

Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan

Public Participation Plan

The Public Participation Plan is an internal working document used by the Arlington Open Space Committee (OSC) and the Town of Arlington to guide public outreach and communications for the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update.

I. Messaging

A. Key Messages

To ensure that all OSC members are sharing the same message about the OSRP and the update process, the following are primary talking points.

Elevator Speech

Key points to make:

- **Keeping the OSRP current allows the Town to maintain and enhance the benefits of its open space and recreation resources.** These resources provide environmental, social, and economic benefits for Arlington residents. Natural areas remove air pollutants, protect and enhance water quality, and provide wildlife habitat. These resources also contribute to our quality of life, giving us places to be active and gather as a community. Parks and open space boost property values and increase municipal revenue.
- **This is your town. Be a part of it!** The OSRP is shaped by the community. It takes into consideration the open space and recreational needs of residents and outlines an action plan to address those needs. Everyone is invited to participate and have their voices heard through an open and transparent process.
- **Having an approved OSRP keeps the Town eligible and in position to acquire funding.** Having an approved OSRP keeps the Town eligible for funding from the Commonwealth and provides a basis of public support for other funding opportunities.
- **The OSRP serves as Town policy for open space, natural resources, and recreation issues.** In concert with the 2015 Master Plan and other Town reports and plans, the OSRP lays out goals and objectives that guide relevant departments, commissions, and other groups in making decisions that affect our natural environment and recreational opportunities.

B. Key Project Information

- Key Contacts
OSRPUpdate@town.arlington.ma.us
Emily Sullivan, Environmental Planner and Conservation Agent, esullivan@town.arlington.ma.us, 781-316-3012
Ann LeRoyer, Open Space Committee Chair

- Timeline: January 2021 to March 2022

II. Public Engagement Strategies

The following outlines the different methods that will be used to collect public input during the update process. These methods will be used to document community needs and feedback on the draft OSRP.

A. Interviews with Municipal Staff by HW

HW will conduct interviews with municipal staff as part of updating and factfinding for Sections 3: Community Setting and 4: Environmental Inventory and Analysis of the OSRP. Additionally, a group work session will be an opportunity to discuss the management and operational needs of municipal departments and/or committees. This discussion will help HW draft parts of Section 7: Resource Protection Needs and Management Needs/Change of Use. Needs as well as actions for the Section 9: Action Plan will be discussed. These meetings will take place virtually, and possibly outside of regularly scheduled OSC meetings.

- Planning and Community Development Department
- Department of Public Works
- Recreation Department
- Council on Aging
- Disability Commission
- Town Manager's Office
- School Department

B. Targeted Engagement of Non-Municipal Groups by HW

There may be other opportunities to interview or organize group meetings with non-municipal individuals and organizations as part of either the fact-finding effort or public input (or both). This can be a strategy to reach and engage residents that have special needs or do not participate in more traditional public events like workshops, including representatives of Environmental Justice Communities, youth, and seniors. These meetings can be led by HW or the OSC through a Meeting in a Box (see below). They will require specific planning to account for those that may not have access to the internet for virtual meetings. Coordination with local social service organizations, Town departments, or community groups that have regular contact with these individuals will help understand barriers and the best way to reach them if accommodations cannot be made.

Proposed during the early stages of the update process, the discussion at these meetings would follow questions asked during the first public workshop (see below).

Possible organizations and groups to target:

- Boys and Girls Club
- Arlington Housing Authority
- Housing Corporation of Arlington
- Youth sports groups

C. Meeting in a Box

OSC members who are interested can hold input meetings with town committees and boards, as well as local groups and organizations they are involved with. The purpose of these meetings will pose

questions to help understand community needs and how the OSRP can help committees meet their goals and objectives. HW will provide meeting materials and training for OSC members, as needed.

Possible organizations and groups to target:

- Specific neighborhood organizations or precincts
- Arlington Eats
- FoodLink
- Youth sports groups
- Park & Recreation Commission
- Conservation Commission
- Sustainable Arlington
- Redevelopment Board

D. Virtual Public Workshops

Below are suggested outlines and format options for two public workshops. See separate proposed logistics as workshops are planned.

Workshop #1 – Identifying Community Needs (June 10, 2021)

Purpose

- Explain the importance of the OSRP.
- Review the update process.
- Understand community needs and if they are being met.

Format Option

- Formal presentation with small groups (virtual).
 - What are we doing well, what could be better, what are new ideas?

Workshop #2 – Vetting Action Plan (Winter 2022)

Purpose

- Recap the OSRP update process and work done to date.
- Describe how the Action Plan was developed.
- Get feedback from community if draft actions are on track, need adjustment, or not appropriate for Arlington.

