

Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan 2022-2029

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Town of Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan 2022-2029

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Arlington values equity, diversity, and inclusion. We are committed to building a community where everyone is heard, respected, and protected.

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SECTION 1. PLAN OVERVIEW

The 2022 Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is a policy document the Town will use to guide the protection and enhancement of its open space and recreational resources. Arlington last updated its OSRP in 2015 and has since initiated and completed a range of planning efforts to address that plan's goals. This OSRP is an opportunity to unify the Town's planning efforts across numerous topics—including environmental stewardship, natural hazard and climate change resilience, and complete streets—as they relate to open space and recreation planning to assess what the Town is doing well and how it can better achieve desired outcomes.

This OSRP establishes the following goals to guide the Town's open space and recreation planning:

- Protect the natural environment to retain its important functions and values and help Arlington adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- Ensure the Town's recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces meet local needs and are accessible, safe, and welcoming to all Arlington residents.

- Support local and regional capacity to meet the needs for recreational opportunities, natural resource protection, and overall resources management to be resilient to climate change.
- Build environmental stewardship and public awareness to support the Town's recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces.

To update the OSRP, Arlington initiated a sustained engagement process to raise public awareness and better understand the town's diverse needs for both users and providers of open space and recreational resources. An analysis of these collective short- and long-term needs resulted in the seven-year action plan, which requires collaboration between municipal departments, boards, and committees, in addition to partnerships with local nonprofit and community groups and other municipalities.

Establishing sustainable funding mechanisms will help Arlington achieve its goals of protecting natural resources and providing recreational opportunities for all residents.

SECTION 2. INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of Purpose

The Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) reflects Arlington's intention to preserve, protect, manage, and enhance its valued open spaces and recreational resources. Through research and analysis of open space and recreation needs and past accomplishments, this plan aims to:

- Establish Arlington's short-term and long-term open space and recreation goals, objectives, and priorities;
- Present a broad statement about Arlington's long-term open space and recreation philosophy;
- Document Arlington's current open space and recreational resources inventory; and
- Provide updated information as required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts guidelines for OSRPs.

Arlington adopted its first OSRP in 1996 with subsequent updates in 2002, 2007, and 2015. The 2022 OSRP builds on the accomplishments of these past plans to reinforce the Town's original goals for its open space and recreation resources. This plan provides an overview of the initiatives, plans, studies, and projects completed

since 2015 and describes how they meet stated goals and objectives in the 2015 OSRP. An important overriding purpose of this plan and the entire open space and recreation planning process is to foster public awareness of these issues and to encourage a broad range of participation in its implementation.

B. Planning Process and Public Participation

An important overriding purpose of the OSRP and the entire open space planning process is to foster public awareness of open space issues and to encourage the participation of municipal officials and all residents in the OSRP's implementation. As the Town prepared for the update process, it developed diverse approaches to ensure that all were able to participate and have their voices heard.

1. Arlington Open Space Committee

The Arlington Open Space Committee is responsible for preparing the OSRP and monitoring the Town's progress toward meeting the Plan's goals and objectives as outlined in the Action Plan (Section 9). In doing so, the Open Space Committee also takes an active role in

promoting and advocating for the Town's open spaces. Membership is made up of Arlington representatives and designees from Envision Arlington, the Public Works Department, the Park and Recreation Commission, the Redevelopment Board, and the Conservation Commission.

During the update process, monthly Open Space Committee meetings were an opportunity for residents to hear discussions, review draft materials, and offer public comment. Multiple announcements of public events and other outreach efforts were designed to collect input and feedback from residents. The Open Space Committee website served as the main clearinghouse to share information and promote public input opportunities and other resources for residents. Announcements and reminders of upcoming events were also posted prominently on the home page of Town website. A dedicated OSRP email address was established to collect comments and questions.

Open Space Committee members took an active role in the public engagement process, including acting as facilitators and note takers during two virtual public workshops. They also set up listening stations at open spaces and parks throughout town and at the Arlington Farmer's Market to promote the online survey that was a key part of the update process. Members were able to speak directly with residents about their priorities and

concerns and have a meaningful conversation about possible solutions.

2. Public Engagement

How are we doing?

Public engagement was organized around two key questions. The first was "How are we doing?" A virtual public workshop on June 10, 2021, had nearly 50 participants. After a short introduction, the participants joined facilitated small groups to talk about how they currently experience the Town's conservation and recreational areas. Participants could choose if they wanted to join a group to talk primarily about open space resources or recreational areas. They offered input on the Town's current efforts to protect open space and provide recreational opportunities, what types of resources, amenities, facilities, and programs are needed most in Arlington, and how existing recreation and conservation areas could be improved. The workshop concluded with a report-out from each group, highlighting common themes and issues. See Appendix A for a summary of the June workshop.

Following the workshop, a community survey was designed to organize and confirm the major themes that emerged from the small group discussions. It was promoted through the Town's website, social media, announcements at Town board and committee

meetings, posted flyers on municipal community boards throughout town, and printed postcards available at Town Hall and other public locations. Paper copies of the survey were also made available.

From July through September 2021, Open Space Committee members set up more than 20 "listening posts" in open space and recreation areas to interact directly with residents and to inform them of the survey. Members handed out postcards with the link and QR code to the online version of the survey along with the Committee's website and email address. Some park users completed the survey in hard copy at the listening posts. Members also took the opportunity to talk with people about their experiences and ideas to maintain and improve the Town's open space and recreation resources.

A total of 1,057 people responded to the structured survey questions and provided hundreds of specific comments and recommendations. A summary of the survey results is found in Appendix A.

Are we on the right track?

The second question to the public was "Are we on the right track?" To answer this question, a second public event, held on December 8, 2021, reviewed the themes of the 2015 goals to see if they were still relevant to

meet community needs and if changes could be made to make them more current.

Approximately 30 participants agreed that the overall goal themes were still relevant to meet community needs. Small group discussions helped to prioritize specific actions that the Town should undertake to meet these goals. At the end of the workshop, each group reported out the key points from their discussion. A summary of the second public workshop is found in Appendix A.



Open Space Committee Listening Station. Photo credit: Ann LeRoyer

3. Town Departments and Committees

The Town wanted to use a variety of approaches to engage civic leaders, volunteers, and other groups to ensure that its outreach efforts were reaching as many residents as possible (Section 5 below discusses specific efforts to reach residents in the town's environmental justice neighborhoods).

Interviews were conducted with municipal department staff to help update the community setting and environmental inventories discussed in the OSRP and to understand the work of different departments and how they support the OSRP goals and objectives.

Departments identified for interviews included the Recreation Department, Department of Planning and Community Development, Town Manager's Office (including the Community Preservation Act Committee), Health and Human Services Department (including the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Division office), and Public Works Department.

The Town has undertaken many studies and initiatives since 2015, so the status and impacts of their implementation was discussed with the department staffs, along with any next steps that should be considered in the updated OSRP. Questions focused on each department's ability to meet the itemized goals and objectives in the management of open space and recreational resources, additional resources required if

the goals are not being met, and future efforts to be planned. The 2015 OSRP Action Plan was also reviewed to determine which actions have been completed, which items are still outstanding or in progress, and what new actions should be included for the future.

Arlington has a wide variety of municipal boards, volunteer committees, and park friends groups that were also consulted. Open Space Committee members used their own connections to keep other committees updated and to gather feedback and comments throughout the update process. Specific outreach was made to the Council on Aging and the Disability Commission. The public workshops, online survey, and other opportunities for participation were promoted to all these municipal boards and committees.

4. Recent Town Plans and Initiatives

The Town has initiated or completed many diverse planning efforts since 2015 that have helped inform the OSRP update and provide overall support of open space and recreational planning in Arlington. Each of these efforts involved public engagement to determine needs and priorities for future projects that come out of these plans and studies. They include the following (hyperlinks provide if available online):

- [Connect Arlington](#) (2021)
- Minuteman Bikeway Planning Study (2021)

- Mystic River Path Connection to Minuteman Bikeway Feasibility Study (2021)
- [Net Zero Action Plan](#) (2021)
- [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) (2020)
- [Arlington Heights Neighborhood Action Plan](#) (2019)
- [Mill Brook Corridor Report](#) (2019)
- [Historic Preservation Survey Master Plan Final Report](#) (2019)
- [Arlington Reservoir Master Plan](#) (2018)
- [Arlington Tree Management Plan](#) (2018)
- [Arts and Culture Action Plan](#) (2017)
- [Community Resiliency Building/Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness \(MVP\) Workshop](#) (2017)
- [Arlington Master Plan](#) (2015)
- Complete Streets Prioritization Plan (ongoing)

These plans are referenced in support of the findings on Needs Analysis (Section 7), as well as the development of strategies outlined in the Action Plan (Section 9).

5. Enhanced Neighborhood Outreach

The Town undertook targeted outreach as part of the OSRP update to ensure that it incorporated the needs of all residents, particularly lower-income and minority populations that are often underrepresented in community planning projects. Two sources of data and information guided these efforts: the Commonwealth's

According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA),

"Environmental Justice (EJ) is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution, and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits."

policy on Environmental Justice (EJ) and the federal Community Development Block Grant Program.

Environmental Justice Communities

The Massachusetts Environmental Justice Policy defines EJ populations as:

"those segments of the population that EEA has determined to be most at risk of being unaware of or unable to participate in environmental decision-making or to gain access to state environmental resources, or are especially vulnerable. They are defined as neighborhoods (U.S. Census Bureau

census block group data for minority criteria, and American Community Survey (ACS) data for state median income and English isolation criteria) that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- The annual median household income is not more than 65% of the statewide annual median household income;
- Minorities comprise 40% or more of the population;
- 25% or more of households lack English language proficiency; or
- Minorities comprise 25% or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150% of the statewide annual median household income.”

Arlington has 21 census blocks where 40% or more of residents identify as a minority population (Map 3-2). More discussion on these neighborhoods is found in Community Characteristics, Environmental Justice Populations (Section 3.C.5).

Community Development Block Grant Program

Authorized in 1974, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is one of the longest continuously run programs at the U.S. Department of

Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The CDBG program gives grants to over 1,200 communities each year to address critical and unmet community needs, primarily serving low- and moderate-income households.

Arlington is classified as an Entitlement Community and has received CDBG grants directly from HUD annually since 1975. Each year, nonprofit organizations and town departments apply for a portion of the annual grant for projects that serve low- to moderate-income households. The Town’s eligibility for these funds is based on community demographics, including age of householder and income status. In recent years, the Town has received grants of about \$1 million annually. Over the past 47 years, Arlington has received more than \$58 million from HUD and leveraged millions more through subrecipients, and from other public and private sources.

Targeted Outreach

The following outreach efforts were performed to ensure that residents in EJ and CDBG neighborhoods had the opportunity to participate in the OSRP update process:

- Arlington Housing Authority posted flyers about the public workshops and community survey in common areas of their developments.

- Flyers were posted on community boards and commercial areas within the EJ and CDBG neighborhoods.
- Open Space Committee members set up "listening posts" in parks located within the neighborhoods.
- Given the number of diverse languages spoken by residents, translations of surveys were made available upon request.
- Arlington EATS distributed surveys to their clients and members.

C. Major Accomplishments Since 2015

Arlington's 2015-2022 OSRP outlined more than 75 separate action items grouped under five goal priorities: land protection, maintenance and capital improvements, management of town open spaces, public participation and stewardship, and sustainable approaches for natural resources management. The projects and initiatives described below illustrate the breadth of work that Arlington's government departments, boards, and commissions have accomplished since 2015, in collaboration with many volunteer committees, regional partners, and other groups. Most of these projects address more than one goal or objective simultaneously, and many are ongoing, as elaborated in other sections of this 2022 OSRP.

Arlington Reservoir Master Plan

In 2018, the Arlington Park and Recreation Commission accepted the completed *Arlington Reservoir Master Plan*, creating a tool to plan and strategize funding opportunities for future investments at "The Res." The Master Plan was developed with extensive public input to understand the diverse needs of residents and stakeholders, to foster dialogue, and to build consensus on how to create a first-class open space and recreation facility. Specific goals include:

- Improve the perimeter trail
- Establish a pedestrian circulation strategy
- Establish a vehicular circulation strategy
- Improve site permeability, visibility, and access
- Improve water quality, filtration, and pump equipment system at the bathing beach
- Improve existing recreational facilities
- Improve the Wildlife Habitat Garden, including installation of more durable fencing

As a long-range planning document, the Master Plan presents recommended strategies with phasing scenarios, estimated costs, and maintenance considerations. Extensive public engagement documented community support for these investments and allows the Town to confidently move forward with capital investments at The Res.



The Beach as the Res. Photo credit: Ann LeRoyer

As of March 2022, the Town completed Phase I, and Phase II is nearly complete. Specific activities include:

- Pump House improvements including new filtration and UV system, pump replacement, and building upgrades
- Beach improvements
- ADA accessible walking path
- New playground
- New parking lot
- New boat ramp
- Bank stabilization and native plantings

Funding for these phases was obtained from a combination of the Town's Capital Plan and Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds.

Wellington Park/Mill Brook Corridor Revitalization Project

The improvements along Mill Brook in Wellington Park are part of the implementation of the long-term goal to expand both passive and active recreational opportunities in the Mill Brook corridor and address flooding concerns described in the 2019 *Mill Brook Corridor Report* and the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program Plan. Working with the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA), the Wellington Park/Mill Brook Corridor Revitalization Project has made this area more accessible as an environmental, cultural, and public health resource.

In 2019, with combined CPA funds and an MVP Action Grant from the state, a comprehensive revitalization plan with construction documents was developed for flood mitigation and park improvements. The following year, the Town again leveraged CPA funds and the Town's CDBG program with an MVP Action Grant for construction. The first phase of construction provided enhanced access to a half-acre of the park that had been overgrown with invasive plants. A new boardwalk

and new porous pathways allow for access to the newly visible brook.

Most work was completed in fall 2021, including the installation of seating and gathering spaces near Mill Brook, additional native plantings, a rain garden, and a natural play area. An existing bridge over the brook was found to be unsafe and was demolished. A future project envisions a new bridge with connecting trails on both sides of the brook.



Fields and Playgrounds

Recent studies have led to recommendations for field and playground improvements, several of which are currently in planning or construction phases. In

addition, major renovation projects were completed in 2017 at Magnolia Playground and Community Garden and at Robbins Farm Park and in 2020 at Lussiano Playground at North Union Park.

Playground Assessment and Recommendation Report

In 2019, the Park and Recreation Commission spearheaded an evaluation of the Town's 20 playgrounds. Each was assessed based on surfacing, maintenance of grounds, equipment, and site furnishings. The report highlights that most of the playgrounds assessed were in fair to poor condition overall. Detailed recommendations include short-term retrofits and surfacing needs with estimated costs for some playgrounds and long-term planning needs, including a funding review, for those in the poorest condition.

Field and Playground Feasibility Study

Led by the Recreation Department, the 2021 Field and Playground Feasibility Study provides an assessment of existing conditions at 12 selected athletic fields and playgrounds throughout the town. It documents grading and drainage issues, safety concerns, and other noticeable conditions. It also provides evaluations of site amenities, such as seating, walkways, and other features. Recommendations focus on improvements that enhance ADA accessibility, user safety and function, and

overall aesthetics. As of April 2022, project planning is underway at the following sites documented in the report:

- Spy Pond Playground - Playground renovation
- Hurd Field - Baseball/softball field renovation with walking path
- Robbins Farm Playground and Hill Slide Replacement - Playground renovation and replacement of hill slides
- Poets Corner Field and Playground - Field renovation looking at potential turf field, playground renovation, and other site improvements
- Parmenter Playground and Other Improvements - Playground renovation, basketball court renovation, and other site improvements

Conservation Projects

Arlington's Conservation Commission protects and manages the town's wetlands and conservation lands. It reviews all proposed activity within regulated areas, including any work within 100 feet of a wetland, lake, or pond, within 200 feet of a river or stream, or within the 100-year floodplain. The commission issues permits for and oversees projects that follow state and local wetland regulations. Two recent examples are included here.

Mystic Riverfront Restoration Project

The Mystic River in Arlington was directly impacted by an oil spill on the Mystic Valley Parkway in 2013, making it eligible for grant funding for restoration. The Conservation Commission and Town Engineer prepared a Natural Resource Damages Assessment grant application for the Town and in 2017 received nearly \$50,000 from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). The site is located along the Mystic River at the end of Park Street, within an EJ community.



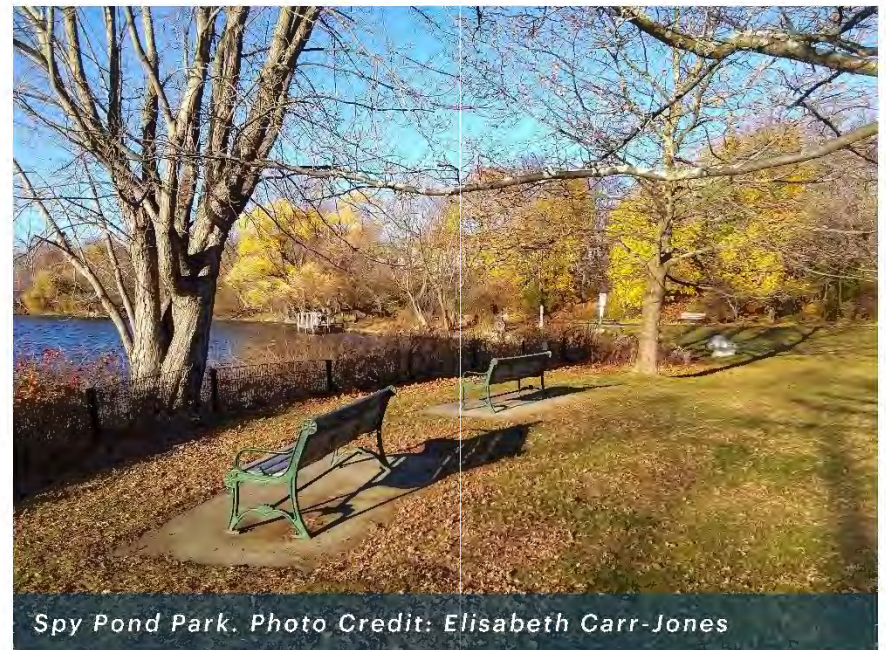
Work began in October 2017 and continued through 2019 to stabilize the slope along the riverbank, remove a broken concrete headwall at the stormwater outfall, repair the drainage pipe, create a swale for flood storage to percolate stormwater runoff, move the dirt footpath around this newly created riparian habitat, and install native plantings and educational signage.

Spy Pond Edge and Erosion Control Project

The Conservation Commission received CPA funding in 2016 to conduct a feasibility study and detailed survey that identified shoreline preservation alternatives and options to mitigate erosion on select portions of Town-owned shoreline along the edge of Spy Pond. Shoreline erosion in these areas resulted primarily from stormwater runoff, wave and ice action, and high recreational use. Over the years, park users have ventured off formal trails and onto banks, creating informal paths that caused unstable banks and erosion. The study concluded that restabilizing the banks would reduce sedimentation into the pond.

In 2019, the Department of Planning and Community Development took the findings from this study and led the Spy Pond Edge and Erosion Control Project. The work included shoreline stabilization, invasive species removal, and revegetation of banks of Town-owned property along the pond. The project also built a wooden platform overlooking the pond and created an

ADA-compliant and permeable pathway through the park. Most of the work occurred within Spy Pond Park, though additional shoreline stabilization took place adjacent to the Boys and Girls Club and behind Scannell Field, where a rain garden swale was also installed. This project was supported with funds from CPA, CDBG, Park and Recreation ADA funds, and Land and Water Conservation Funds from the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services. Additionally, two generous donations were made by the Friends of Spy Pond Park and the Mass Audubon Judy Record Fund.



Spy Pond Park. Photo Credit: Elisabeth Carr-Jones

Public Awareness and Education

The Town of Arlington and many of its departments and volunteer committees sponsor outreach programs and educational events at parks and other public spaces throughout each year. Following are three ongoing projects.

Tree Canopy

In 2017, the Town was awarded a grant by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to conduct an inventory of its street trees, to assess conditions, and identify potential planting sites. Information and data were collected by Arlington's Tree Warden, two interns, Arlington Tree Committee members, and many volunteers. The data collected were used to create an interactive Public Tree Inventory Map, which is now available on the Town's website. In 2018, the information and data from the completed Tree Inventory helped create Arlington's Tree Management Plan, which outlines tree maintenance and planting and overall tree management goals. Opportunities for ongoing public participation in enhancing the town's tree canopy include the Adopt-a-Tree program to promote street tree watering and several programs for purchasing and planting trees.

EcoFest and EcoWeek

Arlington sponsors an annual event, typically in the spring, that promotes environmental stewardship and raises awareness of what residents can do to be better keepers of our planet. Over the past seven years (except during the COVID-19 pandemic), these programs have been either one-day EcoFests or a weeklong series of events that have included demonstrations, tours, workshops, and other activities that bring the community together around environmental issues. The Department of Public Works collaborates with other departments, volunteer groups, students, and nonprofits to organize these programs for all ages.

Take A Walk Arlington

Take A Walk Arlington, an initiative of the Arlington Open Space Committee, was completed in 2020. The project created one town-wide map and seven neighborhood maps showing safe walking routes that connect open spaces, conservation lands, playing fields, playgrounds, and other points of interest. These maps are available on the Open Space Committee's page of the Town's website. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a renewed interest in the maps as residents looked for ways to get outside and be more active during state-mandated stay-at-home orders.

SECTION 3. COMMUNITY SETTING

A. Regional Context

The Town of Arlington is in eastern Massachusetts and lies at the edge of the Boston Basin (a broad, flat, floodplain). Located about six miles northwest of Boston, Arlington's population of 45,304 (2019 American Community Survey) occupies 5.6 square miles or 3,509.9 acres. Arlington is part of Middlesex County and the Greater Boston metropolitan area; its neighboring communities are Lexington, Winchester, Medford, Somerville, Cambridge, and Belmont (see Map 3-1). The primary commercial corridors of Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway bisect the town and connect it to Cambridge and Somerville on the east and Lexington on the west.

Arlington is a town governed by a five-member Select Board, an elected representative Town Meeting of 252 members from 21 precincts, and an appointed Town Manager, similar in governance to the adjacent towns of Lexington, Winchester, and Belmont.

1. Regional Transportation Networks

Many major roads (Massachusetts Avenue and Routes 2, 2A, 3A, 16, and 60) pass through Arlington, linking

residents with neighboring towns, Boston, Cambridge, and nearby highways (Interstates 93 and 95). During peak commuting hours these roads are highly congested. Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) bus transportation also services Arlington, carrying commuters to regional destinations, including the MBTA Alewife T Station on the Cambridge border. The Minuteman Bikeway also passes through Arlington, parallel to Mass Avenue and along parts of Mill Brook and Summer Street. The 10-mile Bikeway starts just over the Arlington border in Cambridge, traverses Arlington and Lexington, and ends near Bedford Center. It is one of the busiest rail-trails in the country.

2. Open Space Resources Shared with Other Towns

Arlington shares a few important and unique resources with neighboring towns and is actively engaged in regional planning efforts to preserve, protect, and enhance those areas.

