

ARLINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TOWN OF ARLINGTON

2026 Update

TOWN OF ARLINGTON
AmpUp!
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

DRAFT FOR REVIEW, ARB DRAFT MAY 2026

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

AmpUp! Comprehensive Plan Update Advisory Committee

Special thanks to the Committee for their extensive outreach at pop-up events and for the time, effort, and insight contributed during the review of the draft plan and its proposed strategies.

- Eugene Benson, Arlington Redevelopment Board Representative (former)
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Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development

- Claire Ricker, Director of Planning and Community Development
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Consultant Team

- Stantec Consulting Services, Inc (lead)
- Ninigret Partners LLC

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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FOREWORD

Arlington's new Comprehensive Plan is a roadmap for the next ten years of the Town's future, shaped by the voices, values, and priorities of our community. This plan reflects the input of both new and long-time residents, local business owners, Town Meeting members, board and commission volunteers, Town staff, and other stakeholders from across Arlington's neighborhoods and business districts. Over the course of an extensive year-long engagement process, the AmpUp! Advisory Committee members helped guide the plan's direction, organize and attend community outreach efforts, and refine the plan's content. We are deeply grateful for their contributions and for the spirit of collaboration that has guided the committee's work.

Community engagement included public workshops, pop-up events, surveys, and small focus group conversations that invited participants to share their experiences and aspirations for Arlington. Through these discussions, we heard what makes Arlington special: walkable neighborhoods, vibrant local businesses, access to parks and open spaces, dedicated volunteers, and a strong sense of community. We also heard clear priorities for the future, including housing affordability and diversity, safe and reliable transportation options, climate resilience, high-quality public infrastructure, and continued investment in our business districts and along our commercial corridors.

This Comprehensive Plan will serve as a guide for Town decision-making by informing capital planning and investments, shaping policies and regulations, and aligning the work of Town departments, boards, and committees. It includes a clear and actionable implementation framework to help translate the community's vision into tangible outcomes over time.

This effort would not have been possible without the thoughtful participation and commitment of so many in our community. The depth and diversity of input we received strengthened the planning process and ensured that the plan generally reflects the lived experiences of those who call Arlington home now and those who may call Arlington home in the future. As we move from planning to implementation, that same partnership will be essential. We look forward to continuing this work together, building on the ideas, energy, and thoughtful input of the community, to ensure that Arlington remains a welcoming, resilient, and thriving place for all, now and into the future.

Foreword by:
Jim Feeney, Town Manager
Claire Ricker, Director of Community Development



INTRODUCTION

1

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 and staff, 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.



Arlington Center

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.



Capitol Square

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. This Introduction and the Community Vision chapter 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.

- **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, which is included in the Appendix.
- **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 toward the goals;
  - 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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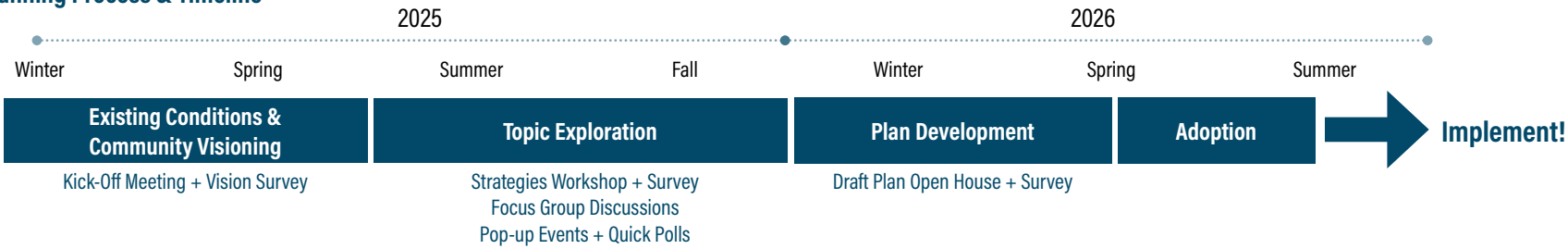
02 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

- 3 interactive public workshops
- 200+ 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

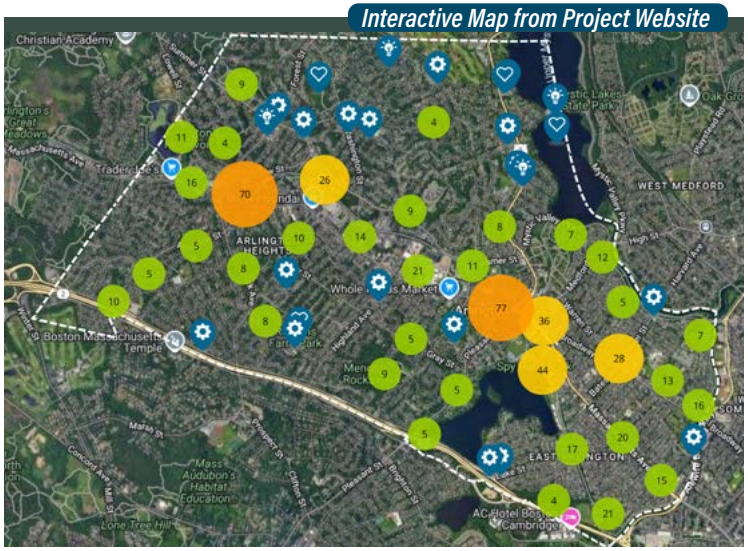
- 6,300+ project website visitors
- 1,100 online contributors
- 3,435 votes and 624 comments on interactive map
- 533 vision survey responses
- 496 responses to 2 quick polls



Town Day Pop Up Event, September 2025



Visioning Forum, April 2025



Interactive Map from Project Website

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 promoted upcoming events and collected input from people at multiple local 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 200 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.



Visioning Forum, April 2025



Plan Development Workshop, October 2025



Signage at Town Day Pop Up Event, September 2025

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.

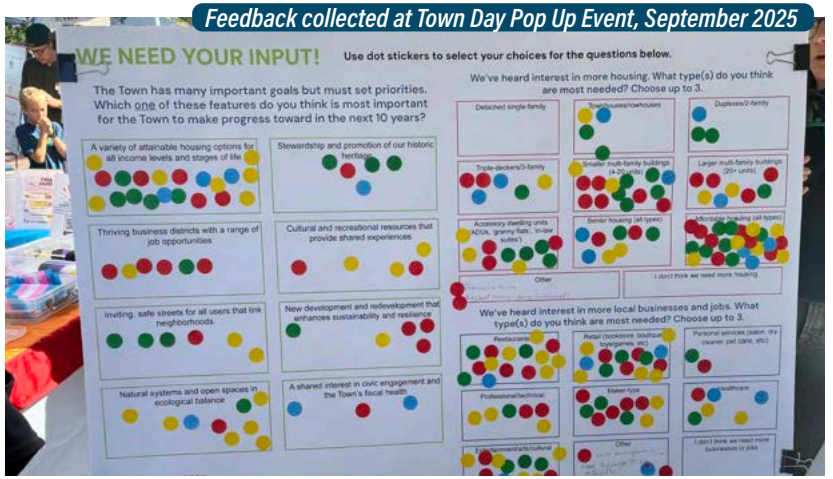
Pop-up Events & Outreach:

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, September 2025



HOW WAS THIS INPUT 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:

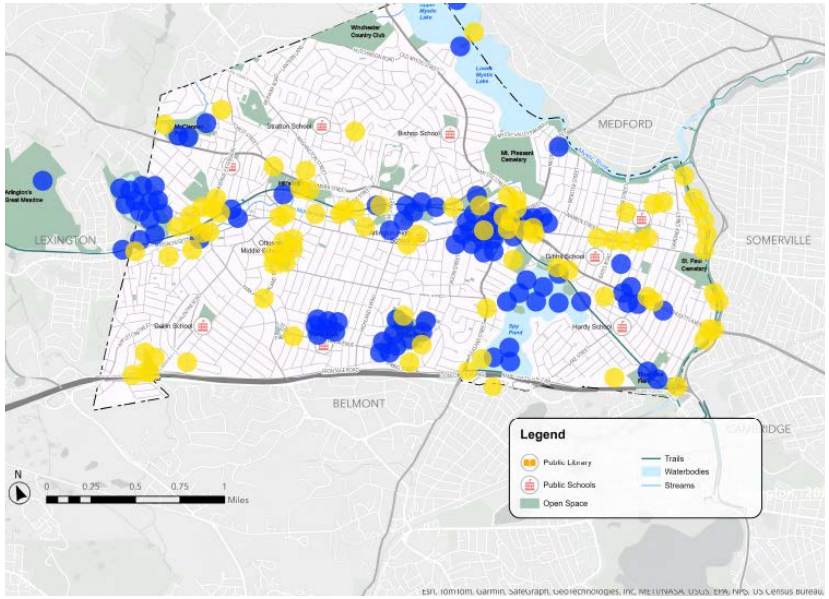
- **“Arlington: A model of equity and sustainability in 2035”**
- **“Small Business Booms in Arlington’s Revitalized Downtown”**
- **“Safe, Walkable Streets in Every Neighborhood”**
- **“Arlington Aging Well” / “Arlington – Longevity Hub”**
- **“Arlington Center Achieves all 3-story minimum buildings 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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Protecting History, Arts, and Culture:** Many shared that Arlington's diverse historic and cultural resources, along with its vibrant arts scene, are valued by community members of all ages. Ensuring these assets remain strong, supported, and accessible was a priority for many.
- **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

3

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

PF

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 initiatives 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.



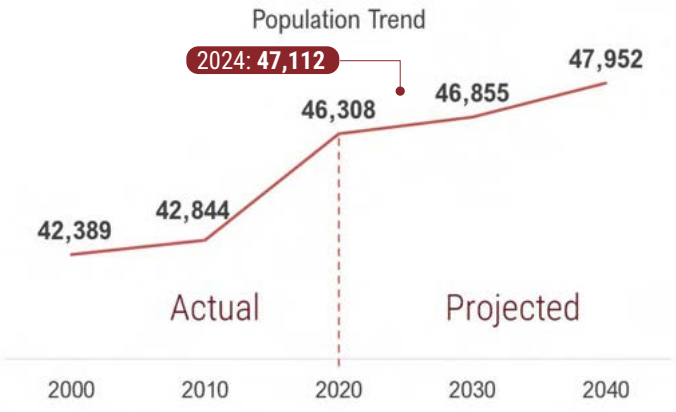
TRENDS INFLUENCING ARLINGTON

4

CONTEXT AND TRENDS I **PEOPLE AND HOUSEHOLDS**

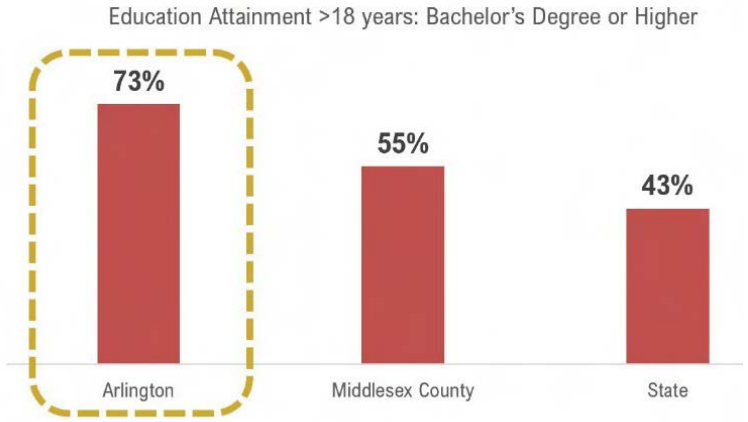
The following information is taken from the "Arlington Today" existing conditions report compiled during this planning process. The full report is available in the Appendix.

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

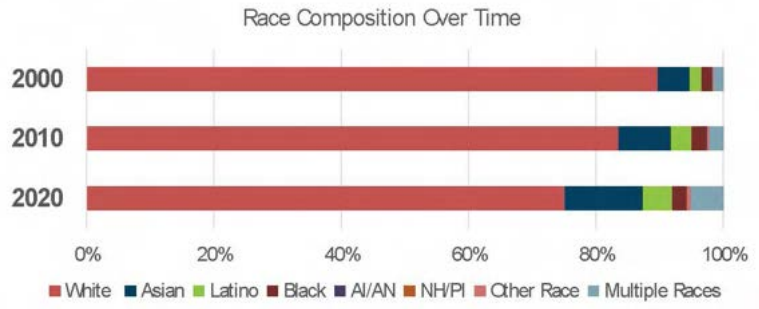
About one-third of households are one person living alone

Other household characteristics:

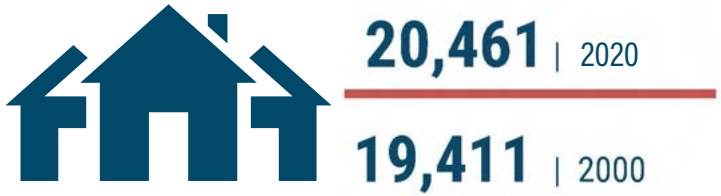
31% Households with children younger than 18 years

29% Households with someone 65 years or older

Arlington is becoming more diverse



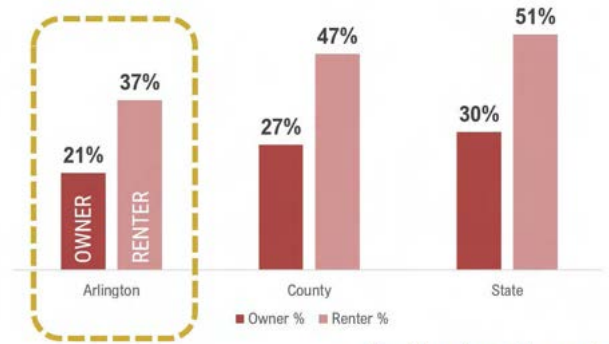
Arlington's housing stock increased by over 5% since 2000 , an average of about 50 new units each year.



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

SUMMARY OF TRENDS INFLUENCING ARLINGTON

- 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

5

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.



Multi-family and commercial uses in East Arlington

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, commercial, and open space 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 and/or open space, 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%
Total	3,570	100%

* 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%
Total Area	3,570	100%

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 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.



Businesses in Arlington Heights

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, storefronts, wayfinding, programming, art, history, and culture.

Key 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 in Arlington's business districts.

Key functions should also include:

- Create a centralized communications and marketing strategy for local businesses and events to increase awareness and engagement across the community.

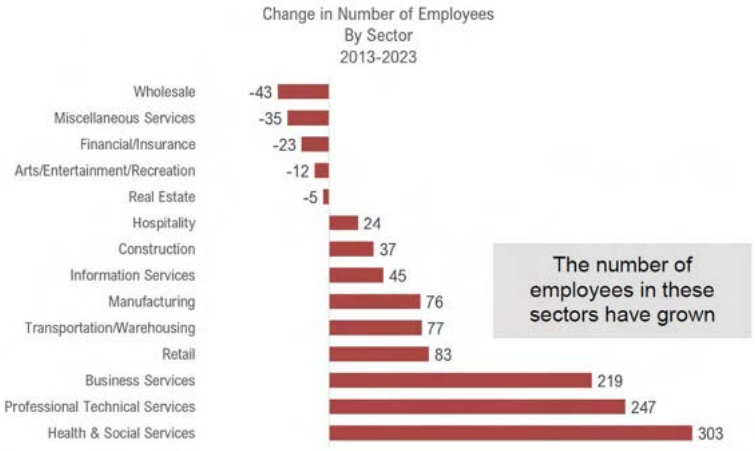
ED-7. Expand the A-TED Committee's focus on broad economic development initiatives to complement tourism-related efforts.

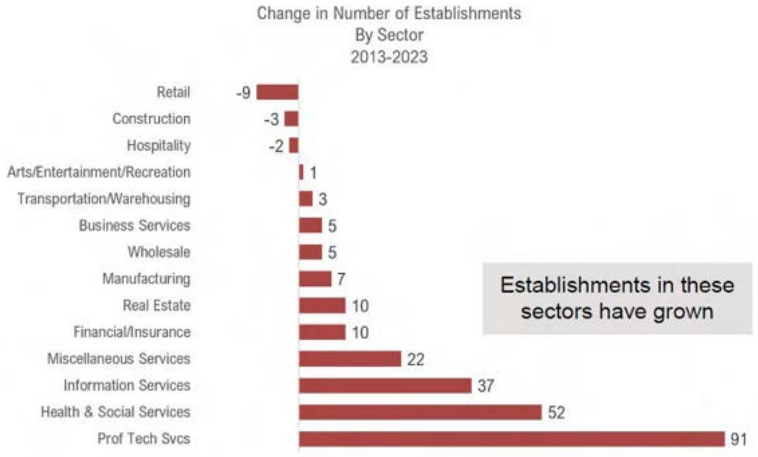
a. Promote and develop business and industry for the purpose of strengthening the local economy, providing jobs, and expanding the tax base.
b. Evaluate options to move from a "volunteer"-led model to a staff position for promotion, programming, and communications to maintain momentum and create consistency.

06 | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

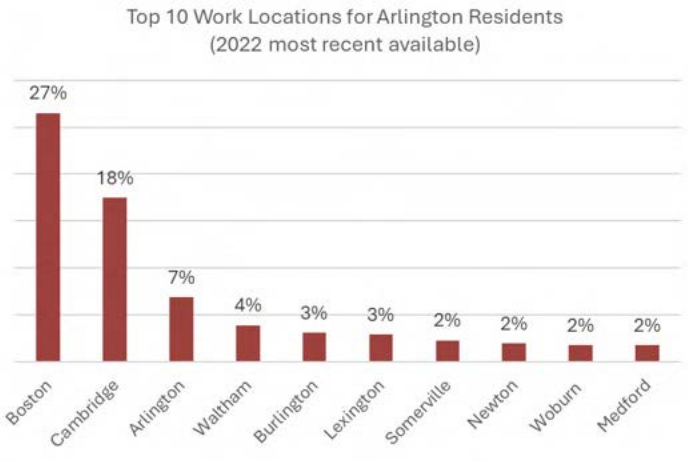
EXISTING CONDITIONS

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 develops and 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 Housing 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% of Area Median Income) 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 fee, 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.

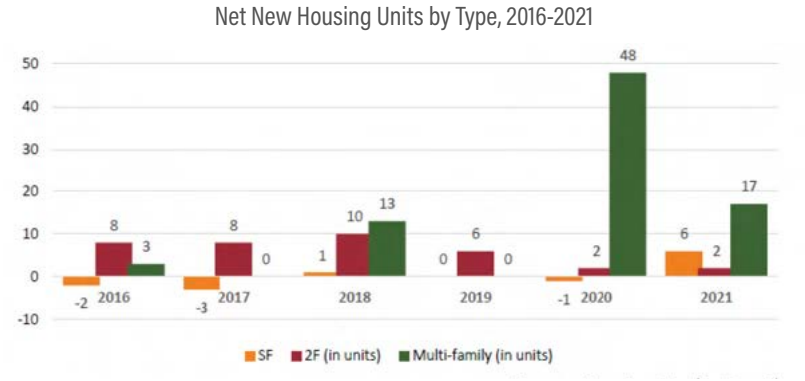
H-12. Explore opportunities to increase the development of accessory dwelling units (ADU) including options that reduce costs and permitting timelines for ADU projects.

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

07 | HOUSING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

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

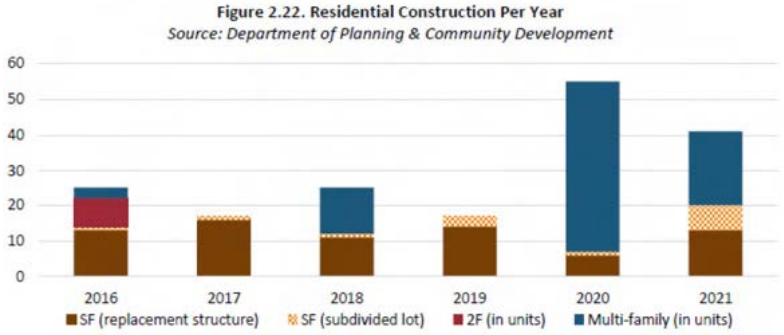


Source: 2022 Housing Production Plan

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

8

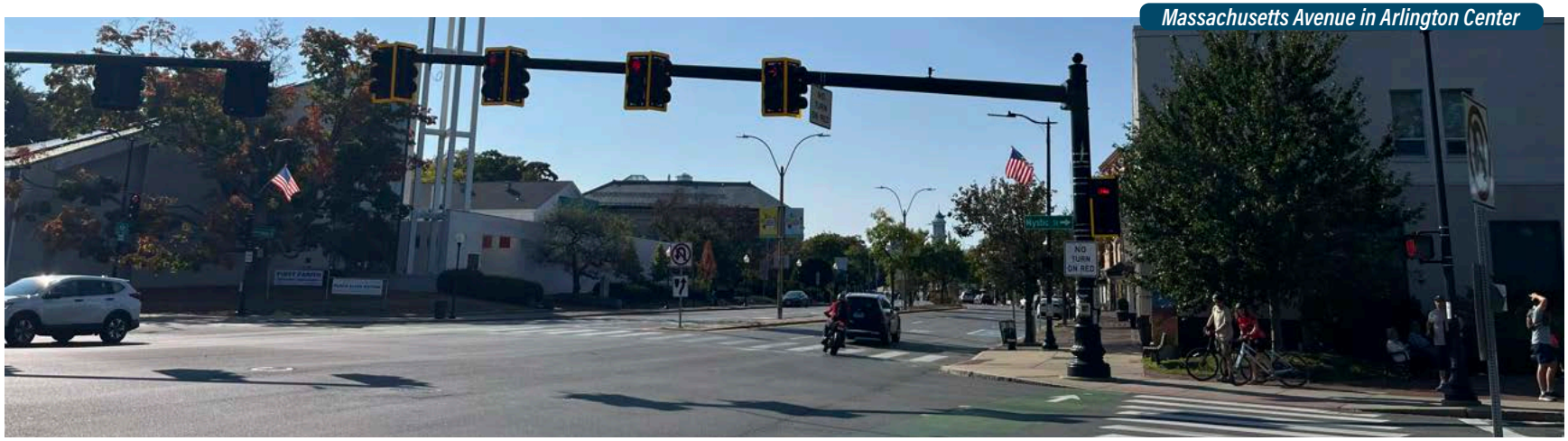
08 | CONNECTIVITY

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 facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. 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. These strategies will help make walking, biking, and using transit more convenient, attractive, and safer.

*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 efficiency, 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. Consider strategies like road diets, speed tables, raised crosswalks, mini-rotaries, and rapid flashing pedestrian beacons at crosswalks among the menu of options.
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 destinations.

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:

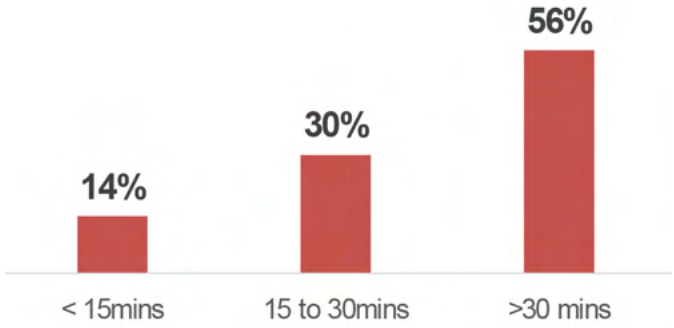
- More frequent and dependable service on high-ridership bus routes.
- Implement bus priority where congestion impacts buses, in the form of transit-signal priority, queue jumps, and bus lanes as necessary.
- Create connections from Arlington Center and Arlington Heights to Alewife, Harvard Square, and 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

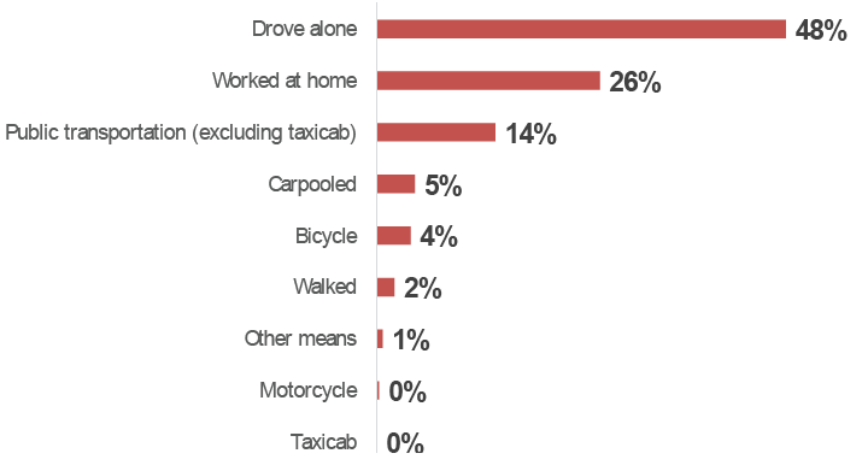
Over half of Arlington's working residents drive to work and commute over 30 minutes

Commute time to work for workers age 16+



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

Workers age 16+ years by means of transportation to work



50% of trips to Arlington originate outside of Arlington

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



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

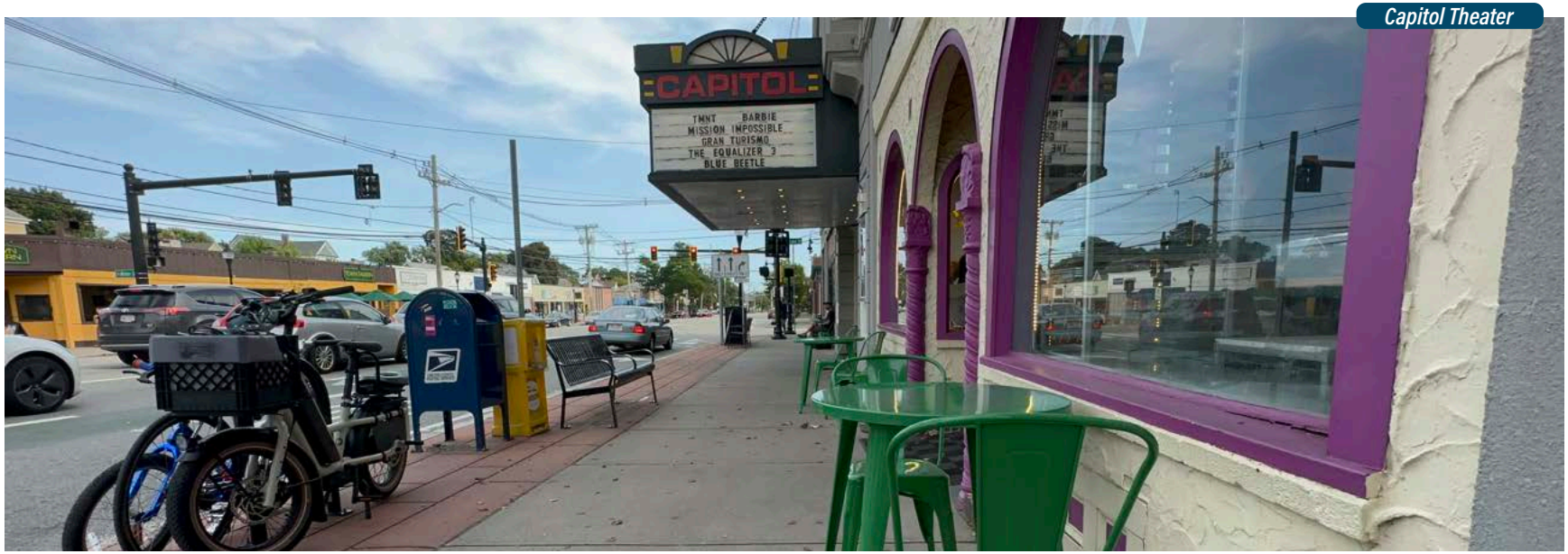
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09 | HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

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 Massachusett 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. Waves of immigration from the late 1800's to today have enriched the cultural fabric of Arlington with a diverse array of languages, food, and traditions. Arlington's historic buildings, sites, artifacts, and landscapes contribute to its distinct sense of place and provide a visible connection with its past. Institutions such as the Arlington Center for the Arts, Arlington Historical Society, the Old Schwamb Mill, Jason Russell House, Cyrus Dallin Art Museum, Armenian Cultural Foundation, and others are local stewards that protect, promote, and enhance historic and cultural resources for the benefit of all.

