tree canopy.</li> </ul>	DPW	Tree Committee, Con Comm, DPCD	Mid	N
<p><b>NR-9. Regularly update street tree maintenance plans and policies to reflect best practices.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Align funding and staff capacity with maintenance needs.</li> <li>b. Gradually replace invasive Norway maple and Callery/Bradford pear trees with more appropriate street trees.</li> <li>c. Consider sidewalk design and material options to mitigate surface displacement and promote stormwater infiltration.</li> </ul>	DPW	Tree Committee, DPCD	Long	N
<p><b>NR-10. Expand educational resources about sustainability and resiliency measures to share with residents and developers.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide education and programming to encourage greater adoption of the recommendations of the Sustainable Landscape Handbook and related landscape practices.</li> <li>b. Provide information about creating rain gardens and other stormwater management practices.</li> <li>c. Enhance education for developers and homeowners on the requirements of the Fossil Fuel Free Bylaw and Specialized Stretch Code.</li> <li>d. Explore additional funding sources, including Town operating funds, to sustain a part-time Energy Advocate position.</li> </ul>	DPCD	OSC, CEFC	Long	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE



GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
NR-11. Explore both Town-sponsored and homeowner/neighborhood-based approaches to invasive species management.	DPCD	DPW, Recreation, OSC, PRC	Mid	N
NR-12. Incorporate local environmental topics into the Arlington Public Schools curriculum to introduce important ecological and climate adaptation ideas and resources to Arlington's youngest residents.	School Department	Young Arlington Collaborative, School Committee	Long	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | FACILITIES AND SERVICES



GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
<b>Goals:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Coordinate and efficiently deliver Town services.</li> <li>» Build, operate, and maintain public facilities that are attractive, cost-efficient, minimize environmental impact, and help connect Arlington as a community.</li> <li>» Direct public facility investments through a long-term capital planning process that anticipates future needs.</li> <li>» Maintain, beautify, and improve our public parks, trails, play areas, and programming to meet the population's changing needs.</li> <li>» Support Arlington Public Schools and enhance educational opportunities for all.</li> </ul>				
FS-1. Continue to facilitate and improve regular interdepartmental meetings to discuss projects and issues that involve multiple departments.	Town Manager	All Departments	Ongoing	N
FS-2. Leverage technology to provide more efficient governance. Integrate systems to create a one-stop shop for public services including dog licensing, bill pay, tax collections, parking meters, parking tickets, report a concern, etc.	IT Department	Town Manager	Short	N
FS-3. Account for the life-cycle costs of projects during the design phase. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Balance initial construction, ongoing maintenance, and replacement timeline costs.</li> <li>b. Align funding and staff capacity with maintenance responsibilities.</li> <li>c. Implement maintenance standards for public lands.</li> </ul>	DPW	Recreation Department, Facilities	Ongoing	N
FS-4. Continue progress toward eliminating building-related emissions to meet Arlington's net zero goals and reduce operating costs.	Facilities	Town Manager, CEFC, DPCD	Ongoing	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | FACILITIES AND SERVICES



GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
FS-5. Continue a regular building and facility inspection process to proactively identify future repairs and upgrades.	Facilities		Short	N
FS-6. Develop project metrics such as improving service delivery and reducing emergency repairs.	Facilities	DPW	Mid	N
FS-7. Consider making the curbside composting program a Town-provided service for all residents.	DPW	Town Manager, Zero Waste Arlington Committee	Long	N
FS-8. Evaluate options to increase public works staffing to provide more regular and proactive maintenance.	Town Manager	DPW	Long	N
FS-9. Increase programming to support vulnerable populations and provide social services to enhance social resilience in the face of climate change and other impacts.	HHS	DPCD	Long	N
FS-10. Complete the Master Field Study and consider priority recommendations for athletic field uses.	Recreation Department	DPCD, DPW, PRC	Short	N
FS-11. Consider increasing program and field fees to help offset rising costs to maintain parks and recreation facilities.	Recreation Department	PRC, DEI	Short	N

\*Not an exhaustive list of partners

## 12 | IMPLEMENTATION

### IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | FACILITIES AND SERVICES



GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
FS-12. Complete a five-year update to the Net Zero Action Plan to identify the next phase of progress toward the Town's climate goals.	DPCD			
FS-13. Implement the Climate Leaders Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap to help meet goals of the Net Zero Action Plan in public schools.	Facilities	School Department, CEFC, DPCD	Ongoing	N
FS-14. Continue implementation of APS Five-Year Strategic Plan (2023-2028) and update when needed.	School Department	Town Manager	Ongoing	N
FS-15 . Reconstruct Ottoson Middle School.	School Department	Town Manager	Long	N
FS-16. Invest in the redevelopment of the Edith Fox Library in East Arlington.	Library	Facilities, Town Manager	Mid	N
FS-17. Maximize occupancy and utility of underused Town-owned spaces. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reevaluate Town and School rental programs and policies.</li> <li>Modernize the Town Hall auditorium's acoustics and A/V.</li> </ul>	Town Manager	DPCD, Facilities, School Department	Ongoing	N
FS-18. Prepare a Facilities Master Plan for all Town-owned buildings.	Facilities	Town Manager	Mid	N
FS-19. Develop a Zero Waste Master Plan to help Arlington meet statewide goals to reduce waste by 90% by 2050.	DPW	DPCD	Mid	N