Arlington Reservoir

Arlington Reservoir combines a water body of 29 acres and land totaling 65 acres, including woods, open areas,

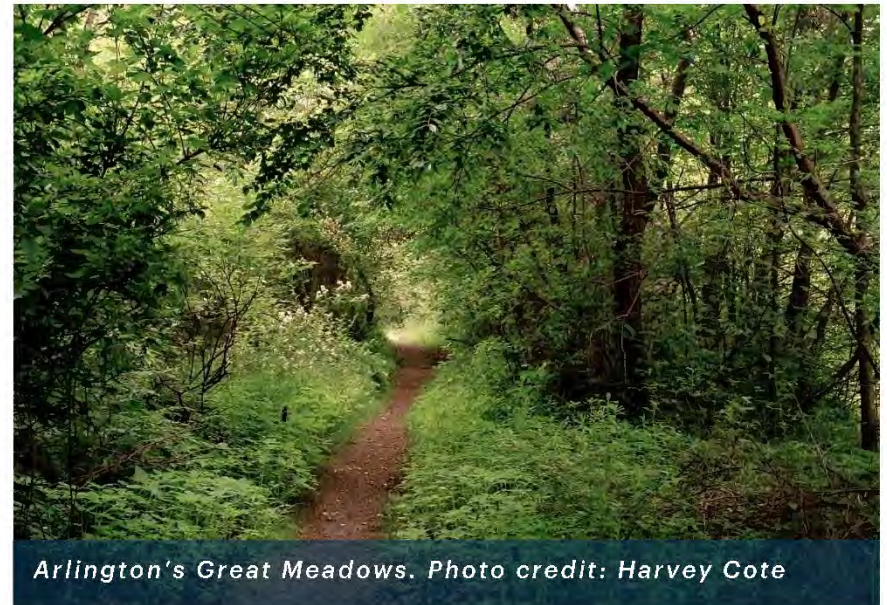
and a sandy beach. More than half of this site is in Lexington, but the land is owned by the Town of Arlington. The Reservoir is frequented by many visitors, particularly in the summer, because of its beach and supervised swimming area. A one-mile wooded path around the Reservoir is used regularly by walkers, joggers, bird watchers, and others who seek a quiet place to enjoy the outdoors close to home. Significant changes are being made in both towns that will improve visitor amenities as part of the current Reservoir Master Plan renovation project.

Arlington's Great Meadows

Arlington's Great Meadows, also located in Lexington but owned by Arlington, is a 183-acre area with a significant number of wetlands and wet meadows. Several entrances are available from the Minuteman Bikeway, and boardwalks have been built and repaired by volunteers in recent years to make the trails more accessible. Residents of Arlington, Lexington, and neighboring towns often visit the Great Meadows to walk, bike, or ski and to observe the diverse flora and fauna, especially the large variety of birds.

Minuteman Bikeway

This rail/trail conversion was dedicated in 1992. The 10-mile paved Bikeway runs from Cambridge's Alewife T



(MBTA) Station through Arlington and Lexington, terminating near Bedford Center with an extension planned to the Concord line. The Arlington section is called the Donald Marquis/Minuteman Commuter Bikeway in honor of the former long-time Town Manager who played a significant role in leading the effort to convert the former railway line into an active trail. The MBTA operated passenger service on this former railroad line through 1977. After a private company purchased the right of way and eventually went bankrupt, the Towns of Lexington, Arlington, and Bedford moved forward with efforts to eventually establish the Bikeway, which is still owned by the MBTA; each town section is managed by the respective

community. The Bikeway in Arlington abuts a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses as well as numerous Town-owned open spaces, conservation lands, and recreational facilities.

Water Bodies

Arlington shares several water bodies with neighboring communities. Alewife Brook on the eastern side of town creates borders with Belmont, Cambridge, and Somerville. It flows into the Mystic River, which then passes through Medford, Somerville, and other communities on its way to Boston Harbor. The Upper and Lower Mystic Lakes border Arlington, Medford, and Winchester. Alewife Brook, Mystic River, the Mystic Lakes, and adjacent green space are all owned and controlled by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). As noted above, the Arlington Reservoir on the western edge of town spans the border between Arlington and Lexington.

Parkways

Multiple highways and roads (Routes 2, 2A, 3A, 16, and 60) pass through Arlington. Alewife Brook Parkway (Route 16) and the Mystic Valley Parkway offer particularly scenic views and open space values. These two roadways are owned and controlled by the Massachusetts Division of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and are shared with Cambridge, Somerville, and

Medford. Planned over 100 years ago as part of Charles Eliot's plan for the Boston metropolitan area, these parkways were designed as carriageways that would provide scenic views to the traveling public. Besides serving as transportation corridors, these parkways provide a buffer area between land uses.

The DCR Parkways Master Plan (August 2020) is DCR's vision for an interconnected network of diverse parkways throughout Boston's metropolitan region that include the Alewife Brook and Mystic Valley Parkways. The DCR Plan identifies short-term improvements and long-term capital investments and provides policy and design guidance for improving its parkways for all travel modes and for all users.

3. Regional Planning Efforts

Arlington is a member of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), a regional planning agency that serves 101 towns and cities in Greater Boston. The Town participates actively in MAPC planning activities, such as the Inner Core Committee (which includes representatives of communities close to Boston who meet regularly to discuss common interests, such as open space).

The Town is also a member of the Metropolitan Mayors Coalition, a group of cities and towns in the urban core of the Metro Boston area, whose leaders pledge to work

together to create solutions for common, regional issues. One focus of the Coalition is preparing the region for climate change. The Climate Preparedness Taskforce works on projects and programs to promote climate mitigation (reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and enhance climate resiliency (strengthening communities socially and structurally). The Town actively participates in the Taskforce.

Increasing development pressures in the Alewife region around the Route 2 rotary at the MBTA Alewife T Station and more frequent flooding and traffic congestion in East Arlington in recent years have caused growing concerns and activism.

The Tri-Community Flood Group for Arlington, Belmont, and Cambridge includes town engineers, elected officials, and concerned neighbors and volunteers. Among the issues the group discusses are the combined sewer overflows (CSOs) that enter the brook from Cambridge and Somerville after heavy rains. The group last met in 2019, but recent advocacy is renewing attention to this issue.

Save the Alewife Brook is a volunteer-led effort established in 2021 to address flooding and water quality problems in the Alewife Brook, particularly the CSO discharges which send sewage-contaminated water into the brook. An estimated 1,200 Arlington residents

live in the 100-year flood plain near the Alewife Brook. During flood events, that unsafe water enters their homes and also contaminates publicly owned lands adjacent to the brook. Climate change threatens to exacerbate the problem with wetter rain seasons, more frequent and more severe storms, and sea level rise.

The Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) works to protect the Mystic River area, including Alewife Brook, Mill Brook, and the Mystic River and Lakes. It sponsors a variety of water quality monitoring programs and offers educational and outreach opportunities throughout the year. MyRWA represents a total of 21 towns and cities within the watershed area. The river and much of the land along the waterway is managed by DCR, which completed a master plan for the area in 2009. MyRWA headquarters are located in the former Central School next to Town Hall in Arlington. Discussion of MyRWA's current projects in Arlington occurs throughout this OSRP document.

The Town is a member of the Resilient Mystic Collaborative, a partnership also between the 21 cities and towns within the Mystic River Watershed and facilitated by MyRWA. The Town also signed on to the Charles River Climate Compact, a partnership between 15 cities and towns within the Charles River Watershed. This compact is facilitated by the Charles River Watershed Association.

Arlington is one of 45 communities designated as part of Freedom's Way National Heritage Area, a federally sponsored program to cultivate a shared stewardship agenda to protect, enhance and promote the nature, culture, and history of the region. Designated by Congress in 2009, the National Heritage Area spans 994 square miles and educates visitors about the region where the American Revolution began.

Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington is also named Battle Road Scenic Byway, an All-American Road as part of the 2021 designations to America's Byways® through the Federal Highway Administration National Scenic Byways Program. This designation is the first All-American Road in Massachusetts. With this designation comes recognition of the lasting importance of the events of April 1775 in the Greater Boston region.

B. History of the Community

The following review of historic themes and development periods in Arlington is largely based on information in the Town's Historic Preservation Survey Master Plan Final Report (2019).

Menotomy: Native American and Colonial Settlement, ca. 1500 – 1806

The Massachuset tribe were the first people known to inhabit the land they called Menotomy, now known as

Arlington. This powerful tribe lived in the valleys of the Mystic, Charles, and Neponset rivers, controlled rich fishing grounds along the coast, and practiced traditional agriculture and hunting. By the early 1630s, much of their land was occupied by English colonists who began settling in the area, then part of the Cambridge hinterland. An important founding event for the colonists of Menotomy was the building of Captain George Cooke's gristmill on Mill Brook near Mystic Street in 1637. The mixed agricultural and milling economy was manifested in rural farmsteads, mostly along Massachusetts Avenue, with small-scale mills and associated housing along Mill Brook and the Mystic River. A small town center developed near the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant Street. Slow but steady population growth occurred during this period, with a brief flourish of industrial-based prosperity at the turn of the 19th century.

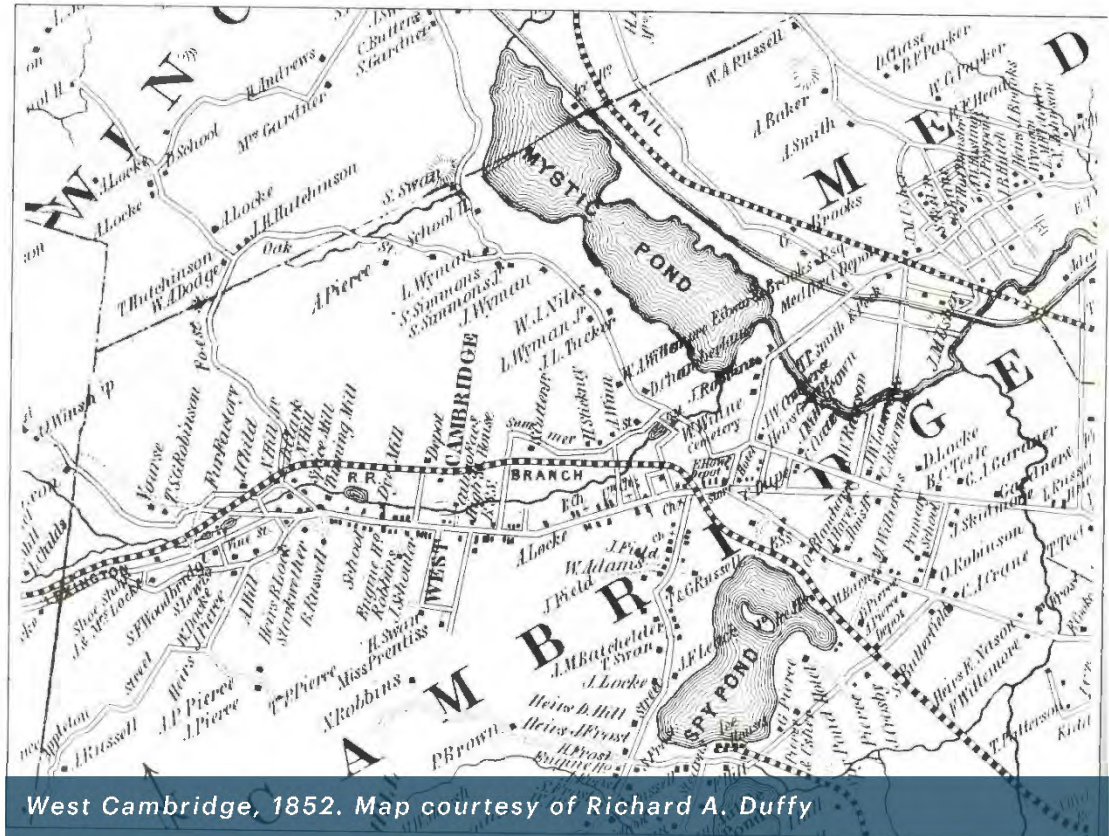
West Cambridge: Early Industrialization and Population Growth, 1807 – 1866

The Town incorporated as West Cambridge in 1807, reflecting its considerable growth as a distinctive community. Major transportation improvements included the establishment of the Middlesex Turnpike (now Lowell Street) in 1810, the arrival of the railroad in 1846, and later the omnibus and horse-drawn street railway along Massachusetts Avenue. Industrial

expansion included a diversity of industries, although most were still comparatively small in scale; ice harvesting flourished at Spy Pond. The agricultural landscape persisted throughout most areas of town, gradually developing into commercial production in large-scale market gardens in the rich flatlands of East Arlington. Industrial and agricultural development began to attract a substantial immigrant community as well, and the town's first large housing subdivision was laid out in East Arlington in 1856. Connections with Boston propelled the development of genteel country houses near the town center and hillsides for wealthy mercantile commuters. At the same time, part of West Cambridge was annexed to Winchester in 1850 and another part was separated to create Belmont in 1859.

Arlington: Early Suburbanization and Market Gardens, 1867 – 1910

Arlington adopted its present name in 1867 to honor Civil War veterans buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. Beginning with its re-incorporation, the town witnessed peaks and declines of industrial development (including mills, factories, and

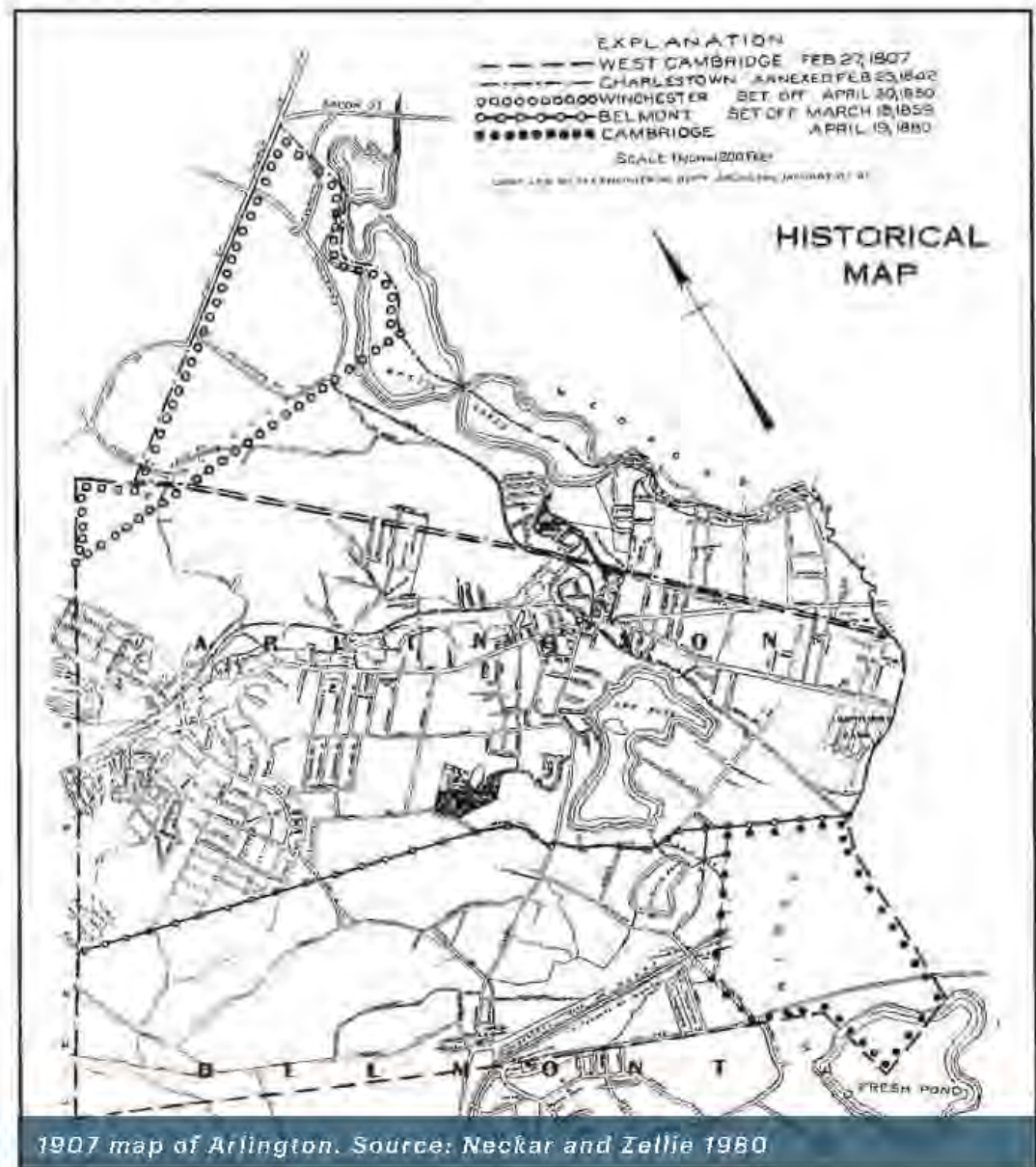


ice-harvesting), which was replaced by the predominance of market gardening and residential growth. Civic improvements and municipal services abounded. Planned housing developments appeared in the western part of town; three major commercial centers with substantial masonry buildings coalesced along Massachusetts Avenue; and grand institutional and civic development concentrated near the center of

Arlington. Electric railway service was extended throughout the town; the first automobile owned by a local resident appeared in 1900. With easier and more affordable transportation, the town's population quadrupled during this period. Vacationers were accommodated in hotels and health facilities; farms were subdivided for middle-class housing, including a substantial community of literary and visual artists in Arlington Heights; and the immigrant population continued to expand. Two- and three-family housing became common in the early 20th century to accommodate the town's growing population. Civic leaders became aware of the need to preserve the town's open space, and in 1896 land was assembled to create Menotomy Rocks Park as the first large public park.

Accelerated Suburbanization, 1911 – 1940

The Boston area's continued population growth and accompanying demand for residential development in this period led to the closing of most of Arlington's large market gardens and the selling off of their land for single-, two-, and three-family housing to accommodate an increasingly working-class



population. Major immigrant groups included the Irish, Italians, Swedes, and Armenians. In northern and eastern Arlington, the town's last major farms were mostly subdivided by the 1930s. Extension of rapid transit to Harvard Square in Cambridge in 1912 was also pivotal to the growth of East Arlington. Massachusetts Avenue became almost exclusively commercialized. The Town adopted its first "Town Plan" in 1916 followed by the Zoning Bylaw in 1924. Many of the town's 18th century houses along Massachusetts Avenue were torn down and redeveloped for auto-oriented uses and larger-scale commercial development. The business zoning district was initially wider and broader along the entire stretch of the corridor as well as along Broadway. In the 1930s, the Concord Turnpike (Route 2) was built to relieve traffic on Massachusetts Avenue, diverting it away from Arlington Center and reducing connections to the neighboring Town of Belmont.

Post-War Modernization, 1941 – 1970

Arlington's position as a desirable bedroom community in close proximity to downtown Boston was solidified after World War II with the construction of subdivisions of single-family, Colonial Revival-style, and ranch houses; low- and medium-rise apartment blocks (mostly along Massachusetts Avenue, with some on isolated, surviving large parcels); and modern commercial strip development along the major thoroughfares. The post-

war home-building boom was significant in some lowland areas of the town that previously had been preserved as farmland and floodplains. Route 128 was constructed nearby in the 1950s, signaling the pre-eminence of automobile-related commuting and development. Several modern office buildings, public housing developments, and schools were built, and the demolition of 18th and 19th century structures continued, especially along and adjacent to Massachusetts Avenue. The Town's second town-wide Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1963 and set the path for further zoning amendments. One of Arlington's few remaining 19th century factories, the Old Schwamb Mill (1861), was saved from near destruction in 1969, marking the beginning of a renewed interest in preservation activities throughout the town.

The Past Fifty Years, 1970-2020

Arlington put a development moratorium on building permits in 1972 to control the commercial growth and higher density and taller residential development along Massachusetts Avenue. Following passage of the State Zoning Act update in 1975, the Town overhauled the Zoning Bylaw, adopting stricter development regulations, downzoning parcels along Massachusetts Avenue and other corridors, and creating new, smaller zoning districts to limit redevelopment potential. Zoning bylaw changes continue to adapt to changing needs.

The effects of past development remain visible throughout Arlington today in long-established residential neighborhoods and business centers in the East, Center, and Heights. With little remaining buildable land, new opportunities are focused on redevelopment and reuse of existing structures while protecting valued parks and conservation lands. Recent decades have seen enhancements in transportation (Minuteman Bikeway, Complete Streets), new arts and culture resources (Arlington Center for the Arts, Dallin Museum), and more small businesses, especially restaurants, as well as significant improvements in the Town's schools, parks, open spaces, and natural resources.

The Town adopted its current Master Plan in 2015. The Zoning Bylaw was then recodified in 2018 and other substantive amendments have been made to allow mixed-use development in business districts and new uses and development standards in industrial zones, which are located primarily along the Mill Brook corridor. Altogether, Arlington has become very attractive for families, young professionals, and long-time residents seeking a friendly, accessible community near Boston and all that the region has to offer.

¹ This plan uses data from the 2020 U.S. Decennial Census and 2014-2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. At the time of its writing, 2020 U.S. Decennial Census data was not available for all referenced community characteristics in this Plan.

C. Community Characteristics

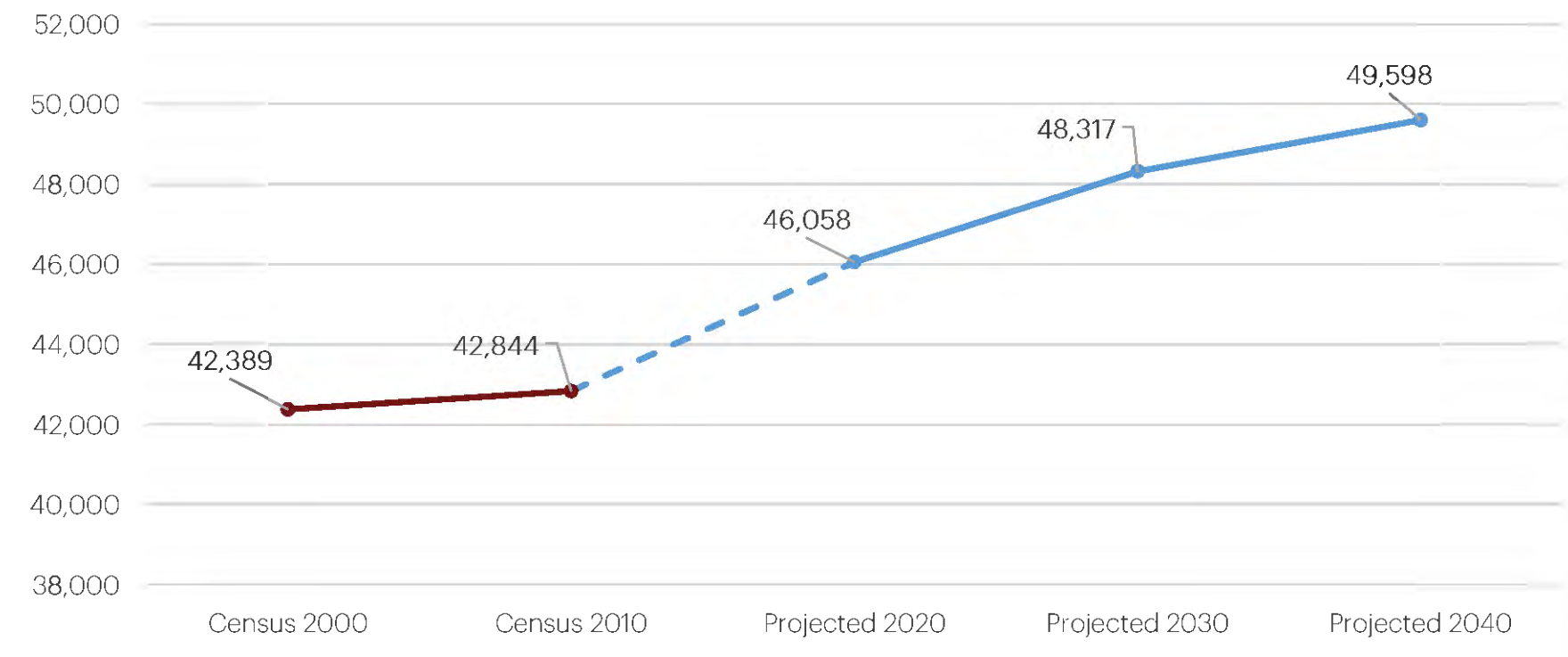
Understanding Arlington's population characteristics and recent trends is essential so the Town can maximize the appropriate use of its open space resources and plan for the future. The following discussion provides statistics related to population demographics and then analyzes how Arlington's open space planning can respond to those data.