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 historic preservation best 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.
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.

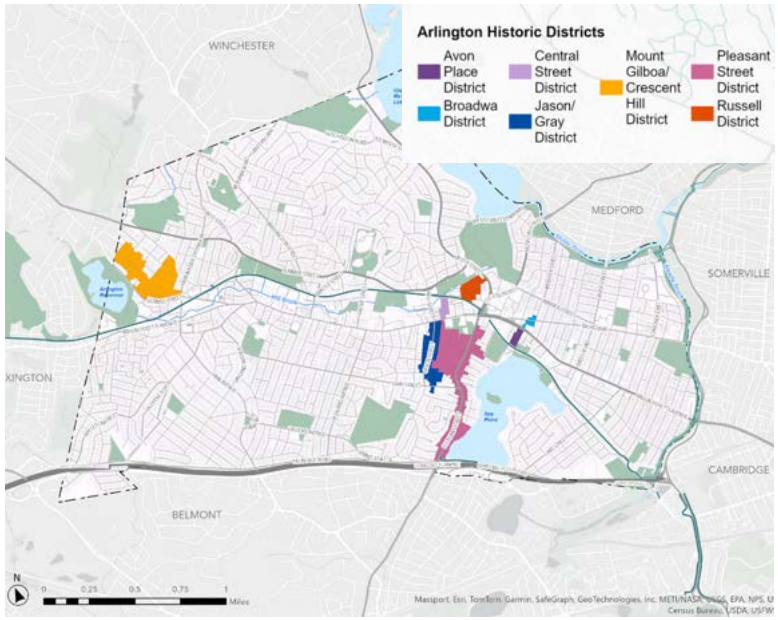
HC-12. Continue implementing ADA self-evaluation recommendations to remove barriers to accessing and enjoying historic resources and arts and cultural facilities.

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

09 | HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

EXISTING CONDITIONS

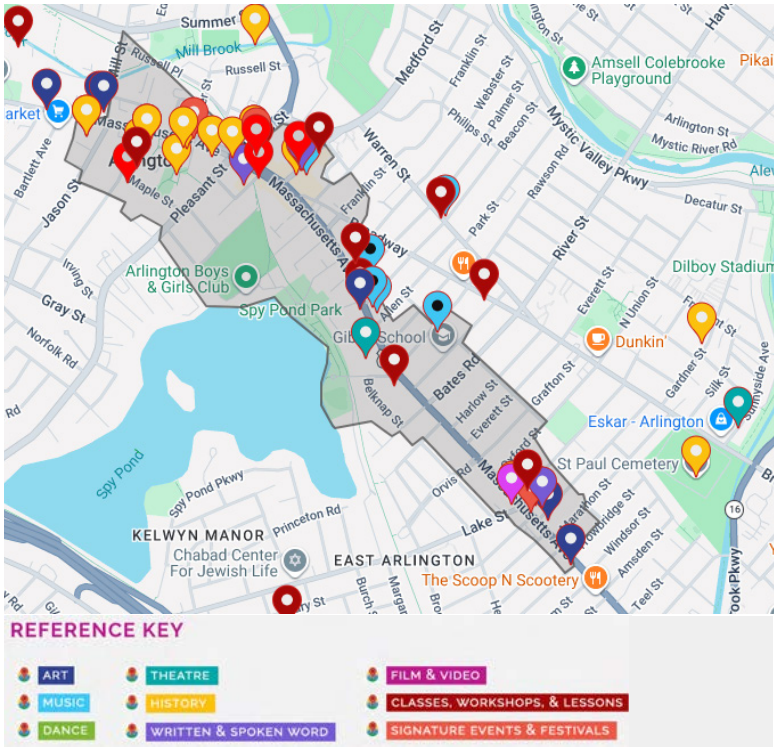
63 listed sites on the National Register of Historic Places, 7 historic districts, and over 300 other historic properties



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.

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



Source: artsarlington.org

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, maintain, 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.

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. Provide regular and proactive maintenance of existing natural resources and open spaces.

NR-9. 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-10. 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-11. 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-12. Explore both Town-sponsored and homeowner/neighborhood-based approaches to invasive species management.

NR-13. 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

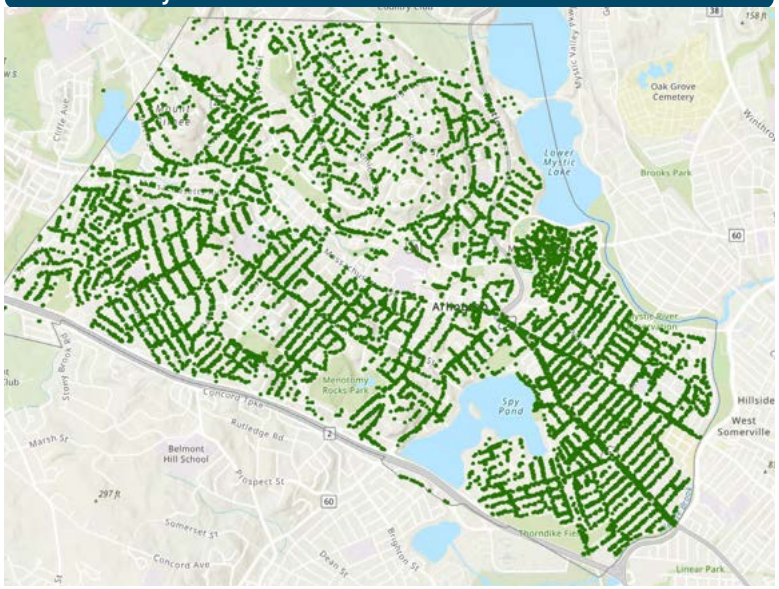
EXISTING CONDITIONS

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 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

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

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

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 base 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.

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

PF-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.

PF-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.

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

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

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

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

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

continued

11 | PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

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

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

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

PF-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.

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

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

PF-15. Reconstruct Ottoson Middle School.

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

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

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

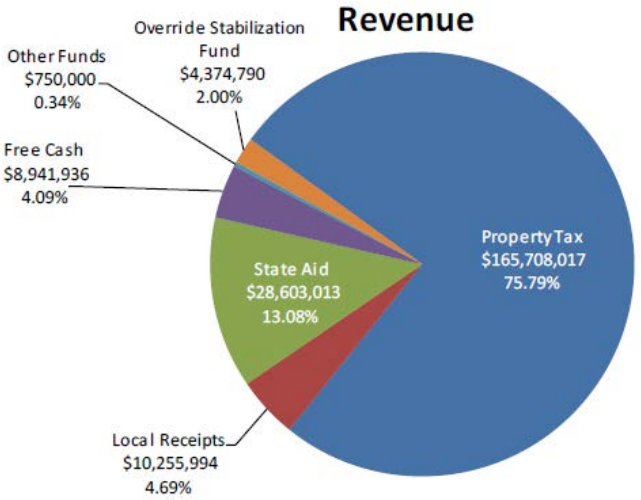
PF-18. Prepare a Facilities Master Plan for all Town-owned buildings.

PF-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

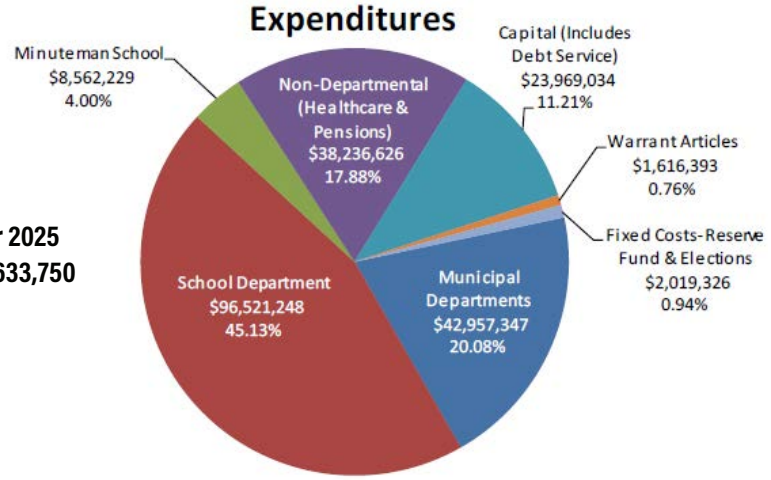
75% of Town's revenue comes from local property taxes



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

Fiscal Year 2025
Total : $218,633,750

Public Education generates the largest expense - nearly 50%



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

Police
3 Police Departments, 65 sworn officers

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

Water
130 miles of water main

Sewer
115 miles of sewer main

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.

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.

» **PF-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.

» **PF-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

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. As a part of the implementation process, designated leads and partners will identify and track a set of clear, consistent, and measurable metrics. 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

Note: **Some of the strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, including studies, plans, audits and increased staffing or investment, may require additional funding through the Town's operating and/or capital budget which should be considered relative to other needs and which will require approval by Town Meeting.**

ABBREVIATIONS

APD - Arlington Police Department
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 - Historical Commission
HDC - Historic Districts Commission
OSC - Open Space Committee
PRC - Park 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.

12 | IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | **LAND USE**

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
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 (3-6 stories). ▪ 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.	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Mid	N
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.	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
LU-3. Leverage Town-owned properties for redevelopment that adds housing, commercial, and open space 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.	DPCD	ARB, Town Manager, Department of Libraries, Facilities Department	Short/Mid	N
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.	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Ongoing	N
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.	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Short	N
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.	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Short	Y
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.	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
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 and/or open space, reduces the heat island effect, and otherwise strengthens community climate resilience.	DPCD	ARB, ZBA, CEFC	Mid	N
LU-9. Continue to consolidate zoning districts to make the Town's Zoning Bylaw more user-friendly while still addressing community needs and desires.	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Mid	Y
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.	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
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.	DPCD	Town Manager, A-TED, State and local legislators	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
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.	DPCD	Select Board, Town Manager, ARB,	Ongoing	N
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.	DPCD	A-TED, Town Manager	Mid	N
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. Key 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.).	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. Key functions should also include: • Create a centralized communications and marketing strategy for local businesses and events to increase awareness and engagement across the community.	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

*Not an exhaustive list of partners

12 | IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | **HOUSING**

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
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.	DPCD	ARB	Mid	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

*Not an exhaustive list of partners

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 Housing 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.	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% of Area Median Income) 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
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 fees – evaluate economics of new development linkage or impact fee, real estate transfer fee, etc.	DPCD	Town Manager, Finance Committee, CPA, AHT	Mid	N
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.	DPCD	ARB, ZBA	Mid	Y
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. a. Ensure economically and socially disadvantaged residents are connected with the resources to take advantage of the benefits (lower energy costs, etc.).	DPCD	CEFC	Short	N
H-11. Expand efforts to promote and share funding resources that help offset the cost of sustainable construction practices, including housing renovations.	DPCD	CEFC, Inspectional Services	Ongoing	N
H-12. Explore opportunities to increase the development of accessory dwelling units (ADU) including options that reduce costs and permitting timelines for ADU projects.	DPCD	Inspectional Services, ARB, ZBA	Short	N

*Not an exhaustive list of partners

12 | IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | **CONNECTIVITY**

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
Goal: » Increase safety for all roadway users by enhancing pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access. » Manage traffic operations to improve efficiency, 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. Consider strategies like road diets, speed tables, raised crosswalks, mini-rotaries, and rapid flashing pedestrian beacons at crosswalks among the menu of options. 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, APD, ABAC	Short	N
C-2. Formalize multimodal networks and close gaps to connect neighborhoods, activity centers, and regional destinations. 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, APD, ABAC	Mid	N

*Not an exhaustive list of partners

12 | IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | **CONNECTIVITY**

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
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.	DPW	Select Board, DPCD, TAC, ABAC, APD	Ongoing	N
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.	DPW	DPCD, Capital Planning Committee	Mid	N
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.	DPCD	DPW, ABAC, TAC	Long	N
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.	Town Manager	Select Board, DPCD, DPW, Police	Short	N

*Not an exhaustive list of partners

12 | IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX | **CONNECTIVITY**

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
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.	DPCD	Select Board, Town Manager, Police, DPW	Short	N
C-8. Update the Town's aging business district parking studies to better understand current usage, opportunities, and issues within a broad context.	DPCD	DPW	Mid	N
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
C-10. Collaborate with neighboring communities and state leads to advocate with the MBTA to improve local service, such as: • More frequent service on high-ridership 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.	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
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.	ACAC	DPCD	Mid	N
HC-2. Continue to seek funding to preserve, conserve, and enhance Town-owned historic resources and materials, including Town Hall and Robbins Library.	Historical Commission, DPCD	Facilities, Town Manager	Ongoing	N
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.	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 of its social and economic heritage.	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 historic preservation best 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
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. 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.	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
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, maintain, 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.	Town Manager	DPCD, DPW, Facilities, Recreation, CEFC, Con Comm	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	Recreation, PRC, 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
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.	DPCD	DPW Recreation, Con Comm	Short	N
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.	DPCD	DPW, ARB	Ongoing	N
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.	DPCD	DPW, Con Comm	Ongoing	N
NR-7. Install native and/or climate adaptive plantings on public properties. • Implement maintenance standards for public lands.	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
NR-8. Provide regular and proactive maintenance of existing natural resources and open spaces.	DPW	Recreation, Schools, Tree Committee, Con Comm	Ongoing	N
NR-9. 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.	DPW	Tree Committee, Con Comm, DPCD	Mid	N
NR-10. 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.	DPW	Tree Committee, DPCD	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. 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.	DPCD	OSC, CEFC	Long	N
NR-12. Explore both Town-sponsored and homeowner/neighborhood-based approaches to invasive species management.	DPCD	DPW, Recreation, OSC, PRC	Mid	N
NR-13. 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 | **PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
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.				
PF-1. Continue to facilitate and improve regular interdepartmental meetings to discuss projects and issues that involve multiple departments.	Town Manager	All Departments	Ongoing	N
PF-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, All Departments	Short	N
PF-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.	DPW	Recreation Department, Facilities	Ongoing	N
PF-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 | **PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
PF-5. Continue a regular building and facility inspection process to proactively identify future repairs and upgrades.	Facilities	Recreation, DPW	Short	N
PF-6. Develop project metrics such as improving service delivery and reducing emergency repairs.	Facilities	DPW	Mid	N
PF-7. Consider making the curbside composting program a Town-provided service for all residents.	DPW	Town Manager, Zero Waste Arlington Committee	Long	N
PF-8. Evaluate options to increase public works staffing to provide more regular and proactive maintenance.	Town Manager	DPW	Long	N
PF-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
PF-10. Complete the Master Field Study and consider priority recommendations for athletic field uses.	Recreation Department	DPCD, DPW, PRC	Short	N
PF-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 | PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

GOAL/STRATEGY	LEAD	PARTNER(S)*	TIMEFRAME	TOWN MEETING ACTION REQUIRED
PF-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	CEFC	Short	N
PF-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
PF-14. Continue implementation of APS Five-Year Strategic Plan (2023-2028) and update when needed.	School Department	Town Manager	Ongoing	N
PF-15. Reconstruct Ottoson Middle School.	School Department	Town Manager	Long	N
PF-16. Invest in the redevelopment of the Edith Fox Library in East Arlington.	Library	Facilities, Town Manager	Mid	N
PF-17. Maximize occupancy and utility of underused Town-owned spaces. a. Reevaluate Town and School rental programs and policies. b. Modernize the Town Hall auditorium's acoustics and A/V.	Town Manager	DPCD, Facilities, School Department	Ongoing	N
PF-18. Prepare a Facilities Master Plan for all Town-owned buildings.	Facilities	Town Manager	Mid	N
PF-19. Develop a Zero Waste Master Plan to help Arlington meet statewide goals to reduce waste by 90% by 2050.	DPW	DPCD	Mid	N

*Not an exhaustive list of partners

ARLINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TOWN OF ARLINGTON

2026 Update

TOWN OF ARLINGTON
AmpUp!
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



APPENDIX

A



ARLINGTON TODAY

Existing Conditions

Arlington Today: Existing Conditions

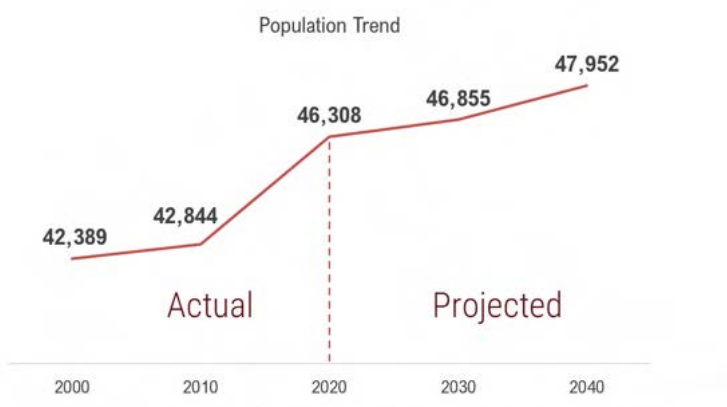
Arlington Today: Existing Conditions 1
Demographics 2
Land Use 9
Housing 19
Sustainable Economic Development 28
Historic & Cultural Resources 33
Open Space, Recreation, & Natural Resources 40
Public Services & Facilities 48
Mobility & Access 55

Demographics

Population

Arlington's population peaked around 53,500 in the 1970 Census. After about three decades of decreasing population between 1970 and 2000, the population stabilized in the early 2000's and began growing again. Arlington's population increased by 8% (3,464 people) between the 2010 and 2020 Census to reach 46,308.

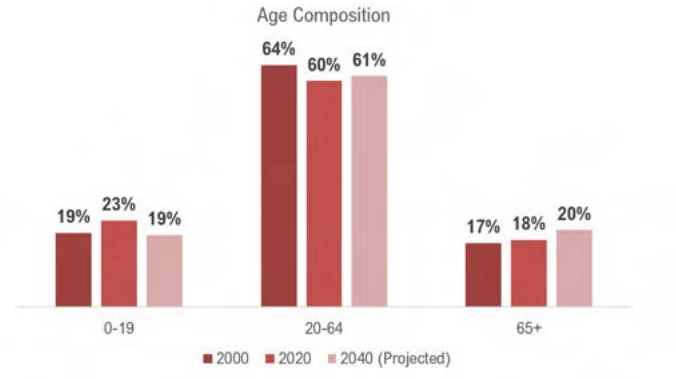
Population projections by the UMass Donahue Institute expect Arlington's population to continue growing over the next twenty years, though at a slower rate than the last decade. These projections are estimates based on several demographic factors such as birth and death rates and net migration patterns. They do not predict the future but are a useful consideration for future planning.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial Census data, UMass Donahue Institute V2024 Population Projections

Age Composition

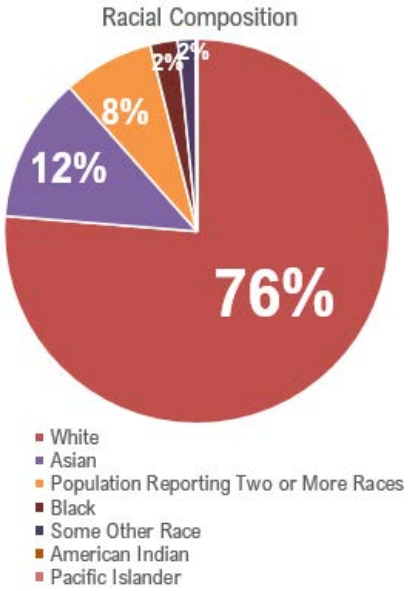
The median age of Arlington residents is 42 years, up slightly from 41.8 years in 2010 and slightly older than Massachusetts' median age of 39.6 years. Since 2000, the proportion of younger and older residents has increased slightly while the proportion of residents ages 20-64 decreased from 64% to 60%. Children under 20 now make up 23% of the population compared to 19% in 2000. This age group is projected to decline in the coming years. People aged 65 and older account for 18% of the population, a slight increase since 2000. This demographic is expected to continue growing over the next two decades. The population of working-age adults (20-64) is expected to stabilize or slightly increase.

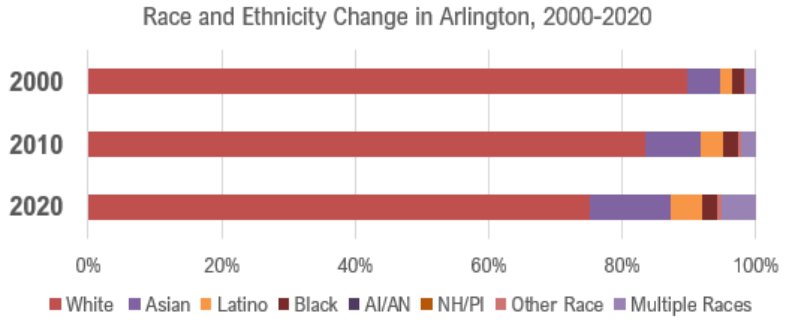


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial Census data, UMass Donahue Institute V2024 Population Projections

Race and Ethnicity

About three-quarters of Arlington's residents identify as white but the community's diversity has been increasing over the past twenty years. Today nearly a quarter of Arlington's population is made up of racial and ethnic minorities. Asians make up the second largest racial group (12%), followed by those who identify as two or more races. About 5% of the population is Hispanic or Latino of any race, up from 3.3% in 2010.

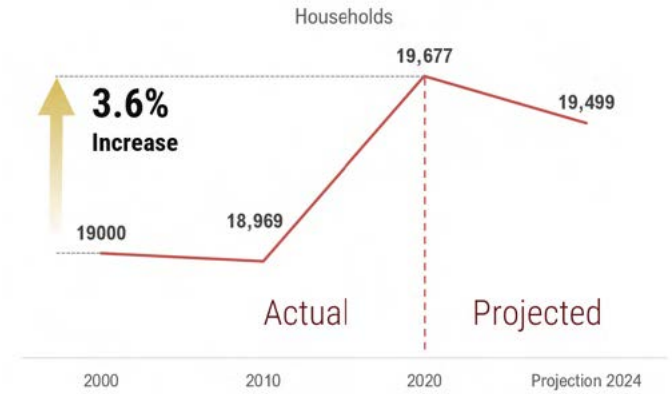


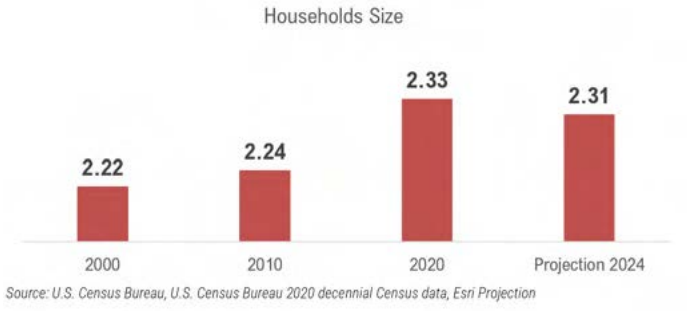


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial Census data

Households

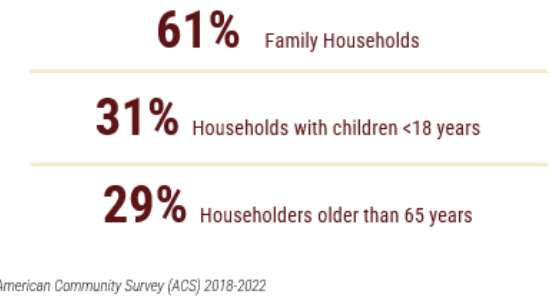
The total number of households in Arlington has grown by 3.6% since 2000 (677 households). The average household size is 2.33 people per household, an increase of 5% over the same period. The Town's average household size remains smaller than Massachusetts (2.45).



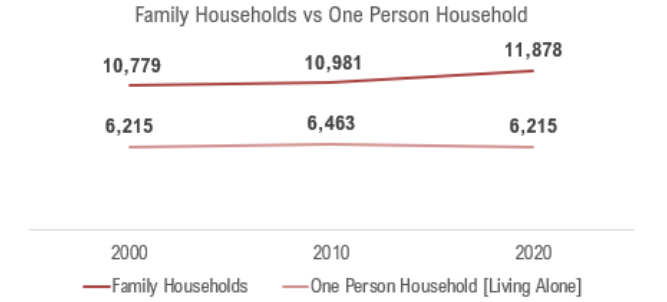


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial Census data, Esri Projection

About 61% of households today are family households*, an increase from 57% in 2000. Just over 30% of households have one or more members under 18 years old. Slightly less than 30% of households include someone age 65 years or older. Roughly one-third of households are one-person households, and the number of these households has remained relatively stable over the last twenty years.