Format Options

- Formal presentation (to be determined).
- Online open house with surveys (also see below).
- Combination of both.

E. Online Surveys

Online surveys will be used throughout the update process. See separate proposed logistics as surveys are planned.

Purpose

- Allow individuals and groups to provide input at their own pace and on their own schedule.

- Allow OSC/Town to follow up on specific ideas or strategies learned during other public input strategies.

Format Options

- Online surveys: traditional questionnaires with accompanying graphics.
- Geo-mapping survey: questionnaires asking participants to pinpoint locations on a map, upload photos, etc.

Comprehensive Community Survey

A comprehensive community survey helps us understand users' experiences at Arlington conservation and recreational areas, opinions on policies the Town currently implements, and reactions to potentially new approaches. Reviewing surveys conducted for past OSRP updates can be used to develop a new survey and gauge changing needs and/or interests. Paper copies can be made available upon request.

Follow-up Surveys

Geo-mapping surveys and shorter surveys (3 to 5 questions) will be used as follow-up to the community survey and/or public workshop. For example, a follow up survey can also be used to review goals and objectives or get feedback on more refined policies or projects. Geo-mapping surveys can ask follow-up questions about maintenance or needed amenities at specific conservation areas or parks, or which neighborhoods need more access to resources. Geo-mapping surveys might also be more engaging for youth than a standard survey.

F. Listening Posts

While posters can be used to promote upcoming events, they can also be used as "listening posts." Boards describe ideas and pose questions, but, in compliance with public health protocols, instead of offering sticky notes for responses or dot voting, people can scan a code or use a website that directs them to an online survey or form to provide their answers and ideas. Listening posts can be set up at Town buildings that are open, or open by appointment, but also, when the weather is warmer, during outdoor events, such as a farmer's market. Listening posts can also be strategically placed in various open spaces. If permitted a representative could be at the post, respecting social distance requirements and other health and safety protocols.

Possible events to target:

- Farmers' Market
- Town Day (?)
- OSC Members at specific parks

III. Promoting Public Events and Project

This section lists the ways events and input opportunities above are promoted.

A. Media Outreach

HW will work with Emily and Ann to draft press releases for local media outlets. All press releases would be circulated to the full OSC for approval prior to dissemination.

ACMi

HW, Emily, and Ann will coordinate with ACMi as events are planned and when public input opportunities are available. Work with Arlington's Public Information Officer, Joan Roman, will be consulted to coordinate with ACMi and for all Town web- and email-based communications.

Contact: Joan Roman, jroman@town.arlington.ma.us

Other Media

Arlington Advocate, Your Arlington, Patch

If OSC members are interested in writing Op Eds for *Your Arlington*, HW will assist as needed.
<https://www.yourarlington.com/easyblog/entry/70-letters/2631-yourletters-19>

Contact: Bob Sprague

B. Targeted Community Groups and Organizations

Keeping a running list of community groups and organizations that should receive announcements about the OSRP is critical and must be updated regularly. Organizations can be asked to distribute announcements to their members or post on their website, online calendar, or social media presence. This list should include those that have physical or digital newsletters or email distribution lists. Identifying an OSC member that will be the primary contact and reach out to the group/organization will ensure that everyone is contacted. **Note that contact information (emails, phone numbers, etc.) is available in a separate file.**

The OSC will also conduct targeted outreach to Environmental Justice (EJ) communities, as identified by the State's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, and CDBG communities. This targeted outreach will include door hangers inviting residents to participate in upcoming workshops, as well as direct outreach at the parks and open spaces in EJ and CDBG neighborhoods. The OSC will meet these communities where they live and play to get their input in this plan update.

Groups/Organizations that will be asked to help distribute information about project events

Organization	Contact	OSC Contact (if needed)
Arlington Dog Owners Group (A-DOG)	Susan Doctrow	David White
Arlington EATS	Andi Doane	
Arlington Garden Club	Alice (Lolly) Bennett	
Arlington Land Trust	Christopher Leich	Ann LeRoy
Arlington Reservoir Committee	David White	David White
Friends of Alewife Reservation	Ellen Mass	
Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows	David White	David White
Friends of Magnolia Park	Nancy Zimmerman	
Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park	Judy Weinberg	
Friends of Robbins Farm Park	Elaine Backman	Elisabeth Carr-Jones
Friends of Spy Pond Park	Karen Grossman	
Friends of the Robbins Town Garden	Miriam Levine	