1. Population Characteristics

Current and Projected Population

Arlington's population is growing. In 2019, the American Community Survey (ACS) estimated Arlington's population to be 45,304, a noticeable increase of 6.8% from the 2010 U.S. Census, which reported population of 42,389.¹ Projections developed by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMDI) and MAPC for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) forecast steady population growth in Arlington over the next 20 years. Projections showed a local population of 46,058 in 2020, 48,307 in 2030, and 49,598 in 2040, increases of about 7.4%, 4.9%, and 2.7%, respectively (Figure 3-1).

Figure 3-1. Population Projections for Arlington through 2040



Source: MassDOT Socio-Economic Projections for 2020 Regional Transportation Plans, 2018

Population Density

Arlington is a densely populated community covering approximately 5.5 square miles, of which 5.2 square miles are land, and 0.3 square miles are surface water. According to the 2019 ACS, Arlington's 5.2 square mile land area is home to a population of 45,304 people with a population density of about 8,712 person per square

mile. This population density is in the middle range of Arlington's surrounding communities (see Table 3-1). Except for the Town of Lexington which has a much larger land area, Arlington and its neighboring cities and towns have relatively high population densities, indicating limited open space resources and areas for Arlington residents nearby.

Table 3-1. Population Density of Arlington and Neighboring Towns

Town	Population	Population Density
Arlington	45,304	8,325.7
Belmont	26,116	5,316.9
Cambridge	118,927	16,470.2
Lexington	33,132	1,910.3
Medford	57,341	6,934.1
Somerville	81,360	18,404.8
Winchester	22,738	3,545.8

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2019

Table 3-2 Change in Age Groups as a Percent of Total Population, 2010 to 2019

Age Group	2010	2019	% Change
Under 10	12.1%	12.9%	0.8%
10-19	8.4%	10.0%	1.6%
20-24	4.1%	3.5%	-0.6%
25-34	14.0%	14.5%	0.5%
35-44	16.4%	15.2%	-1.2%
45-59	23.4%	20.3%	-3.1%
60-74	13.7%	16.4%	2.7%
75 and older	7.8%	7.2%	-0.6%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2019

Current and Projected Age Distribution

As shown in Table 3-2, age groups experiencing slight increases from 2010 to 2019 were school age children (19 years and younger) and adults 25-34 years. This information may indicate some young families moving into Arlington. The proportion of residents 60-74 years increased almost 3%, the largest increase of all age groups.

Projections over the next 20 years show a decrease in children under 10 of nearly 20%, while the percentage of older children will increase. Residents between 35 and 44 are also projected to decrease, while residents aged 60-74 would experience a significant increase of over 50% (Table 3-3).

Residents with Disabilities

In 2019, about 4,031 Arlington residents (8.9% of the population of about 45,304) had mobility and/or self-care limitations. Of the 4,031 individuals with a disability, approximately 68.7% are 65 years and older.

Table 3-3. Population Projections by Age Group

Age Group	Census 2010	Projection 2020	Projection 2030	Projection 2040	% Change 2010-2040
Under 10	5,378	5,136	4,459	4,355	-19%
10-19	3,990	4,637	5,091	4,924	23%
20-24	1,447	1,688	1,844	2,003	38%
25-34	5,817	5,496	5,401	5,998	3%
35-44	7,134	6,933	7,091	6,687	-6%
45-59	9,763	10,065	10,381	10,612	9%
60-74	5,682	6,823	8,000	8,701	53%
75 and older	3,633	3,480	3,797	4,501	24%
Total Population	42,844	44,258	46,064	47,781	11.52%

Source: MassDOT Socio-Economic Projections for 2020 Regional Transportation Plans (UMass Donahue Institute), 2018

Racial and Linguistic Diversity

Most residents identify as one race, with 79.7% of Arlington's population in 2019 identifying as white and 20.3% identifying as another race or more than one race (Table 3-4). Arlington's residents of color identify as Asian (12.3%, mostly Asian Indian and Chinese), African American (3.1%), or mixed race (3.8%). The fastest growing subgroup is Asian. Across categories, 4.9% identify as Hispanic or Latino. By contrast, people of color account for 47.3% of the Boston metropolitan area's population and 23.2% of Middlesex County's total population.

Table 3-4. Racial Identity of Arlington Residents

	2010	2019	Change
One Race	97.3%	96.2%	-1.1%
White	86.0%	79.7%	-6.3%
Black or African American	2.2%	3.1%	0.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Asian	8.7%	12.3%	3.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race	0.4%	1.1%	0.7%
Two or more races	2.7%	3.8%	1.1%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	3.0%	4.9%	1.9%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2019

While Arlington has limited racial and ethnic diversity compared to some of its neighboring cities, the town is home to a significant foreign-born population. Approximately 20% of Arlington’s residents have immigrated to the U.S. from some other part of the globe. Most have been in the U.S. for over a decade. Data also show that 20% of town residents speak a language at home other than English. Within this group, 3% identify as speaking Spanish, 9.3% speaking other Indo-European languages, and 7.3% speaking Asian and Pacific Island languages.

Education Attainment

Arlington is a well-educated community. In 2019, 70.9% of residents 25 years and older had a bachelor’s degree or higher, an upward trend from 2010 (Figure 3-2).

2. Household Characteristics

Table 3-5 shows that households with one or more people under 18 years and with one or more people 65 years and over increased 4.3% and 3.2% respectively from 2010 to 2019. This suggests that Arlington’s households are including more families but are also becoming older. Householders living alone decreased by 2.7% since 2010, and average household size increased slightly to 2.36.

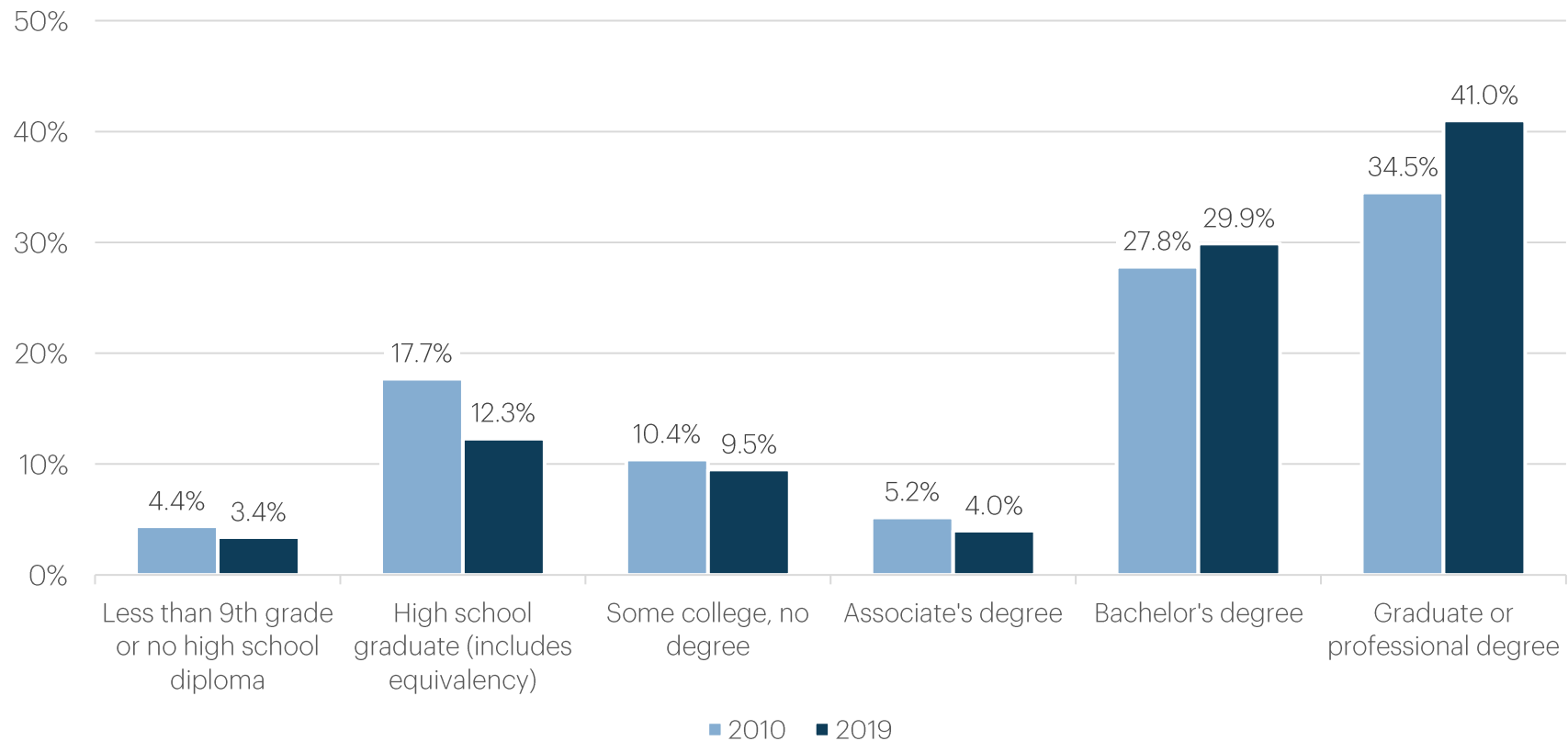
Table 3-5. Select Household Characteristics, 2010 and 2019

	2010	2019	Change
Total households	18,994	19,065	71
Average household size	2.22	2.36	0.14
Households with one or more people under 18 years	26.2%	30.5%	4.3%
Households with one or more people 65 years and over	26.4%	29.6%	3.2%
Householder living alone	34.6%	31.9%	-2.7%
65 years and over	10.8%	13.9%	3.1%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2019

Projections from UMDI and MAPC also included the number of anticipated future households. In Arlington, an additional 3,866 household units are projected by 2040 (when comparing with 2019). This is a significant increase in anticipated future households, especially when compared to the small increase in households from 2010 to 2019.

Figure 3-2. Education Attainment of Arlington Residents 25 Years and Older



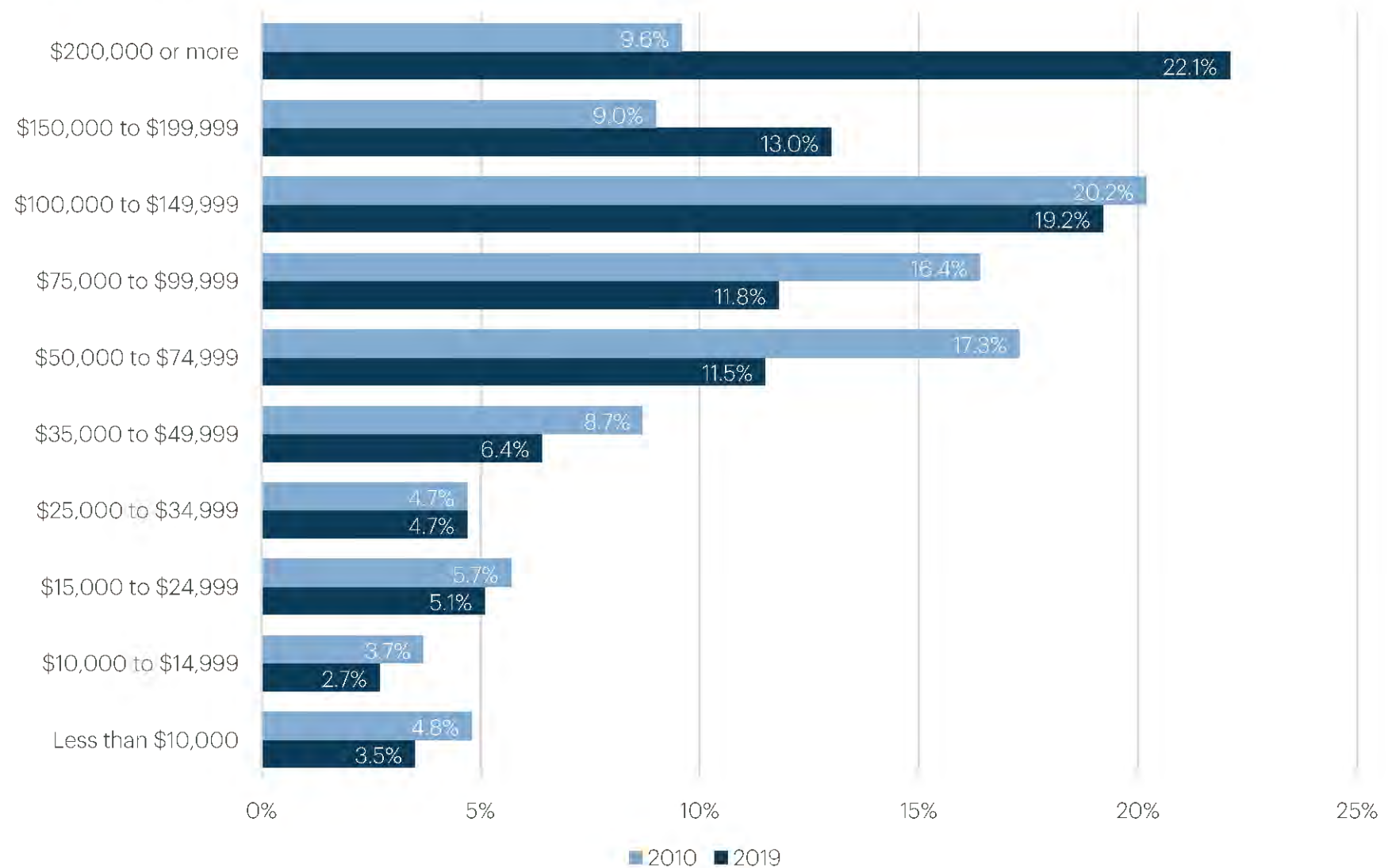
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2019

3. Income Characteristics

The median household income in Arlington was \$108,389 in 2019, a \$25,618 increase from 2010. Figure 3-3 shows the shifts in the income brackets and the

increase in the number of households with median incomes more than \$150,000. Approximately 54% of all Arlington households had household incomes over \$100,000 in 2019.

Figure 3-3. Arlington's 2010 vs 2019 Household Income Comparison



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2019

Despite Arlington's relatively low poverty rates compared to the Boston Metro area, approximately 5.2% of Arlington's population lives below the poverty level. Approximately 25.5% of households receive Social Security income in 2019, with another 6.6% combined receiving Supplemental Security Income, public assistance income, or SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) assistance for food purchases. The poverty rate for those under 18 is 3.5% and the poverty rate for those 65 and older is 7.7%.

4. Employment Characteristics

The MA Department of Unemployment Assistance, Economic Research Department reports that the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) for July 2021 in Arlington was 4%, compared to 5.7% in the Commonwealth, a 2.5% and 4.4% decrease, respectively, from 2020. The Town's residents continue to be predominately employed in the education, health care, and social assistance services (30.5%) and professional, scientific, and management and administration and

waste management services (23%), the latter of which is increasing (Figure 3-4).

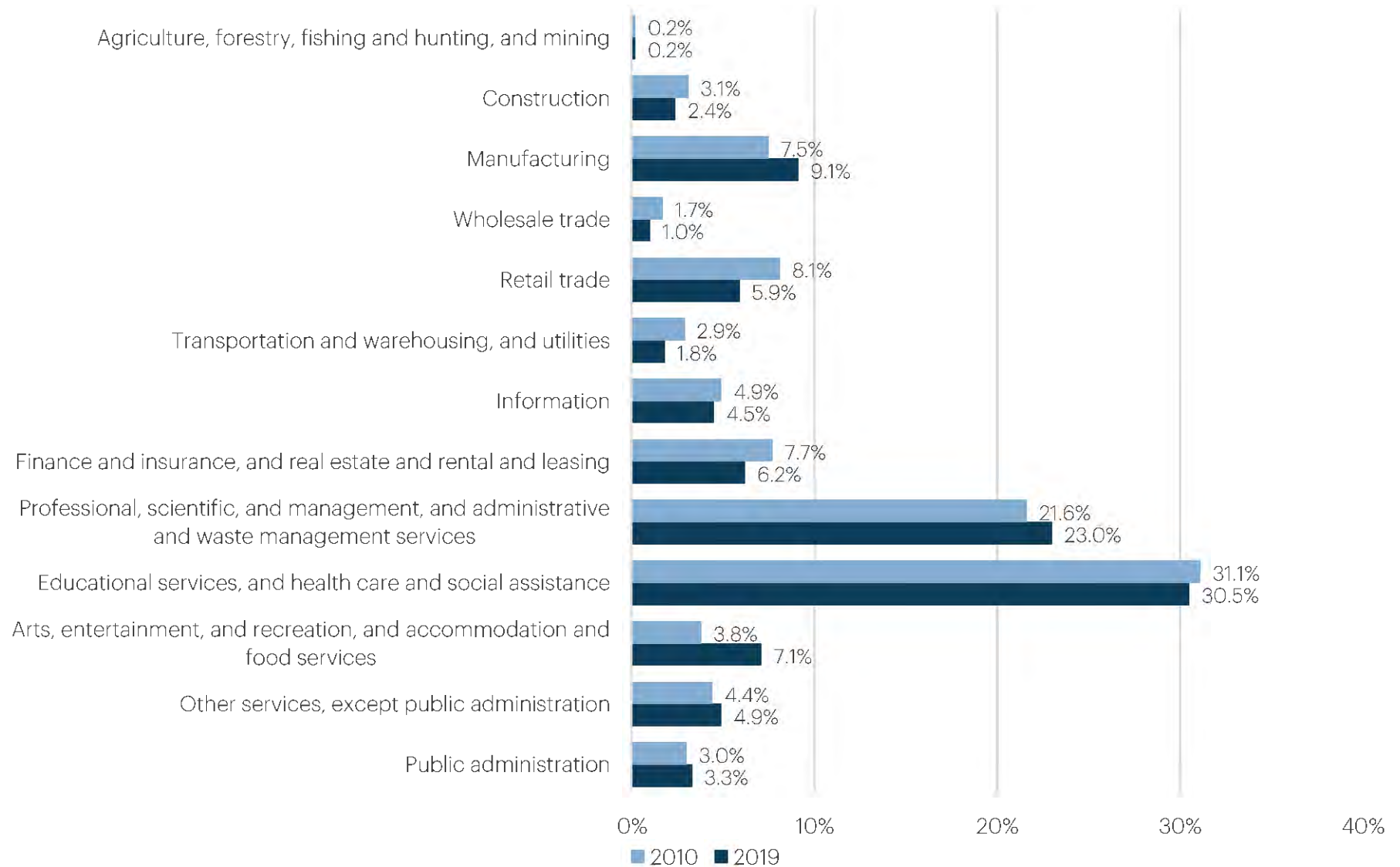
Table 3-6 lists Arlington establishments employing more than 100 employees. The top two are Arlington Public Schools (Arlington High School specifically) and Armstrong Ambulance Services Inc., with a range of 250 to 499 employees.

Table 3-6. Top Employers in Arlington

Company name	Address	Number of employees
Armstrong Ambulance Svc Inc	Mystic St	250-499
Arlington High School	Massachusetts Ave	250-499
American Alarm & Comms Inc	Broadway	100-249
Brightview Arlington	Symmes Rd	100-249
Children's Music Network	Court St # 22	100-249
International School of Boston	Matignon Rd	100-249
Massachusetts Highway Dept	Appleton St	100-249
Mirak Hyundai	Massachusetts Ave	100-249
Mirak Truck Ctr	Massachusetts Ave	100-249
Ottoson Middle School	Acton St	100-249
Park Avenue Nursing Home	Park Ave	100-249
Visiting Nursing & Community Care	Broadway # 2	100-249
Whole Foods Market	Massachusetts Ave	100-249

Source: Labor Market Information through the MA Department of Unemployment Assistance, Economic Research Department. Obtained August 27, 2021.

Figure 3-4. Employment of Arlington Residents 16 Years and Older 2010 and 2019



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2019

5. Environmental Justice Populations

As discussed in Section 2.B.5 Enhanced Outreach and Public Participation, the Commonwealth identifies Environmental Justice (EJ) communities using ACS data, where U.S. Census Blocks meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. The annual median household income is not more than 65% of the statewide annual median household income,
2. Minorities comprise 40% or more of the population,
3. 25% or more of households lack English language proficiency, or
4. Minorities comprise 25% or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150% of the statewide annual median household income.

Arlington has 21 census blocks that meet the requirements of Criterion 4 (with one census block also meeting the requirements of Criterion 2) (Map 3-2). These blocks generally encompass the commercial areas of Town and are in denser residential areas, with multifamily homes and apartment complexes. Neighborhoods outside of the EJ communities are predominately made up of single-family homes. As noted in Table 3-4, most residents identifying as a race

other than white selected Asian (12.3%), and 4.9% of respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino.

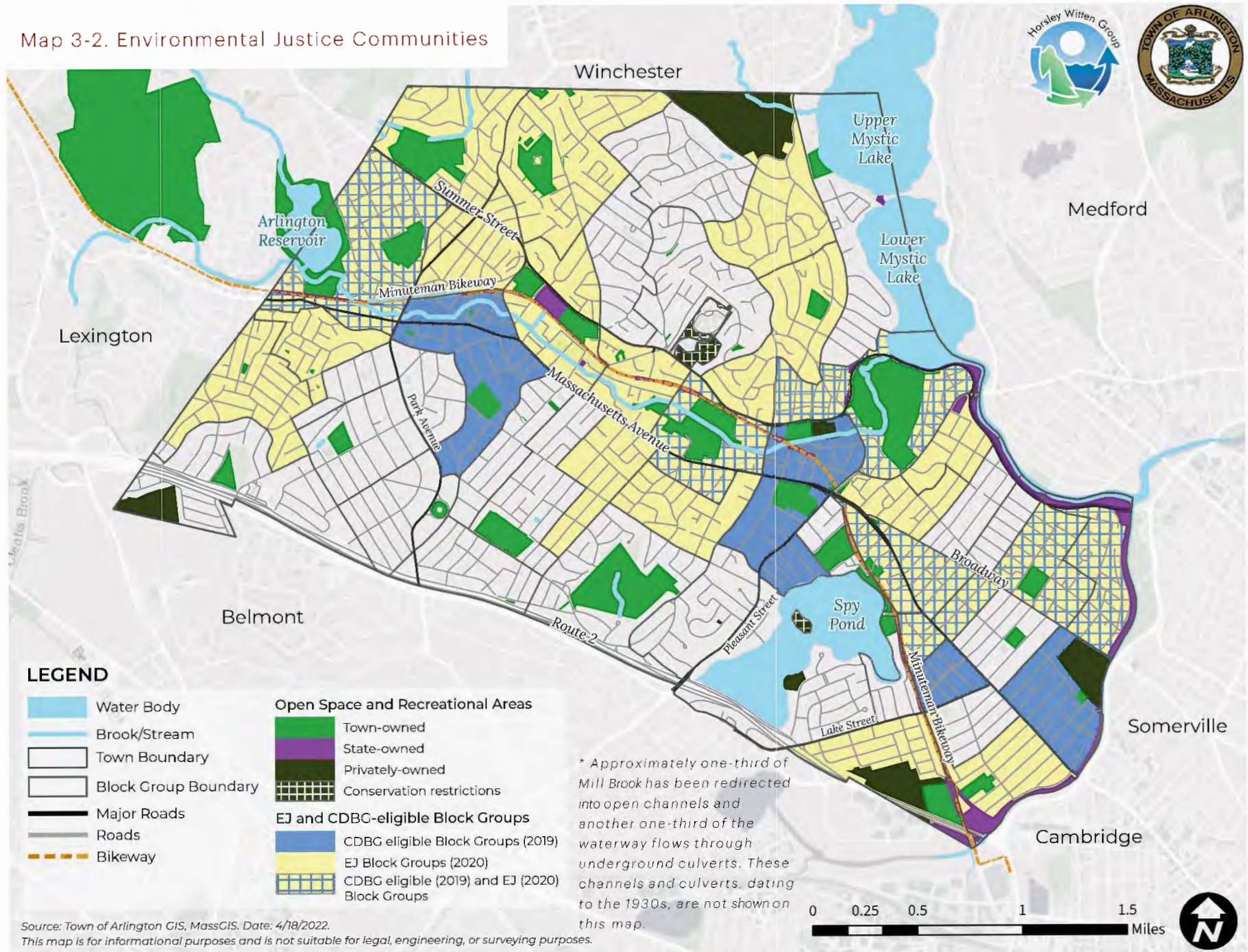
Another indicator used to identify lower income households was Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) data. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) CDBG program gives grants to more than 1,200 communities throughout the U.S. each year to address critical and unmet community needs, primarily serving low- and moderate-income individuals. Arlington is an Entitlement Community and has received CDBG grants directly from HUD annually since 1975. Block groups that qualify for CDBG program funds are also shown on Map 3-2.