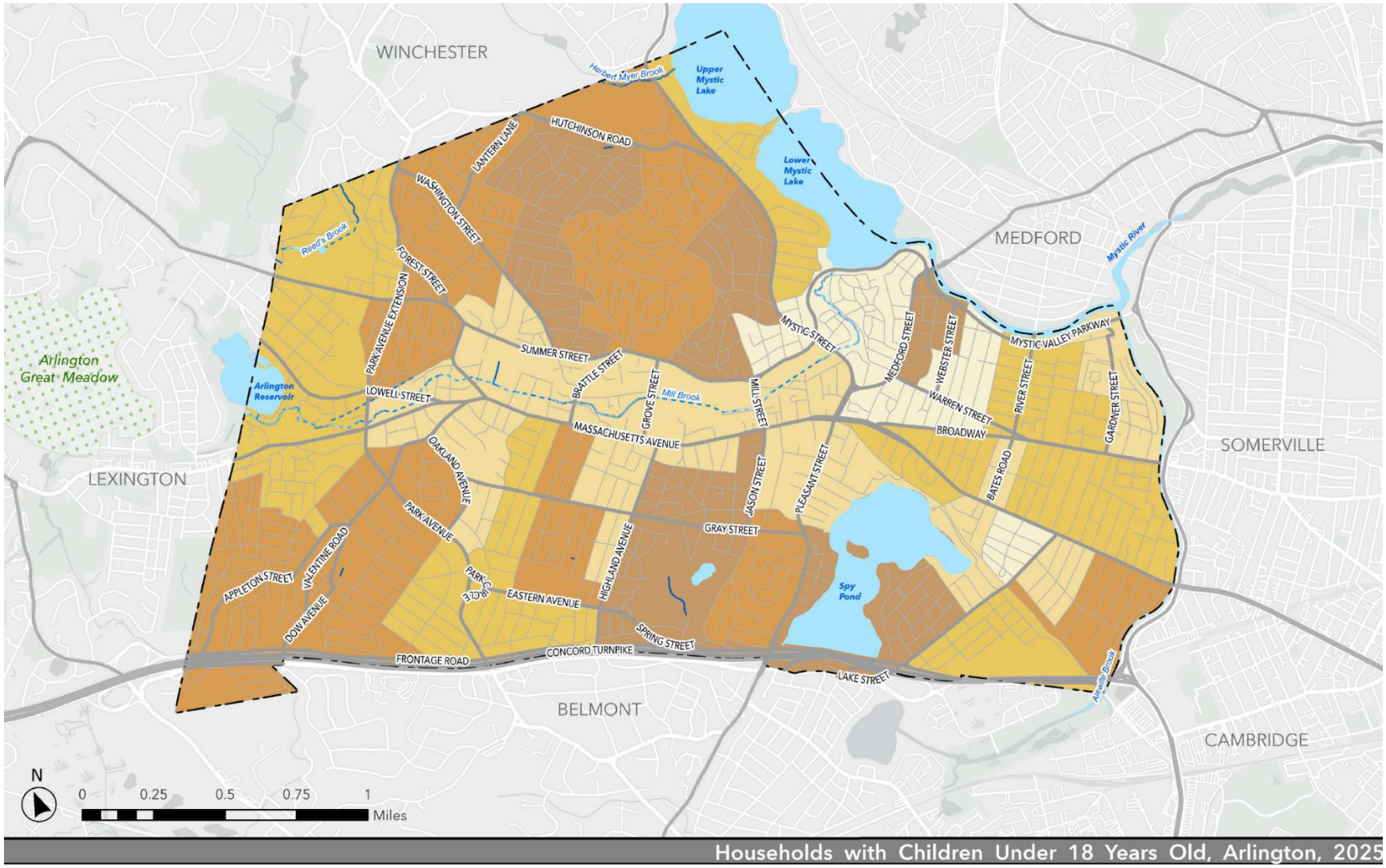


: American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2022



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

**The U.S. Census defines a family household as one or more people living in the same household who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.*



Households with Children Under 18 Years Old, Arlington, 2025

Percent of Households with Children under 18 Years Old
- 0.0% - 13.2%
- 13.3% - 20.8%
- 20.9% - 30.9%
- 31.0% - 43.7%
- 43.8% - 67.7%

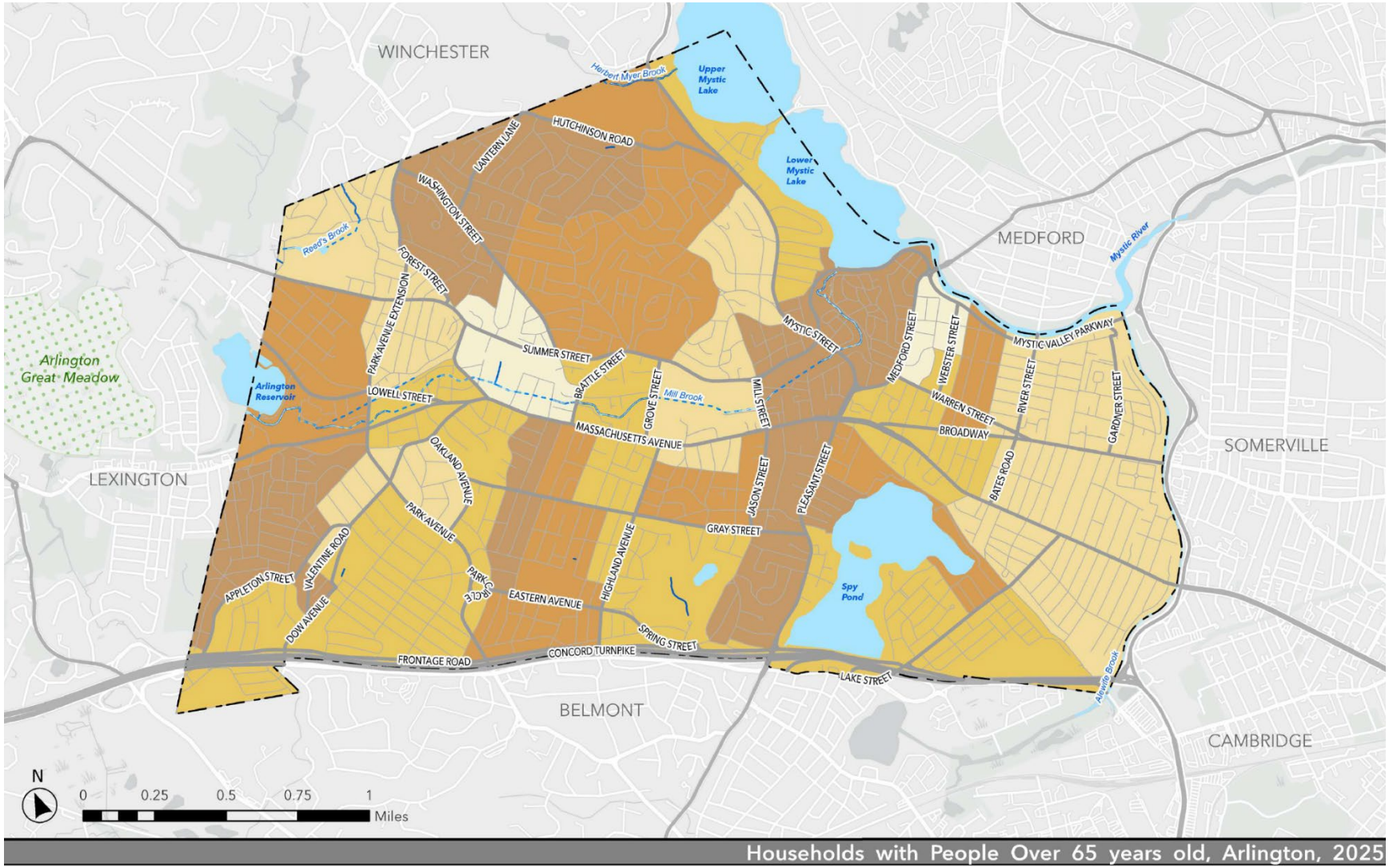
- Surface Water
- Brook/Stream
- Brook/Stream (Underground)

- Town Boundaries
- Major Road
- Local Road

ARLINGTON MASSACHUSETTS

Date: 03.28.2025
Existing Conditions Report
Arlington, MA

Map displays U.S. census data by census block group.



Households with People Over 65 years old, Arlington, 2025

Percent of Households with People over 65 Years Old
- 0.0% - 6.9%
- 7.0% - 21.5%
- 21.6% - 33.1%
- 33.2% - 41.6%
- 41.7% - 67.4%

- Surface Water
- Brook/Stream
- Brook/Stream (Underground)
- Town Boundaries
- Major Road
- Local Road

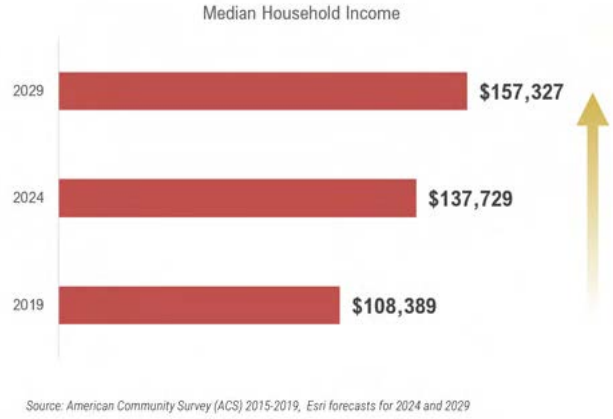
ARLINGTON MASSACHUSETTS

Date: 03.28.2025
Existing Conditions Report
Arlington, MA

Map displays U.S. census data by census block group.

Median Income

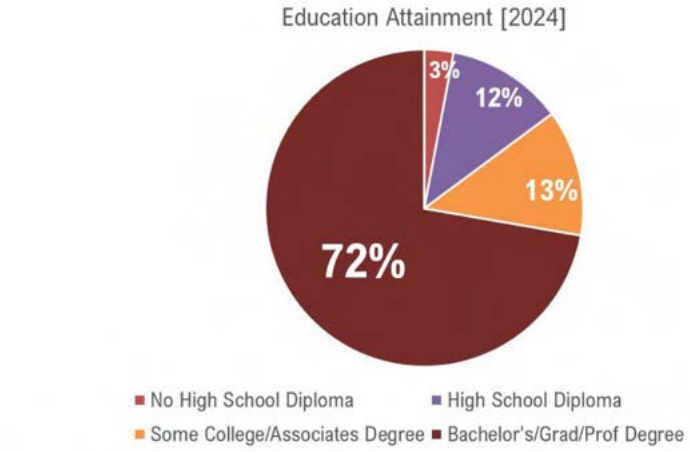
Arlington's median household income has been steadily increasing. Currently at $137,729, it has increased by nearly 47% since 2015 and by 17% in the last five years. However, 5.4% of households are below the federal poverty level, about half the Commonwealth's rate of 10.4%. Projections expect median household income to increase by 14% over the next five years.



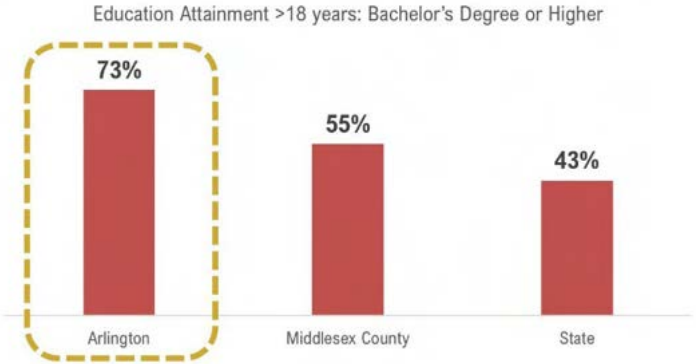
Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2015-2019, Esri forecasts for 2024 and 2029

Education

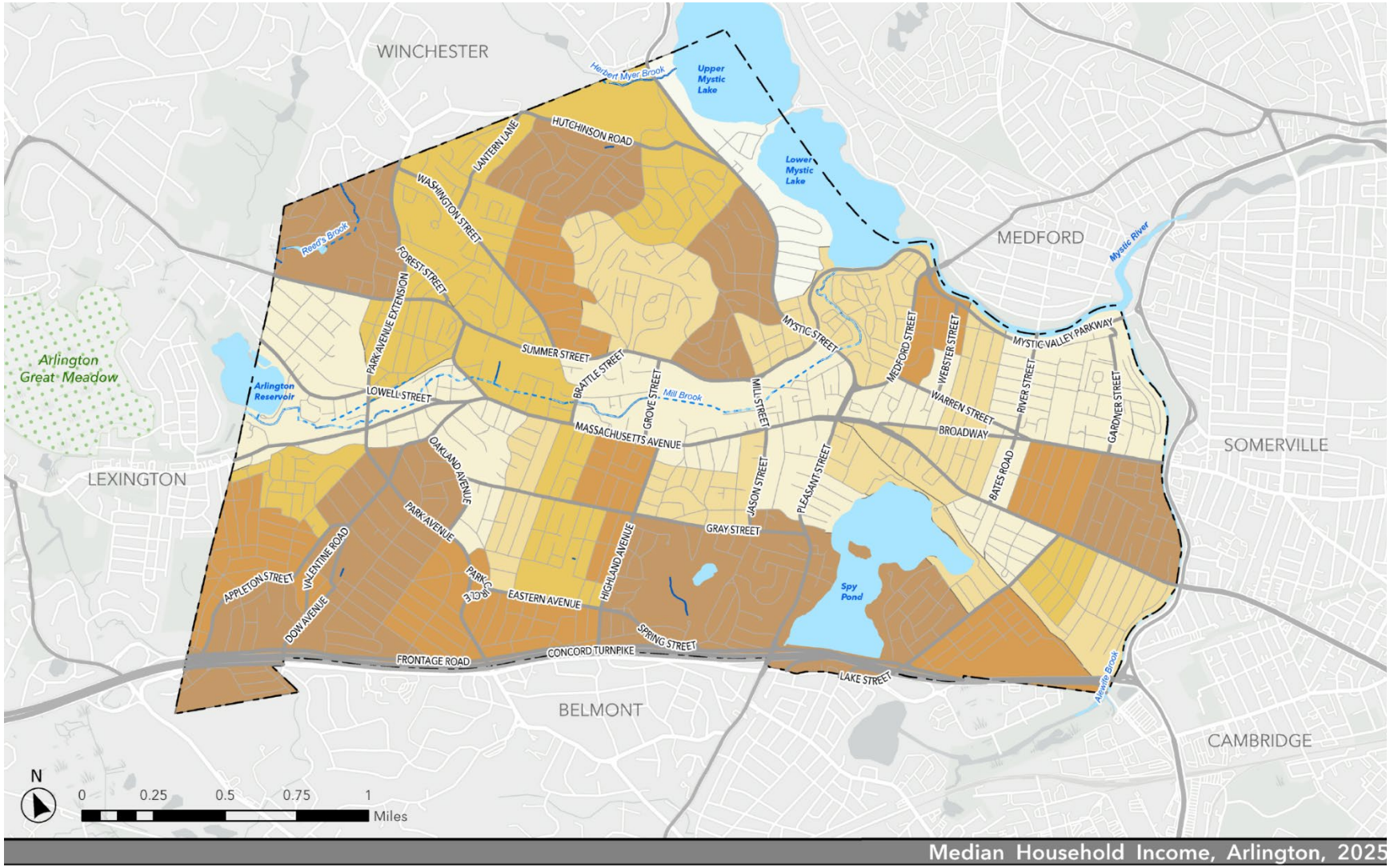
Arlington is a highly educated community with 73% of residents aged 18 or older holding a bachelor's degree or higher, significantly more than that of Middlesex County (55%) and Commonwealth (43%). Additionally, over 40% of Arlington residents hold an advanced degree (graduate or professional), surpassing the County's 28.8% and the Commonwealth's 19.6% advanced degree attainment rates.



Source: Esri 2024



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5 Yr 2023



Median Household Income, Arlington, 2025

Median Household Income
- Not Recorded
- $0 - $120,710
- $120,711 - $151,571
- $151,572 - $171,613
- $171,614 - $202,474
- $202,475 - $250,000

- Surface Water
- Brook/Stream
- Brook/Stream (Underground)

- Town Boundaries
- Major Road
- Local Road

ARLINGTON MASSACHUSETTS

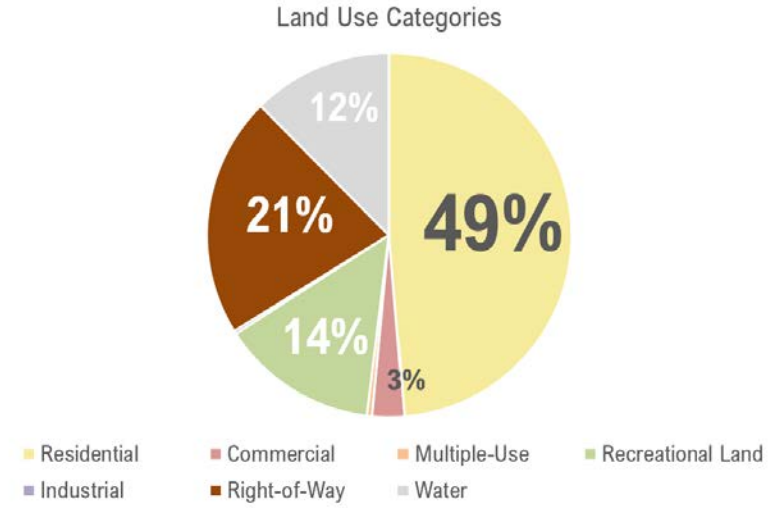
Date: 03.24.2025
Existing Conditions Report
Arlington, MA

Land Use

Existing Land Use

The Town of Arlington covers approximately 5.5 square miles, nearly 95% of which is land and about 12% is surface water. As a predominantly residential suburb of Boston, residential land makes up the largest use category, representing about half. Rights-of-way (streets, etc.) occupy about 20% of Arlington's area. Commercial uses make up significantly less at 3%, and mixed-use and industrial uses are less than 1% combined. Almost 15% of the Town's area is dedicated to open spaces and recreation uses.

Commercial, multiple use, and industrial uses are concentrated along Massachusetts Avenue, Mystic Street, Medford Street, and Broadway and between Massachusetts Avenue and the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway.



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%
Total	3,570	100%

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

Source: GIS Data Set from Town

Map displays U.S. census data by census block group.

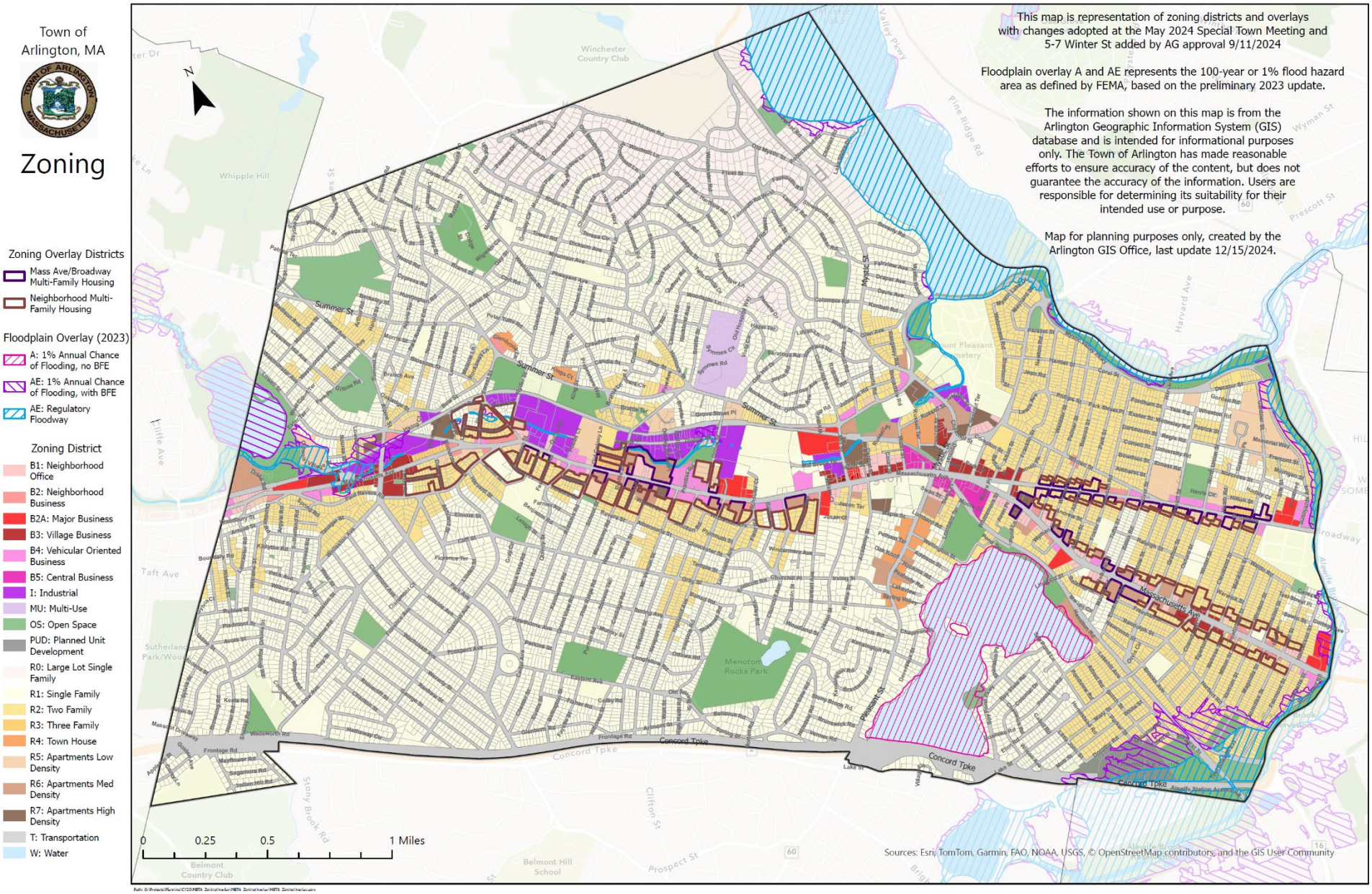
Existing Zoning

In 2018 Arlington recodified its zoning bylaw to improve clarity, consistency, and useability. The bylaw includes nineteen zoning districts and three overlay districts.

Most of Arlington falls within one of the eight residential zoning districts. Only 4% of Arlington is zoned for commercial and 2% for industrial. The multiple-use district makes up just 0.5% of town and about 8% of the town falls within the Open Space District. Much like its distribution of land use, Arlington's non-residential zoning districts are primarily clustered along the Massachusetts Avenue corridor, Mystic Street, Medford Street, and Broadway and between Massachusetts Avenue and the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway. Residential zoning districts surround this main corridor with higher density residential zones located adjacent to these commercial and mixed-use corridors and more broadly throughout East Arlington.

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%
Total Area	3,570	100%

Source: Town of Arlington GIS


Town of Arlington, MA
Zoning
This map is representation of zoning districts and overlays with changes adopted at the May 2024 Special Town Meeting and 5-7 Winter St added by AG approval 9/11/2024
Floodplain overlay A and AE represents the 100-year or 1% flood hazard area as defined by FEMA, based on the preliminary 2023 update.
The information shown on this map is from the Arlington Geographic Information System (GIS) database and is intended for informational purposes only. The Town of Arlington has made reasonable efforts to ensure accuracy of the content, but does not guarantee the accuracy of the information. Users are responsible for determining its suitability for their intended use or purpose.
Map for planning purposes only, created by the Arlington GIS Office, last update 12/15/2024.
Zoning Overlay Districts
Mass Ave/Broadway Multi-Family Housing
Neighborhood Multi-Family Housing
Floodplain Overlay (2023)
A: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, no BFE
AE: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, with BFE
AE: Regulatory Floodway
Zoning District
B1: Neighborhood Office
B2: Neighborhood Business
B2A: Major Business
B3: Village Business
B4: Vehicular Oriented Business
B5: Central Business
I: Industrial
MU: Multi-Use
OS: Open Space
PUD: Planned Unit Development
R0: Large Lot Single Family
R1: Single Family
R2: Two Family
R3: Three Family
R4: Town House
R5: Apartments Low Density
R6: Apartments Med Density
R7: Apartments High Density
T: Transportation
W: Water
N
0
0.25
0.5
1 Miles
Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Residential Districts

The R0, R1, and R2 districts are single- and two-family residential districts. Together, these districts comprise a substantial majority of the residentially zoned land in Arlington. The R3 and R4 districts are established residential areas in or adjacent to the commercial centers along Broadway and Massachusetts Avenue. The R5, R6, and R7 districts are apartment districts in which a variety of uses and different densities of development are allowed. Most of these districts are along Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant Street, primarily within or adjacent to Arlington Center.

- Large Lot Single-Family (R-0): The Large Lot Single-Family District has the lowest residential density of all districts and is generally served by local streets only.
- Single-Family (R-1): The predominant uses in R1 are single-family dwellings and public land and buildings.
- Two-Family (R-2): The predominant use in R2 is a two-family dwelling or duplex. This district is generally served by local streets only and its neighborhoods are largely walkable and well established. It includes areas that are generally within walking distance of the stores and transportation facilities along Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway.
- Three-Family (R-3): The predominant use in the R3 district is a three-family dwelling. These neighborhoods typically have a small-scale multifamily residential character.
- Townhouse (R-4): The predominant uses in the R4 district are one- and two-family dwellings in large, older houses. Conversions of these old homes to apartments or offices are allowed to encourage their preservation. Townhouse construction is permitted at the same density as the apartment conversions, and at a scale in keeping with the older houses.
- Apartment/Low Density (R-5): The predominant use is two- to three-story apartment buildings located along or near principal arteries. The Town allows small-scale offices on principal arteries only.
- Apartment/Medium Density (R-6): The predominant land uses consist of a mix of apartment buildings up to four stories tall and offices at a smaller scale.
- Apartment/High Density (R-7): This district accommodates apartment buildings up to five stories high and offices of a similar scale.

Business Districts

- Neighborhood Office District (B1): The predominant uses include three-family dwellings, houses with offices on the ground floor, or office structures which are in keeping with the scale of adjacent houses. Primarily located on or adjacent to Massachusetts Avenue, this district is intended to encourage preservation of small-scale structures to provide contrast and set off the higher-density, more active areas along the Avenue. Mixed-use buildings without retail space are allowed in this district. *Note: This zoning designation was voted for removal at the Spring 2025 Town Meeting. The decision is pending approval by the Massachusetts Attorney General as of Fall 2025*.
- Neighborhood Business District (B2): The Neighborhood Business District is intended for small retail and service establishments serving the needs of adjacent neighborhoods

and oriented to pedestrian traffic, and mixed-use buildings. Locations are almost all along Massachusetts Avenue or Broadway.