Organization	Contact	OSC Contact (if needed)
Coalition to Save the Mugar Wetlands	Jeannette Cummings	
Spy Pond Committee	Brad Barber	David White
Sustainable Arlington	Brucie Moulton	
Tree Committee	Susan Stamps	
Zero Waste Committee	Charlotte Milan	
Bicycle Advisory Committee (ABAC)	Dan Amstutz	
Capital Planning Committee	Sandy Pooler and Timur Yontar	
Cemetery Commission	Michele Hassler	
Commission for Arts and Culture	Adria Arch	
Community Preservation Act Committee	Clarissa Rowe	
Conservation Commission	Emily Sullivan	
Conservation Land Stewards	Emily Sullivan	
Council on Aging	Kristine Shah	
Disability Commission	Jill Harvey	
Envision Arlington Steering Committee	Greg Christiana and Scott Lever	
Historic Districts Commission	Carol Greeley	
Historical Commission	Victoria Rose	
Human Rights Commission	Jill Harvey	
Long Range Planning Committee	Sandy Pooler	
Master Plan Advisory Committee	Jenny Raitt	
Park and Recreation Commission	Joe Connelly	
Redevelopment Board	Jenny Raitt	
School Green Teams	Rachel Oliveri	
Tourism and Economic Development	Angela Olszewski	
Transportation Advisory Committee	Dan Amstutz	
Zoning Board of Appeals	Christian Klein	
Walking in Arlington	Rachel Stark	
Arlington Housing Authority	John Griffin	
Housing Corporation of Arlington	Pam Hallett	
Town Departments		
Arlington School Department	Julie Dunn, School Superintendent – how to best reach out to PTOs	
Arlington Public Library	Andrea Nicolay	
Arlington Recreation Department	Zachary Vaillette	
Arlington Planning and Community Development	Jennifer Raitt	
Health and Human Services (AYCC, COA, Disability Commission)	Christine Bongiorno, Jill Harvey,	

C. Methods

The following are different ways the OSC will use to promote events and the project. Content will have details about the event or encourage people to go to the project website for more information about

what's happening. It will be determined on a case-by-case basis which formats will be used, but generally, the OSC supports these methods to reach residents.

Even with events and input opportunities taking place online due to social gathering limitations and public health concerns, it is important to make sure that promotion is done both electronically and in paper format.

Posters: Posters are generally 24x36 or 18x24 and typically require mounting on/clipping to foam core and an easel for display at Town Hall, schools, library, and other locations. Use will be determined based on local, regional, and state protocols and measures in place to protect public health and access to these locations by the public. Also see Town Bulletin Boards below.

Flyers & Postcards: Flyers are generally 8.5x11 and postcards are 4x6. Both can be paper and electronic. Electronic flyers and postcards are easy to send to targeted community groups and stakeholders by email and, due to their size, printed versions may also be easier to post than posters in the Town's locked bulletin boards (see below) as well as community bulletin boards at local grocery stores, pharmacies, and other retail establishments. HW will coordinate printing with the Town as needed.

Town Bulletin Boards/Alerts: Another low-tech way of promoting the project website and available input opportunities is using the Town's locked bulletin boards in commercial areas and boards in some parks and recreation facilities. HW will coordinate printing with the Town for upcoming events.

OSRP E-News: HW will set up an E-News distribution list on MailChimp. Targeted community groups and organizations listed above will be used as the starting outreach list of emails. Emails voluntarily provided by survey respondents or collected during registration for virtual meetings would also be added.

Email Signature: Town Staff and OSC may consider adding brief "advertisements" to their email signatures, encouraging people to visit the project website or an upcoming public event (this would be attached to all outgoing e-mail messages).

Arlington is updating its Open Space and Recreation Plan! Visit XXX to learn about the plan, the update process, and how you can participate.

Town's Website: Post information/updates about the project throughout the Town's website and calendar of events page that directs people to the project website.

Social Media: Postings on the Town's Facebook page and Twitter account. A list of posts can be prepared ahead of time for continuous and consistent messaging. The OSC social media accounts can share the Town's social media postings about the OSRP update. OSC social media managed by Wendy, Town social media managed by Joan Roman.

Personal Announcements/Piggyback at Other Meetings: Town Staff and OSC members frequently participate in other town meetings or community group events. Asking for an opportunity to make announcement about an upcoming OSRP event or public input opportunity can help spread the word to individuals that might not have heard otherwise. HW can help with preparing announcements and key points to make, as requested.

Door Hangers: Door hangers are a good option to reach residents that may have limited interaction with Town Hall or not receive notifications or frequently visit the Town's website. They can be hung in targeted neighborhoods. Hangers can promote an upcoming public event/opportunity with a website address or QR code to the survey or input form. HW will coordinate with Town in printing/production.

Lawn Signs: Lawn signs are small and will be used to display the project website. They should be strategically placed, such as along a bike path or in parks. HW will coordinate with Town in printing/production.