D. Development Patterns and Trends

1. Land Use Patterns and Trends

Arlington has evolved from a farming community during colonial times to a town where roughly 88% of the land available for development is currently developed for a combination of residential and non-residential uses (e.g., commercial, industrial, etc.). Because Arlington is almost completely developed, it is unlikely that major changes in land use patterns will occur; rather redevelopment and rezoning are the primary tools that have been used for new development.

Map 3-2. Environmental Justice Communities



The majority of Arlington's land use today is low-density residential or a mix of residential and other types of uses like commercial, retail or office space. Arlington has a significant base of single-family homes, but many residents live in two-and-three family homes, condominiums, and apartment buildings. Nearly all (92%) of Arlington's two- and three-family homes were built before 1945, compared to 54% of single-family homes. These multifamily buildings are larger structures (2,767 square feet of floor area, on average) compared to single-family homes (2,018 square feet on average). They are also on smaller lots of 5,710 square feet on average compared to 7,218 square feet for single-family homes.² As a result, people living in these multifamily homes generally have less private open space and rely more on the Town's public open spaces and recreational facilities.

2. Infrastructure

Because Arlington is highly developed, its existing infrastructure is not expected to change drastically or to significantly determine the development of open space, although pressure for redevelopment has increased in recent years.

² Arlington Housing Plan 2022-2027, Adopted by Arlington Redevelopment Board January 24, 2022



Transportation Systems

Arlington has a variety of systems suitable for diverse methods of transport:

- The town's well-developed road system consists of approximately 102 miles of public streets, 23 miles of private streets, and six miles of state highways and parkways.
- The Minuteman Bikeway carries bicycle and pedestrian commuter and recreation traffic. This rail/trail conversion project runs through Arlington's

central valley (Mill Brook Valley), which also provides the most level and direct route through town. The Bikeway links directly to the Alewife T Station in Cambridge and extends 10 miles through Arlington and Lexington and into Bedford.

- In recent years, bike lanes and shared use designations have been marked on many sections of Massachusetts Avenue and on some other town roads. The Town began participating in the Bluebikes regional bikeshare program in 2020. The Town also appropriated funds to acquire and install bicycle racks to provide bike parking options at various schools, parks and recreational areas across town. Community Preservation Act funds are currently being used to study the feasibility of a trail connection from the Minuteman Bikeway in Arlington Center to the Mystic River Path along the Mystic Valley Parkway.
- The MBTA provides bus service that connects to the Alewife T Station, Harvard Square via North Cambridge, and to other communities, including Somerville, Lexington, Bedford, Medford, and Burlington. The MBTA also provides The Ride, a van for low-income residents with disabilities.
- The Arlington Council on Aging provides a jitney (van) service called "Dial-A-Ride." This service provides individualized routes and times of service to suit users' transportation needs. This service is

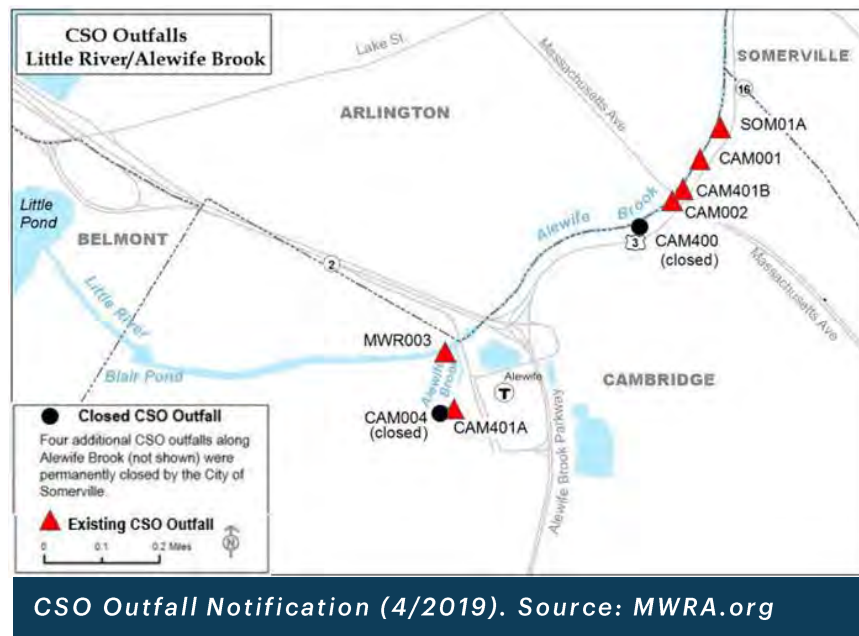
supported by a federal grant for people with disabilities, the elderly, and lower-income people. The Council on Aging also has a van to transport elders to the Senior Center for activities and to medical appointments on an as-needed basis for a small fee.

The Town is focused on improving mobility into and through Arlington by all modes. *Connect Arlington* (2021) is a 20-year strategy to ensure that all residents, workers, business owners, and visitors are provided a safe, reliable, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all people of all ages and abilities. The Plan lays out seven goals with strategies that will guide Arlington to meet this vision. It touches on all modes of transport, details specific locations where improvements can be made, and offers policy guidance for decision makers.

Water and Sewer

Arlington receives its drinking water and sewer service from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). However, the Town's Water and Sewer Department performs maintenance and infrastructure improvements to the local water, sewer, and stormwater distribution systems. The entire town receives water and sewer service, with the exception of very few private wells and septic systems. They do not play a significant role in long-term planning.

There are five CSOs on Alewife Brook between Massachusetts Avenue and the Mystic River, all of them sourced from Somerville or Cambridge. The MWRA has proposed significant improvements to these outfalls to reduce wet weather discharges to Alewife Brook, and some of this work has been done. As noted in the section above on Regional Planning Efforts, however, the CSOs continue to overflow and affect the quality of life of Arlington residents.



3. Long-term Development Patterns

As mentioned, the long-term development patterns of Arlington are already well established by current uses. Land use regulatory policy centers more on the redevelopment of existing sites and regulation by special permit for new uses. In 2015, the Town adopted its current Master Plan, which looks at all aspects of physical development (transportation, housing, commercial centers, public facilities, etc.) as well as possible zoning changes, impacts on natural resources and open space, and effects on historical and cultural resources.

Arlington Zoning and Local Regulations Governing Land Uses

Arlington Town Meeting in 2001 voted to approve the creation of an open space district, increasing the number of zoning districts to 19 (see Table 3-7 and Map 3-3). Nearly 50 Town-owned parcels, including parks, playgrounds and playing fields throughout the town, were transferred into this new district, adding an extra level of protection from development. Eight of Arlington's other zones are residential, six are business, and the others are zones for more specialized uses, such as industrial, Planned Unit Development, and transportation.

Map 3-3. Zoning Map

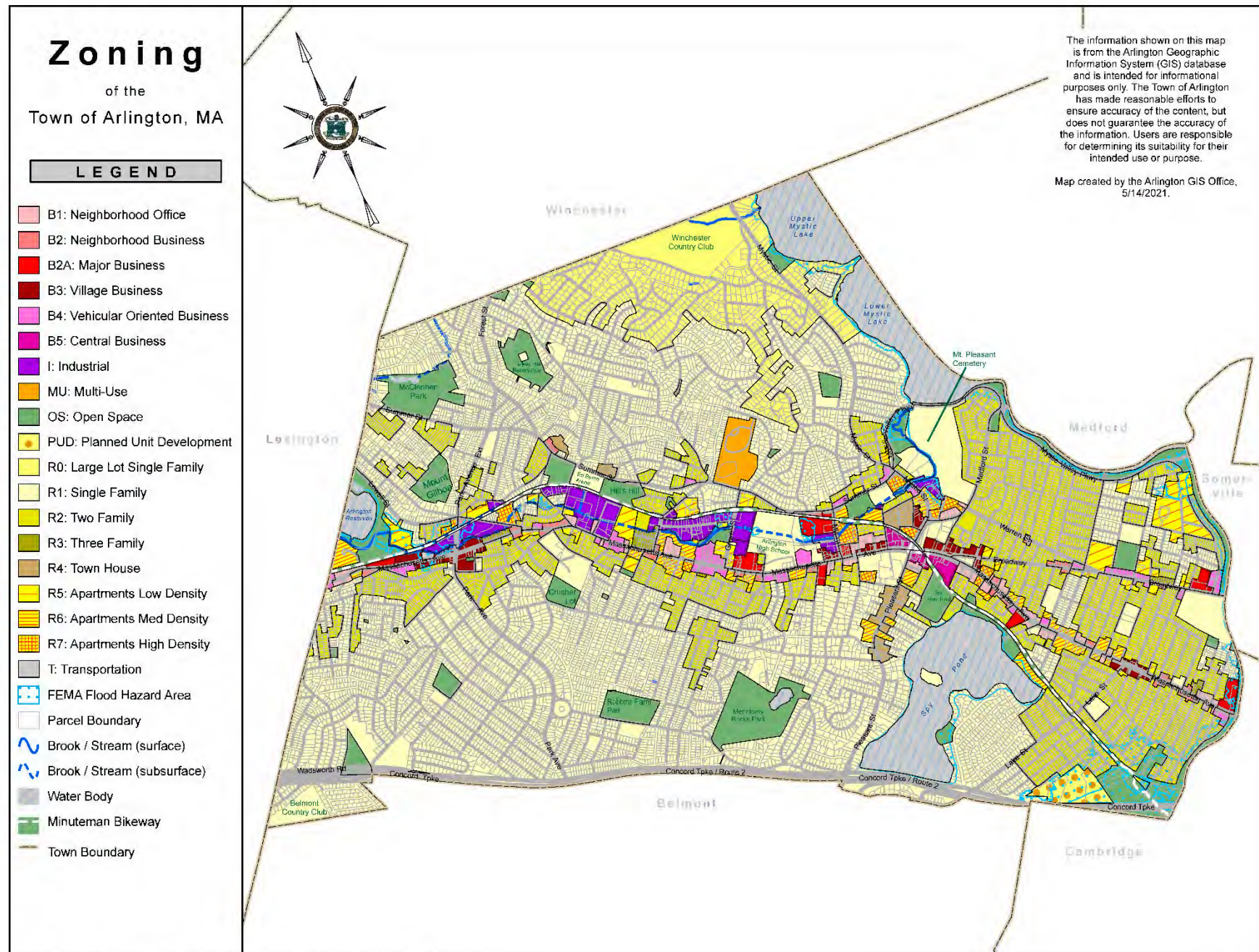


Table 3-7. Arlington Zoning Districts by Land Area

Zoning district	District Name	Acres
R0	Large Lot Single Family	238.2
R1	Single Family	1,771.5
R2	Two Family	619.7
R3	Three Family	8.3
R4	Town House	19.4
R5	Apartments Low Density	63.7
R6	Apartments Medium Density	49.0
R7	Apartments High Density	18.7
OS	Open Space	275.9
PUD	Planned Unit Development	16.2
B1	Neighborhood Office	25.9
B2	Neighborhood Business	16.9
B2A	Major Business	22.2
B3	Village Business	30.2
B4	Vehicular Oriented Business	30.0
B5	Central Business	10.3
I	Industrial	48.7
MU	Multi-Use	18.0
T	Transportation	0.8
Total acres without water – 3,283.6		

Source: Arlington GIS, “zoning.shp”. Table omits water area. With water, the total area in the GIS zoning map is 3,509.9 acres (5.6 sq. mi.) as found in the 2015 Arlington Master Plan.

Control of land subdivision rests with the Arlington Redevelopment Board (the hybrid Town’s Planning Board acting under c. 40A and Redevelopment Authority

acting under c. 121B and the Town Manager Act). The Board also serves as the Town’s Board of Survey pursuant to the 2009 law establishing that role. The Rules and Regulations Governing the Design and Installation of Ways were adopted by the Board of Survey in June 2010.

Arlington also has a land use regulation known as Environmental Design Review (EDR), which helps to improve the visual quality of the environment and is required for certain classes of special permits. Most major development projects are required to undergo EDR by the Arlington Redevelopment Board. EDRs have strict review standards. As part of the EDR, the board reviews the development plan for such elements as landscaping and relation of the site plan to the surrounding neighborhood. While these visual elements do not add open space to Arlington, they do affect the visual quality of the town (including its green character). They may also provide buffer zones between adjacent land uses. The EDR process is triggered where a new structure, or a new outdoor use, or an exterior addition or change in use meets requirements outlined in Section 3.4.2 of Arlington’s Zoning Bylaw.

The Arlington Redevelopment Board will also use EDR procedures and standards for any development allowed by right or by special use permit in the Planned Unit Development District or Multi-Use District, parking in the

Open Space District, and proposals for a medical marijuana treatment center or marijuana establishment.

Build-out Analysis

Because Arlington's land is almost fully developed, this Plan does not contain a build-out analysis, which would show what could happen if the town developed all its land to maximum potential under existing zoning. This type of analysis is more revealing for rural or more suburban communities than for an older developed community like Arlington.

Long-term Changes to Land Use Patterns

The existing pattern of Arlington's land uses may evolve naturally over time with changes in local or regional circumstances, but as discussed previously, major changes are not anticipated due to the lack of large undeveloped land parcels. Arlington remains focused on the preservation of existing protected lands and on acquisition of small parcels when properties of interest to the Town or other entities, such as the Arlington Land Trust, may become available.

A significant circumstance that could change Arlington's land use patterns would be economic pressure for more intense development that might necessitate the rezoning of some land, although the Town has no intention to convert designated open spaces to other uses. Arlington has only a few

undeveloped private properties with development potential. However, these properties typically have development constraints. For instance, the 17-acre undeveloped land that comprises the Mugar property in East Arlington is largely wetlands and floodplains. It has been the subject of numerous development proposals over the past 50 years or more, although Town Meeting has voted several times to protect the entire property as open space. The most recent development proposal for the site was submitted in 2016 as a Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit for housing. A decision with conditions was granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals in November 2021, but the project is currently on hold due to legal appeals which are not expected to be resolved for several more years.

SECTION 4. ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

A. Topography, Geology, and Soils

Arlington is situated in the Coastal Plain of Eastern Massachusetts. Approximately 8% (286 acres) of Arlington's area is the surface water of bodies of water, including Spy Pond, Hill's Pond, Arlington Reservoir, Mill Brook, Alewife Brook, and the Mystic Lakes. The Town lies on the western or outer geological edge of a broad, flat floodplain known geologically as the Boston Basin.

1. Topography and Geology

Approximately one-third of the town (east of Arlington Center) is part of the Boston Basin, a fairly low and level land mass. The range of elevation in this section is from 10 to 40 feet above mean sea level; it is located along the Alewife Brook floodplain and extends to Spy Pond and the Lower Mystic Lake. Spy Pond is part of the headwaters of Alewife Brook. It feeds the brook through the Little River in Belmont, although the construction of Route 2 altered Spy Pond's historic relationship to the Little River.

Just beyond the western shores of the Lower Mystic Lake and Spy Pond is an unbroken ridge (elevation 49.2 feet), which is part of a terminal moraine. This ridge marks the beginning of Arlington's characteristic rocky knobs and unsorted glacial rock masses. The western portion of Arlington is hilly and rocky, with elevations ranging from 100 to nearly 400 feet above sea level, seen clearly in Map 4 1. This part of town marks the beginning of the Boston escarpment. Arlington's hills, which are remnants of ancient mountains, are divided by a valley carved by the action of the now-extinct Arlington River. Outcrops of igneous rock are evidence of an earlier mountain-building volcanic period. Mill Brook now flows in a west-to-east direction through this valley, collecting water from Arlington's Great Meadows via Munroe Brook and from Sickie Brook in Lexington.

Arlington's topography bears distinct marks of the glacial period. As the glacier moved down from the north, rocks of various shapes and sizes were scoured from the mountains, pulled up and carried forward by the flow of ice. As the glacial period ended, masses of rocks were dropped in unsorted layers as the forward

edge of ice melted. These formations are called terminal moraines, and an example may be seen on the southern slopes of Arlington Heights.

2. Soils

Map 4-1 also shows the location of Arlington's most prominent soils and special landscape features. Most of the soils are designated urban land complexes because they have been modified so they no longer retain their original properties. Arlington's most common soil, a Charlton-Hollis-Urban Land Complex, is located in western areas and is found on slopes of 3 to 5%. Charlton soils are well-drained, upland soils where the relief is affected by the bedrock. They are stony, with 60 inches or more of friable fine sandy loam (a silt-sand-clay mixture). Hollis soils are shallow (<20 in.), excessively drained soils on bedrock uplands. They are also friable fine sandy loam (adapted from McLaughlin 1994, 13).

The Newport-Urban Land Complex soil is also located in western areas of town, particularly the land west and northwest of Park Circle, lands east of Turkey Hill, and lands west of the Winchester Country Club. These soils have 3 to 15% slopes and tend to be silty loam.

East Arlington contains primarily a Merrimac-Urban Land Complex soil found on 0 to 8% slopes. Merrimac soils are excessively drained soils on glacial outwash plains

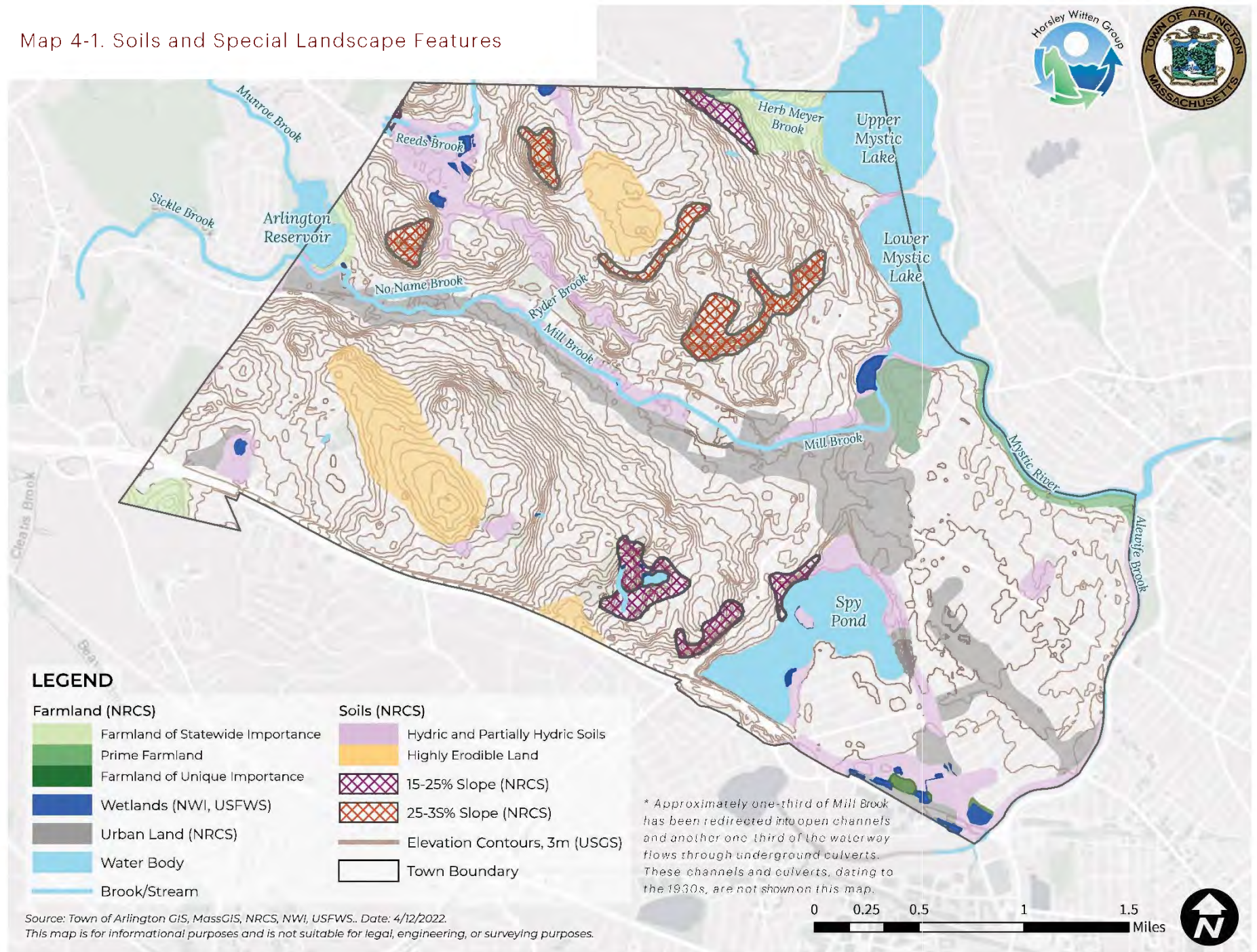
and are sandy loams over a loose sand and gravel layer at 18-30 inches (adapted from McLaughlin 1994, 13). These soils contain approximately 75% urban land/disturbed soils. There are also some pockets of Sandy Udorthents and Udorthents wet substratum soils by the lakes, streams, and wet areas. Udorthents soils have "been excavated and/or deposited due to construction operations" (USDA Soil Conservation 1991, 27).

B. Landscape Character

Arlington has a rich variety of terrain and water bodies, but its current landscape character has been more affected by its location in the greater metropolitan Boston area than by its soil types or topographical and geological limitations. Even though much of Arlington is quite hilly, especially in the western area known as the Heights, these hills have not significantly affected development. They do offer valuable vistas of Boston and Cambridge, especially from Robbins Farm Park and Hattie Symmes Park on top of two of the highest hills. More discussion of these unique features is provided in Section 4.F.

Arlington's most common soils and topographical and geological characteristics pose little hindrance to potential development or redevelopment. Most

Map 4-1. Soils and Special Landscape Features



buildable land has already been used for housing development or historic and current industrial and commercial uses. Very little land is available for other purposes, including open space and recreational use. Nevertheless, water resources, parks, and other recreational facilities have been designated and protected for over more than 100 years and are found in neighborhoods throughout the town.