- Major Business District (B2A): The Major Business District is located along Massachusetts Avenue, Mill Street, Summer Street, and Broadway. These areas generally contain retail and service uses that serve the needs of a large neighborhood area. Customers generally arrive by car, so the Town wants to ensure that ample parking is available to serve the retailer. Mixed-use buildings are allowed in this district, as is medium density housing due to the district's proximity to residential uses.
- Village Business District (B3): The Village Business District's predominant uses include retail, service and office establishments catering to both convenience and comparison-goods shoppers and oriented to pedestrian traffic. Mixed-use structures are allowed in this district. The three locations include portions of the principal business areas of Arlington: Lake Street, Arlington Center, and Arlington Heights.
- Vehicular Oriented Business District (B4): The Vehicular Oriented Business District provides for establishments that are primarily oriented to automotive traffic, which means they require large amounts of land in proportion to building coverage. This district also consists of establishments devoted to the sale or servicing of motor vehicles, the sale of vehicular parts and accessories, and service stations. Arlington has an abundance of automotive and automotive accessory sales and service establishments. As these businesses gradually close, the Town has encouraged conversion of the property to other retail, service, office, or residential use, particularly as part of mixed-use development.
- Central Business District (B5): The Central Business District is a small district in Arlington Center. It includes retail, service, and office uses, and it provides for large scale development. The scale is intended to reinforce the Center's role as the focus of activity in Arlington. Mixed-use development is encouraged, such as the combining of residential and business uses in one building. Activities shall be oriented to pedestrian traffic and to centralized parking.

Other Districts

- Multi-Use (MU): The Multi-Use District allows larger-scale development only when controlled by the Arlington Redevelopment Board through urban renewal plans and Environmental Design Review. Designation as a Multi-Use District requires a minimum of one acre of land.
- Industrial (I): The Industrial District in the Mill Brook Valley allows uses requiring the manufacture, assembly, processing, or handling of materials which because of their traffic, noise, appearance, odor, or hazards would be disruptive to residential and other business uses.
- Transportation (T): In the Transportation District, the principal uses are bus terminals, open space uses, and the Minuteman Bikeway.
- Planned Unit Development (PUD): The Planned Unit Development District provides for large scale, multi-use development upon approval of a development plan and the assembly of a large amount of land.

- Open Space (OS): The Open Space District includes parcels under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, Arlington Redevelopment Board, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), or Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). Structures, where present, are clearly accessory to the principal open space and recreation functions of the property.

Overlay Districts

- Floodplain District: This district is intended to preserve the natural flood control characteristics and the water storage capacity of existing floodplains and to protect the public from hazard and loss through the regulation of future development of lands adjoining such watercourses. Additionally, it protects the health and safety of the occupants of lands subject to seasonal or periodic flooding in the Mill Brook, Alewife Brook, Mystic River, and Mystic Lakes floodplain.

- Inland Wetland District: This district is intended to preserve and protect the streams, water bodies, and other watercourses, including wetlands. The district protects the health and safety of persons and property against the hazards of flooding and contamination while also preserving and maintaining the groundwater table for potential water supply purposes. It also protects the community against the detrimental use and development of lands adjoining such watercourses and conserves the watershed areas in Arlington for the health, safety, and welfare of the public. *Note: This zoning designation was voted for removal at the Spring 2025 Town Meeting. The decision is pending approval by the Massachusetts Attorney General as of Fall 2025*.

- Multi-family Housing Overlay: Two districts consisting of the Massachusetts Avenue/Broadway Multi-Family (MBMF) Overlay District and the Neighborhood Multi-Family (NMF) Overlay District. The purpose of these districts is to respond to the local and regional need for housing by enabling development of a variety of housing types including those with affordable housing requirements in compliance with MGL 40c Section 3A. The districts also promote multi-family and higher density housing near services and public transportation to ensure pedestrian-friendly development and to reduce dependency on automobiles. They also encourage economic investment in the redevelopment of properties and residential uses to provide a customer base for local businesses.

All residential zoning districts as well as the PUD district permit single-family dwellings by right. The R0 and R1 districts only allow single-family dwellings and group homes by-right. Two-family dwellings are allowed by right in the R2 through R7 zoning districts. Other residential uses including three-family dwellings, townhouses, and apartment buildings require a special permit in residential districts. Three-family dwellings and townhomes are permitted by special permit in the R3 through R7 districts. Apartment buildings are permitted by special permit in the R5 through R7 districts.

Accessory dwelling units are permitted accessory uses in all residential and business districts.

Three-family dwellings are also allowed by special permit in all business districts (B1 to B5). Townhouses are allowed by special permit in all but the B4 district, and apartment buildings in all but the B1 district. Townhouses and apartment buildings are also allowed by special permit in the Multi-Use (MU) and Planned Unit Development (PUD) districts.

Permitted residential uses in Arlington zoning districts

Residential:

Class of Use	R0	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Residential								
Single-family detached dwelling	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Six or more single family dwellings on one or more contiguous lots	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
Two-family dwelling, duplex			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Six or more units in two-family dwellings or duplex dwelling on one or more contiguous lots			SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
Three-family dwelling				SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
Townhouse				SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
Apartment building						SP	SP	SP
Conversion to apartments, up to 18 units per acre, with no alteration to the exterior of the building					SP	SP		
Single-room occupancy building				SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
Group home	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Conversion of one- or two-family dwelling to bed and breakfast	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
Assisted living residence							SP	
Dormitory *(Note: See Section 3.5 if use is for educational or religious purposes)*			SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP

Business:

Class of Use	B1	B2	B2A	B3	B4	B5
Residential						
Single-family detached dwelling						
Two-family dwelling, duplex dwelling						
Six or more single-family dwellings or six or more units in two-family dwellings or duplex dwellings on one or more contiguous lots	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
Three-family dwelling	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
Townhouse	SP	SP	SP	SP		SP
Apartment building		SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
Conversion to apartments, up to 18 units per acre, with no alteration to the exterior of the building	SP					
Single-room occupancy building	SP					SP
Group home	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hotel/Motel			SP	SP	SP	SP
Conversion of one or two-family dwelling to bed and breakfast	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
Assisted living residence				SP		
Dormitory *(Note: See Section 3.5 if use is for educational or religious purposes.)*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Other Districts:

Class of Use	MU	PUD	I	T	OS
Residential					
Single-family detached dwelling [A]		Y			
Two-family dwelling, duplex dwelling [A]		Y			
Three-family dwelling		SP			
Townhouse	SP	SP			
Apartment building	SP	SP			
Conversion to apartments, up to 18 units per acre, with no alteration to the exterior of the building					
Single-room occupancy building		SP			
Group home	Y	Y			
Hotel/Motel		SP			
Artists' Mixed Use			SP		
Assisted living residence	SP				
Dormitory *(Note: See Section 3.5 if use is for educational or religious purposes)*	SP	SP			

Housing

Existing Housing Stock

Arlington's neighborhoods developed gradually over the course of more than one hundred years and reflect changes in development styles and socio-economic dynamics. While a variety of housing types exist, in general, most housing units are in single family or two-family structures.

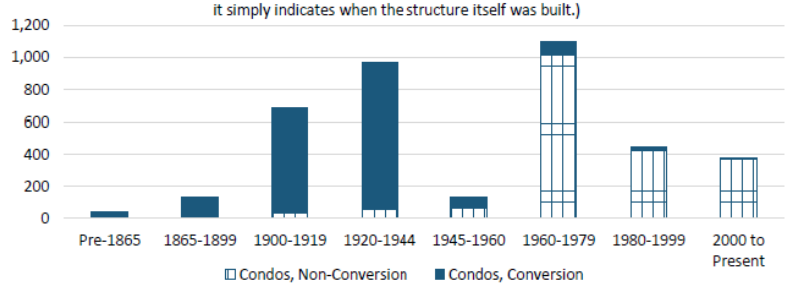
Age & Type

There are approximately 20,400 housing units in Arlington that range in style from detached single-family homes to larger apartment buildings. Single-family homes make up 44% of the local housing stock and two-family homes make up 25%. The remaining units are in small (3+ units) to larger multi-family buildings (30+ units).

The majority of Arlington's housing units were built before 1980 with just under half constructed prior to 1940. Most newer single-family homes replaced older dwellings and tend to be larger and more expensive than their predecessors. Arlington's two-and-three family homes, smaller-scale multifamily (3+ units), and multi-use buildings tend to be older and largely constructed during the early twentieth century. Larger-scale multifamily buildings were built over the last sixty years.

A substantial number of condominiums (condos) also make up Arlington's housing stock. About 28% of existing condos were built as new construction between 1960 and 1979 and nearly half are conversions made to older buildings. The rate of condo conversion has decreased by over 70% since 2016.

Figure 2.14. Condominiums, Year Structure Built
Source: Arlington Assessor's Records, 2021
(Note: For condo conversions, this does not indicate when the conversion took place; it simply indicates when the structure itself was built.)



Source: 2022 Housing Production Plan

Tenure & Vacancy

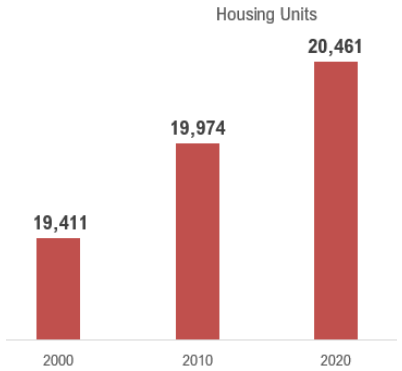
While just under 60% of units are owner-occupied and just over 40% are rental units, housing tenure varies across Arlington's neighborhoods. For example, Turkey Hill has a 73.6% ownership rate and very small proportion of the town's rental housing inventory (7%). East Arlington, on the other hand, has a 42.1% ownership rate and contains 34.3% of the town's rental inventory. As Arlington's 2022 Housing Production Plan (HPP) notes, these differences in tenure are closely linked to differences in household incomes and race, indicating potential barriers to housing equity within the town. About 4-5% of Arlington's housing units are estimated to be vacant.

Length of Residency

Approximately 88% of Arlington residents live in the same residence as one year ago. Of the 12% who lived in a different residence, 7.7% moved from a different Massachusetts city or town, 2.8% moved from a different state, and 1.5% immigrated from abroad.

Development Trends

Arlington's housing stock has grown slightly over the past two decades, averaging about fifty new units per year (5% growth 2000-2020). Most net new units can be attributed to multi-family developments, the demolition and rebuilding of single-family units on subdivided lots, and the conversion of two-family and other smaller multi-family units into condos.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial Census data

The conversion of two- to three-family or larger buildings into condominiums has also added units to Arlington's housing stock. According to the 2022 HPP, 294 structures were converted to condos between 2016 and 2022, creating 633 new condo units. While this is less than the condo conversion rate reported in the 2016 HPP it is still impactful and contributes to ongoing public perception of the prevalence of tear-down-and-rebuilt projects.

Figure 2.23. Net New Housing Units by Type, 2016-2021
Source: Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development

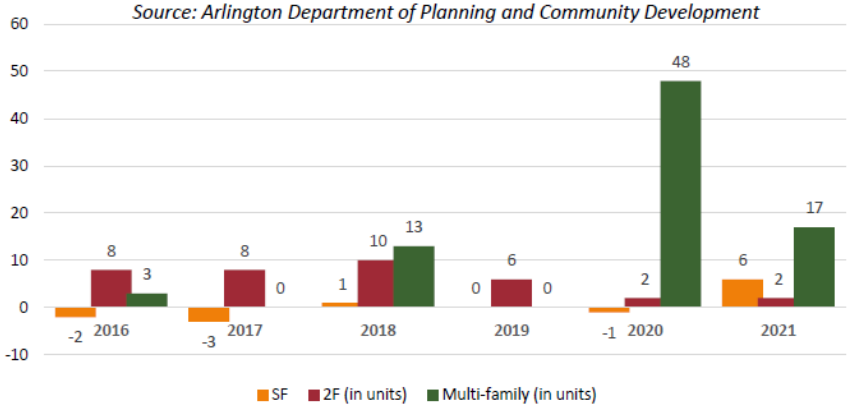
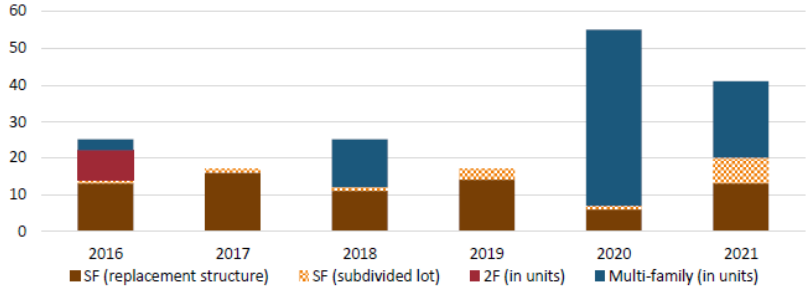
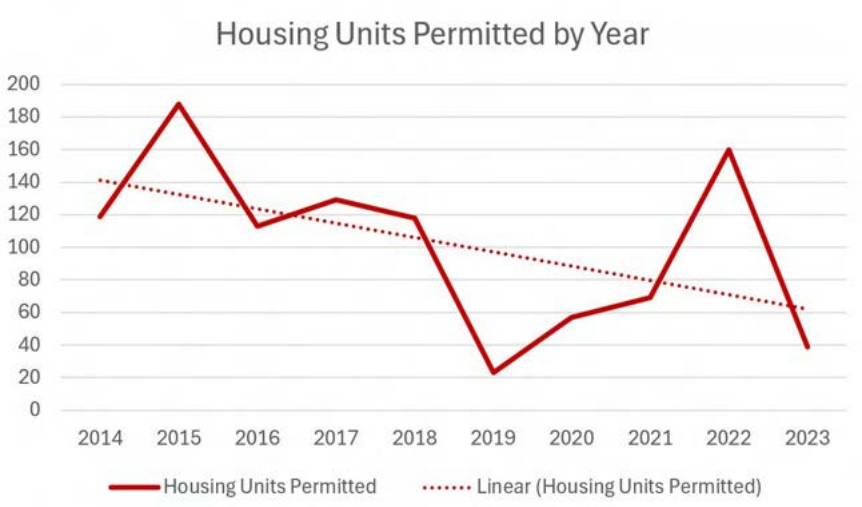


Figure 2.22. Residential Construction Per Year
Source: Department of Planning & Community Development



Source: 2022 Housing Production Plan

The pace of residential development has slowed somewhat over the past decade based on available building permit data. Approximately 1,000 units were permitted between 2014 and 2023, 86% of which were multi-family units and 14% were single-family units. 2015 saw the most units permitted with 188, while 2019 saw the fewest with only 23. Among the multi-family units permitted in this period, about 85% were in buildings with five or more units and 15% were in duplexes.



Significant Recent and Planned Housing Development

The Artemis: 124-unit multi-family development on a two-acre former industrial site. The complex includes adaptive reuse of two historic buildings and new construction. One-quarter of units (33) are reserved for households earning no more than 80% of the Area Median Income.

The Residences at Mill Brook: The development includes 50 homeownership units, of which 13 (25%) will be available to households earning no more than 80% of Area Median Income. The development is expected to be completed by the end of 2025.

10 Sunnyside Avenue: The proposed development which is due to break ground during the fall of 2025 includes 43 rental units, 100% of which will be affordable at no more than 60% of Area Median Income.

Housing Costs

In 2020 the median home sale price in Arlington was $862,000, but prices have since climbed to $960,000 influenced by pandemic dynamics and Arlington's competitive market. As discussed in Arlington's 2022 HPP, home sale prices, on average, have come in at 105% of the seller's asking price (~$560 per square foot), propelled by buyers who are willing and able to pay top dollar for the residence they want. This dynamic is a challenging obstacle for many first-time homebuyers.

Median rent is $2,043 per month, reflecting an 18% increase since 2019. This surpasses the statewide median rent and is rapidly nearing Boston's rental prices.

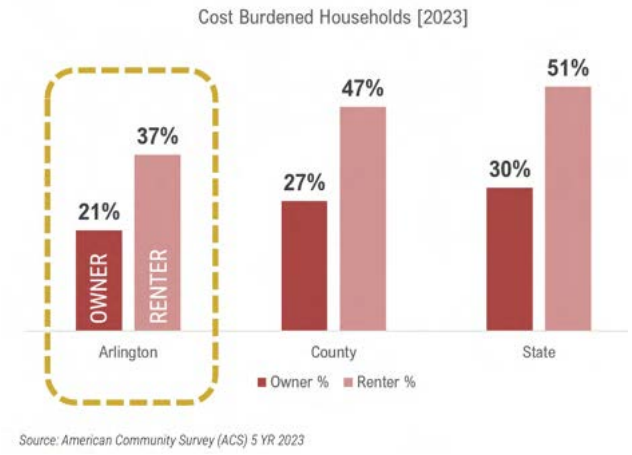
Limited housing supply paired with high demand for housing has driven prices up across Massachusetts and the dynamics in Arlington are no different. As a suburban town with access to Boston and a high-quality public school system, Arlington is an attractive place to live. The Covid-19 pandemic and rise of remote work has further escalated the cost of housing and preferences towards suburban living over more urban areas. This has created greater competition, further escalating home prices in response to high demand and a high willingness to pay from prospective home buyers. These trends can be observed in Arlington's home prices between 2020 and 2022. While this has increased property values for existing homeowners, it has significant implications for local housing affordability.

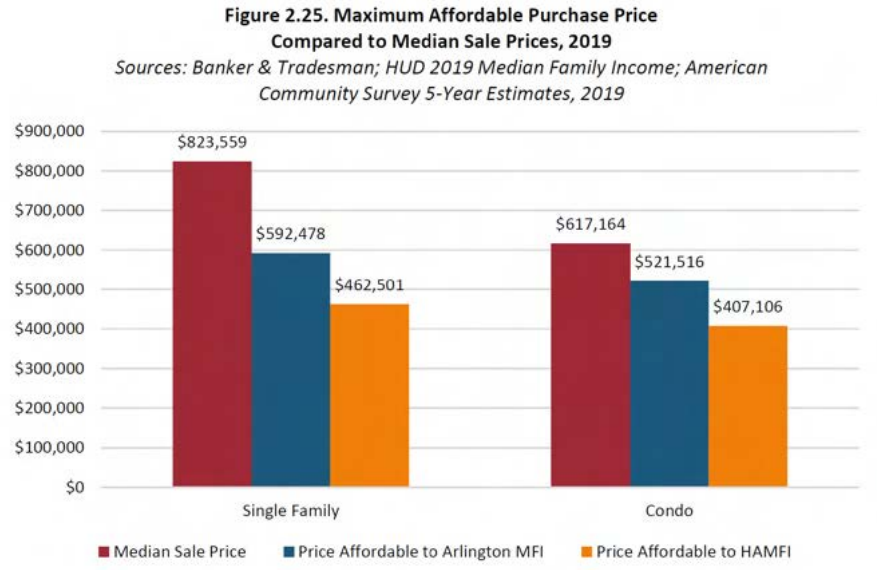
Cost-Burdened Households

Arlington includes a number of cost-burdened households that are struggling to find housing that they can afford. About 21% of owner households and 37% of renter households are considered cost-burdened and spend 30% more of household income on housing costs. Arlington has a relatively lower share of cost-burdened owner and renter households compared to Middlesex County (27% owner/47% renter) and the Commonwealth (30% owner/51% renter).

People aged 65 years and older in nonfamily households (living alone or with non-relatives) experience the highest rates of cost-burden and severe cost-burden among Arlington's Low- and Moderate-Income (LMI) households. Among non-LMI households, larger families tend to be more cost-burdened than other household types.

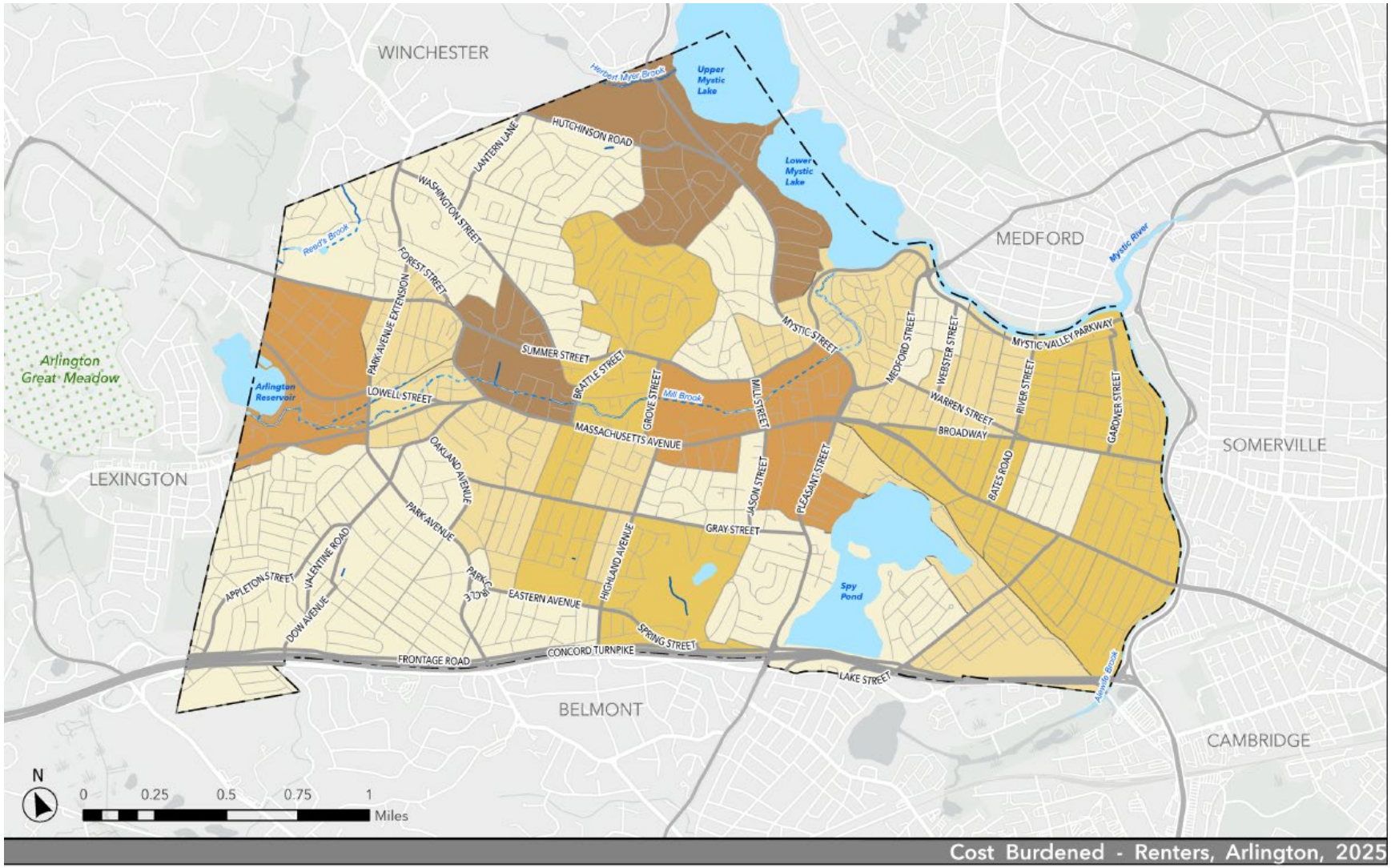
Over the last decade, the number of Arlington's cost-burdened households has generally decreased. This could be due to cost-burdened households being forced to move elsewhere for more affordable options, higher incomes, or another combination of reasons. However, this downward trend has not been experienced to the same degree by renters compared to owners. While the proportion of cost-burdened renters has decreased since 2010, it has been at a slower rate than observed among homeowners. Renters, especially one- and two-person households, are increasingly facing higher rents.



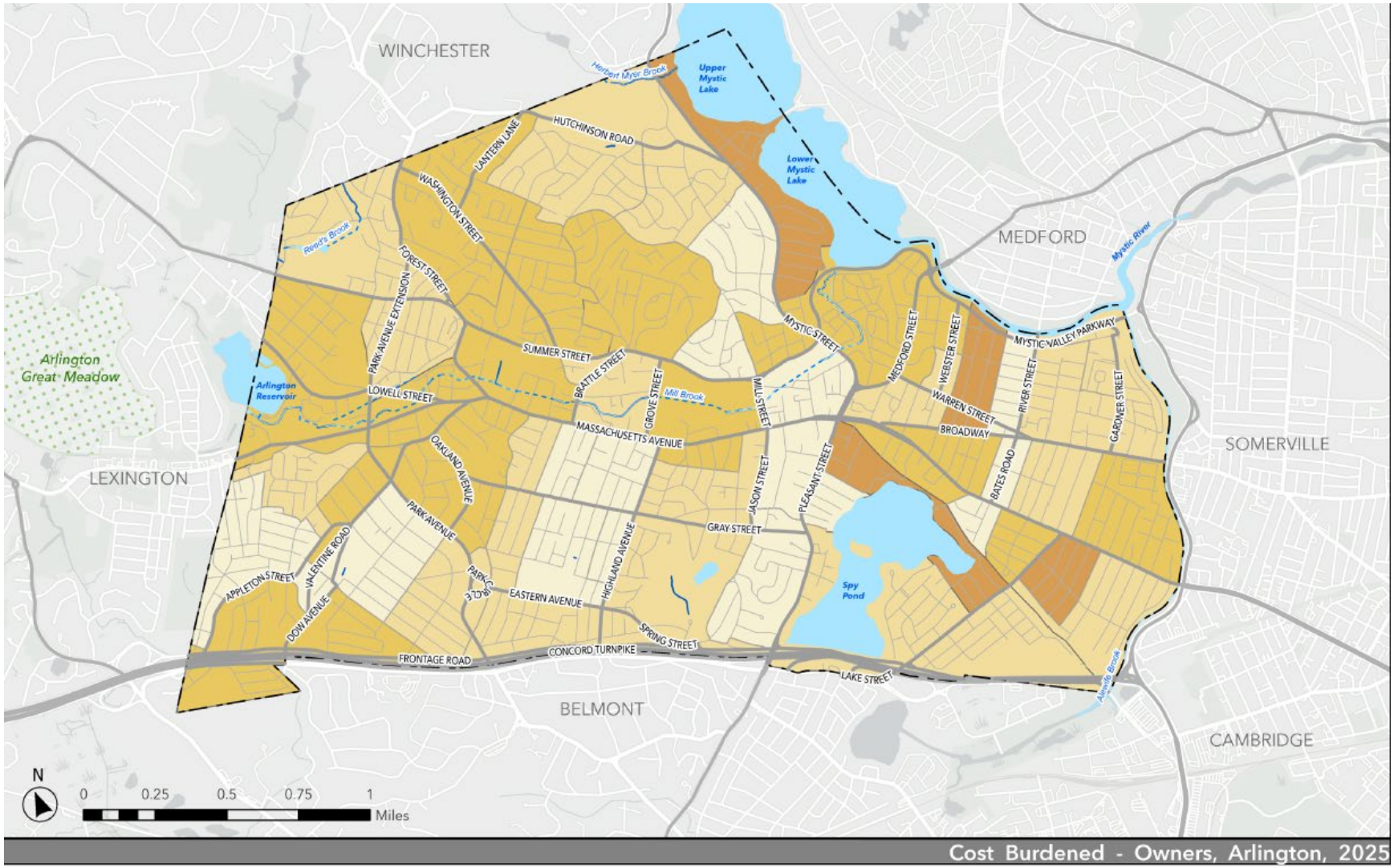


Affordability Gap

Arlington's HPP highlights a significant gap between the median sales price and the median income of Arlington households. Households earning Arlington's median household income of $145,141 (2019) can afford a single-family home of approximately $592,500 or a $521,000 condo (with additional condo fees). Both of these are significantly below the median sale prices demonstrating an increasing gap in housing attainability for Arlington households. This gap becomes even more pronounced for those earning HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) as illustrated below.



Map displays U.S. census data by census block group.



Map displays U.S. census data by census block group.

Existing Affordable Housing

Arlington's affordable housing stock is comprised of 1,302 units across public housing, Section 8, Housing Corporation of Arlington developments, and units developed through the Town's Inclusionary Zoning, 40B, and other policies. These units only meet about 20% of the community's need for deed-restricted affordable units, however. As reported in Arlington's 2022 Affordable Housing Trust Action Plan, nearly 1 in 3 households are low- or moderate-income households with household incomes less than 80% area median income (AMI) and more than 10% of households are extremely low-income households with incomes less than 30% AMI. The level of need far exceeds the availability of affordable units resulting in long waiting lists for public housing and housing vouchers.

The Arlington Housing Authority (AHA) plays the leading role in maintaining Arlington's affordable housing stock and Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). It owns and operates 179 units of affordable family housing, over 500 units of elderly housing, and administers the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) and HUD Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. In addition, it also provides special needs housing and single-room occupancy housing.

The Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA) also plays an important role in maintaining and expanding the local affordable housing stock by acquiring and rehabilitating properties into affordable rental units. HCA owns and operates 151 rental units across various locations, serving a wide range of incomes and family types. Additionally, HCA manages a Homelessness Prevention Program which provides rent and security deposit subsidies to income-eligible households.

Family Housing

AHA offers 179 two- and three-bedroom units at Menotomy Manor in East Arlington. Veterans, current Arlington residents, and families with no other form of assistance receive preference for available units.

Senior housing

AHA owns and manages four public housing developments for the elderly and people with disabilities, prioritizing Arlington residents, disaster victims, and the homeless. These include Winslow Towers (132 units), Chestnut Manor (100 units), Cusack Terrace (67 units, including five wheelchair assessable units), and Drake Village Complex (216 units, including 7 wheelchair accessible units). Millbrook Square, a privately owned property managed by Corcoran Jennison, also provides housing for low-income, elderly, and disabled residents.

Tenant assistance

AHA manages the HUD Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program and the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP). Both offer subsidies to help income-eligible households afford market-rate rents. Tenants pay 30% or less of their monthly gross income, with AHA covering the remaining cost.

Special Needs Housing

Approximately 113 housing units provide housing for Arlington residents with special needs. AHA administers these units in addition to sponsoring a residential home that provides living accommodations for 13 developmentally disabled adults.

Two additional properties owned and operated by Caritas Communities provide 37 units to low-income single person households with shared kitchens and baths.

Group Homes

Arlington's Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and Department of Mental Health (DMH) oversee 81 housing units in group homes for adults with severe disabilities. Additional private group homes and mental health treatment facilities are also available in Town and administered by AHA. It is important to note, however, that only units managed by DDS or DMH are counted towards the 10% SHI calculation as per Chapter 40B.

Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory

Massachusetts's Chapter 40B aims to provide affordable housing for people with low-and-moderate incomes across the state by establishing a statewide goal for every city and town to have at least 10% of their total year-round housing units to be deed-restricted affordable and eligible for listing on the State's Subsidized housing Inventory (SHI). The 10% minimum represents each community's "regional fair share" of low- or moderate-income housing. Communities that do not meet this standard are subject to comprehensive permit applications for developments containing at least 20-25% affordable units. These proposals can override local zoning controls like density, parking, bedrooms, and floor area.

Safe Harbor status can be granted through the General Land Area Minimum exception if it can be demonstrated that more than 1.5% of the total land area zoned for residential, commercial, or industrial use is occupied by SHI eligible housing. Arlington recalculates its General Land Area Minimum prior to each 40B proposal to determine whether it can claim Safe Harbor status.

The most recently available data from June 2023 indicates that 1,299 housing units are on the Subsidized Housing Inventory, or 6.37% of the Town's year-round housing units in 2020. This is below the state's 10% affordable housing threshold and below the demonstrated need of income-eligible households currently living in Arlington. While Arlington has made substantial progress towards meeting the state's affordable housing goal, an additional 735 affordable units will be needed to reach the 10% threshold. To keep pace with the requirement, the town will need to ensure that new residential developments include affordable units that can be added to the SHI.

Inclusionary Zoning

Adopted in 2001, Arlington's Inclusionary Zoning bylaw requires projects with six or more housing units to set aside at least 15% of the total units as affordable. Since its adoption, the bylaw has resulted in over 60 inclusionary, affordable housing units being constructed with additional units in the pipeline.

Community Preservation Act

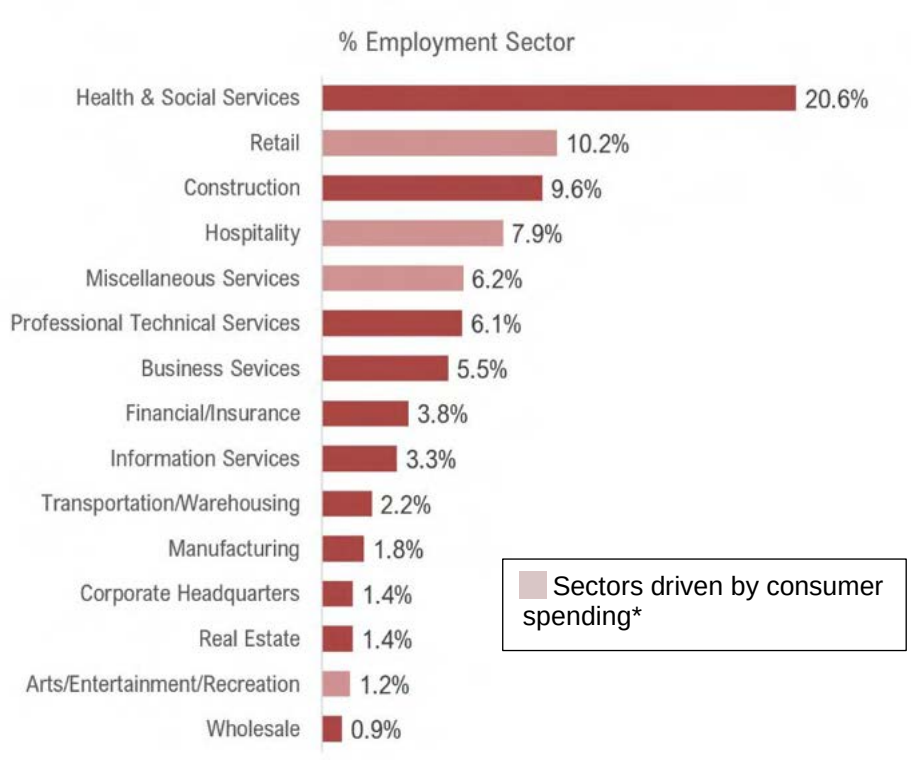
Arlington CPA grants have supported 24 housing projects since the first grants were approved in 2016. These efforts include the affordable housing improvements, HCA's Homelessness Prevention Program, the Somerville Homeless Coalition's Leasing Differential Program for Arlington tenants, and the Arlington Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Sustainable Economic Development

Arlington's Employment Base

Arlington's local employment base includes 1,280 business establishments that generate about 10,000 jobs and $693 million in wages on average each year. Additionally, about 12% of residents are self-employed with earnings likely not reflected in this data

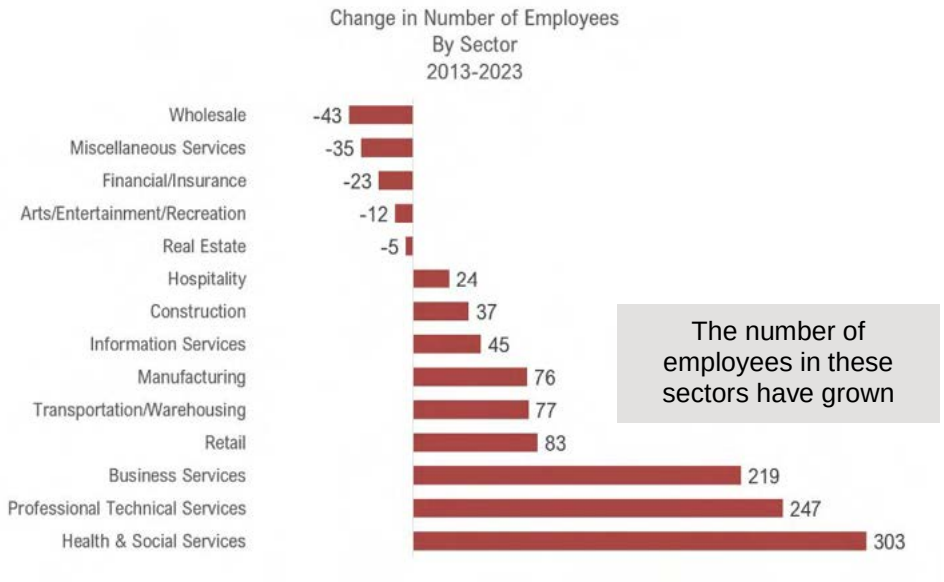
The healthcare and social services sector is the largest single sector and accounts for 20% of this employment base. However, several sectors that are driven by discretionary consumer spending account for 25% of local jobs making it the largest broad economic sector. These include retail, hospitality, and arts and entertainment. Arlington's local restaurant market is also strong with an estimated $145 million in spending and a spending potential index (SPI) 75% higher than the national average. A SPI measures how much a particular geographic area is likely to spend on a specific category of goods or services compared to the national average. An SPI of 100 matches the nation's average, while an SPI value below or above 100 indicates that residents are likely to spend less or more than average.



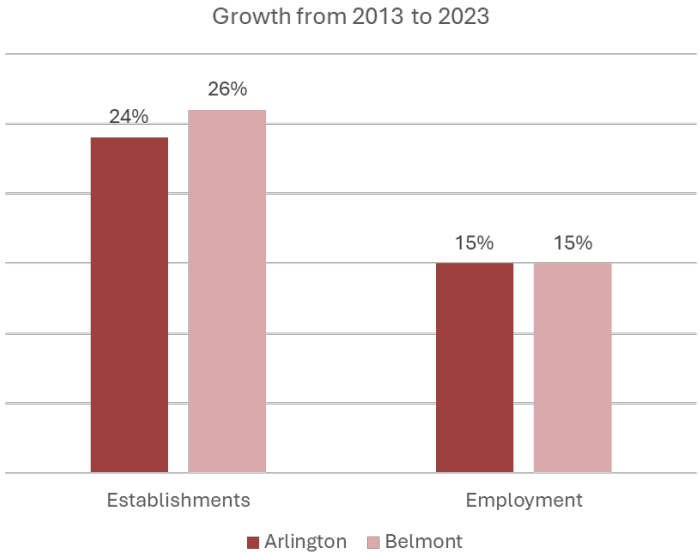
**Consumer-driven sectors consist of businesses whose performance depends on household spending. They grow when disposable income and consumer confidence in the economy are strong, but are among the first to slow when spending tightens.*

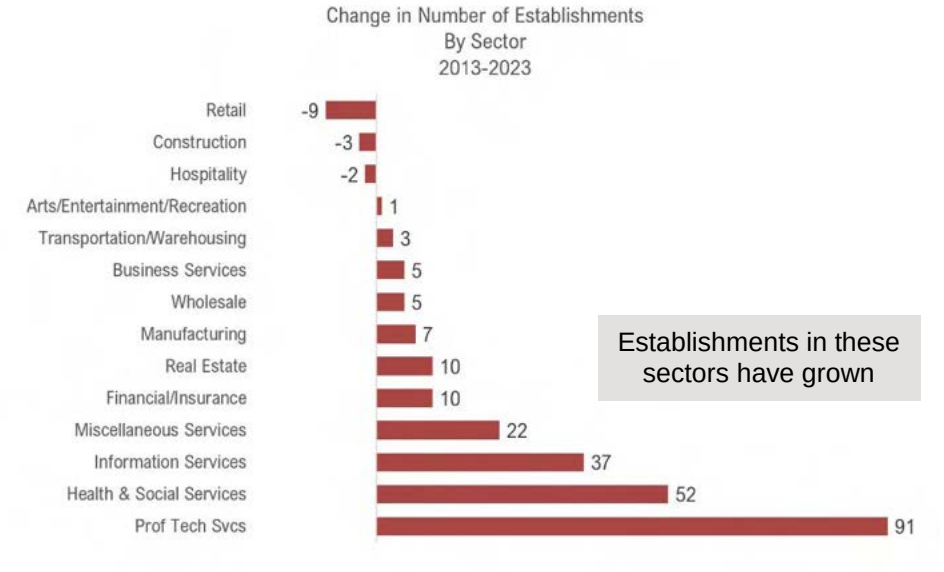
Arlington has added almost 250 new businesses and more than 1,300 employees since 2013. Much of this economic growth can be attributed to the healthcare and social services sector which experienced a 17% increase in total jobs (+300 jobs) and the professional and technical services sector which experienced a 67% increase (+247 jobs). New businesses in the professional and technical services, health and social services, and the informational services sectors also increased significantly during this period (72% of all new establishments). If these trends continue, there may be opportunity for small-scale office space in mixed-use development to support continued growth in these sectors.

Overall, office-based industries have experienced the greatest growth in both jobs and establishments over the last decade. Sectors such as arts, entertainment, and recreation and hospitality have seen considerably less.



The number of employees in these sectors have grown



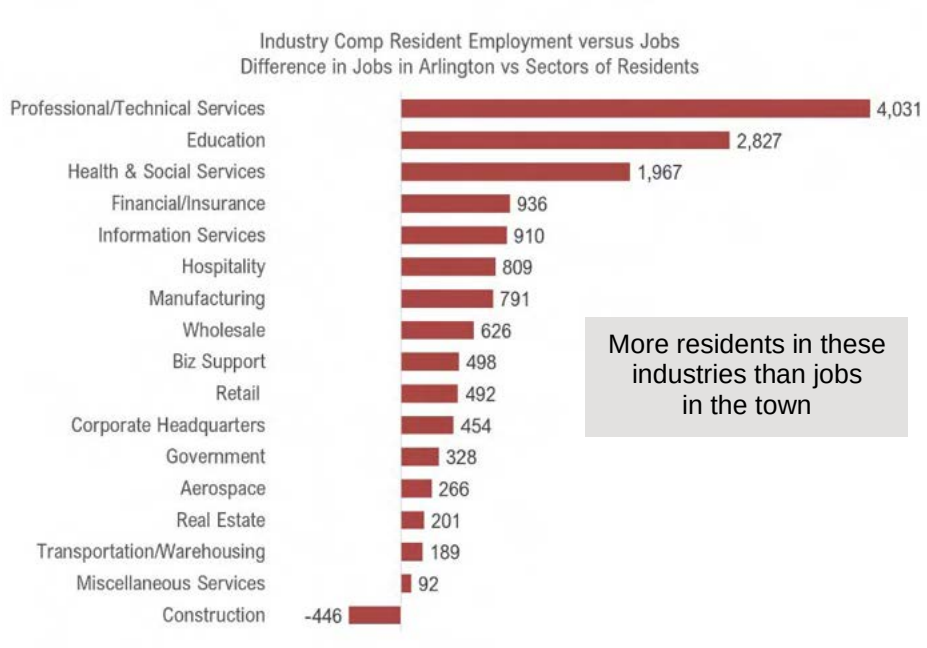


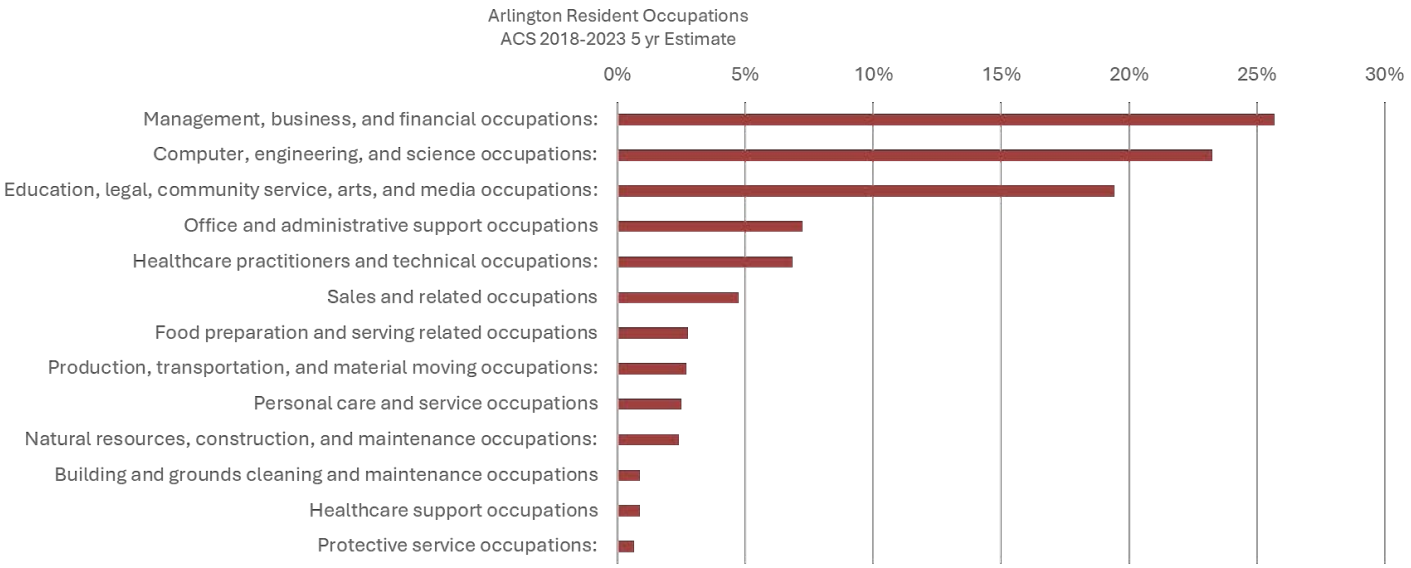
Establishments in these sectors have grown

Note: Belmont was used as a comparison geography because of its proximity and limited commercial / industrial space, which is more similar to Arlington than Medford and Somerville which have very different development opportunities

Workforce

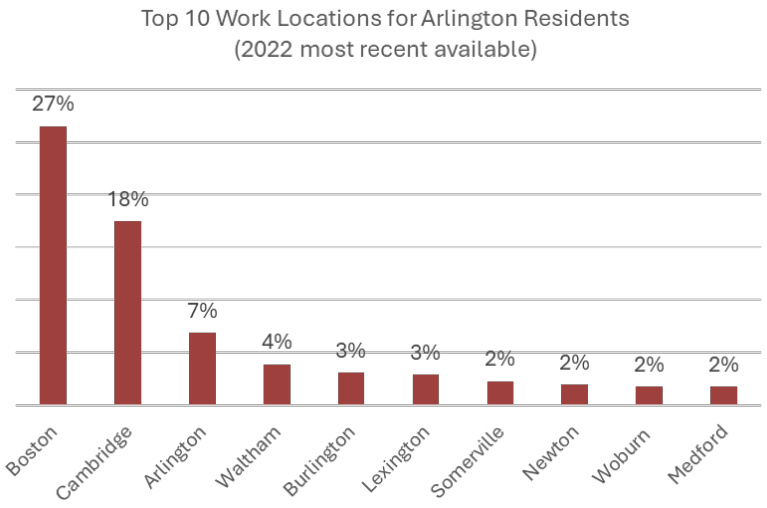
As a suburban community, Arlington has 2.6 times more residents in the workforce than it has jobs. Most residents (93%) commute outside Arlington for work in sectors that are not available locally. Almost half of Arlington residents hold jobs in management, finance, or STEM fields. Despite local job growth in the professional and technical services sector, significantly more residents (6x) still work in that sector than there are related jobs available in Arlington. This mismatch applies across several sectors with the exception of construction, which is the only industry where there are more jobs in Arlington than resident workers. As a result, most jobs (83%) in Arlington are filled by non-resident workers. This trend has remained steady over the last decade.

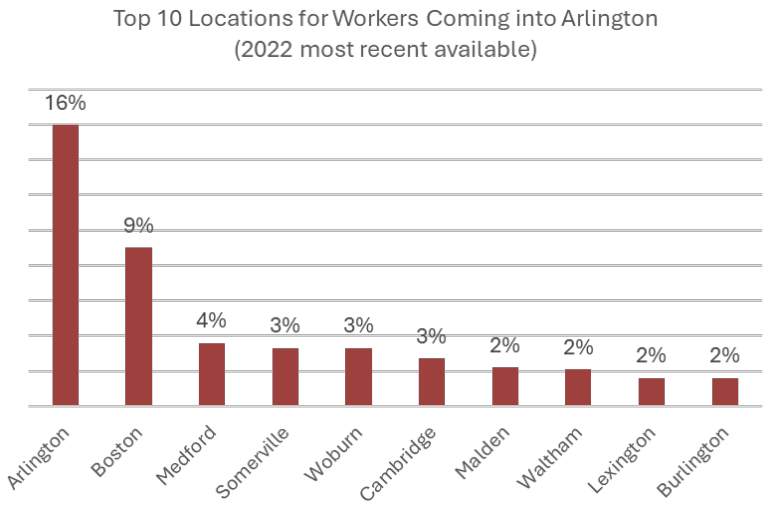




Several neighboring communities benefit from Arlington's worker residents. Roughly 45% of residents work in Boston or Cambridge alone, with other top locations including Waltham, Burlington, and Lexington. A relatively smaller proportion of workers come to Arlington for work from nearby communities, with just 12% coming from Boston or Cambridge. This unbalanced exchange of resident workers raises important questions around transit for commuting given the dispersed nature of the incoming workforce.

The proportion of residents working from home at least part-time has also increased over the years. According to the most recent ACS data, 48% of Arlington residents reported working from home at least part of the time. This represents a 6% increase from 2018 and is a significant change over a short period of time, primarily driven by pandemic-era shifts toward remote work especially for white collar workers.





Space Availability

Less than 7% of Arlington's land is zoned for business, industrial, or multi-use development. Recent data indicates only 40,000 square feet (SF) of commercial space is currently available and actively marketed in Arlington. This space is located in six buildings and offers small individual spaces, each under 10,000 SF. This limited supply of available, suitable land and building space presents a challenge for economic growth, particularly higher value office and light or flex industrial in growing sectors.

Existing Commercial Land Use in Arlington

Land Use/Zoning District	Total Acres	Pct. of Land Area
Business (B1-5)	133	3.7%
Industrial (I)	75	2.1%
Multi-use or Planned Unit Development (MU/PUD)	34	1%

Retail and Experience

Like many communities, Arlington's commercial areas continue to experience retail vacancies in response to the shifting retail landscape. These empty storefronts create negative perceptions of its commercial districts and impact potential tenants' willingness to lease available spaces. Some vacancies require investment by landlords to support tenant improvements, while others are not being actively marketed as available spaces by building owners. Building improvements and active marketing of vacant spaces would help reduce vacancies and also expand Arlington's viable commercial spaces.

The strength of Arlington's restaurant sector combined with its mix of other consumer-oriented businesses make "experience" a critical factor in attracting continued economic growth. Investments that enhance the consumer experience such as improvements to signage and wayfinding, programming, parking, and upgraded storefronts and streetscape play an important role in improving experience. Efforts to improve public perceptions of Arlington's commercial areas and expand the variety of local businesses are also essential for increasing the Town's potential to capture consumer spending and new businesses.

Interviews with local business owners highlight the need for greater consistency, predictability, and efficiency in Arlington's business-related regulatory processes. In addition, a coordinated Town effort to support and market economic development and tourism was identified as a key opportunity to advance economic growth. When paired with investments in district experience improvements, these efforts would help position Arlington as a more competitive and attractive destination for both businesses and visitors.

Historic & Cultural Resources

Brief History

The following history section is adapted from the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan (2022) and Historic Preservation Survey Master Plan Final Report (2019).

The Town of Arlington sits on the ancestral lands of the Massachusett Tribe, the Indigenous peoples after which the Commonwealth is named. Originally settled in 1635 by European settlers as a part of Cambridge, Arlington was known as "Menotomy" after the Menotomy River (now called Alewife Brook). Agriculture and animal grazing made up the settlement's early economy, and it then expanded to include milling with the development of the area's first mill by Captain George Cooke on Mill Brook in 1637.

The formalization of Massachusetts Avenue as the major east/west transportation route between Boston and surrounding rural towns supported expansion of the Menotomy settlement, leading to greater commercial activity and the development of a distinct town center. This corridor served a key role in the early battles of the American Revolution, facilitating the movement of colonial militias and supplies to and from Lexington and Concord. Menotomy's location also made it a key site for additional militia ambushes against retreating British troops, culminating in the intensive Battle of Menotomy that followed the Battle of Lexington and Concord.

In 1807, Menotomy and a section of present-day Belmont broke off from Cambridge and reincorporated as West Cambridge. In 1867 the Town was renamed Arlington in honor of the Civil War veterans buried at the Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA.