C. Water Resources

Arlington's water resources have great scenic, recreational, and ecological value; they are not used for drinking water, because Arlington receives its drinking water from Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). All of Arlington's major water bodies are part of the Mystic River Watershed, which is part of the Boston Harbor River Basin. A small portion of the town, including one small wetland in the southwest corner, is in the Charles River Watershed.

1. Watersheds

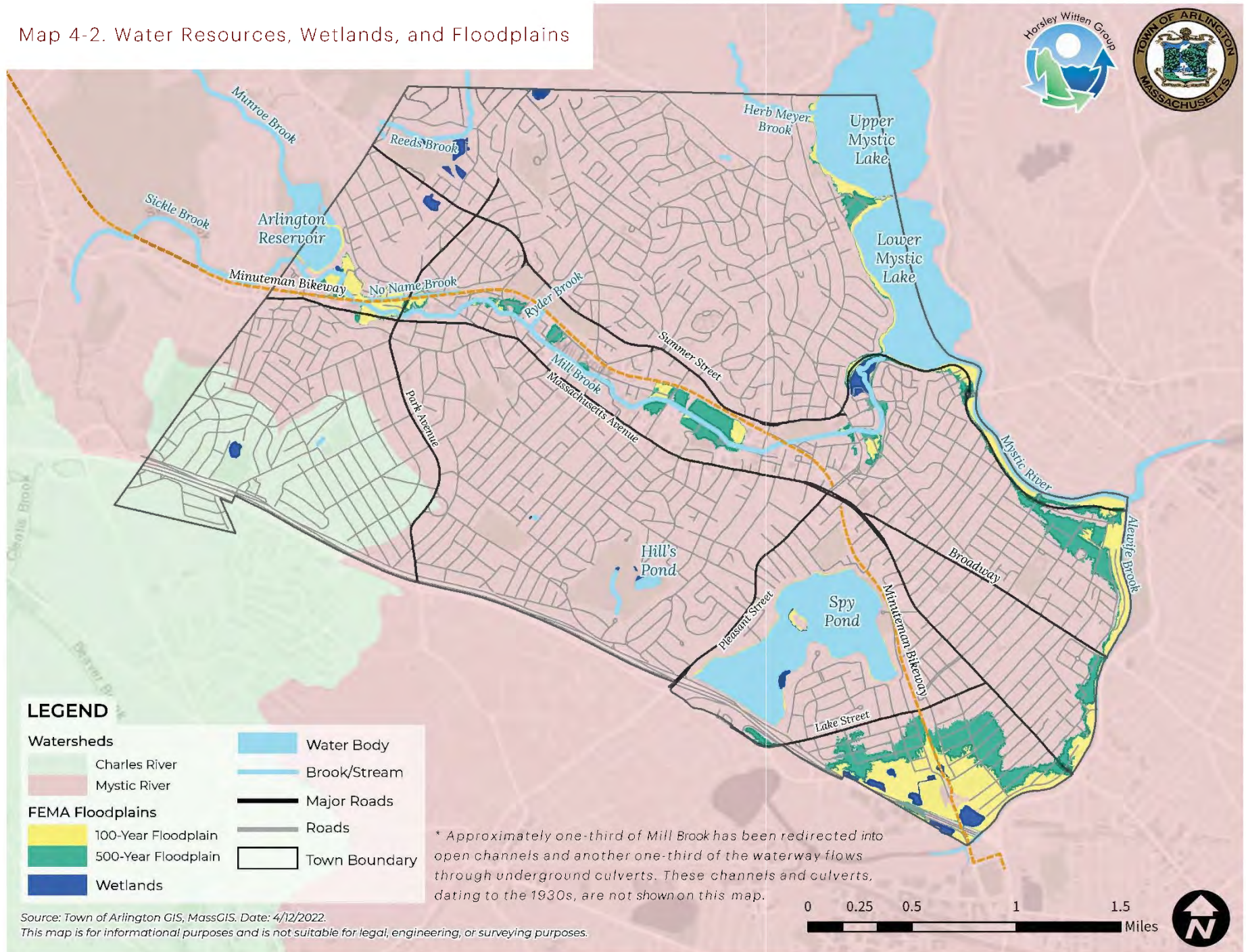
As depicted on Map 4-2, over 90% of Arlington is in the Mystic River Watershed. The primary streams in this watershed are Mill Brook in the western upland sections and Alewife Brook along the eastern border with Somerville and Cambridge. A small area in the southwest section of town are the headwaters of Rock Meadow Brook, which is part of the Charles River

watershed. Neither of these watersheds is used for water supply purposes.

Arlington has an active stormwater management program under the direction of the Town Engineer in the Department of Public Works. The Stormwater Awareness Series, filmed and archived by the local public access TV station, was developed in 2015 for Arlington residents and the general public. The series was designed to educate business owners and residents on stormwater and the impacts on runoff, water quality, flood control and prevention, erosion, and other stormwater related impacts within the town. Information was provided by stormwater professionals for the purpose of increasing awareness of these issues within the town and to provide information for residents to help understand how the surrounding environment affects, and impacts, the local water resources and what can be done to reduce these impacts. Presentations and factsheets for each session are available on the Engineering Division's webpage.

A revised set of Stormwater Management Standards was issued in April 2018 to assist applicants and their consultants by providing Stormwater Management/ Mitigation design guidelines, submission requirements, and review procedures in accordance with Town bylaws.

Map 4-2. Water Resources, Wetlands, and Floodplains



2. Surface Water

Surface water makes up approximately 8% (286 acres) of Arlington’s area (3,509.9 acres). The numerous water bodies make water resources a unique attribute of the town and its open space assets (Table 4-1). However, as in many Massachusetts communities, access to water bodies is limited, since shoreline in Arlington is predominantly in private ownership. Charles Eliot (1926) and others recognized the recreational, ecological, and visual importance of the town’s larger water bodies—Spy Pond, the Mystic Lakes, and the Arlington Reservoir. Even though much of the land bordering these water bodies has been lost to development, there are still significant opportunities for improving access to them.

Table 4-1. Water Resources in Arlington

Lakes and Ponds	Rivers and Brooks
Arlington Reservoir	Alewife Brook
Hill’s Pond	Mill Brook
Lower Mystic Lake	Mystic River
Upper Mystic Lake	Reed’s Brook
Spy Pond	Ryder Brook
	Herb Meyer Brook
	No Name Brook

In accordance with the federal Clean Water Act, all the waters in the Commonwealth have been classified by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental

Protection (MassDEP) based on the designated use for that waterbody. Classifications are based upon a number of physical and water quality standards, or criteria. If it is determined that a water body does not meet the water quality criteria for its classification, it is considered out of compliance with its classification, or impaired. When a waterbody is impaired, it is put on the state’s 303(d) List of Impaired Waters, which references section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (Table 4-2). Water bodies on the 303(d) List are prioritized and a schedule is made to develop total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for pollutants that are causing the waterbody to not meet water quality criteria. A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still safely meet water quality standards.

Another source for understanding the conditions of the town’s surface waters is the water quality report card for the Mystic River Watershed issued each year by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in collaboration with the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA). The grade is based on how frequently water bodies meet bacteria standards for swimming and boating. Grades are calculated using a three-year rolling average of bacterial levels. Table 4-3 shows the results of the 2020 report card. The Upper and Lower Mystic Lakes and Mystic River all received high marks, indicating they are safe for swimming and boating. Mill and Alewife

Brooks received Ds because they only met bacteria standards acceptable for these activities in less than half the samples taken.

Table 4-2. Impaired Water Bodies in Arlington

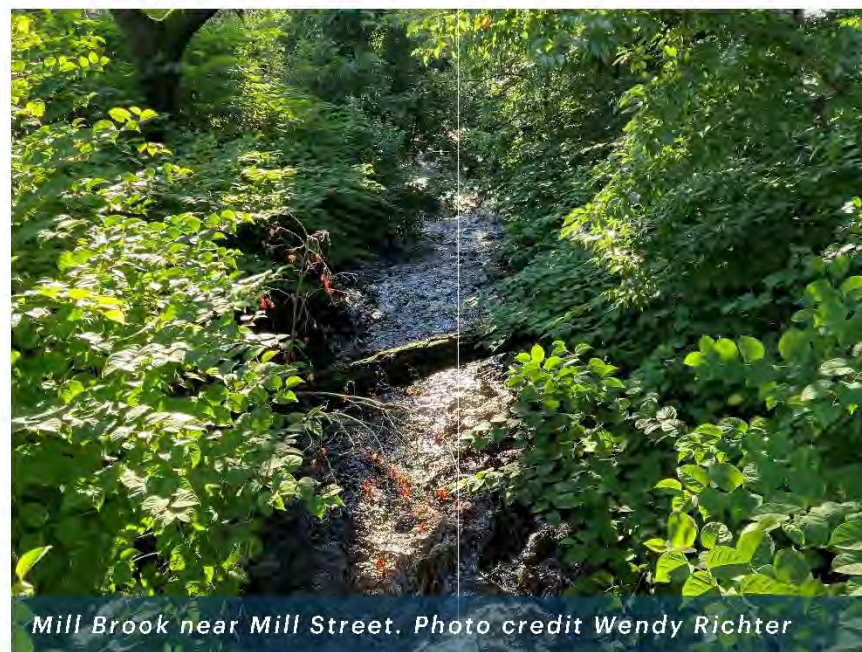
Water Body	Impairment
Alewife Brook	Chloride, Dissolved Oxygen, Lead in Sediment, Total Phosphorus, Trash, Water Chestnut; Benthic Macroinvertebrates
Lower Mystic Lake	Dissolved Oxygen
Mystic River	Dissolved Oxygen, pH, Water Chestnut, Eurasian Water Milfoil, <i>Myriophyllum Spicatum</i>
Spy Pond	Curly-leaf Pondweed, Water Chestnut
Upper Mystic Lake	Curly-leaf Pondweed, Dissolved Oxygen

Source: DRAFT Massachusetts Integrated List of Waters for the Clean Water Act 2018/2020 Reporting Cycle, Appendix 8: Boston Harbor/Mystic River Watershed and Coastal Drainage Area Assessment and Listing Decision Summary. Available at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/20182020-draft-integrated-list-of-waters-appendix-8-boston-harbor-mystic-river-watershed-coastal-drainage-area-assessment-and-listing-decision-summary/download>

Table 4-3. EPA/MyRWA Water Quality 2020 Report Card for Water Bodies in Arlington

Waterbody	Grade	Average Compliance Rate
Upper and Lower Mystic Lakes	A	93.2%
Mystic River (Fresh water)	B+	81.9%
Mill Brook	D	48.6%
Alewife Brook	D	46.2%

Source: Mystic River Watershed Association, *Water Quality Grades and Compliance Rates – Calendar Year 2020*, available at <https://mysticriver.org/epa-grade>.



3. Aquifer Recharge Areas

There are no existing or potential drinking water supply aquifers in Arlington. To the best of all local knowledge, there are also no longer any private drinking water wells in the town. As mentioned earlier, Arlington imports water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) for its domestic and commercial consumption; therefore, the issue of aquifer recharge for the purposes of public water supply protection is not relevant to Arlington.

4. Flood Hazard Areas

Major flooding problems caused by severe storms have been experienced every few years. The areas around Reed's Brook (northwest), Mill Brook and No Name Brook (central corridor), and Alewife Brook and the neighborhoods around Mugar property wetlands in East Arlington have been particularly affected. As noted in Section 3.3 above, a recently proposed development project on the privately owned Mugar property is of particular concern because of the history of flooding in that part of town, which was part of the Great Swamp dating to the colonial period. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-year floodplain areas are shown in yellow on Map 4-2 (FEMA July 2017).

5. Wetlands

Arlington's wetlands provide opportunities for nature observation, as well as walking and bird watching in adjacent uplands. They also provide valuable ecosystem services in the form of flood water storage. The largest wetland area in Arlington is Meadowbrook Park at the mouth of Mill Brook adjacent to the Lower Mystic Lake. Other wetland areas are scattered throughout town, as shown in dark blue on Map 4-2. However, many recreational resources are also located in and near wetland zones, causing conflicts between user needs and protection of the landscape. These areas include Thorndike and Magnolia fields in southeastern Arlington, McClennen Park in the Reed's Brook area in the northwestern corner, and Poet's Corner in the southwestern corner.

6. Profiles of Key Water Resources

A brief profile of each water resource follows, including public access, recreational uses and, for some water bodies, wildlife uses. Section 5. Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest has further details on these resources.

Alewife Brook

Access: Much of the state-owned Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Alewife Brook Reservation in East Arlington is accessible by foot; the reservation also encompasses areas in Cambridge, Somerville and Belmont. DCR's construction of the Alewife Brook Greenway linking the Minuteman Bikeway and Mystic Valley Parkway with a walking and bicycling path along the Arlington side of the brook has increased access and native landscaping in the area since its completion in 2013. Access points to the Greenway can be found at the intersections of the brook and the following major roads: Massachusetts Avenue, Broadway, and Mystic Valley Parkway. Access is also available at the end of Thorndike Street, where there is a large marsh adjacent to the brook next to the Minuteman Bikeway.

In recent years, newly constructed and proposed residential and commercial developments along Route 2 in Belmont, and Cambridge continue to threaten the hydrology and nature of the upper Alewife Brook drainage area. Flooding conditions and combined sewer overflows from Cambridge and Somerville affect wildlife habitat, native vegetation, and public access for passive recreation, and these threats have prompted much public comment and advocacy.

Recreational Use: Passive recreation is the primary use of Alewife Brook, notably walking and bird watching. The brook itself is not typically used for active recreation, although parts of the brook are navigable by canoe or kayak when the water level is high enough.

Wildlife Use: Alewife Brook supports a small herring run due to its connection to the Mystic River. The brook and its banks attract many varieties of birds, small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

Arlington Reservoir

The Arlington Reservoir Master Plan was completed in 2018. Key recommendations focused on improving water quality, recreational facilities, site access, habitat, and pedestrian circulation around the property. It also recommended parking improvements, better vehicular access, and a new boat ramp. Some of this work was done in 2020-2021 and remaining construction will be completed in 2022. The work includes a new filtration and UV system and overall building improvements at the pump house, beach improvements, installation of an ADA accessible path, creation of a new playground, parking lot improvements, and installation of a new boat ramp.

Access: The Arlington Reservoir (locally known as The Res) is located in both Arlington and Lexington but is wholly owned by the Town of Arlington. The Res is

accessible from several streets and neighborhoods in both towns via paths to the walking trail around the water body. A parking lot on Lowell Street in Arlington is accessible throughout the year. Another year-round parking lot abuts Hurd Field and Drake Village, a short walk from the Reservoir trail, the Minuteman Bikeway, and Massachusetts Avenue. There is a connection from the Reservoir to Arlington's Great Meadows in Lexington via an ACROSS Lexington trail on existing roadways. Another trail along Sickie Brook in Lexington's Cataldo Reservation links the Reservoir and Minuteman Bikeway in East Lexington.

Recreational Use: Arlington Reservoir is a manmade recreational and flood control reservoir. In the late 1970s the Town reconstructed a sandy beach and swimming area by building an earthen impoundment to separate the swimming area from the rest of the Reservoir. A water filtration system keeps the swimming water clean. Residents from Arlington and surrounding communities use Reservoir Beach in the summertime for swimming and other recreation. The Reservoir's one-mile perimeter walking trail is used throughout the year for birding, cross-country running, fishing, jogging, and dog walking.



Sunset at The Res. Photo credit: Wendy Richter

Wildlife Use: Arlington Reservoir supports a wide variety of wildlife including fish, turtles, bees, dragonflies, and other insects. Over 60 species of water birds and shorebirds have been found there among the nearly 220 bird species recorded to date. The annual cycle of raising and lowering the water level enhances the variation of habitats that attract different species at different times of year.

Hill's Pond

Access: Hill's Pond in Menotomy Rocks Park is accessible by a path that begins at the primary entrance on Jason Street and from several other entry points on adjacent streets.

Recreational Use: Hill's Pond is a manmade pond that offers scenic recreational value. People use the pond for passive recreation, including fishing, ice skating, and bird watching.

Wildlife Use: This small pond is home to common inhabitants such as birds, sunfish, frogs, and insects.

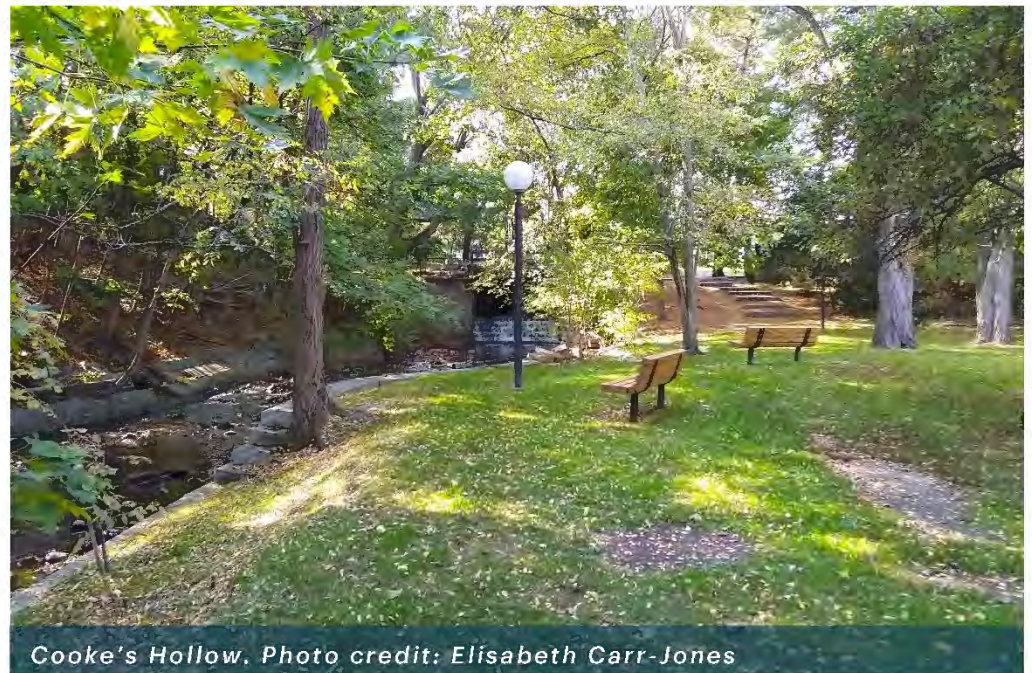
Mill Brook

Access: Most of the area abutting Mill Brook is developed with both residential and industrial uses, so access is limited. Several sections of the brook run through underground culverts. About one-third of the brook abuts Town-owned parks and open spaces: Meadowbrook Park, Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Cooke's Hollow (all off Mystic Street near the brook's eastern end), Mill Street, Mill Brook Drive, Wellington Park (on Grove St.), Watermill Place and Old Schwamb Mill (on Mill Lane), Park Avenue, Hurd Field, and the Arlington Reservoir. The brook is formed by the merger of

Sickle Brook in Lexington and water leaving the Reservoir through a sluice gate.

Recreational Use: Mill Brook has scenic and historic value in certain areas but is not used for active recreation. Accessible areas are limited and used primarily for walking and bird watching.

Wildlife Use: The brook provides a natural corridor that is used by various ducks and other bird species, mammals including raccoons, skunks and coyotes, fishes, and unknown varieties of insects and other fauna.



Cooke's Hollow. Photo credit: Elisabeth Carr-Jones

Mystic Lakes

Access: Access to the Upper and Lower Mystic Lakes in Arlington is limited because most of the shore land is privately owned. The Window on the Mystic conservation area provides access off Mystic Street in Arlington to the Upper Mystic Lake. Public access is available along Mystic Valley Parkway in Medford and Winchester, but parking on the Arlington side is available only by parking on side streets nearby.



Window on the Mystic. Photo credit: Elisabeth Carr-Jones

Recreational Use: The Upper and Lower Mystic Lakes straddle the boundaries of Arlington, Winchester, and Medford. People use the lakes for swimming, boating, and fishing. A three-acre wooded waterfront conservation area in Arlington next to Upper Mystic Lake off Mystic Street (Route 3) near the Winchester town line, known as Window-On-The Mystic, is used for passive recreation. The Arlington Conservation Commission installed a bench on this shoreline so

visitors may rest and enjoy the view of the lake and the preserved open space. Two private boat clubs are located on the Mystic Lakes. The Medford Boat Club is on DCR land and is accessible from both Arlington and Medford. It straddles land next to the dam that separates the upper and lower lakes. The Winchester Boat Club on Upper Mystic Lake is not accessible from Arlington.

Wildlife Use: The Mystic Lakes support a varied fish population, notably Alewife and Blueback Herring that migrate and spawn each spring. When DCR rebuilt the dam between the two lakes in 2013, it included a fish ladder that has increased the herring activity significantly. The lakes also support numbers of year-round, seasonal, and migrating birds. Bald Eagles have been seen regularly in recent years.

Mystic River

Access: Access to the Mystic River is available along the Arlington portion of the DCR Mystic Valley Parkway. The only dedicated parking area along the Arlington side of the river is near the intersection of Alewife Brook and the Parkway at the northern end of the Alewife Brook Greenway.

Recreational Use: The Mystic River is used for boating, fishing, bird watching, and appreciation of nature in an urban area. Along its banks, many people enjoy picnicking, walking, and dog walking.

Wildlife Use: The Mystic River supports one of the strongest river herring runs in the Greater Boston region, consisting of both Alewife and Blueback Herring. The river is an important habitat for many species of birds, and an over-wintering area for waterfowl, because its water current usually prevents parts of it from freezing completely.

Spy Pond

Access: Spy Pond is accessible to the public at several points, via streets that lead to the pond and at Spy Pond Park and Scannell Field on the northeastern shore, which is also close to the Minuteman Bikeway. Access to the pond also exists along a paved path on its southern shore, adjacent to Route 2. The Spy Pond Committee of



Mystic River. Photo credit: Wendy Richter

Envision Arlington, with assistance from the Appalachian Mountain Club Trail Team, has carried out major rehabilitation work on that path, including building steps at access points, removing invasive plants, and planting native vegetation.

Recreational Use: Fishing, boating, bird watching, and skating are popular on and around Spy Pond. The Arlington Boys and Girls Club, located on the northeastern shore, uses Spy Pond for boating in the summer months.

Wildlife Use: Spy Pond supports a limited fish population, and in the fall and spring the pond is an important resting and feeding area for migrating birds. Throughout the year Canada geese, mallard ducks, and mute swans are found along the shores, and more than 120 permanent and migrating bird species have been documented.

D. Vegetation

Arlington's vegetation consists of a mixture of native and introduced species. Little is known about the town's pre-Colonial era vegetation since Arlington was clear-cut in the 1600s (McLaughlin 1994) when much of the area was farmed. An in-depth, town-wide survey of flora found in Arlington has not been undertaken, but a major study of vegetative communities in Arlington's Great Meadows was commissioned by the Arlington Conservation Commission and completed in the spring of 2001 (see Clark 2001).

1. Public Trees

Arlington has been designated a Tree City USA Community since 2001. This program is sponsored by The National Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters.



New public trees. Photo credit: Arlington Tree Commission

The Arlington Tree Committee was established in 2010 by the Arlington Select Board. Its mission is to promote the protection, planting, and care of trees in Arlington through coordination with the Department of Public Works and its own educational and outreach programs with residents. The Tree Committee website has links for

individuals to get information about requesting a street tree to be planted, volunteer opportunities to residents to help take care of the town's street trees, and more.