The first half of the 1800's saw Arlington grow and attract more industry. Middlesex Turnpike (1810, now Lowell Street), the railroad (1846), and the street railway along Massachusetts Avenue connected the growing town to the region. Agriculture continued as a major economic sector, with commercial market gardens in East Arlington. Immigrants were attracted by the agriculture and industry, leading to the development of the town's first residential subdivision in Arlington in 1856.

After incorporating as Arlington, the community saw changing industrial patterns and continued population growth. Menotomy Rocks Park was established as the town's first large public park in 1896. Literary and visual artists settled in Arlington Heights. Most large market gardens were subdivided into more housing in the early 1900's. Two- and three-family housing became more common in this period in support of continued population growth. The first "Town Plan" was adopted in 1916 followed by the Zoning Bylaw in 1924.

Arlington further suburbanized throughout the 20th century as its larger industries declined. The Concord Turnpike (Route 2) was developed in the 1930's, and more housing was developed ranging from single-family houses on former agricultural land or flood plains to low- and medium-rise apartments along Massachusetts Avenue. This housing increasingly accommodated the changing working-class population that supported the greater Boston area's changing industries.

Historic Places & Landscapes

Arlington has one historic district and 63 sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Arlington Center Historic District includes most of the central downtown area. Historic places include the Robbins Library, Robbins Memorial Town Hall, Whittemore-Robbins House, Regent Theatre, Capitol Theatre, Central Fire Station, the Pleasant Street Congregational Church, Old Burying Ground, and the Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

There are seven local historic districts, most of which are in or adjacent to the Arlington Center Historic District. The Mt. Gilboa/ Crescent Hill District is located in western Arlington near the reservoir. The others include the Avon Place District, Broadway District, Central Street District, Jason/Gray Street District, Pleasant Street District, and Russell District. The Pleasant Street District is the largest with 150 parcels while the Broadway District is the smallest with just 8 parcels.

The 2023 Archeological Reconnaissance Survey documented 37 archaeological sites that represent at least 10,000 years of human history. Accompanying sensitivity mapping illustrates how Arlington's natural environment has drawn and supported Native and Euro-American habitation and activity for thousands of years.

Arlington also contains several historic landscapes listed on the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Historic Landscape Inventory. A 2006 report on Freedom's Way Heritage Area identified 63 heritage landscapes in Arlington. These landscapes represent distinctive places shaped by human interaction with the natural environment and reflect local history while also contributing to the community's character. Identified priority heritage landscapes include the Battle Road Corridor, Great Meadows/Mill Brook Drainage System, Jonathan Whittemore House, Mugar Property, Spy Pond and adjacent parkland, and the W.C. Taylor House.

Arlington Properties on the National Register of Historic Places

S.N.	NAME	LOCATION	CATEGORY	LISTED DATE
1	Allyn House	94 Oakland Ave.	Building	9/27/1985
2	Arlington Center Historic District	Bounded by Massachusetts Ave. and Academy, Pleasant St. and Maple St.	District	7/18/1974
3	Arlington Center Historic District (Boundary Increase)	Roughly bounded by Jason St., Massachusetts Ave., Pleasant St. and Gray St.	District	9/27/1985
4	Arlington Coal & Lumber	41 Park Ave.	Building	4/18/1985
5	Arlington Gaslight Company	Grove St. Town Yard	Building	4/18/1985
6	Arlington Pumping Station	Brattle Court off Brattle St.	Building	4/18/1985
7	Arlington Reservoir	Park Circle	Structure	9/27/1985
8	Baptist Society Meeting House	3--5 Brattle St.	Building	4/18/1985
9	Bassett, Maria, House	8 College Ave.	Building	9/27/1985
10	Butterfield-Whittemore House	54 Massachusetts Ave.	Building	3/30/1978
11	Call-Bartlett House	216 Pleasant St.	Building	4/18/1985
12	Calvary Methodist Church	300 Massachusetts Ave.	Building	6/23/1983
13	Capitol Theater Building	202--208 Massachusetts Ave.	Building	4/18/1985
14	Chapel of St. Anne	Claremont Ave.	Building	4/18/1985
15	Cushman House	104 Bartlett Ave.	Building	4/18/1985
16	Cutter, Ephraim, House	4 Water St.	Building	3/29/1978
17	Cutter, Gershom, House	1146 Massachusetts Ave.	Building	11/12/1999
18	Cutter, Jefferson, House	1 Whittemore Park	Building	1/23/1992
19	Cutter, Second, A. P., House	89 Summer St.	Building	4/18/1985
20	Damon House	275 Broadway	Building	4/18/1985
21	Farmer, Kimball, House	1173 Massachusetts Ave.	Building	4/18/1985
22	First Parish Church Parsonage	232--234 Pleasant St.	Building	4/18/1985
23	Fowle-Reed-Wyman House	64 Old Mystic St.	Building	4/14/1975
24	Greek Orthodox Church	735 Massachusetts Ave.	Building	6/23/1983
25	Hall, Edward, House	187 Pleasant St.	Building	4/18/1985
26	Highland Hose House	1007 Massachusetts Ave.	Building	4/18/1985
27	Hill, Addison, House	83 Appleton St.	Building	9/27/1985

S.N.	NAME	LOCATION	CATEGORY	LISTED DATE
28	Hornblower, Edward, House and Barn	200 Pleasant St.	Building	4/18/1985
29	House at 45 Claremont Avenue	45 Claremont Ave.	Building	4/18/1985
30	House at 5 Willow Court	5 Willow Court	Building	4/18/1985
31	House at 5-7 Winter Street	5--7 Winter St.	Building	4/18/1985
32	Kensington Park Historic District	Roughly bounded by Kensington Park, Brantwood and Kensington Rds.	District	9/27/1985
33	Kimball, W.W., House	13 Winter St.	Building	4/18/1985
34	Locke School	88 Parke Ave.	Building	9/27/1985
35	Locke, Capt. Benjamin, House	21 Appleton St.	Building	7/21/1978
36	Locke, Lt. Benjamin, Store	11--13 Lowell St.	Building	4/18/1985
37	Milestone	Appleton St. and Paul Revere Rd.	Object	9/27/1985
38	Mystic Valley Parkway, Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS	Mystic Valley Parkway	District	1/18/2006
39	Old Schwamb Mill	17 Mill Lane and 29 Lowell St.	Building	10/7/1971
40	Orvis Road Historic District	Roughly bounded by Massachusetts Ave., Freeman, Randolph St. and Newcomb St. on Orvis Rd.	District	9/27/1985
41	Pierce Farm Historic District	Roughly bounded by Claremont and Oakland Aves.	District	9/27/1985
42	Pleasant Street Congregational Church	75 Pleasant St.	Building	6/23/1983
43	Prentiss, William, House	252 Gray St.	Building	9/27/1985
44	Prentiss-Payson House	224--226 Pleasant St.	Building	4/18/1985
45	Prince Hall Mystic Cemetery	Address Restricted	Site	11/25/1998
46	Proctor, William, House	390 Massachusetts Ave.	Building	4/18/1985
47	Rawson, Warren, Building	68--74 Franklin St.	Building	9/27/1985
48	Rawson, Warren, House	37--49 Park St.	Building	4/18/1985
49	Robindreau, Alfred E., House	28 Lafayette St.	Building	4/18/1985
50	Robinson House	19 Winter St.	Building	4/18/1985
51	Robinson-Lewis-G. F. Fessenden House	40 Westminster Ave.	Building	4/18/1985
52	Russell Common	2--10 Park Terrace	Building	4/18/1985
53	Russell, Jason House	7 Jason St.	Building	10/9/1974
54	Shattuck, Ralph W., House	274--276 Broadway	Building	9/27/1985

S.N.	NAME	LOCATION	CATEGORY	LISTED DATE
55	Sterling, Ella Mahalla Cutter, House	93 Summer St.	Building	4/18/1985
56	Swadkins, Thomas, House	160 Westminster Ave.	Building	4/18/1985
57	Swan, Henry, House	418 Massachusetts Ave.	Building	9/27/1985
58	Symmes, Stephen, Jr., House	215 Crosby St.	Building	4/18/1985
59	Taylor-Dallin House	69 Oakland Ave.	Building	9/27/1985
60	US Post Office-Arlington Main	10 Court St.	Building	6/18/1986
61	Wayside Inn	393 Massachusetts Ave.	Building	9/27/1985
62	Whittemore House	267 Broadway	Building	4/18/1985
63	Winn Farm	57 Summer St.	Building	4/18/1985
54	Shattuck, Ralph W., House	274--276 Broadway	Building	9/27/1985
55	Sterling, Ella Mahalla Cutter, House	93 Summer St.	Building	4/18/1985
56	Swadkins, Thomas, House	160 Westminster Ave.	Building	4/18/1985
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Source: National Register of Historic Places [NRHP] list updated on 2024-07-10 [https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm]

Historic Preservation

The Arlington Historical Commission and Arlington Historic Districts Commission oversee the preservation of the community's historic buildings, resources, and character. The Town's Community Preservation Act (CPA) Committee oversees the allocation of dedicated CPA funds to support a range of public investment projects, including the preservation of historic landmarks and other historic resources.

The Historical Commission maintains an inventory of historically and architecturally significant properties and administers the Town's demolition-delay bylaw. It works with the Planning & Community Development Department to ensure new development maintains Arlington's historic character. The Commission also works with other Town departments to maintain and restore Town-owned historical buildings and gardens. The Whittemore Robbins House, Town Hall and grounds, 23 Maple Street, and the Jarvis House at 50 Pleasant Street are all managed by the Commission.

The Arlington Historic Districts Commission protects and preserves the historic resources within the Town's seven local historic districts. It reviews the architectural appropriateness of proposed development and exterior design changes of properties within these districts to ensure that any improvements are compatible with the character of the district.

In addition, the Arlington Historic Society, a private nonprofit organization, also supports preservation of the Town's history and heritage. The Historic Society and several other private groups focus on the preservation of specific sites and historic artifact and document collections in Town.

Community Preservation Act

Arlington CPA grants have supported 31 historic preservation projects since the first grants were approved in 2016. These projects include historic building restoration projects, records preservation, and an updated historic resources inventory.

Cultural Resources

Arlington's vibrant and dynamic culture is supported through its extensive network of civic institutions and community organizations, local shops and restaurants, and highly utilized outdoor spaces. The Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture oversees all Town-related arts and culture programming and activities including the Arlington Mural Project, the local Artist-In-Residence Program, and the Arlington Cultural District.

The Arlington Cultural District runs from Arlington Center to East Arlington between Massachusetts Avenue and the Minuteman Bikeway and serves as a hub for arts, culture, dining, and entertainment. It is home to several arts and cultural institutions including the Arlington Center for Arts, which offers studio space, classes, exhibits, and performances that engage local artists and the wider community. The Cyrus E. Dallin Art Museum, based in the historic Jefferson Cutter House, stewards over ninety works of art from throughout the Arlington-based sculptor, educator, and Indigenous rights advocate's career. The Regent Theatre supports a variety of live music, theatre, dance, comedy, and other entertainment events for all ages. The historic Capitol Theatre in East Arlington provides a unique setting for movie-goers, decorated in the style of the original theatre. Arlington Children's Theatre offers an artistic outlet for youth and has been in Trinity Baptist Church since 2016.

Additionally, the Town hosts several annual events, festivals, and parades including Arlington Town Day, Summer and Winter Carnivals for children, Feast of the East, Uncle Sam's Birthday, Patriot's Day and Veteran's Day parade, and the Arlington Farmers Market.

Open Space, Recreation, & Natural Resources

Overview

Arlington's limited open space and recreation areas and facilities are a highly valued community resource that include a wide range of opportunities for outdoor activities, sports, and leisure. More than 550 acres of publicly held open space make up Arlington's open space network, including Arlington's Great Meadows and land surrounding the Arlington Reservoir which are located in the Town of Lexington. About 118 acres of privately owned open space complement these public open space resources, providing additional recreational offerings at Winchester Country Club, Belmont Country Club, Arlington Catholic High School Field, and Kelwyn Manor Playground.

While Arlington's open space and recreational resources are distributed throughout town, its larger resources tend to be located towards its perimeter. Many are also located adjacent to existing water bodies.

The Town of Arlington and State's Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) owns the majority of these open and recreational spaces. The Town of Lexington owns about 7% and private entities, including not-for-profits, for-profits, and land trusts own the remaining 32%. About 72% of Arlington's open and recreational spaces are protected.

OWNERSHIP CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE [%]
Public	
Town of Arlington	**46%**
Town of Lexington	**7%**
State (DCR)	**15%**
Private	**32%**

Arlington's Department of Public Works' Parks Division oversees the maintenance of Town-owned parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, open space, and public trees. The Department of Recreation and Community Services manages recreational programming and facilities and works in partnership with DPW to balance user needs and the ongoing maintenance of open space and recreational assets. The Parks and Recreation Commission and Conservation Commission also play key roles in the management of the Town's open space and recreational resources.

A full inventory of Arlington's open space and recreational resources is available in the Town's Open Space & Recreation Plan (2022), with additional information in its Public Land Management Plan 2023-2026.

Major Open Space and Recreational Resources

Arlington's parks and open spaces provide opportunities for a variety of passive activities, such as walking, hiking, enjoying scenery, and observing wildlife.

Name	Location
Arlington's Great Meadows	Minuteman Commuter Bikeway (Lexington, MA)
Arlington Reservoir	210 Lowell Street
Hurd and Reservoir Fields	25 Drake Road
Buzzell Fields	29 Summer Street
Cooke's Hollow	94 Mystic Street
McClennen Park	664 Summer Street
Meadowbrook Park	Mystic Valley Parkway
Pleasant Cemetery	70 Medford Street
Menotomy Rocks Park	129 Jason Street
Mount Gilboa	1 Gilboa Road
North Union Park/Lussiano Field	60 N Union Street
Poets Corner	9 Keats Road

Name	Location
Robbins Farm Park	61 Eastern Avenue
Spy Pond and parks and fields	56 Pond Road
Kelwyn Manor Park	Spypond Parkway
Summer Street Sports Complex	422 Summer Street
Symmes Woods and Parks	Symmes Road
Thorndike and Magnolia Park and Fields	99 & 111 Magnolia Street
Turkey Hill Reservation	9 Brand Street
Wellington Park	34 Grove Street
Whittemore Park and Uncle Sam Plaza	611 Massachusetts Avenue
Windows on Mystic/Mystic Lakes	Mystic Valley Parkway

Small Neighborhood Parks and Open Spaces

Arlington also has several smaller neighborhood parks and open spaces that include historic landscapes, school facilities, community gardens, small conservation areas, playgrounds, and streetscapes. Some of these resources include Foot of the Rocks, Monument Square, Park Circle Water Tower, and Prince Hall Mystic Cemetery.

Most of Arlington's public schools offer additional recreation opportunities for the community ranging from playing fields, courts, and playgrounds to indoor gym facilities and pollinator and educational gardens.

Several larger community gardens also provide recreational and educational opportunities for the community while contributing to the Town's open space fabric. The Arlington Community Orchard features over 50 fruit trees, herbs, and edible berries, as well as sculptures, picnic tables, and gathering space for workshops and public use on MWRA land off Brattle Court. The Magnolia Community Garden offers 54 garden plots and supporting facilities for resident use in addition to providing important drainage in its flood-prone location. The Robbins Farm Learning Garden, colonial kitchen garden at the Jason Russell House, and demonstration gardens at Arlington's neighborhood schools provide educational gardening resources to the community and visitors. Other garden and planting initiatives focused on native plants and preserving and expanding pollinator habitats include the Wildlife Habitat Garden at Arlington Reservoir and the Mystic Charles Pollinator Pathways volunteer coalition.

Arlington's streetscapes also include a variety of small landscapes and memorial sites that offer community gathering space and create more attractive environments along commercial corridors. These small but interesting spaces include sidewalk plazas and street parklets, traffic island gardens and planters, and veterans memorials and markers.

Trails, Corridors, and Greenways

The Minuteman Bikeway provides opportunities for walking, running, biking, and rolling and connects Arlington to Cambridge, Lexington, and Bedford. It also serves as an important habitat corridor due to its proximity and connections to several open spaces, brooks, and water bodies. Additional trails and pathways run through existing open spaces offering additional amenities for walking, hiking, and interacting with nature.

A 1.4-mile section of the Alewife Brook Reservation and Greenway runs through Arlington parallel to Alewife Brook and the Alewife Brook Parkway. The area is managed by DCR and includes pathways for pedestrian and cyclist use. It also provides connections to the Fresh Pond Pathway, Watertown Greenway, and the Mystic River Reservation in Medford.

The 2.7-mile Mill Brook corridor flows from Arlington Reservoir to Lower Mystic Lake. With more than 40% of the brook culverted and 30% channelized, only a few short sections are open and in natural condition. Much of the surrounding land is publicly owned by the Town of Arlington and serves as open space and recreational areas. The need for substantial restoration and remediation to enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, and address drainage and flood control along the brook was identified in both the *2010 Mill Brook Linear Park Report* and 2019 *Mill Brook Corridor Report*.

A narrow section of the Mystic River Reservation is located in Arlington parallel to the Mystic River and Parkway. In 2019 a

restoration project was completed to create riparian habitat, add flood storage, and improve stormwater quality.

Conservation Land

The Arlington Conservation Commission (ACC) plays a critical role in the protection and management of wetlands and local conservation land. The Commission oversees and manages 33.1 acres across twenty-four parcels of land including Meadowbrook Park, Mount Gilboa Conservation Area, Windows on the Mystic, Cooke's Hollow, and Turkey Hill Reservation. The Commission also owns a variety of smaller conservation parcels that provide space for habitat throughout town.

Recreational Facilities

Arlington's recreational programs and facilities are extensively used and highly valued by the community. The Recreation Department is a self-supporting enterprise and does not use general fund dollars to support staff or programs. It oversees several sports leagues for youth and adults, fitness programming, and special event permit requests. Other organized leagues contract with the Town for use of fields, courts, and other facilities.

The Summer Street Sports Complex and Ed Burns Arena are Arlington's two largest recreational facilities. The Summer Street Sports Complex includes baseball, softball, field hockey, and soccer fields, a bocce court, basketball court, fitness stations, tot play equipment, and a handicap accessible children's play structure. The Ed Burns Arena provides an ice rink in the fall and winter months and batting cages, indoor soccer programs, and summer camps in the spring and summer. It is also used for special events and is home to the Arlington Hockey and Figure Skating Association and Arlington High and Arlington Catholic School boys' and girls' hockey teams. The Town-owned Gibbs School gymnasium also offers space for indoor recreation.

The Town of Arlington has consistently invested in its open space and recreational resources to ensure high-quality experiences and meet growing user demand. The Parks and Recreation Commission's long-term capital plan outlines ongoing investments in ADA compliance, playground audits and repairs, and feasibility studies to assess and plan for further improvements over the next five years. Robbins Farm Playground was recently renovated to become the Town's first playground utilizing universal design principles. Additionally, the Department plans to develop a Field Master Plan to prioritize the use of existing field spaces and explore the potential of passive open spaces for accommodating active recreation.

The Arlington Boys and Girls Club is a key partner for Arlington's recreational offerings. The private, non-profit facility is located next to Spy Pond and hosts a variety of classes, events, and after-school programing. It has the only indoor pool in town and offers swimming lessons and open swim time. The Fidelity House in Arlington Center also serves as a community center and runs programming for children.

Community Preservation Act

Arlington CPA grants have supported 21 open space projects and 14 recreation projects since the first grants were approved in 2016. These projects include contributing to the Open Space and Recreation Plan and Public Land Management Plan, feasibility studies for specific locations, and improvements to parks and playgrounds.

Natural & Ecological Resources

Local Terrain

Located on the western edge of the Boston Basin, Arlington's landscape generally slopes downward from west to east with more hilly and rocky terrain in the west of town and flatter, more low-lying terrain towards the east. At 380 feet, Turkey Hill represents the highest elevation point along with neighboring Gilboa and Symmes Hill. The lower elevations in the eastern part of town range between 10 and 40 feet above mean sea level.

Water Resources

Arlington straddles the Charles River and Mystic River watersheds. The majority of land (90%) is located in the Mystic River watershed with water flowing towards low-lying areas in the eastern and southern parts of town where it drains into Alewife Brook and the Mystic River, and eventually Boston Harbor and Massachusetts Bay. The Poets Corner and Arlington Village neighborhoods drain to the Charles River watershed.

About 8% of Arlington's total area is comprised of surface water and includes two lakes, two ponds, one reservoir, one river, and several brooks. The Upper Mystic and Lower Mystic lakes are located on the town's northeastern border with Medford. Spy Pond lies just north of the Concord Turnpike and Arlington Reservoir sits on Arlington's western border with Lexington. The smaller Hill's Pond is located just west of Spy Pond in Menotomy Rocks Park. The Mystic River runs from the Mystic Lakes along Arlington's eastern border before entering Medford.

Mill Brook and Alewife Brook are the town's largest streams and experience occasional flooding during intensive and extended rainfall events. Low-lying areas adjacent to waterways are especially vulnerable. Access to Arlington's water bodies is limited due to adjacent private properties that line most shorelines.

	LAKES AND PONDS	AREA [ACRES]
1	Spy Pond	**102**
2	Lower Mystic Lake	**55**
3	Upper Mystic Lake	**49**
4	Arlington Reservoir	**12**
5	Hill's Pond	**2**
	Total	**220**

Wetlands

Arlington's wetlands are primarily located near Alewife Brook, Spy Pond, Hill's Pond, the Arlington Reservoir, in Meadowbrook Park, and on undeveloped properties near Thorndike field. Most are shallow marshes and shrub swamps bordering existing waterbodies. Meadowbrook Park contains the largest wetland which is located at the mouth of Mill Brook adjacent to Lower Mystic Lake.

Several of the Town's recreational fields and facilities are located in and near wetland areas creating tensions between user needs and environmental protection as well as seasonal limitations in recreational use. Thorndike and Magnolia fields, McClennen Park, and Poet's Corner all experience saturation and drainage issues due to their proximity to wetland areas.

Arlington's 183-acre Great Meadows, located in Lexington, also includes a large certified vegetated wetland. The flat, marshy plain contains a series of hummocks and is surrounded by wooded uplands with walking trails.

Forests

Woodland areas are limited in Arlington due to its built-out condition but some can still be found in Menotomy Rocks Park, Turkey Hill, Mount Gilboa, Arlington Reservoir, Hill's Hill, Crusher lot at the Ottoson School, and portions of the Symmes Property. As a densely developed community, Arlington's tree canopy plays an important role in the provision of vital ecosystem services that improve air quality, filter pollutants, support flood control and erosion prevention, and provide shade and heat management during the summer. Over the years Arlington has lost a considerable proportion of its tree population from development, pests and disease, and the loss of funding for tree maintenance and replacement. To preserve its canopy, Arlington passed a Tree Preservation Bylaw in 2016 to limit tree removal and support canopy revitalization and is also in the process of implementing a Tree Inventory Management Plan. The plan aims to restore Arlington's tree canopy to its peak level of 10,700 trees by planting 300 street trees per year (assuming a removal rate of 200 street trees per year) and increasing its tree planting budget.

Key Habitats and Wildlife

Arlington's limited but diverse natural ecosystems provide crucial habitats for a variety of flora and fauna.

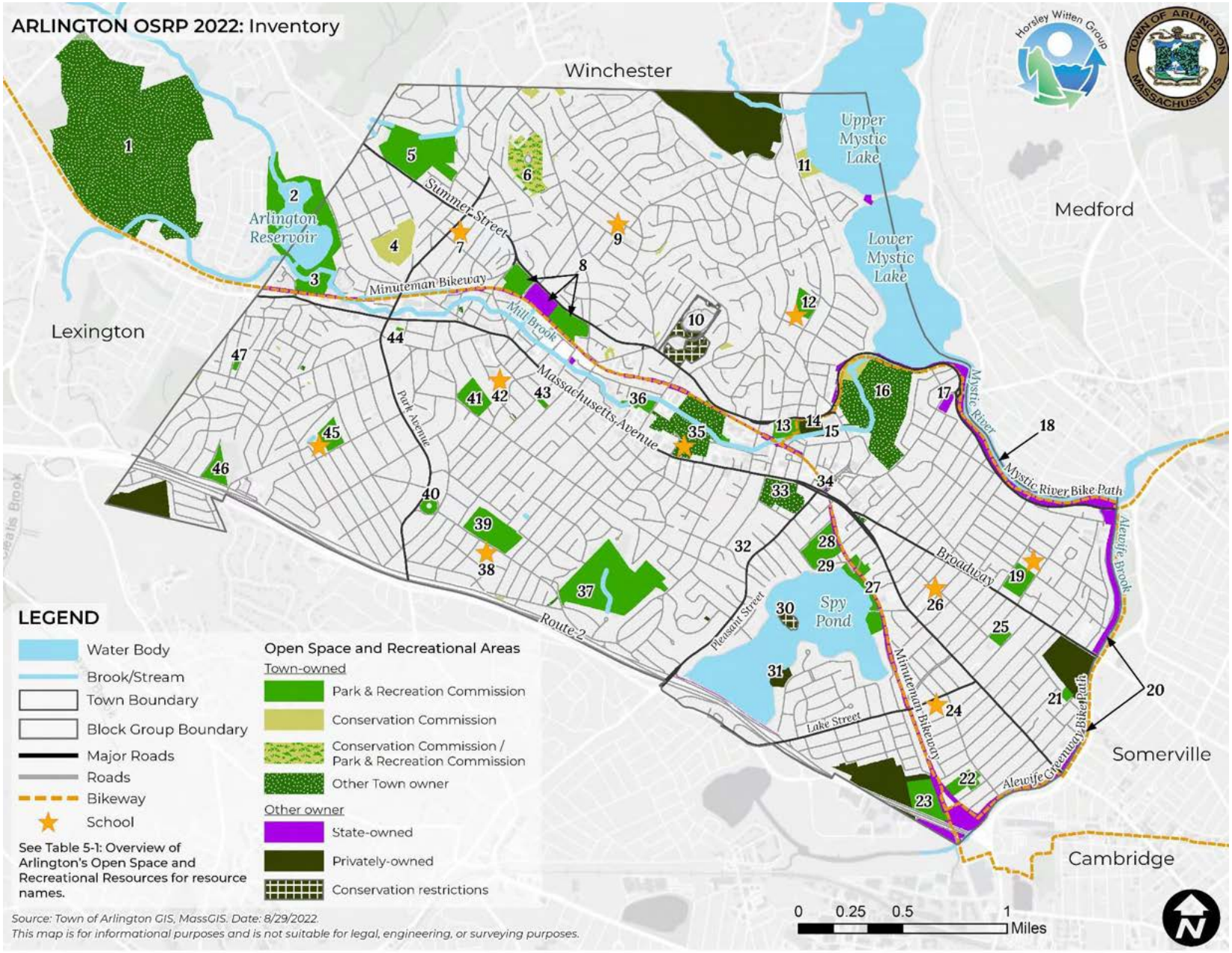
Habitat Name	Documented Flora and Fauna
Alewife Brook	Small herring run, variety of birds, small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians
Arlington Reservoir	Fish, turtles, bees, dragonflies, 60 species of water birds and shorebirds
Hill Pond	Birds, sunfish, frogs, and insects
Mill Brook	Ducks, birds, mammals- racoons, skunks and coyotes, fishes
Mystic Lakes	Support migrating birds (support Alewife and Blueback Herring), Bald Eagles
Spy Pond	Resting and feeding area for migrating birds, Canada geese, mallard ducks, mute swans
Mystic River	Supports one of the strongest river herring runs, birds, waterfowl

Arlington is home to several threatened and endangered species listed on the Massachusetts Endangered Species List, including six plant species and eight fish and wildlife species, such as the Golden-winged Warbler, Mystic Valley Amphipod, Black-billed Cuckoo, and Orchard Oriole.

Spy Pond has been designated as a Priority Habitat under MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), recognizing it as a critical area where rare and endangered species have been observed, making it a key habitat to protect. Additionally, Spy Pond, the Mystic Lakes, portions of the Mystic River and Alewife Brook, and their surrounding areas have been identified by MassWildlife and The Nature Conservancy's BioMap as core habitats and critical natural landscapes. These ecosystems play a vital role in biodiversity conservation both locally and across the Commonwealth.

According to BioMap data, core habitats cover just under 9% of Arlington's total area and critical natural landscapes cover roughly 7%.

Open Space and Recreational Resources in Arlington



Public Services & Facilities

Overview

Arlington is governed by a five-member Select Board elected at-large, an appointed Town Manager, and a Town Meeting legislative branch made up of 252 representatives elected from Arlington's 21 precincts. The Town's 18 departments provide a range of municipal services, public facilities, and public utilities to ensure a high quality of life for all residents. The Town also has over 80 boards, committees, and commissions that work with departments on a variety of issues.

Arlington's Town Departments include:

- Clerk's Office
- Facilities
- Finance
- Fire
- Human Resources
- Health and Human Services
- Information Technology
- Inspectional Services
- Legal
- Libraries
- Planning and Community Development
- Police
- Public Works
- Purchasing
- Recreation and Community Services
- Schools
- Town Manager

Town Facilities

Arlington's Facilities Department oversees the operations and maintenance of 35 buildings with approximately 1.5 million square feet of space. These include 25 Town buildings and 10 schools.

Town Hall: The Robbins Memorial Town Hall functions as the central hub for Arlington's municipal operations, housing the Town Clerk's Office, Assessor's Office, Selectboard Office, Town Manager's Office, Department of Planning and Community Development, and Human Resources. While well-maintained, the building is in need of enhancements.

Public Library: The Arlington Public Library system provides access to a variety of traditional and technological resources for all residents across two libraries: the Robbins Library main branch located in Arlington Center, and the Edith M. Fox Library, known as the Fox Branch, located in East Arlington. In addition to circulating physical and digital materials, both locations offer meeting spaces for community groups and host a range of in-person and online programming and events for all ages. In 2024, the library system had over 319,000 total visitors and circulated more than 976,000 physical and electronic materials. The libraries have seen an increase in all metrics over the past five years especially in the community's use of digital materials and program attendance.

Arlington Senior Center: Operated by the Council on Aging, Arlington's Senior Center provides a variety of programming and activities that support older adult education. It also facilitates access to social services, health and wellness resources, and assisted transportation.

Public Health & Safety

Department of Health and Human Services: includes the Board of Health, the Council on Aging (COA), COA Transportation, Veterans Services, and the Youth Counseling Center. It also provides professional support to several town boards, notably the Fair Housing Commission, the Disabilities Commission, Board of Health, Council on Aging, Human Rights Commission, and Board of Youth Services.

Arlington Police Department: Arlington's Police Department is organized across three divisions that focus on community services, investigative services and professional standards, and support services and logistics. Sixty-five full-time sworn officers support the Department including one school resource officer and three parking control officers. The Department is located in the Arlington Community Safety Building at the corner of Mystic and Summer Street. The building was renovated in 2015 but the department has already outgrown the space.

In 2024, the Department received about 30,000 emergency calls, which represents a 37% increase from 2020call volumes. The Department is most impacted by traffic levels in town which have resulted in vehicular and pedestrian crashes, parking issues, and congestion which slows response time. Between January 2022 and November 2024, the Department responded to 31 pedestrian crashes, some which included fatalities, and 162 motor vehicle crashes. The majority of these incidents occurred along Medford Street, Park Avenue, Mystic Street, Massachusetts Avenue, Broadway, and Summer Street.

Arlington Fire Department: The Fire Department provides fire prevention and suppression, hazard mitigation, planning for local emergencies, and emergency medical service across the Arlington

community. In addition, the department also provides building inspections on a regular basis for code enforcement, public education projects, training, and performs several related tasks including annual hose testing and hydrant inspections. The Department operates out of three fire stations (Central Fire Station, Highland Station, and Tower Station). In 2024 the Department responded to 5,926 calls for assistance, 70% of which were for medical emergencies entailing emergency medical response and emergency medical assist. That was an increase from 59% in 2021.

The Department includes a Class 1 Rescue/Ambulance staffed by two EMT-Basics, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Department currently has seventy-six EMT's. When staffing allows, Rescue 2 is placed in service as a second transport vehicle. In 2024, the Department's ambulance service responded to a total of 3,338 medical emergencies, up 9.6% from 2021.

The Fire Department works in partnership with the Arlington Emergency Management Office which is charged with developing and implementing the Town's Comprehensive Emergency Management (CEM) plan. The CEM plan focuses on preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery from all risks, including man-caused emergencies and natural disasters.

Infrastructure & Municipal Services

Water & Sewer

Arlington's public water and sewer system is managed by its Department of Public Works (DPW) in partnership with the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA). While the town maintains its own water and sewer infrastructure, it purchases water and sewer service from MWRA. About 130 miles of water lines and 115 miles of sewer lines make up the system.

Like many other communities, this infrastructure is aging and in need of repair and replacement. The town continually works to maintain and upgrade its aging water and sewer system's infrastructure to maintain reliable services. Funding is in place to replace about one mile of water piping per year. Expediting this replacement process would require a water rate adjustment. Different sections of Arlington's sewer system are inspected and improved each year. As of 2025, DPW confirmed the Town has already completed one full cycle of upgrades and is beginning the process again to keep up with the ongoing maintenance needs.

Stormwater

Arlington manages its stormwater program through a Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) permit under the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). The Town has also enacted a Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) to help it target drainage infrastructure improvements to safeguard the water quality of its surface water resources. Because Arlington has a separated sewer system it does not directly experience combined sewer overflows (CSOs) within town boundaries. It is impacted, however, by neighboring CSO

communities that discharge into shared waterbodies along Arlington's town line, most notably Alewife Brook.

High volume and duration rainfall events result in significant flooding throughout town due to Arlington's high density and level of impervious surfaces as well as its local topography which directs waterflow to Mill Brook. One to two significant flood events typically occur each year at key points along Mill Brook impacting some residents whose properties intersect the floodplain. Recognizing Mill Brook's capacity cannot increase, DPW focuses on flood mitigation and preparedness.

Waste Management

The Town facilitates waste collection through a contract with Waste Management. The service provides weekly curbside and dumpster collection for solid waste, recycling, and yard waste from residential and commercial locations. Arlington's mandatory recycling program has decreased solid waste tonnage over the years. Trash is taken to an incinerator in North Andover, and recycling goes to GreenWorks in Peabody where it is sorted and sold to make new consumer goods. The Town operates a Reuse & Recycling Center that accepts items not suitable for curbside pickup, such as electronic waste, scrap metal, propane tanks, batteries (excluding alkaline), and bulky rigid plastics. Yard waste is made into mulch and other organic material to enhance soil quality.

Public Schools

Arlington Public Schools serve approximately 6,000 students across eleven schools which include one pre-school, eight elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Total enrollment has increased by about 6% since 2021. Enrollment has grown steadily for the past twenty years and is expected to continue to increase over the next five years.

Menotomy Preschool: A nonprofit preschool located in Arlington High School and run by the childhood special education department at AHS, offering work-related training experience for high school students studying early childhood education.

Kindergarten to Grade 5:

Bishop Elementary: Built in 1950, renovated in 2002. Softball/youth baseball diamond, basketball court, multipurpose field, playground, parking lot.

Brackett Elementary: Rebuilt in 2000. Basketball court, multipurpose field, playground, across street from Robbins Farm Park (baseball diamond, multipurpose field, playground)

Dallin Elementary: Rebuilt in 2005. Softball/youth baseball diamond, basketball courts, multipurpose field, playground, tot lot

Hardy Elementary: Built in 1926, renovated in 2001. Basketball courts, playground, parking lot available after 3pm

Peirce Elementary: Rebuilt in 2004. Basketball courts, playground, tot lot, parking lot available after 3pm

Stratton Elementary: Built in 1962, renovated in 2011. Basketball courts, multipurpose field, playground, parking lot available after 3pm

Thompson Elementary: Rebuilt in 2013. Basketball court, softball/youth baseball diamond, playgrounds, baseball diamond, multipurpose field, picnic tables, seasonal spray pool, parking lot

Gibbs School: Grades 3-8. Built 1928, renovated in 2018. Playground, gardens, outdoor classroom.

Ottoson Middle School: Grades 6-8. Built in 1920, renovated in 1998. Softball/youth baseball diamond, practice area, parking

Arlington High School: Grades 9-12. Rebuilt 2020-2025. Three gymnasiums, baseball/soccer field, softball/football field, amphitheater, football stadium and track.

The Arlington High School Building Project began in 2020 to improve and expand the facility to keep up with increasing enrollment and transform outdated infrastructure to better meet today's education needs. The four-phase project includes the addition of performing arts and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) wings, new educational spaces for humanities, the library, and Menotomy Preschool, administrative offices, a black box theater, and new athletic facilities and turf fields. The project has entered phase four and is expected to be completed in September 2025.

Town Financials

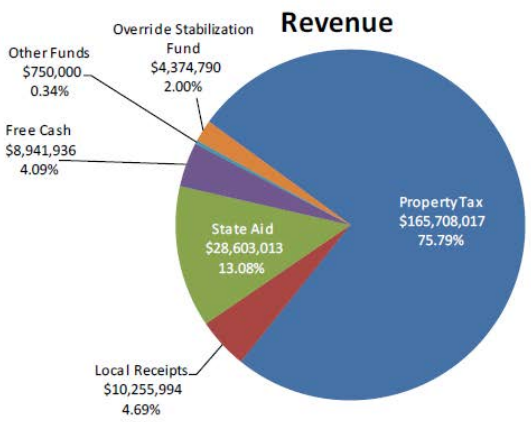
Three-quarters of the Town's revenue comes from local property taxes. In Fiscal Year 2025, the total tax levy was approximately $166,205,000, of which 94.7% was residential. 3.6% was commercial and less than 0.2% industrial. The remaining 1.5% was from personal property taxes. Compared to Fiscal Year 2021, the residential share has stayed about the same while the share of commercial and industrial both shrank and personal property increased.

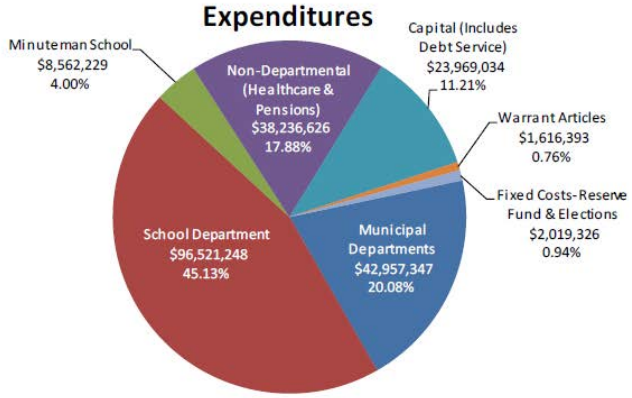
While a fairly stable source of revenue, property tax increases are limited by Proposition 2½ and have been insufficient to keep pace with rising costs. New growth, primarily from new construction and redevelopment, can also increase the Town's revenue but has averaged only about 1% in recent years, among the bottom third of Massachusetts' towns and cities. This creates a structural deficit where limited property tax revenue increases lag behind steadily increasing costs for essential services. Fiscal Year 2026 is the final year of a three-year plan that incorporated the Proposition 2½ override approved in November 2023.

Almost half of the Town's expenditures are allocated to the School Department (45%). Non-departmental (healthcare and pensions) is another sizable expenditure at almost 18%. Municipal departments account for about 20% of expenditures.

Fiscal Year 2025

Total $218,633,750





Enterprise Funds

The Town has five enterprise funds separate from the Town's General Fund: water/sewer, recreation, Ed Burns Arena/Sports Center, Council on Aging Transportation, and Youth Counseling Center. The water/sewer fund is the largest with a Fiscal Year 2025 budget of approximately $24.5 million. The others range from $130,000 to $2.6 million.

Capital Improvement Program

The goal of the Capital Planning Program is to provide a means of planning for the maintenance and improvement of the capital assets and infrastructure of the Town. The maintenance of infrastructure and the capital assets are of vital importance to the delivery of quality services. Over the five-year span of the capital improvement program, the total budget is estimated around $67.8 million. The Fiscal Year 2025 capital improvement budget is $16 million. About half is allocated to six Public Works divisions. Schools is the next largest component at around 28%.

Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) allows participating cities and towns to reserve dedicated funds to preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop open space and recreational facilities. The acquisition, creation and preservation of these community assets is financed through the Community Preservation Fund, comprised of local revenues collected from a property tax surcharge (1.5% of the net tax levy in Arlington), plus annual distributions from the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund.

The Town of Arlington passed the CPA in November 2014. The Town began collecting local tax surcharge revenue in 2015 and received the first annual state CPA distribution in 2016. The first round of CPA grants was approved by Annual Town Meeting in 2016.

To date, Arlington CPA grants have directly leveraged at least $800,000 in new outside funding for open space, recreation, and historic preservation in Arlington. In addition, CPA has contributed to the required local match for millions in federal and state housing awards to date.

Mobility & Access

Overview

Arlington provides its residents with a robust multimodal transportation network. The roadway network is well-connected, providing multiple connections between residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and employment centers both locally and regionally. The local road network is complemented with through roads, which allows for streamlined travel for those passing through Arlington and connecting to Boston or Cambridge without substantially impacting residential traffic flows. Public transit is available to Arlington residents through the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) bus network. MBTA's web of bus routes through Arlington provides residents with frequent and accessible service, and several bus routes connect directly with rapid transit subway service at Alewife Station and Harvard Station.

Sidewalk and active transportation infrastructure continues to develop in Arlington, with increasing emphasis on the long-term sustainability of the Town's mobility network. Though the current sidewalk network is far-reaching and deemed to be in above-fair condition, instances of crashes particularly involving pedestrians and cyclists remain high along Massachusetts Avenue. This can partially be explained by the confluence of bus, cyclist, auto, and pedestrian traffic on this thoroughfare. While the Town is expanding multimodal infrastructure, additional steps are needed to ensure complementary traffic calming measures take place.

Roadway Network

People driving, taking transit, making deliveries, biking, and walking in Arlington, whether for work, travel, or social activities, have several key roadways to choose from. Most of these thoroughfares connect the town in the east-west direction: Route 2, Route 2A, Route 16, and Route 60. These roads, predominantly characterized as principal arterials or urban major arterials, are essential in bringing commuters into and out of Arlington during peak travel periods. Route 2 runs along the Town's southern border and is the only controlled-access route, connecting to Cambridge, I-95, and beyond.

The functional classification of Arlington's roadways are depicted in Table 1. The classification of a roadway indicates its function and its scale of connectivity spanning from local access to through movement. As seen in Table 1, 97 miles (73%) of Arlington's roadway network fall into the local classification. Arterials and collectors comprise 17% of the roadway network, while state and national highway-designated roads make up the remainder.

Table 1: Classification of Roads in Arlington[1]

Classification	Roadway Miles
Local	97
Arterial	12
Collector	10
Ramp	2
State Route	8
US Highway	3

[1] Road Inventory from 2024: Road Inventory 2024 | MassDOT Open Data Portal

Arterial Roads

Arterials provide the highest level of mobility for vehicles. These are often state highways and provide limited multimodal options for roadway users.

Collector Roads

This functional class of road allows for access to abutting land with higher frequency than an arterial road. Collector roads link local roadways to larger arterials.

Local Roads

Local roads connect drivers to abutting land and prioritize frequent access needs over connectivity or transit needs.

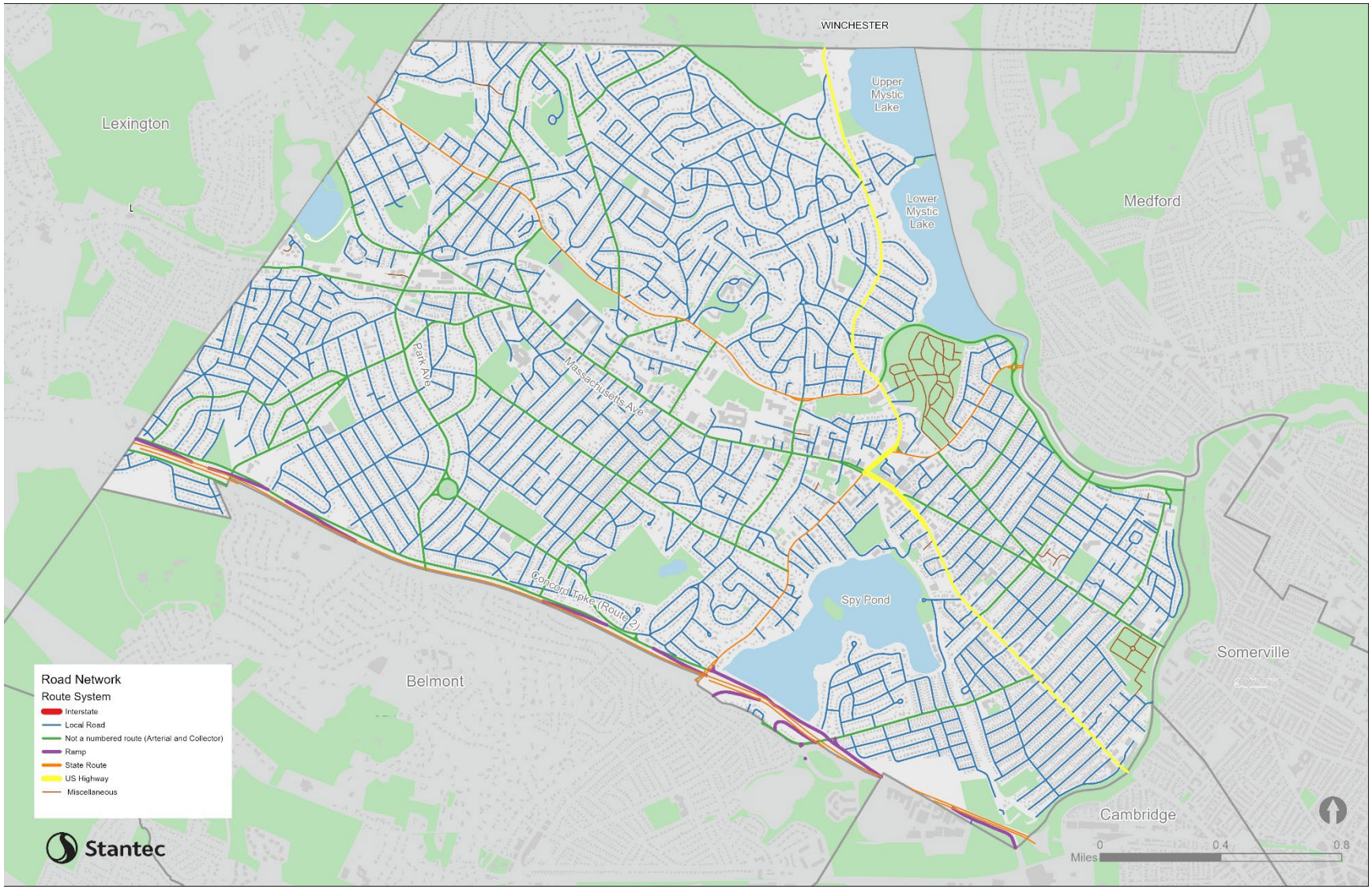
This classification of road is divided into accepted town roads (those owned by the Town) and unaccepted town roads (private ways). The Town of Arlington plows all roads in the winter months, but all other maintenance of private ways are the responsibility of the abutting owners per state laws governing private ways.

Roadway Jurisdiction

Figure 2 depicts the current jurisdiction of roads in Arlington. The jurisdiction of a roadway indicates the ownership and responsibility for maintenance, enhancements, and repairs.

The majority of roads in Arlington fall under the jurisdiction of the Town. The state-owned roadways include sections of Route 2 and segments of Route 3, which are maintained by the Commonwealth.

Figure 1: Classification of Roads in Arlington (*MassDOT, 2024)*[2]



[2] Road Inventory from 2024: [Road Inventory 2024 | MassDOT Open Data Portal]

Figure 2: Arlington Roadways and Ownership (MassDOT, 2024)[3]



Key Arterials

Table 2: Classification of Key Arterials in Arlington

Street	Other Designations	Function	Roadway Characteristics	Context	Ownership
Route 2	**N/A**	Principal arterial connecting connection between Boston and NY State line. Commuting route for workers in northwest suburbs to Boston	Three to four lanes in each direction. Five exits into Arlington. No bicycle facilities	Walled-in highway	MassDOT
Route 2A	Massachusetts Avenue, Mystic Street, Summer Street	Principal arterial and minor arterial running in the east-west direction. A connection between the Cambridge city line and the start of Summer Street. Offers a similar function as Route 2, but at slower speeds	One to two lanes in each direction. Sidewalks on both sides, intermittent bike lanes.	Varies: commercial, residential	
US Route 3	Mystic Street and Massachusetts Avenue	Principal arterial provides connection between surrounding suburbs and Boston area	One to two lanes in each direction along Massachusetts Avenue; two-lane roadway along Mystic Street. Sidewalks on both sides, proposed bike lane.	Residential, industrial, park and open space	MassDOT
Route 16	Alewife Brook Parkway	Principal arterial and east-west connection between Revere and Webster, however in Arlington is oriented in north-south direction, running along the border at the Cambridge city line	One lane in each direction		DCR

[3] Road Inventory from 2024: Road Inventory 2024 | MassDOT Open Data Portal

Route 60	Medford Street, Chestnut Street, Mystic Street, Pleasant Street	Urban major Arterial and east-west connection between Revere and Waltham Provides a link for residents traveling between Medford and Belmont, and between Route 2 and Interstate 93 Used by commercial vehicles	One lane in each direction Near shared use bike path	Residential, industrial, commercial, and open space	MassDOT
Lake Street	N/A	Urban minor arterial and connection between Massachusetts Avenue and Route 2 Used by commuters and for local school pick-up times	One lane in each direction Sidewalks on both sides, partial existing bike lane, proposed completed bike lane	Residential	Town
Mill Street	N/A	Urban minor arterial and connection between Massachusetts Avenue and Route 2A Crosses the Minuteman Bikeway. Primary point of access for those going to Arlington High School	One lane in each direction Sidewalks on both sides, proposed bike lane	Commercial	Town
Park Avenue	N/A	Urban minor arterial and connection between Route 2A and Belmont. Crosses Massachusetts Avenue, and bisects Arlington in the north-south direction	One lane in each direction Sidewalk both sides, protected bike lane for a section, shared street bike lane in other sections	Residential and commercial when passing Massachusetts Avenue	Town

Signalized Intersections

Arlington has 34 signalized intersections including both state-owned and Town-owned, as shown below.

Signalized Intersection Under MassDOT Jurisdiction

- Lake Street/Route 2 WB Ramps
- Park Avenue/Frontage Road D (North Side)
- Pleasant Street/Frontage Road D (North Side)
- Lake/Street Route 2 E Exit 60
- Massachusetts Avenue/Route 16*

Signalized Intersection Under Town Jurisdiction

- Pleasant Street /Irving Street
- Summer Street/Mill Street/Cutter Hill Road
- Broadway/Bates Road/Warren Street/River Street
- Broadway/Franklin Street
- Park Avenue/Florence Avenue
- Mystic Street/Columbia Road/Kimball Road
- Broadway/Oxford Street/N. Union Street
- Massachusetts Avenue/Shoulder Circle/Lockeland Avenue
- Massachusetts Avenue/High School Drive
- Mystic Street/Chestnut Street
- Medford Street/Warren Street
- Appleton Street/Appleton Place/Mass. Avenue
- Lake Street/Brooks Avenue
- Massachusetts Avenue/Jason Court/Mill Street
- Massachusetts Avenue/Franklin Street
- Mystic Valley Parkway/River Street/Harvard Avenue
- Route 2A (Summer Street)/Overlook Road/Ryder Street
- Route 2A (Summer Street)/Park Avenue Extension
- Route 2A (Summer Street)/Forest Street
- Mass. Avenue/Brattle Street
- Mystic Street/Summer Street/Mystic Valley Parkway
- Massachusetts Avenue/Lake Street/Winter Street
- Massachusetts Avenue/Pleasant Street/Mystic Street
- Massachusetts Avenue/Broadway
- Massachusetts Avenue/Swan Place
- Route 2A (Summer Street)/Brattle Street/Hemlock Street
- Massachusetts Avenue/Park Avenue
- Massachusetts Avenue/Linwood Street/Foster Street
- Gray Street/Highland Avenue
- Broadway/Cleveland Street
- Massachusetts Avenue/Thorndike Street/Teel Street

Parking Facilities

Arlington has on-street parking in many of its residential neighborhoods. Parking is time-restricted in the three commercial districts: Arlington Heights, East Arlington, and Arlington Center. In Arlington Center, parkers pay-to-park, contributing to a parking benefits district. No overnight parking is allowed on any public street in Arlington. The Town has a pilot program to allow 150 permits for overnight on-street parking at a cost of $1 per day.

Additionally, the Town has invested in electric vehicle charging stations for Town vehicles, with ten locations in Arlington as of June 2025.