To preserve the Arlington's tree canopy, the Town Meeting passed Article 16 Tree Preservation Bylaw in 2016 with further amendments in 2018 and 2019. Article 16 states "the removal of protected trees (healthy trees 8 inches DBH (diameter of tree at "breast height") or greater within the setback) on private property (under applicable circumstances) is prohibited unless the removal is authorized by written approval of a Tree Plan, submitted to the Arlington tree warden."³

In 2017, the Town conducted an inventory of the street trees to assess conditions and identify potential planting sites. Information and data were collected by Arlington's Tree Warden, two interns, the Arlington Tree Committee, and many volunteers. From the data collected, an interactive Public Tree Inventory Map was created. In 2018, the information and data from the completed Tree Inventory helped create Arlington's Tree Management Plan, which outlines tree maintenance and planting and overall tree management goals for the town. The Tree Committee also implemented an Adopt-A-Tree program in 2020 to assist the Town Department of Public Works with watering of newly planted trees.

³ <https://www.arlingtontrees.org/public-trees>

2. Woodland Areas

A few small woodlands in Arlington provide peaceful areas for passive recreational activities, walking and nature observation, and are reminders of more heavily wooded areas or forests of the past. Arlington's wooded areas include Menotomy Rocks Park, Turkey Hill, Mount Gilboa, Arlington Reservoir, a portion of the former Symmes Hospital property (now Arlington 360), Hill's Hill, and the Crusher Lot at the Ottoson Middle School.

All of Arlington's woodlands have significant overstories, which do not allow extensive shrub growth. Species typical of an Oak-Hickory forest dominate the woodland areas, including White Ash, Black Oak, Red Oak, White Oak, Scarlet Oak, Hophornbeam, Bitternut Hickory, Shagbark Hickory, White Pine, and Sassafras. These areas also contain species common to disturbed soils, including Staghorn Sumac, Grey Birch, and Paper Birch. Some woodland communities also include Sugar Maple, Black Cherry, and Basswood (Linden).

The native shrubs and plants found in Arlington woodlands are typical of those found in other Boston Basin areas: Blueberry, Currant, Dangleberry, Deerberry, Maple Leaf Viburnum, Pipsissewa, Whorled Loosestrife, Sarsaparilla, and False Solomon's Seal.

Introduced tree species that have infiltrated Arlington woodland areas include Norway Maple, Tree-of-Heaven (Ailanthus), Sycamore Maple, European Mountain Ash, and Cherry Cultivars. Nonnative shrubs include Common Buckthorn, European Buckthorn, Forsythia, Winged Euonymus, some Honeysuckles, Multiflora Rose, Oriental Bittersweet, Barberry, and Japanese Knotweed. Other abundant invasive plants include Black Swallowwort and Garlic Mustard.

3. Wetland Areas

Arlington has a number of marshes, ponds, streams, rivers, and lakes containing trees such as Green Ash, Silver Maple, Red Maple, Ashleaf Maple, Cottonwood and Willow. Cattail, Silky Dogwood, Red Osier Dogwood, Buttonbush, and the pervasive Purple Loosestrife and Phragmites are also key constituents in these areas. Willow trees, which grow in wet soils, are found along the edges of Spy Pond, Thorndike Field, and Arlington Reservoir. Reed beds and aquatic weeds are found in and along the major watercourses, inland marshes, Mystic Lakes, the Reservoir and Spy Pond.

4. Landscaped and Mowed Areas

Arlington contains many landscaped and mowed parks and playing fields that are accessible for sporting activities, sledding, picnicking, strolling, relaxation, and scenic viewing. Robbins Farm Park, Town Hall Garden,

Poets Corner, Thorndike Field, Magnolia Field, and McClennen Park are some of these areas. Given the suburban character of the town, the primary vegetation found in its parks is a variety of deciduous and coniferous trees and cultivated shrubs and grasses.



In mowed areas, a variety of herbs and wildflowers grow naturally. Chicory, Yarrow, Burdock, Clover, All-heal, Plantain, Goldenrod, and Tansy are among the plants that have managed to take root amidst the grasses. Nonnative Japanese Knotweed and Garlic Mustard have invaded many paved or mowed areas and are especially prevalent along the Minuteman Bikeway.

Tree plantings in the parks and reservations include Alder, Cedar, Hawthorn, Metasequoia, Lombardy Poplar, Sycamore, Dogwood, and flowering ornamentals. Arlington's streets are lined with several species of maples and oaks, Sycamore, Basswood (Linden), and Ash, among other trees.

The use of native plantings in Arlington has become widely accepted through the efforts of the Arlington Conservation Commission and its native plant list, and through the policies of the Department of Public Works to use native trees and plants in its own work.

5. Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species

Six species of plants listed as threatened (T) or endangered (E) on the Massachusetts Endangered Species List have been observed in Arlington (see Table 4-4). Threatened species, as defined by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, "are native species which are likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future, or which are declining or rare as determined by biological research and inventory" (321 CMR 10.03(6)(b)).

Table 4-4. Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Plant Species

Most Recent Observation	Common Name	Scientific Name	Taxonomic Group	MESA Status
2019	Engelmann's Flatsedge	<i>Cyperus engelmannii</i>	Vascular Plant	Threatened
1913	Purple Needlegrass	<i>Aristida purpurascens</i>	Vascular Plant	Threatened
1898	Long-leaved Bluet	<i>Houstonia longifolia</i>	Vascular Plant	Endangered
1890	Northern Bedstraw	<i>Galium boreale</i>	Vascular Plant	Endangered
1870	Estuary Arrowhead	<i>Sagittaria montevidensis</i> ssp. <i>spongiosa</i>	Vascular Plant	Endangered
1854	Whorled Milkweed	<i>Asclepias verticillata</i>	Vascular Plant	Threatened

Source: Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program Rare Species Viewer: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rare-species-viewer>.
Obtained August 2021.

E. Fisheries and Wildlife

Although there are few areas for wildlife to thrive in Arlington's urban setting, the town still has a good mixture of fish and other wildlife species. Arlington residents value the town's natural areas, and protection of wildlife is an important aspect of preserving those open spaces and natural corridors.

1. Fauna, in General

Arlington's fauna is remarkably rich for such an urban setting, especially the birds and migratory fishes. This variety is linked directly to the quantity, quality, and diversity of soils, water, and vegetation in the area. However, their relative abundance is constrained by human activity. Maintenance and regulation of the use of certain areas within open spaces is crucial to Arlington's ability to enhance, preserve, and enjoy its living resources.

Currently, there are few up-to-date inventories of Arlington's fauna. Birds are the best documented species, due to the expertise of local observers. The Menotomy Bird Club maintains an informative website, and bird lists have been compiled by volunteers for the Arlington Reservoir, Menotomy Rocks Park, McClennen Park, and Spy Pond. These data are posted on the nationally recognized Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology site (ebird.org).

In general, what is known about birds probably represents most of the fauna in town; that is, where proper habitat exists, there are pockets of wildlife that have adapted to or tolerate the changes of the last three centuries. However, some areas that appear to be natural are not prime wildlife habitat and require active management. The majority of Arlington's wetlands are downgraded habitat areas because of the large stands of introduced Phragmites reed and Purple Loosestrife that have thrived, compared to native cattails, sedges, and grasses. In addition, most wildlife does not thrive in fragmented, small plots, and each wildlife species requires a certain minimal sized area. Even paths or roads through certain habitats can change the species' assemblage.



Turkeys in a neighborhood. Photo credit Ann LeRoyer

The presence and distribution of major fauna groups other than birds, such as invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals, are less well known. Most local native fauna have declined over the past century, as has wildlife across all urban North America. However, because of its well-planted residential areas, existing undeveloped open spaces, small wildlife corridors, and the proximity of open space in neighboring towns, Arlington hosts a surprising array of wildlife for a town of its size and development.

2. Invertebrates

Thousands of species of invertebrates inhabit Arlington, but none have been well surveyed at the town level. Some species have been listed for Middlesex County, but those data cannot be readily interpreted for Arlington. Because these animals are the part of the fauna that binds ecosystems together, they are vital to a viable ecosystem. The most common invertebrates are insects. Arlington's fauna range in species from butterflies (e.g., Monarch, Viceroy, Cabbage Butterfly, and Black and Tiger Swallowtails), to the odonates (e.g., dragonflies, damselflies, etc.), to the thousands of other invertebrate species. Numbers and species of spiders, crustaceans, and mollusks are also unknown.

3. Fishes, Reptiles and Amphibians

The Mystic River watershed has very few species of fishes; biologists have documented only 29 species (23 native and 6 nonnative species; Hartel, Halliwell, and Launer 2002). Due to the geology, the relatively small size of the Mystic drainage basin, and the changes in the quality of the town's streams, the Arlington area may now have fewer species. Many changes dating back to colonial days have affected the range of fish species in Arlington. An example is the White Sucker which lives in the Mystic Lakes but runs up streams to spawn. The fish can move upstream from the Lower Mystic Lake via the Meadowbrook Park and the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery but has been stopped from going farther by the dam and culvert at Cooke's Hollow.



Alewives. Photo credit: Jerry Prezioso

While not listed state-wide, two species of river herring have declined in the Mystic River watershed, although the enhanced fishway built on the Mystic dam in 2012 has allowed hundreds of thousands of Alewife and Blueback Herring to access the upper lake and beyond (789,000 in 2019). The MyRWA has been active in promoting and documenting the passage of migrating native anadromous herrings in the watershed.

There is a limited amount of sport and ice fishing in Arlington's major water bodies. Common Carp, Bluegill, Yellow and White Perch, and Pumpkinseed Sunfish are common, and two-to-three-pound Largemouth Bass have been caught in Spy Pond in recent years.

Because of the secretive nature of reptiles and amphibians, little is known about their occurrence in Arlington. The common species that exist in populated areas can also be found in Arlington: Eastern Red-backed Salamander, Bullfrog, Green Frog, Garter Snake, Snapping Turtle, and Painted Turtle.

4. Birds

Over the past 25 years, careful observers have recorded nearly 230 species of birds in and around Arlington, including more than 60 breeding species. The most abundant are those that have adapted to urban habitats. The European Starling, Rock Dove (Pigeon), and House Sparrow, which were introduced in the 1800s, are very

numerous. Common breeding birds found year-round in backyards, small wooded areas, and vegetated parks in Arlington are Northern Cardinal, Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, Black-capped Chickadee, Goldfinch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Mockingbird, Downy Woodpecker, House Finch, American Robin, and Mourning Dove.

Species such as Northern Flicker, Chimney Swift, Eastern Kingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, House Wren, Gray Catbird, Northern Oriole, and Red-tailed Hawk breed in Arlington, but generally migrate south for the winter. Most of these species are insect eaters, consuming thousands of insects and worms over the summer season.

Arlington's wet open spaces and ponds attract large numbers of birds, especially during migration. More than 25 species of ducks visit Spy Pond, the Mystic Lakes, and Arlington Reservoir; the most spectacular and common are American Wigeon, Hooded, Common, and Red-breasted Merganser, Ring-necked Duck, Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler, and Ruddy Duck. Also common are Mallard Duck, Black Duck, Canada Geese, and Mute Swans.

A dozen species of sandpipers and plovers can be found at the water's edge, especially around the flats at Arlington Reservoir and Hill's Pond. All of these species

require relatively clean aquatic habitat with abundant prey items. Spotted, Least, Pectoral, Semipalmated and Solitary Sandpipers, along with Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, are found regularly. Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons are quite common.



Pileated woodpecker. Photo credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

More than 50 species, many of which require open meadow or edge, nest at Arlington's Great Meadows. American Woodcock, Common Snipe, Northern Harrier, Ring-necked Pheasant, Marsh Wren, and other meadow birds are some of the less common birds that can be found there (Andrews et al. 1993; Clark 2001).

Of the 228 species of birds reported in Arlington, more than 30 species are new to the area since the 193 species reported in the 1996 Arlington Open Space Plan, which was based on the bird list of Andrews et al. (1993). Recent additions include Snowy Egret, Glossy Ibis, Tricolored Heron, Baird's Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Northern Goshawk, Philadelphia Vireo, Horned Lark, Pileated Woodpecker, Grasshopper Sparrow, Monk Parakeet, White-fronted Goose, and Leach's Storm Petrel.

A number of locally uncommon or unusual birds are found in and around Arlington's open spaces and water bodies. These species form a special part of the very urban nature of Arlington and Greater Boston. Such species include the Bald Eagle, Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Wild Turkey, Great Cormorant, Green Heron, European Wigeon, Canvasback, Woodcock, Golden Plover, Pectoral Sandpiper, two species of Cuckoos, Red-bellied and Pileated Woodpeckers, all six species of local swallows, numerous warbler species, Bobolink, and Orchard Oriole. These species may be found in Arlington because of the availability of appropriate habitat, such as the large Mystic Lakes, the mudflats of the Reservoir, the wet meadows at Arlington's Great Meadows, or the mature trees at Menotomy Rocks Park.

5. Mammals

Many of the typical mammals that survive and sometimes even thrive in urban settings appear in all areas of Arlington, including Virginia Opossum, Raccoon, Striped Skunk, Eastern Cottontail, Gray Squirrel, Eastern Chipmunk, House Mouse, and Norway Rat. Other species are found less frequently, such as Northern Short-tailed Shrew, Little Brown Bat, and White-footed Mouse. Certain species may be common but are found only in restricted habitats, such as Muskrat in aquatic areas, Meadow Vole in open meadows and Red-backed Vole in wooded areas. Larger mammals are being seen more frequently in recent years, including White-tailed Deer, Red Fox, Coyote, and Woodchuck. Coyotes have become a particular nuisance in some neighborhoods.

6. Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species

There are few federal- or state-listed threatened (T), endangered (E), or special concern (SC) species in Arlington (Table 4-5). One bird—the Golden-winged Warbler—is listed as endangered. The Mystic Valley Amphipod, *Crangonyx aberans*, is known from Arlington's Great Meadows and possibly other water bodies (Smith 1983; 1991). Arlington also has breeding populations of the uncommon Black-billed Cuckoo and Orchard Oriole. Other state-listed species, such as Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Harrier, and American

Bittern, are also recorded occasionally but most are not known to breed in Arlington (Andrews 1993; Viet and Peterson 1993). A Bald Eagle nest was established in Mount Pleasant Cemetery in 2021, but no young fledged, presumably due to the presence of rodenticides in their food sources. No state or federally listed fishes or mammals have been found in Arlington. The Spy Pond area is the only location in Arlington identified as a BioMap Core Critical Landscape and Core Habitat, Priority Habitat of Rare Species.



Table 4-5. Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Fisheries and Wildlife Species

Most Recent Observation	Common Name	Scientific Name	Taxonomic Group	MESA Status
1930	Hentz's Red-bellied Tiger Beetle	<i>Cicindela rufiventris hentzii</i>	Beetle	Threatened
1923	Twelve-spotted Tiger Beetle	<i>Cicindela duodecimguttata</i>	Beetle	Special Concern
1903	Imperial Moth	<i>Eacles imperialis</i>	Butterfly/Moth	Threatened
1895	Blue-spotted Salamander (complex)	<i>Ambystoma laterale pop. 1</i>	Amphibian	Special Concern
1879	Northern Harrier	<i>Circus hudsonius</i>	Bird	Threatened
1874	Golden-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>	Bird	Endangered
1800s	Marbled Salamander	<i>Ambystoma opacum</i>	Amphibian	Threatened
Historic	Wood Turtle	<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Reptile	Special Concern

Source: Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program Rare Species Viewer: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rare-species-viewer>. Obtained August 2021.

7. Wildlife Corridors

Natural corridors that connect two or more habitat areas allow the free movement of wildlife. In developed communities like Arlington, wildlife may be forced to use rail trails, bike paths or power lines as corridors, as well as streams, rivers, undeveloped wetlands, and riparian buffers.

The Minuteman Bikeway forms an important spine of habitat movement due to its proximity to many open space parcels, Mill Brook, and other water bodies in Arlington. It runs west to east from the northwest

portion of Arlington near the Arlington Reservoir past Spy Pond (identified as BioMap Core Critical Landscape and Core Habitat, Priority Habitat of Rare Species) to the southeast corner near Alewife Brook and the Alewife Reservation. Open space access from the Bikeway near Buzzell Field also leads to Cooke's Hollow, Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, through Meadowbrook Park, and into the Lower Mystic Lake. An additional habitat corridor is formed to the north along the banks of the Lower Mystic Lake, which then leads to the Upper Mystic Lake and into Winchester. Much wildlife activity has been observed at the Arlington Reservoir along the Munroe

Brook toward Lexington, as well as in neighborhoods between natural parcels such as near the former Symmes Hospital site, Turkey Hill, Mount Gilboa and McClennen Park.

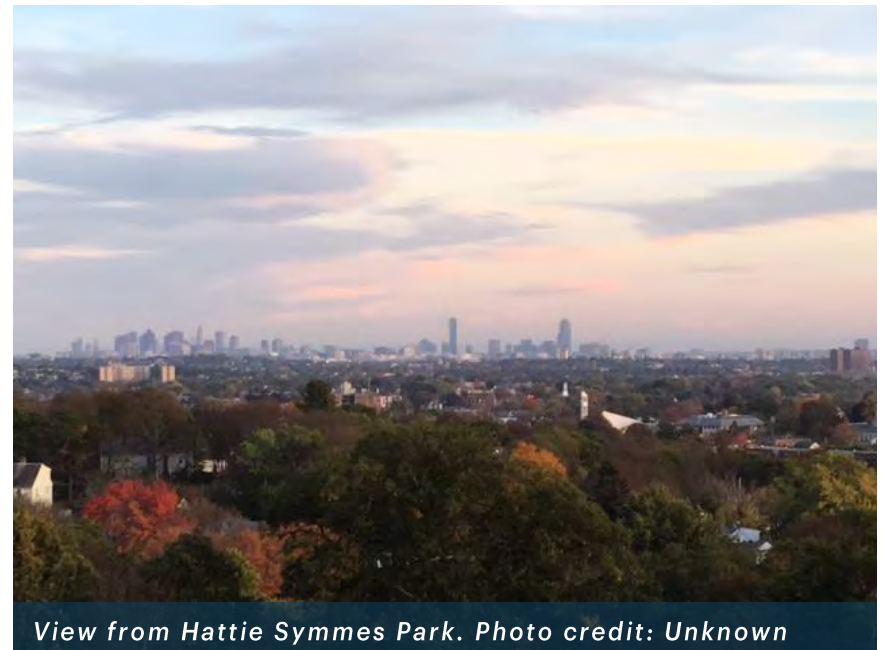
F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

Arlington's scenic areas and unique environments contribute to its character and remain cherished by town residents and visitors. Situated in the Mill Brook Valley (the site of a major glacial river at the end of the Ice Age), Arlington is a landscape of many steep hills that provide scenic vistas both throughout town and into Boston and neighboring communities.

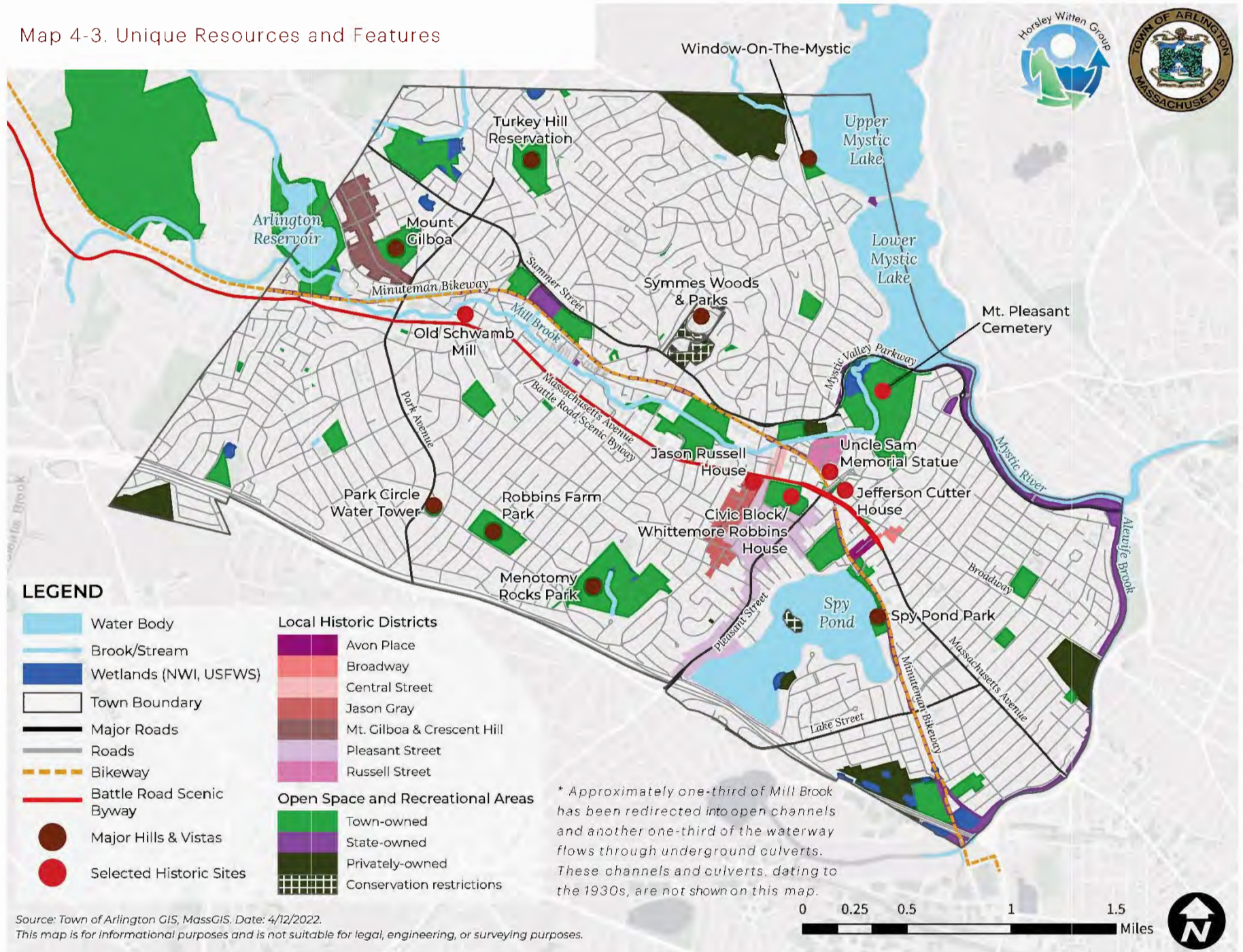
With houses dating back to the 18th century, Arlington retains some of its colonial roots. Perhaps the town's biggest claim on American history is its role at the dawn of the American Revolutionary War, in the events of April 19, 1775, when Arlington (then known as Menotomy) saw some of the fiercest fighting between the British troops and the Minutemen all along Massachusetts Avenue between Lexington and Cambridge. The area features numerous historic markers and is now identified by a federally designated scenic bylaw and called the Battle Road Scenic Byway. Many of Arlington's unique aspects are described below and depicted on Map 4-3.

1. Scenic Landscapes

Views of Boston are available from vantage points atop the town's many hills on both sides of the Mill Brook Valley (Robbins Farm Park/Eastern Ave., Route 2 overpass on Park Avenue, Mount Gilboa, Jason Heights, Turkey Hill, and Arlington 360, the former Symmes Hospital property). Robbins Farm Park has such a good view of Boston that on July 4th hundreds of people gather on this steep hillside to view the Esplanade Fireworks - eight miles away! Hattie Symmes Park at Arlington 360 also offers expansive, clear views of Boston including the Harbor Islands.



Map 4-3. Unique Resources and Features



Views of the Mystic Lakes are seen most easily from Arlington at the Window-On-The-Mystic, a three-acre conservation site off Route 3, which is Arlington's only public waterfront on the Upper Mystic Lake. A bench and steps have been provided through the Arlington Conservation Commission. Mt. Pleasant Cemetery also offers views of the Lower Mystic Lake through the trees.

Mystic River views are best seen from areas along the Mystic Valley Parkway (DCR land) in Arlington and Medford.

Mill Brook forms the central spine of Arlington and is visible from numerous locations, including the Arlington Reservoir walking trail, the Minuteman Bikeway, Wellington Park, Cooke's Hollow conservation land on Mystic Street, Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, and other pockets of un-culverted stretches throughout the valley. Cooke's Hollow is the location of Arlington's only waterfall and is near the site of the first grist mill dating to the 1630s.

Alewife Brook can be viewed from the Alewife Brook Parkway and Greenway, and from several neighborhoods in East Arlington.

Arlington's Great Meadows, reached from the Minuteman Bikeway and local roads, offers one of the most scenic areas along the Bikeway. This 183-acre site is owned by the Town of Arlington, but it is located entirely within Lexington's borders.

Mount Gilboa and **Menotomy Rocks Park** have dramatic glacial rock formations and woodlands.



Mount Gilboa. Photo credit: Elisabeth Carr-Jones

Arlington Reservoir is reached from the parking lot next to the beach area on Lowell Street and the walking trail around the perimeter. Parking is also available in the lot next to the Drake Village elderly housing complex and Hurd Field, with access available by crossing the field.

Historic structures and their surrounding open space include the Jason Russell House (situated at Mass Ave. and Jason St., on a large, landscaped lot), the Jefferson

Cutter House (in Whittemore Park in Arlington Center), the Old Schwamb Mill complex including Mill Pond Park (on Mill Lane in Arlington Heights), and the Whittemore-Robbins House (part of the Civic Block behind the Robbins Library in Arlington Center).

Spy Pond can be viewed from a walking path along the border of Route 2, from the Minuteman Bikeway, and from the recreational areas along the northern shore at Spy Pond Park.



Robbins Memorial Garden. Photo credit: Ann LeRoyer

The Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden, enclosed by a wall as part of the Town Hall Civic Block, features a brick walkway through a formal garden of flowering trees and shrubs (designed in the 1930s by Olmsted Brothers and restored in 2019 with Community Preservation Act funding) and a statue of a Native American (called “Menotomy Indian Hunter”) by Cyrus E. Dallin, the famous sculptor who lived and worked in Arlington.

The Minuteman Bikeway is scenic because of largely wooded borders, converted railroad bridges, historic landmarks, (e.g., Jefferson Cutter House), and abutting open spaces (e.g., Spy Pond Park and playground, Hurd Field, Arlington's Great Meadows). The Minuteman Bikeway has become one of the most used bicycle/recreational trails in the country, according to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.

Mount Pleasant Cemetery, the town's only public cemetery, offers a large expanse of landscaped open space near Arlington Center. Trees and rolling hills and many historic markers provide picturesque scenery and complement adjacent open space in Meadowbrook Park, a wetland area protected by the Conservation Commission. Mill Brook runs through the cemetery and park and empties into the Lower Mystic Lake.

2. Major Characteristic or Unusual Geologic Features

Arlington is geologically interesting because of its dramatic changes of elevation and its hilly and rocky contours. The eastern part of town has elevations close to sea level, whereas elevations in western Arlington are often as high as 350 to 400 feet above sea level. Almost all the hills, including Turkey Hill, Mount Gilboa, Symmes, and Menotomy Rocks, contain rock formations left behind by melting glaciers after the Ice Age that are suitable for light hiking or rock climbing.

3. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

According to the Massachusetts Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) program, administered by EEA, Arlington does not have any designated ACECs.

4. Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources

Arlington has many cultural and historic sites and programs that attract both residents and visitors. Populated by many people in the visual, print, performance, and related arts fields, the town also has many organizations concerned with maintaining and enhancing its cultural and historic attractions and heritage.

Historic Resources

The Historic Preservation Survey Master Plan, completed in April 2019, inventoried Arlington's local historic resources, including historic buildings and places, cultural and archaeological elements, and other significant structures to be included in the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth, which is maintained by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). The top priority of the plan was making corrections to Arlington inventory forms on file with the MHC in conjunction with Arlington Historical Commission Records and Arlington demolition review list. The plan makes recommendations for preservation by neighborhood and resource type, with top priorities for each neighborhood.

Historic Organizations

Several historic organizations in Arlington focus on its heritage, including:

- Arlington Historical Society (private nonprofit)
- Arlington Historical Commission (Town)
- Arlington Historic Districts Commission (Town)

Historic Districts

Arlington has five National Register Historic Districts, three multi-property National Register Districts, one National Register Thematic Nomination, and 57 properties that are individually listed in the National

Register. The Arlington Center National Register Historic District encompasses 11 properties, including the historic Whittemore-Robbins House, the Robbins Memorial Town Hall, and the Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden. The Arlington Historical Commission has jurisdiction over this space.

Arlington also has seven local historic districts, comprised mostly of single-family homes totaling more than 300 properties. These districts are under the jurisdiction of the Arlington Historic Districts Commission (See Map 4-3).

- The Avon Place Historic District
- The Broadway Historic District
- The Central Street Historic District
- The Jason Gray Historic District
- The Mount Gilboa/Crescent Hill Historic District
- The Pleasant Street Historic District
- The Russell Street Historic District

Arlington also has demolition delay bylaws that protect individual historic structures within or outside of the historic districts.

Historic Sites and Attractions

In addition to the seven locally designated historic districts, Arlington has many historically significant individual properties and landmark sites, such as the milestone marking the ride of Paul Revere at the corner

of Appleton Street and Paul Revere Road. Several of the town's key historic attractions are described below.

The **Jason Russell House** (ca. 1740), owned and managed by the Arlington Historical Society, is the centerpiece of the town's history. The adjacent Smith Museum houses extensive collections documenting Arlington history and is open to the public for tours and special events.



On the evening of April 18, 1775, Paul Revere and William Dawes rode through Arlington warning the colonists that the British were marching to Concord. The following

day, battles between British troops and Colonial Minutemen began in Lexington and Concord and continued along Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington. As the British retreated through Arlington to Boston, colonists fired guns on the Redcoats marching down Massachusetts Avenue.

In the restored Jason Russell House, visitors can see several bullet holes from shots fired that day. Its owner, Jason Russell, was killed and is buried in the Old Burying Ground in Arlington Center, along with 11 other Minutemen (from Arlington and other Massachusetts communities) who died that day. A plaque on the property reads: "The site of the house of Jason Russell where he and 11 others were captured, disarmed, and killed by the retreating British on April 19, 1775."

The **Jefferson Cutter House** (ca. 1830) was moved in 1988 to Whittemore Park, the former site of the John Adams House (c. 1650), one of the town's first houses in Arlington Center, which was torn down in 1950. The Cutter House now hosts the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum and a meeting and gallery space in its basement that offers rotating exhibits by local artists throughout the year.

The **Old Schwamb Mill** (ca. 1861), established as a living history museum in 1970, is open for public tours and a variety of special events and educational programs.

Visitors can view the manufacture of high-quality oval and circular wooden picture frames using original tools and processes dating from the establishment of the Schwambs' frame business in 1864. The former mill pond on Mill Brook is now a Town-owned park, dedicated in 2020 as Mill Pond Park in honor of Patricia Fitzmaurice, the museum founder.



The **Uncle Sam Memorial Statue** commemorates Samuel Wilson, who was born in Arlington in 1766. It is located in a small park in the town center (at the intersection of Mystic/Pleasant Streets with Massachusetts Avenue). The Town's Visitor Center is

also located in this small park adjacent to the Minuteman Bikeway.

Arts and Culture

The **Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture** serves as the umbrella organization for all Town-related arts and culture activities. The commission consists of a core committee and four main standing subcommittees: Marketing and Evaluation, Grant Making, Fundraising and Resource Development, and Community Engagement (formerly Public Art and Programs and Festivals). The commission's responsibilities include actively promoting and advocating for arts and culture, managing the Arlington Cultural District, seeking and distributing arts-related grants, and supporting a robust public art program for the Town.

The **Arlington Center for the Arts (ACA)**, located at the Central School in Arlington Center, is a vibrant nonprofit center with studios for visual, print, and performing artists. ACA offers arts classes for adults and children, and vacation/summer camp programs, as well as regular exhibits and special programs for the community. Open studio exhibits, literary readings, crafts, and drama and musical offerings make the center an exciting place for people of all ages.

The **Cyrus E. Dallin Art Museum**, founded in 1995 by a dedicated volunteer group of Arlington residents, is

housed in the Town-owned Jefferson Cutter House in Arlington Center. Visitors experience over ninety works of art spanning Cyrus Dallin's sixty-year career. Dallin's art was inspired by classical forms, figures in Euro-American history, Indigenous peoples, and his family and friends. Works on exhibit include rare master plasters, original bronze casts, prototypes of public monuments and memorials, and coins, medals, and paintings. The Museum's comprehensive exhibits ground Dallin's unique body of work within the context of his commitment to artistic expression, education, and Indigenous rights.



Throughout Arlington, churches, and civic buildings including Robbins Memorial Town Hall Auditorium, Robbins Library, and Arlington High School provide rehearsal and performance space for dance, choral, and other performing arts groups. In Arlington Center, the Regent Theater and the Arlington Friends of the Drama present live theater and other performance programs. In East Arlington, the popular Capitol Theater shows feature films and has an old-fashioned concession counter.

Festivals, Fairs, and Parades

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the cancellation of many public events in 2020 and 2021, but typically the following activities and other celebrations are sponsored by Town departments and community-based organizations.

The Recreation Department sponsors carnivals and other special programs for young children in the summer and winter.

East Arlington businesses celebrate the Feast of the East, a springtime street fair sponsored by restaurants,



Concert at Robbins Farm Park. Photo credit: Tony Vogel

art galleries, and other groups in that neighborhood and business district, known as Capitol Square.

In mid-September during Town Day, Arlington commemorates the birthday of Uncle Sam (Samuel Wilson), supplier to the U.S. Army, who was born in Arlington on September 13, 1766. This event includes a street fair, food vendors, and road race.

Arlington hosts its own Patriot's Day Parade, (one of the largest local parades in Massachusetts), complete with appearances from "William Dawes" and "Paul Revere" in

an annual re-creation of their famous ride in 1775. A Veterans' Day Parade is also held annually in November.

Some park "friends" groups sponsor annual or occasional programs and special events, such as July 4th and other summertime events at Robbins Farm Park and Spy Pond Fun Day in Spy Pond Park.

Archaeological Areas

In 1959, Arvid Carlson found a fossil tusk of a mastodon (a prehistoric cousin of the elephant) in Spy Pond (Balazs 1973). The Arlington Historical Society's Smith Museum now displays the 6½ foot tusk, which is about 42,000 years old.

In 1988, members of Boston University's Archaeology Department, under contract with the Prince Hall Mystic Cemetery Association, performed a geophysical survey of Arlington's Prince Hall Mystic Cemetery, the country's earliest Black Masonic cemetery. People buried in this cemetery are said to be from the country's first Black Grand Lodge, formed in 1776 (Pendleton 1989). Survey findings included remains from structures that once belonged in the cemetery, such as the cemetery gate and an obelisk monument. A small park and historical marker now commemorate the cemetery, although most of the former cemetery land has since been developed.

During work in the early 1990s to renovate Spy Pond Field (Ritchie 1993), archaeological excavations were conducted along the shores of Spy Pond. Some of the archaeological remains found in this area included prehistoric lithic chipping debris and structural remains from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ice industry buildings.

In 2022, Arlington will commence an Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey to record and document known and probable locations of archaeological resources associated with patterns of ancient and historical activity. The survey, funded through the Community Preservation Act, will include additional focus on the Old Burying Ground and Prince Hall Cemetery.

G. Environmental Challenges

Arlington's environmental problems and challenges are typical of other communities in northwest suburban Boston. The major types of environmental problems include hazardous waste site remediation, stormwater and drainage control, and wetland enforcement matters. Resiliency to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change has also been a growing concern in the region.

1. Hazardous Waste Sites

Most of Arlington's required hazardous waste remediation efforts are the responsibility of private parties. According to MassDEP's Reportable Release

Lookup table, there have been 215 reported disposal incidents in Arlington since 1987. The vast majority of incidents reported to MassDEP were relatively minor or low risk, involving a response that did not require oversight by DEP or a Licensed Site Professional (LSP).

Ten incidents are "Tier classified," however, meaning a type or an extent of contamination that poses a higher risk to the public. Arlington has six Tier 1 (highest risk) sites, two Tier 1D sites, and two Tier 2 sites, as shown in Table 4-6. Tier 1D is a default classification that MassDEP assigns when the responsible party misses a regulatory deadline, e.g., failing to file a report. Tier 2 sites warrant clean-up under LSP supervision, but they

Table 4-6. DEP Tier Classified Sites in Arlington

Site Name	Address	Contamination Type	Chapter 21E Status
Residence	25-27 Laurel Street	Hazardous Material	Tier 1
Residential	21 Laurel Street	Hazardous Material	Tier 1
Residence	29 Laurel Street	Hazardous Material	Tier 1
Residence	1 Old Colony Lane	Hazardous Material	Tier 1
Unnamed Location	1087-1089 Massachusetts Ave	Hazardous Material	Tier 1
Former Dry Cleaners	1092 Massachusetts Ave	N/A	Tier 1
Arlington High School	869 Massachusetts Ave	Hazardous Material	Tier 1D
Mile Marker 132	Route 2 West	Oil	Tier 1D
Commercial Property	882-892 Massachusetts Ave	Hazardous Material	Tier 2
Unnamed Location	1 Broadway	Oil	Tier 2

Source: Waste Site & Reportable Release Lookup, Chapter 21 Database, Department of Environmental Protection, December 2021

do not involve a high enough risk to require a MassDEP permit.

MassDEP has identified 11 sites in Arlington that are subject to Activity and Use Limitations (AUL): remediated (and sometimes non-remediated) sites that can be used for new purposes, subject to restrictions recorded with the deed (Table 4-7).

2. Landfills/Solid Waste

There are no longer any active landfill sites in Arlington. The Reed's Brook area was a municipal landfill from 1959 to 1969 and has undergone a Comprehensive Site Assessment as part of a closure process. It was redeveloped and dedicated as McClennen Park in June 2006.

Table 4-7. DEP Sites with Activity and Use Limitations (AUL)

Site Name	Address	Status*	RAO Class	AUL DATE
51 Grove St Site	51 Grove St	REMOPS	-	04/09/2007
Arlington Catholic Playing Field	Summer St	RAO	B2	11/11/2009
Brighams East Edge of Parking Lot	30 Mill St	RAO	-	07/30/2007
Brighams Inc	30 Mill St	RAO	A2	07/30/2007
Buzzell Field	Summer St	RAO	PA	09/19/2013
Commercial Property	30 Mill Street	DPS	-	06/12/2012
Fmr Arrow Pontiac	25 Massachusetts Ave	PSC	PA	12/22/2016
MBTA Parking Lot	1395-1425 Massachusetts Ave	PSC	PA	11/21/2016
Unnamed Location	180 Mountain Ave	RAO	A3	01/17/2006
Unnamed Location	1386 Massachusetts Ave	RAO	B2	04/16/2004
Unnamed Location	24 Central St	RAO	A3	05/01/1998

Source: Waste Site & Reportable Release Lookup, Chapter 21 Database, MA DEP, December 2021

* Status:

REMOPS = "Remedy Operation Status,"

PSC = "Permanent Solution with Conditions."

RAO = "Response Action Outcome," or a report field with DEP that actions taken have eliminated substantial hazards and no significant risk exists on the site.

DPS = "Downgradient Property Status"

** RAO Status:

PA = Permanent Solution with Conditions and a land use restriction

A2 = A permanent solution has been achieved.

A3 = A permanent solution has been achieved.

B2 = Remedial actions have not been conducted because a level of No Significant Risk exists, but that the level is contingent upon one or more AUL that have been implemented.

3. Erosion

Arlington is almost totally developed with paved streets and a complete network of storm sewers, and it has few erosion problems. A number of localized erosion areas exist along the Minuteman Bikeway, which is a converted rail line. Some parks, playgrounds, and wooded conservation areas also experience localized erosion around pathways and on steep slopes. Erosion bars and other remediation measures are taken to minimize any extensive damage.

4. Chronic Flooding

Several areas in Arlington have chronic flooding problems, primarily in neighborhoods adjacent to Alewife Brook, Mystic River and Mill Brook. The greatest concern is for sections of East Arlington between Lake Street and Route 2, which is very flat and not far above sea level. This area is part of the former Great Swamp. Stormwater runoff from Belmont, Cambridge, and Route 2 contributes to flooding in the Alewife Brook neighborhoods during heavy rainfalls.

MyRWA and the Town are working collaboratively on local projects to help address regional flooding concerns. As noted elsewhere, natural flood storage areas have been created along Mill Brook in Wellington Park. The final phase of construction will be complete by 2022 and will include a rain garden to prevent

flooding on Prentiss Road, additional native plantings, and a natural play area designed by local artist Mitch Ryerson.



5. Sedimentation

For the most part, sedimentation is not a problem in Arlington's open spaces, however, there are isolated areas where sedimentation does impact water resources. In 2021, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) removed approximately 800 cubic yards of sediment in Spy Pond at the Route 2 outfall and constructed stormwater drainage

improvements to the drainage system to address sedimentation concerns. In addition, there have been some sedimentation concerns with Meadowbrook Park at the mouth of Mill Brook. Every year that area receives a heavy deposit of sand from the winter snow control efforts. Eventually this may change the nature of the wetland there. The Conservation Commission, which oversees this area, holds regular spring clean-ups and monitors the situation.

6. New Development

Arlington has very little remaining buildable open land. The Mugar property in East Arlington near Alewife Brook is the last large remaining undeveloped site. It is currently the subject of a Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit proposal that is pending legal appeals.

Redevelopment of some light industrial sites along the Mill Brook corridor has included the Brigham Square Apartments on Mill Street and the recently approved Chapter 40B housing project on the site of the former Theodore Schwamb Mill on Mass Ave in Arlington Heights. Both the Town's 2015 Master Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) stress that a major goal of the town is to ensure that any new development or redevelopment is done in an environmentally sensitive manner that enhances the open space values of the corridor.

7. Ground and Surface Water Pollution

All water bodies in Arlington face the threat of nonpoint pollution from roadway, house, business, and stormwater runoff. For example, Spy Pond receives roadway runoff from Route 2, and the brooks collect runoff from storm drains, roadways, and neighboring properties.

The Conservation Commission's Water Bodies Working Group assesses the needs of all the waterbodies in Arlington and coordinates management with goals to remove invasive aquatic plants and improve the overall water quality. The Working Group's 2021 Annual Report divides their findings into three general categories. Most Water Bodies Working Group efforts and plans focus on category 2.

Category 1: Water bodies that are in generally good shape, do not need much help, or whose issues are being addressed by other agencies or funding sources, e.g., Upper and Lower Mystic Lakes and Mystic River

Category 2: Water bodies with some issues that could benefit from directed intervention, e.g., Spy Pond, Arlington Reservoir, Hills Pond, McClennen Park Detention Ponds (Reeds Brook)

Category 3: Water bodies that are in poor shape with many issues that would need major efforts and

additional funding to improve, e.g., Mill Brook and Alewife Brook.

Arlington also has resources and plans in place to improve stormwater management to minimize the impacts of runoff on water quality. To meet the requirements of its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Permit, Arlington has a Stormwater Management Program with a Stormwater Management Plan (last updated in 2019), which helps target drainage infrastructure improvements with the goals of better water quality. Recent projects in East Arlington installed infiltration trenches and rain gardens to reduce pollutants entering Alewife Brook and Mystic River.

In 2007, Arlington adopted the Town's Stormwater Mitigation bylaws to require property owners to mitigate the impacts of additional stormwater flow and volume from their property should they undertake a project that increases impervious area on their property by 350 square feet or more. Guidance for Arlington residents who start these types of projects can be found in the Town's 2018 Stormwater Management Standards.

8. Public Street Trees

Arlington is recognized for its "leafy suburban" character and the abundance of street trees. However, the majority of these trees are Norway Maples, which are now considered invasive and continue to proliferate

although they are no longer being planted. Because many of the older trees were planted decades ago, they are showing signs of age and often need to be trimmed or removed. Many of them are also growing under utility wires, so they are susceptible to extreme pruning for storm hazard and safety reasons.

Based on the findings of its 2017 Tree Inventory, Arlington has a goal of planting new and replacement trees regularly, but the loss ratio has been greater than would be desired. Specifically, DPW has a goal of planting 300 trees annually (on average, 150-200 are removed annually), with a goal of reaching a surplus of 2,000 trees in 20 years. Since 2019, the Tree Division planted 955 trees and removed 495 for a net gain of 460 trees. Challenges remain in the long-term management and maintenance of street trees and other public trees town-wide.

9. Environmental Equity

Social equity is an important principle the Town of Arlington follows when making decisions that affect quality of life for residents. When applied to open space and recreation planning, the Town seeks to ensure that all residents have access to a healthy environment, open space, and recreational amenities and opportunities, particularly in neighborhoods that are predominately lower income populations and communities of color.

These EJ indicators help identify the locations of those neighborhoods. See Section 3 Community Characteristics, Population Characteristics for more discussion of these areas in Arlington.

As the Town plans for open space and recreational needs, it looks at what opportunities are available in these spaces and if it provides equitable access to the same opportunities and quality of resources and amenities as in other parts of town. As shown in Map 4-4 and listed in Table 4-8, all but three of the Environmental Justice (EJ) areas in Arlington (areas 9, 19, and 20) have open space and recreational resources within those neighborhoods. Looking for ways to increase access in the underserved areas should be considered if residents' needs are not being met. All EJ areas have access to resources within a quarter mile, or approximately an eight-minute walk.

10. Impacts of Natural Hazards and Climate Change

The environmental challenges mentioned above are and will be exacerbated by the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. As noted in the Town's Community Building Resiliency Workshop in 2017, Arlington is most vulnerable to heavy rainfall and flooding, ice and snowstorms, extreme heat, and storm surge and sea level rise in the Mystic River.

It is important to recognize the multiple benefits of the town's natural resources, including its open spaces. Not only do they offer opportunities for recreation and enjoying nature, but they are critical in mitigating and minimizing the impacts of these extreme weather events. For example, improving and enhancing natural systems with "nature-based solutions" for stormwater management not only improves water quality, but also adds greenery to an area, which absorbs heat rather than radiates it, thus cooling the air. Many of these types of multi-benefit projects and initiatives are happening in Arlington today and more are being planned to address current and future environmental challenges and the range of needs identified in Section 7 Analysis of Needs.