Traffic Safety

Vehicular, Pedestrian, and Bicycle Crashes

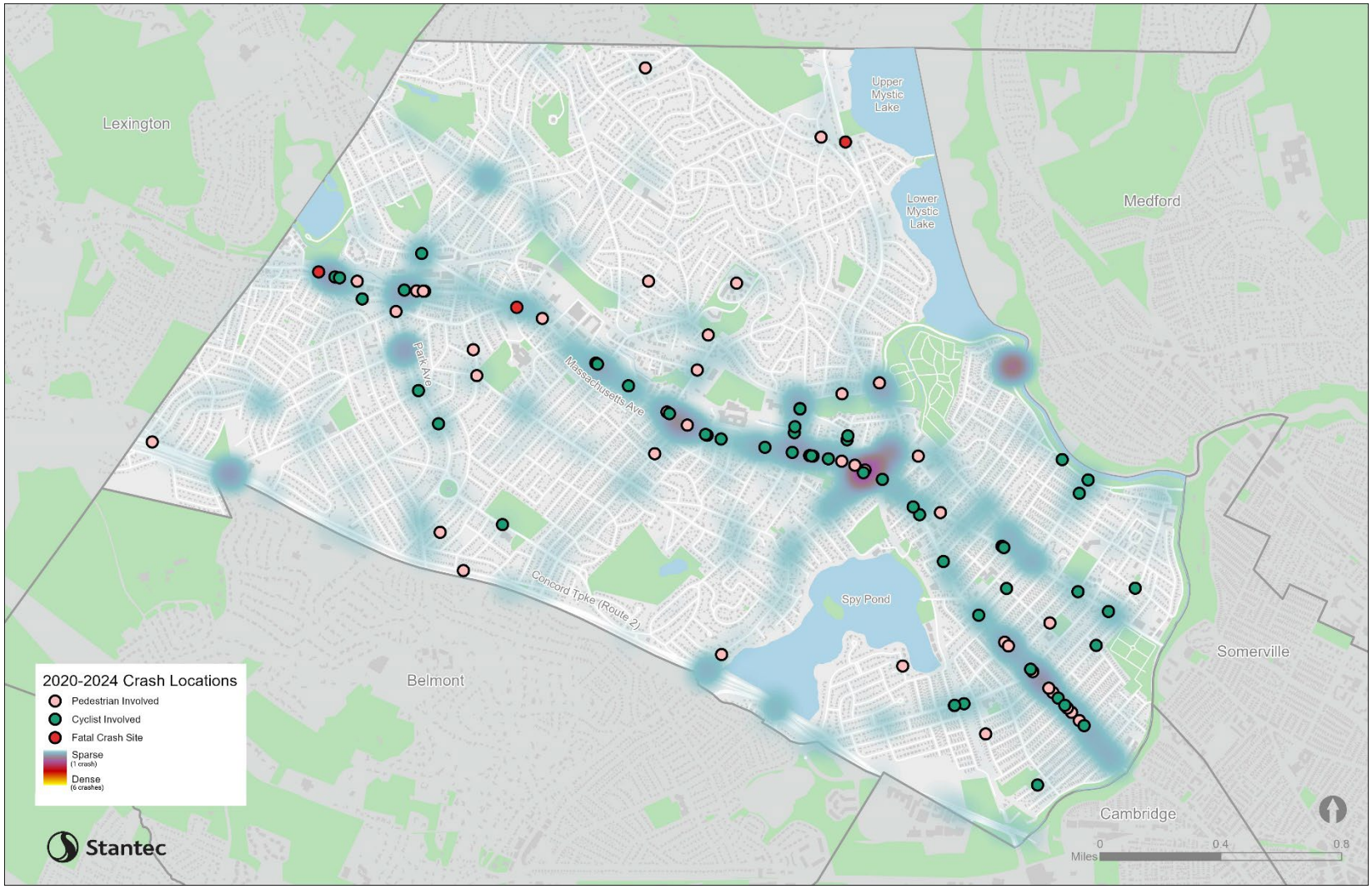
Potential transportation safety conflicts in Arlington were visualized using MassDOT crash data from 2020 to 2024. This data indicates that collisions are occurring along Massachusetts Avenue, with fatalities occurring at intersections with Dundee Road and Appleton Street. Collisions along this stretch often involve pedestrians and cyclists. Crashes involving solely vehicles are more concentrated along Mystic Street and Massachusetts Avenue within Arlington's central historic and business district. According to MassDOT information, 25 pedestrian crashes, 40 bicycle crashes, and 17 intersection crashes were contained within the top 5% of Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) clusters (2021).

Table 3 Types of Crashes[4] [5] [6] [7] [8]

Crash Description	Number of Crashes (2020-2024)
Fatal injury	3
Pedestrian Involved	51
Cyclist Involved	53
Total Crashes	*1,568*

[4] Crash Data from 2020: 2020 Crashes | MassGIS Data Hub
[5] Crash Data from 2021: 2021 Crashes | MassDOT Open Data Portal
[6] Crash Data from 2022: 2022 Crashes | MassDOT Open Data Portal
[7] Crash Data from 2023: https://geo-massdot.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/MassDOT::2023-crashes/about
[8] Crash Data from 2024: 2024 Crashes | MassDOT Open Data Portal

Figure 3 Arlington Crash Locations 2020-2024



Note: Crash locations based on merged MassDOT Impact Data from 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024[9] [10] [11] [12] *The sparse and dense designations identify areas of town that have experienced a lower or higher concentration of crashes.*

Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

Pedestrian Facilities

Infrastructure for pedestrians is generally available throughout Arlington, with sidewalks present on all major corridors and throughout most neighborhoods. All residential neighborhoods, except for Turkey Hill in the northwest and an area in the southwest portion of Arlington Heights, have consistent sidewalks on both sides of the street infrastructure. Additionally, sidewalk conditions at and around bus stops in Arlington are generally sufficient and maintained. Sidewalks in Arlington are doubly useful for both mobility and recreation. Along Broadway, various outdoor dining and seating areas allow the sidewalk to be a place of socialization and commerce. Curb extension and pedestrian plazas further enhance the sense of community taking place on Town sidewalks.

Pedestrians also enjoy a diverse tree canopy over most sidewalks, though areas along Massachusetts Avenue, particularly west of Academy street, stand to benefit from greater shading.

The Town provides snow plowing along all roadways and private ways. At bus stops, the MBTA has responsibility for clearing snow from sidewalks. Sidewalks outside of MBTA jurisdiction are cleared by adjacent residents or business owners.

Pathways

Three miles of the Minuteman Bikeway pass through Arlington, linking residents in Bedford, Lexington, and Cambridge on a shared use path. Traveling on the bikeway, pedestrians and cyclists pass several parks and historic sites. The pathway also is an economic asset, as it links areas of major business and downtown activities, such as Arlington Heights, Arlington Center, and East Arlington.

The bikeway connects Arlington to the regional bicycle paths, such as the Somerville Community Path, the Fitchburg Cut-off Path, the Alewife Greenway (with access to Alewife Station), the Reformatory Branch Trail in Bedford, and the Narrow-Gauge Rail-Trail in Bedford.

[9]Crash Data from 2020: 2020 Crashes | MassGIS Data Hub
[10] Crash Data from 2021: 2021 Crashes | MassDOT Open Data Portal
[11] Crash Data from 2022: 2022 Crashes | MassDOT Open Data Portal
[12] Crash Data from 2023: https://geo-massdot.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/MassDOT::2023-crashes/about

Bicycle Facilities

Arlington's dedicated bicycle facilities connect different recreational assets, as well as areas of commercial and residential life. The Connect Arlington Sustainable Transportation Plan created a map of future bike infrastructure, further developing this network of mobility. Per recommendations outlined in this 2021 plan, the Town has established projects to further develop Massachusetts Avenue bike lane infrastructure and Mystic Valley Parkway bicycle infrastructure. The bike lane design intended for Mystic Valley Parkway is currently in progress and will link the heavily trafficked Minuteman Bikeway to Medford. The increasing presence of shared bike stations enhances the need for a safe and comprehensive bicycle network. As of June 2025, Arlington has ten shared bike stations in the Bluebikes Bike Share System, six of which are located along the Minuteman Bikeway. Often these bike share programs have users that cycle for transportation, rather than recreation, as the network of Bluebikes connects the town to a broader system encompassing Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, Newton, and the Metro Boston area.

Figure 4: Existing Sidewalk Network[13]

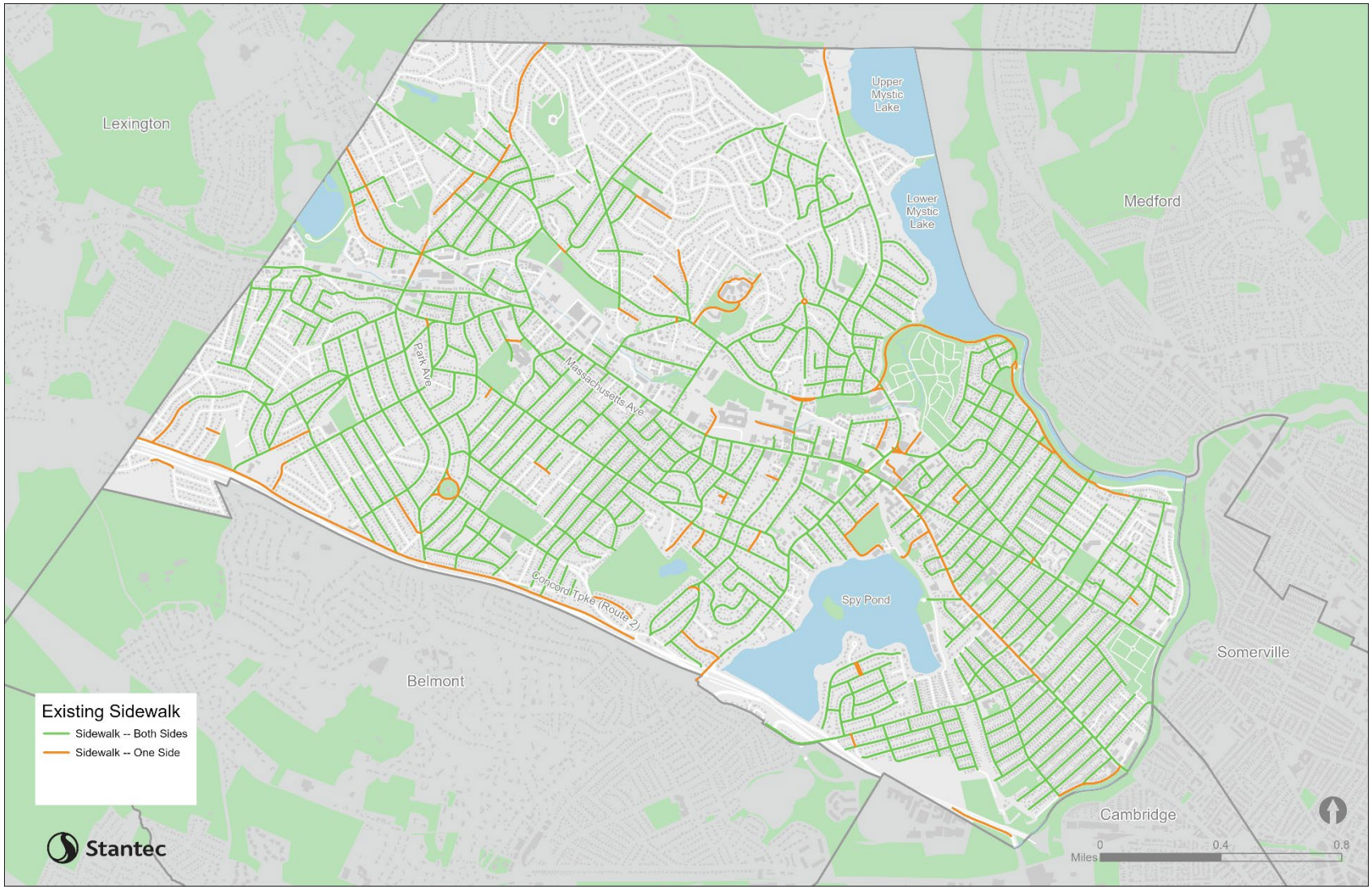
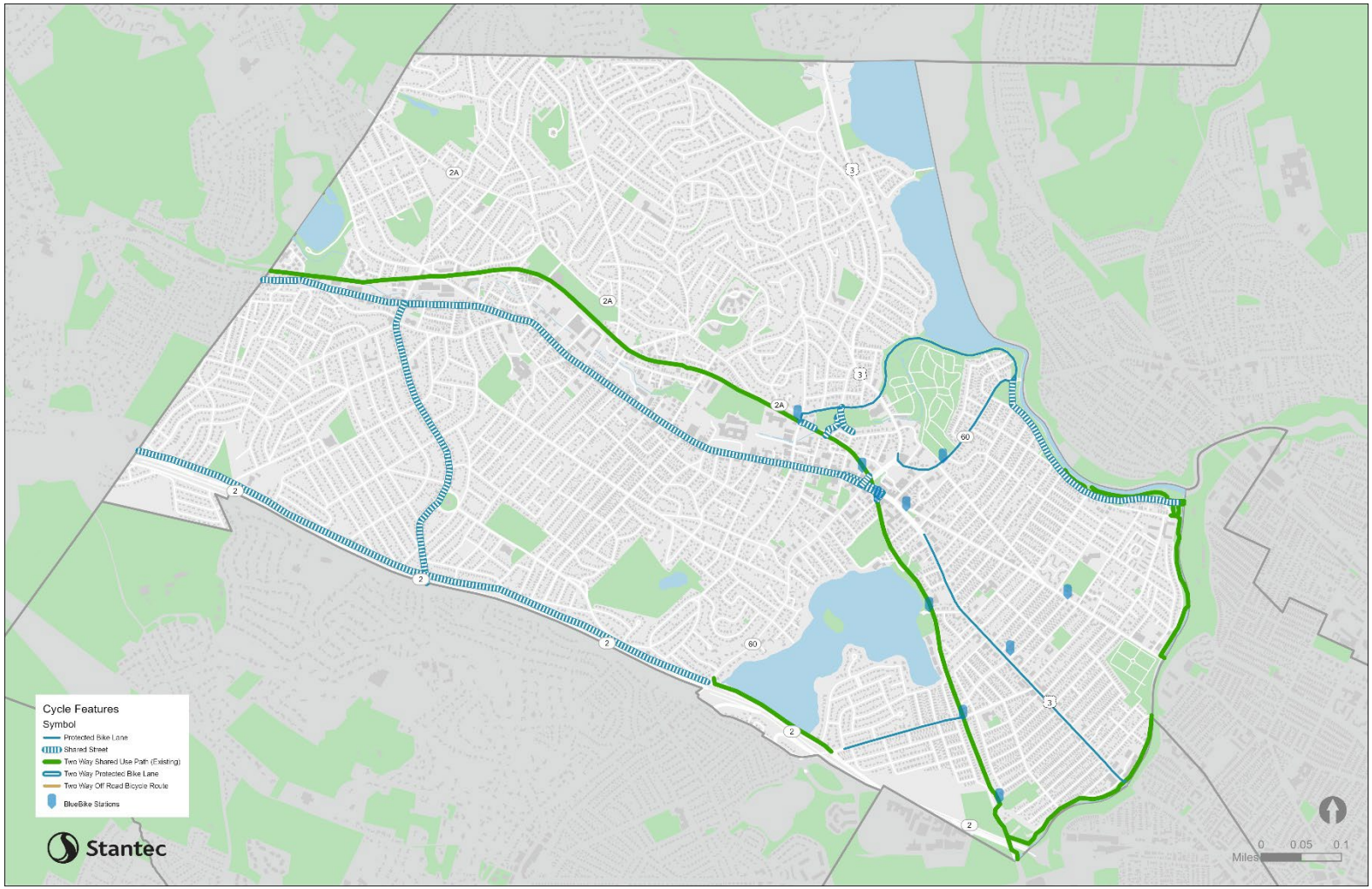


Figure 5 Arlington Bike Bicycle Network and Facilities[14]



[13] Sidewalk Infrastructure Data from 2023: Sidewalk Inventory | MassGIS Data Hub

[14] Bicycle Infrastructure from 2021: Connect Arlington Complete Plan FINAL : Town of Arlington Massachusetts : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive

Transit

Bus Transit

Nine fixed MBTA bus routes pass through Arlington, with one bus route meeting a 15-minute/high frequency headway. Most routes connect east and west, facilitating connection to and from Cambridge and Somerville. In addition, three routes connect directly to Alewife Station, an MBTA station providing rapid transit to Boston. Two others connect to Harvard Station, including the Route 77 bus which provides frequent service at less than 15 minute intervals during morning peak times.

Rapid Transit

There are no stations within the Town boundary that are serviced by rapid transit. However, the Alewife Station is located just beyond the southern town border and accessible through three bus routes. At this MBTA station residents have frequent and fast access to Somerville, Cambridge and Boston via the Red Line.

Arlington is also within two miles of four MBTA commuter rail stations, in Belmont, Winchester, Cambridge, and West Medford.

Transportation for Senior Citizens

Senior citizens in Arlington benefit from transportation services provided through the Town's Council on Aging (COA). The COA's van service costs riders $6 per roundtrip and must be scheduled at least 2 business days in advance.

Medical Escort Services are also provided for trips outside of Arlington limits at the rate of $10 each way.

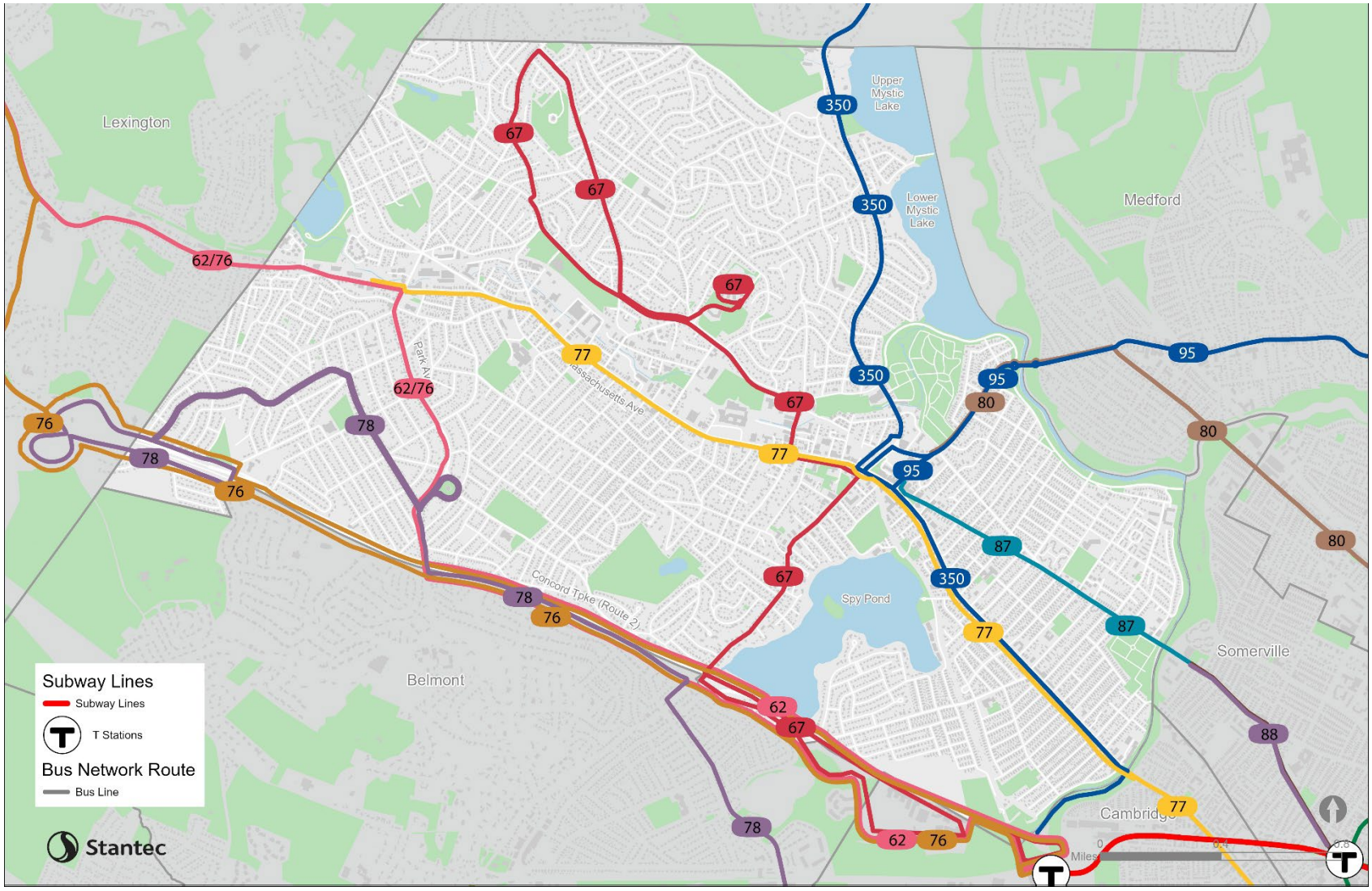
All residents of Arlington have access to free transportation via taxi or rideshare service for any cancer-related appointment. This service is funded through the Sanborn Foundation in partnership with the Arlington Council on Aging.

Table 4 Typical Boarding on Bus Routes through Arlington, Fall 2023

MBTA Bus Route	Route Description	Frequency (avg AM peak, 2025)[15]	Average Weekday Boardings (Fall 2023)[16]
62	Bedford VA Hospital – Alewife Station	40-55 min	675
67	Turkey Hill – Alewife Station	25-30 min	327
76	Alewife via Hanscom Airport	40-55 min	226
77	Arlington Heights – Harvard Station	15 min	4,902
78	Arlmont Village – Harvard Station	20-30 min	1,084
80	Arlington Center – Lechmere Station	40 min	649
87	Clarendon Hill or Arlington Center – Lechmere Station	15-30 min	2,279

[15] Frequency Data from Summer 2025: MBTA Bus Schedule
[16] Average Boarding Data from Fall 2023: MBTA Ridership by Trip, Stop, Season, Route

Figure 6 MBTA Bus Routes through Arlington (March 2025)[17]



[17] System Map Data from 2025: MBTA System Map

General Travel and Commute Patterns

All Trips Estimates

New ways of using available traffic data have allowed planners to predict and model travel demand patterns. *Replica* is a data product that processes Census data, traffic and transit counts, and anonymized mobile GPS data to predict where daily trips are occurring, and the mode and purpose of these trips. Table illustrates the general pattern of the top municipalities from which trips originate that end in Arlington on a typical weekday. Figure 4 further breaks down the origin location of weekday trips, showing specific census tracts where trips are predicted to start. The figure indicates that the majority of trips originate within the Town limits, though there is also east-west demand, with 23% of all trips originating from the east in Boston, Cambridge, Medford, and Somerville.

The data indicates that most trips occur within Arlington, meaning interventions to existing transportation networks stand to benefit most trip takers by improving local roadways.

Table 6: Estimated Mode Share for All Trips, 2024

Mode	Percentage of Trips
Personal Vehicle	73%
Pedestrian	15%
Bike	6%
Transit	3%
Commercial Vehicle	1%
TNC/ Ride Share	1%
Other	1%

Figure 4: Origins of Trips to Arlington Daily, (Fall, 2024)

 illustrates that most trips taken on a weekday are done via private automobiles. The second highest share of trips are made by pedestrians, a mode share that increases from 15% to 17% when looking at just Arlington residents. Table indicates the mode share breakdown of trips made by just Arlington residents.

Table 5: Top Trip Origins for Trips that end in Arlington, Weekday, Fall 2024[18]

Trip Origin	Percent of All Trips
Arlington	47%
Boston	8%
Cambridge	7%
Medford	4%
Somerville	4%
Other	30%

[18] Origin Trip Data from Fall, 2024: Replica: Data to Drive Decisions about the Built Environment

Table 6: Estimated Mode Share for All Trips, 2024[19]

Mode	Percentage of Trips
Personal Vehicle	73%
Pedestrian	15%
Bike	6%
Transit	3%
Commercial Vehicle	1%
TNC/ Ride Share	1%
Other	1%

[19] Origin Trip Data from Fall, 2024: Replica: Data to Drive Decisions about the Built Environment

Figure 4: Origins of Trips to Arlington Daily, (Fall, 2024)[20]



Auto Ownership

As of 2023, it was estimated that 4% of households in Arlington do not own vehicles, representing a population that is entirely dependent on multimodal infrastructure to walk, bike, take transit, use transportation network companies or taxis, or other alternatives for moving around Arlington and beyond. Table shows the percentage of households with zero vehicles, compared to those with at least one.

Table 7: Arlington Residents Mode Share for All Trips, 2024[21]

Mode	Number of Trips of Residents
Personal Vehicle	72%
Pedestrian	17%
Bike	7%
Transit	3%
Other	1%
TNC/Ride Share	0%

Table 8: Auto Ownership of Arlington Households[22]

Number of Vehicles	Percentage of Households
2	43%
1	40%
3+	14%
0	4%

[20] Origin Trip Data from Fall, 2024: Replica: Data to Drive Decisions about the Built Environment

[21] Origin Trip Data from Fall, 2024: Replica: Data to Drive Decisions about the Built Environment

[22] Car Ownership Data from 2019-2023: 5-Year Estimates: Commute in Arlington Massachusetts - Census Bureau Tables

Commute Mode Choice

Using census data to verify commuter mode choice, Table indicates that Arlington residents most often choose to travel via personal vehicle. Around 2% of residents walk, while 18% use public transportation. Roughly 48% of Arlington residents work from home for at least part of the work week, likely due to the changes caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.[23] When comparing the mode share of multimodal transportation in Arlington versus the State, it far outpaces the Massachusetts average for walking, biking and public transit use.

Commuting Time

The average commuting time of Arlington residents is 32 minutes according to 2019-2023 census data, and predicted to be around 16 miles.[24] The relationship between miles traveled and average commuting time could be explained by the higher than average rates of congestion experienced on arterials going into Boston or Cambridge.

Table 11: Arlington Commuter Mode Share[25]

Mode	Number of Trips of Residents
Personal Vehicle	71%
Transit	18%
Bike	7%
Pedestrian	2%
TNC/Ride Share	1%

[23] American Community Survey data from 2023: https://data.census.gov/.
[24] Commuter Data from 2019-2023 5-Year Estimates: Commute in Arlington Massachusetts - Census Bureau Tables

[25] Commuter Data from 2019-2023 5-Year Estimates: Commute in Arlington Massachusetts - Census Bureau Tables