Map 4-4. Environmental Justice Communities and Access to Resources

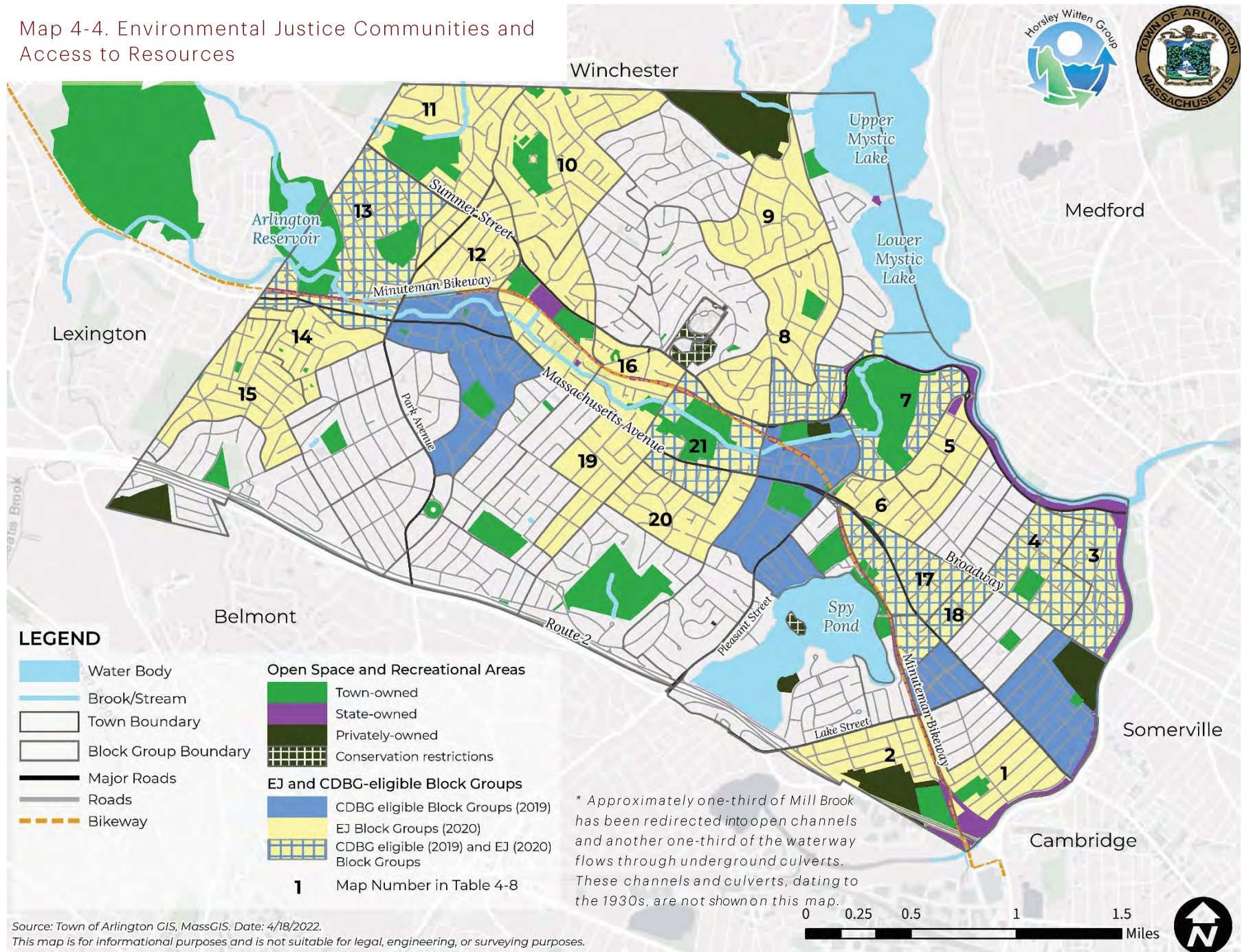


Table 4-8. Open Space and Recreational Areas within and near EJ Areas

Map Number*	Open Space/Recreation Areas in EJ Area	Additional Open Space/Recreation Areas within .25 miles of EJ Area
1	Magnolia Street Playground & Field, Alewife Brook Reservation, Minuteman Bikeway	St. Paul's Cemetery, Waldo Park, Thorndike Park & Field
2	Thorndike Park & Field, Alewife Brook Reservation, Minuteman Bikeway	Spy Pond, Magnolia Street Playground & Field,
3	Mystic River Reservation, Alewife Brook Reservation	North Union Playground, Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Parallel Park, St. Paul's Cemetery, Waldo Park
4	North Union Playground	St. Paul's Cemetery, Mystic River Reservation, Waldo Park, Alewife Brook Reservation,
5	Parallel Park	Minuteman Bikeway, Uncle Sam Monument, Cooke's Hollow, Monument Park, Jefferson Cutter House & Whittemore Park, Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Mystic River Reservation
6	Jefferson Cutter House & Whittemore Park, Uncle Sam Plaza, Minuteman Bikeway	Mystic River Reservation, Central Street, Civic Block, Water Street, Arlington Catholic Field, Cooke's Hollow, Buzzell Field, Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Parallel Park, Monument Park, Spy Pond Park & Field
7	Meadowbrook Park, Mystic River Reservation, Mt. Pleasant Cemetery	Spy Pond Field, Bishop School Field, Symmes Woods & Park, Minuteman Bikeway, Parallel Park, Buzzell Field, Cooke's Hollow, Woodside Lane Reservation, Jefferson Cutter House & Whittemore Park, Arlington Catholic Field, Arlington High School, Monument Park, Uncle Sam Monument, Civic Block, Water Street, Central Street
8	Bishop School Field	Meadowbrook Park, Window-On-The-Mystic, Medford Boat Club, Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Mystic River Reservation, Hemlock Street, Symmes Woods & Park, Buzzell Field, Cooke's Hollow, Woodside Lane Conservation, Arlington Catholic Field, Arlington High School, Wellington Park, Central Street, Minuteman Bikeway, Civic Block, Water Street
9	None	Window-On-The-Mystic, Stone Road, Bishop School Field, Symme's Woods & Park, Woodside Lane Conservation

Map Number*	Open Space/Recreation Areas in EJ Area	Additional Open Space/Recreation Areas within .25 miles of EJ Area
10	Forest Street, Turkey Hill Reservation, Mohawk Road, Ridge Street Conservation, Brand Street	Hill's Hill, Winchester Country Club, Minuteman Bikeway, Summer Street Sports Complex, Ed Burns Arena, McClennen Park
11	McClennen Park, Philemon Street	Forest Street, Mohawk Road, Arlington Reservoir, Turkey Hill Reservation, Ridge Street Conservation, Mount Gilboa, Madison Avenue, Summer Street Sports Complex, Brand Street
12	Minuteman Bikeway	Mount Gilboa, Locke School Playground, Mohawk Road, Hill's Hill, Park Avenue, Summer Street Sports Complex, Turkey Hill Reservation, Ed Burns Arena, McClennen Park, Madison Avenue, Hurd Field, Brand Street
13	Park Ave, Hurd Field, Arlington Reservoir, Mount Gilboa, Madison Avenue, Minuteman Bikeway	McClennen Park, Kilsythe Road, Inverness Road, Philemon Street, Mount Gilboa, Locke School Playground, Hibbert Street Playground, Short Street
14	Short Street, Kilsythe Road, Inverness Road	Minuteman Bikeway, Hurd Field, Arlington Reservoir, Rublee Street, Mount Gilboa, Park Avenue, Locke School Playground, Hibbert Street Playground, Florence Avenue Park
15	Hibbert Street Playground, Rublee Street	Poets Corner, Belmont Country Club, Florence Avenue Park, Short Street, Inverness Road, Hurd Field, Kilsythe Road, Arlington Reservoir, Minuteman Bikeway
16	Hill's Hill, Summer Street Sports Complex, Wellington Park, Ed Burns Arena, Brattle Street Conservation Area, Minuteman Bikeway, MWRA Orchard	Arlington High School, Symmes Woods & Park, Woodside Lane Conservation, Brand Street, Turkey Hill Reservation, Mohawk Road, Hemlock Street, Cutter School/Reinhart Playground, Crusher Lot
17	Minuteman Bikeway	Spy Pond Park, Scannell Field, North Union Playground
18	Monument Park, Minuteman Bikeway	Central Street, Uncle Sam Monument, Civic Block, Water Street, Arlington Catholic Field, Cooke's Hollow, Buzzell Field, Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Jefferson Cutter House & Whittemore Park, North Union Playground, Spy Pond Park & Field, Scannell Field

Map Number*	Open Space/Recreation Areas in EJ Area	Additional Open Space/Recreation Areas within .25 miles of EJ Area
19	None	Minuteman Bikeway, Arlington High School, Wellington Park, Brattle Street Conservation AREA, MWRA Orchard, Cutter School/Reinhart Playground, Menotomy Rocks Park, Spring Street, Concord Turnpike, Robbins Farm Park
20	None	Menotomy Rocks Park, Brantwood Road/Worden CR, Buzzell Field, Wellington Park, Arlington High School, Civic Block, Minuteman Bikeway, Arlington Catholic Field, Uncle Sam Monument, Water Street, Central Street
21	Arlington High School, Minuteman Bikeway	Brattle Street Conservation Area, Hemlock Street, Symmes Woods & Park, Buzzell Field, Woodside Lane Conservation, Wellington Park, Arlington Catholic Field, Civic Block, Cooke's Hollow, Uncle Sam Monument, Water Street, Central Street

*Map Number corresponds to number on Map 4-4.

SECTION 5. INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION INTEREST

Arlington's open space offers a diverse combination of historical, natural, and recreational areas. This chapter discusses the most significant publicly and privately owned open space and recreational facilities and provides a listing in table format of other parcels.

A. Brief History of Arlington's Open Space

Arlington's open space is a precious and limited resource that has been difficult to acquire, develop, and maintain. For example, much of the open space inventory along the Mill Brook corridor was reclaimed from abandoned millponds, dumping areas or fallow marshes. The Minuteman Bikeway now rests on what was once a railroad corridor. This rail/trail conversion took almost 20 years to complete after its original conception in the early 1970s and was dedicated in 1992. Today, thousands of people use the bikeway, which connects many of the town's open and historical spaces, for both recreation and commuting. It is

regularly identified as one of the town's favorite open space resources.

Charles Eliot's 1926 Town Plan provided a thoughtful blueprint for preserving open space as a cohesive and important element of the town's layout. Some of Eliot's ideas have lived on in subsequent open space plans, but many of his ideas have not been realized, and some of those opportunities are now lost. Included in his plans was a linear park along Mill Brook and a Town Center Park. Eliot also suggested offering the public complete access to town water bodies. That vision is still pursued by the continued development of regional greenways and improved access to local water bodies.

Access to open space has been and will likely continue to be a challenge for the Town of Arlington. As an inner suburb of the Boston/Cambridge metropolitan region, Arlington has been nearly built out for decades with dense residential neighborhoods on small lots that offer residents little private open space. This puts more pressure on the town's existing open space and

recreational areas to meet the needs of residents of all ages and abilities.

Arlington has had no opportunity to avail itself of means designed for legal protections for forestry, agriculture, or horticultural uses (Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B); there are no such properties in the town. State-owned land managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is part of the Alewife Brook Reservation and the Mystic River Reservation. Other DCR parcels in Arlington include the Ed Burns Arena and land around the Medford Boat Club on the Mystic Lakes. The state Department of Public Works and Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) also manage a number of parcels, and Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) owns the footpath along the southern edge of Spy Pond.

These state-managed parcels receive protection as Article 97 lands. Article 97 protected lands are those purchased for the purpose of parkland and conservation of open space and are under the jurisdiction of the Recreation Department or the Conservation Commission. The protection offered to Article 97 lands is that a two-thirds vote of the local governing body (i.e., Town Meeting) as well as a two-thirds vote of the State legislature is required to transfer them to another purpose. A number of municipal properties also receive this protection.

Arlington's Town-owned open spaces, designated in the Open Space Zoning District, have been placed under the jurisdiction of a Town department or commission most appropriate for the designated use of the land, predominantly the Park and Recreation Commission or the Conservation Commission. They are the stewards of the lands under their jurisdiction, in conjunction with the Department of Public Works which generally performs maintenance on all properties. Any proposed disposition of these properties must be brought before Town Meeting for public hearing and approval.

B. Arlington's Open Space and Recreational Resources

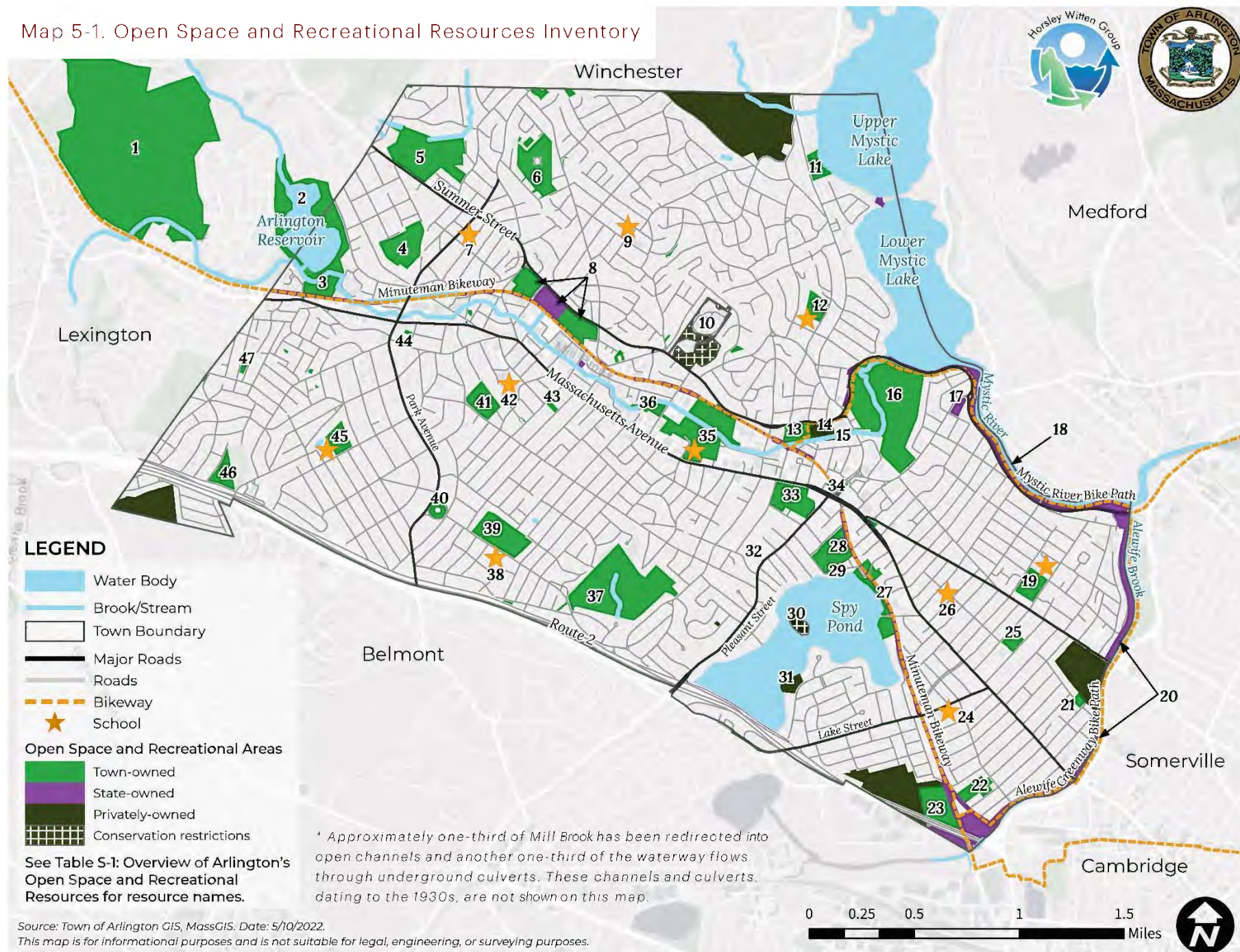
Currently Arlington has more than 550 acres of publicly held open space, which include Arlington's Great Meadows and some of the land surrounding the Arlington Reservoir located in the Town of Lexington. Using the key below, these resources can be located on Map 5-1. An additional 118 acres are privately owned, of

which the Winchester Country Club, Belmont Country Club, Arlington Catholic High School Field, and Kelwyn Manor Playground are the only parcels used for recreation. Arlington has not acquired any new open space or recreational areas in recent years.

Map 5-1 Key

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Arlington's Great Meadows | 16. Meadowbrook Park & Mt. Pleasant Cemetery | 31. Kelwyn Manor Park |
| 2. Arlington Reservoir | 17. Parallel Park | 32. Parmenter School Park |
| 3. Hurd/Reservoir Fields | 18. Mystic River Reservation | 33. Civic Block/Town Garden |
| 4. Mount Gilboa | 19. North Union Park/Lussiano Field & Thompson School | 34. Whittemore Park & Uncle Sam Plaza |
| 5. McClennen Park | 20. Alewife Brook Reservation & Greenway | 35. Arlington High School |
| 6. Turkey Hill Reservation | 21. Waldo Park | 36. Wellington Park |
| 7. Peirce School | 22. Magnolia Park & Fields | 37. Menotomy Rocks Park |
| 8. Summer Street Sports Complex, Buck Field, Hill's Hill & Ed Burns Arena | 23. Thorndike Fields | 38. Brackett School |
| 9. Stratton School | 24. Hardy School | 39. Robbins Farm Park |
| 10. Symmes Woods & Parks | 25. Crosby School Park | 40. Park Circle Water Tower |
| 11. Window-On-The-Mystic & Mystic Lakes | 26. Gibbs School | 41. Crusher Lot |
| 12. Bishop School | 27. Spy Pond Park & Scannell Field | 42. Ottoson Middle School |
| 13. Buzzell Fields | 28. Spy Pond Field | 43. Reinhart Park/Cutter School |
| 14. Arlington Catholic Field | 29. Boys & Girls Club | 44. Locke School Playground |
| 15. Cooke's Hollow | 30. Elizabeth Island | 45. Dallin School/Florence Ave. Park |
| | | 46. Poets Corner |
| | | 47. Hibbert Park |

Map 5-1. Open Space and Recreational Resources Inventory



The narratives in this section describe the Town's open space and recreational areas and other noteworthy open spaces, including a brief history of the parcel and its conservation and/or recreational use. The first section describes four corridors and greenways that span much of the town. The second section includes descriptions and site maps of 20 major open spaces and recreational facilities. The final section presents information on smaller parks, historic landscapes, gardens, and other

recreational and natural areas. Table 5-1 provides an overview of the public resources and active and passive recreational opportunities available at these sites, such as playgrounds, ballfields, or walking trails. All public and private open space and recreation sites in Arlington are listed in Appendix B, detailing inventory requirements outlined in Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services (DCS) Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Workbook (2008).

Table 5-1. Overview of Arlington's Open Space and Recreational Resources

Map No.*	Resource	Street Location	Bikeway Access	Playing Fields	Play-ground	Tennis Court	Basketball Court	Woods, Trails	Garden	Picnic Sitting Areas	Other Features
20	Alewife Brook Reservation & Greenway	Mass Ave/ Broadway/ other points	yes					yes		yes	boardwalks
14	Arlington Catholic Field (private)	Summer Street		football; soccer; lacrosse							
1	Arlington's Great Meadows	Mass Ave and Maple Street in Lexington	Yes					yes			boardwalks
35	Arlington High School	Mass Avenue	yes (in 2022-23)	football; baseball; softball/ little league; soccer; lacrosse	yes		yes (2)			yes	track lanes

Map No.*	Resource	Street Location	Bikeway Access	Playing Fields	Play-ground	Tennis Court	Basketball Court	Woods, Trails	Garden	Picnic Sitting Areas	Other Features
2	Arlington Reservoir	Lowell Street	yes, via Hurd Field	volleyball/ multi-purpose court	yes			yes	yes	yes	Mill Brook Corridor; swimming beach (seasonal)
12	Bishop School	Columbia Road		softball/ little league; soccer	yes		yes		yes	yes	
29	Boys and Girls Club (private)	Pond Lane	yes				yes				indoor gyms; swimming pool
38	Brackett School	Eastern Avenue		multi-purpose	yes (2)		yes		yes	yes	
8	Buck Field	Summer Street Sports Complex	yes	softball/ little league	yes					yes	
13	Buzzell Fields	Summer Street	yes	2 softball/ little league	yes		yes			yes	
33	Civic Block/ Town Garden	Mass Avenue/ Library Way/ Maple Street			yes			yes	yes	yes	
15	Cooke's Hollow	Mystic Street						yes	yes	yes	Mill Brook Corridor; waterfall
25	Crosby School Park	Winter/ Oxford Streets		multi-purpose	yes	yes (4)	yes			yes	
41	Crusher Lot	Gray/Oakland Streets						yes			

Map No.*	Resource	Street Location	Bikeway Access	Playing Fields	Play-ground	Tennis Court	Basketball Court	Woods, Trails	Garden	Picnic Sitting Areas	Other Features
45	Dallin School/ Florence Avenue Park	Florence Avenue		softball/ little league; soccer/ multi- purpose	yes (2)		yes		yes	yes	seasonal water sprinkler
30	Elizabeth Island	Spy Pond Park						yes		yes	boat landings
26	Gibbs School	Tufts/Foster Streets			yes (2)		yes		yes	yes	
24	Hardy School	Lake Street	yes		yes (2)		yes		yes	yes	
47	Hibbert Park	Hibbert Street			yes					yes	
8	Hill's Hill Field and Woods	Summer Street Sports Complex	yes	soccer				yes			
3	Hurd/ Reservoir Fields	Drake Road	yes	2 softball/ little league; soccer				yes			Mill Brook Corridor
31	Kelwyn Manor Park (private)	Spy Pond Parkway		multi- purpose	yes					yes	seasonal beach
44	Locke School Playground	Davis Road			yes					yes	
22	Magnolia Park and Fields	Herbert Street	yes	soccer; lacrosse	yes		yes		yes	yes	
5	McClennen Park	Summer Street		1 little league; 2 soccer/ mixed use	yes			yes		yes	skateboard ramps; pond

Map No.*	Resource	Street Location	Bikeway Access	Playing Fields	Play-ground	Tennis Court	Basketball Court	Woods, Trails	Garden	Picnic Sitting Areas	Other Features
16	Meadowbrook Park	Mystic Street/ Mt. Pleasant Cemetery						yes			Mill Brook Corridor; wetlands
37	Menotomy Rocks Park	Jason Street			yes			yes		yes	Hill's Pond
-	Minuteman Bikeway	Town-wide	yes							yes	
4	Mount Gilboa	Crescent Hill Road						yes			Boston vistas
18	Mystic River Reservation	Mystic Valley Parkway	yes in 2023					yes			Mystic Lakes vistas
19	North Union Park/ Lussiano Field	Thompson School/ North Union Street		softball/ little league; soccer/ multi-purpose	yes		yes		yes	yes	spray park
42	Ottoson Middle School	Acton Street		softball/ little league; multi-purpose					yes		
17	Parallel Park	Medford Street			yes		yes			yes	
40	Park Circle Water Tower	Park Avenue									fruit trees
32	Parmenter School Park	Irving Street			yes		yes				
7	Peirce School	Park Avenue Extension			yes (2)		yes		yes	yes	
46	Poets Corner	Dow Avenue		softball/ little league	yes		yes			yes	

Map No.*	Resource	Street Location	Bikeway Access	Playing Fields	Play-ground	Tennis Court	Basketball Court	Woods, Trails	Garden	Picnic Sitting Areas	Other Features
43	Reinhart Park/ Cutter School	Robbins Road/ School Street			yes					yes	
39	Robbins Farm Park	Eastern Avenue		baseball; soccer/ lacrosse	yes		yes		yes	yes	Boston vistas; sledding hill
27	Scannell Field	Linwood Street / Spy Pond Park	yes	softball/ little league					yes	yes	
28	Spy Pond Field	Pond Lane/ Wellington Street	yes	baseball; softball/ little league; soccer/ lacrosse		yes (5)				yes	Play Fair Arch and Field House
27	Spy Pond Park	Pond Lane	yes		yes			yes	yes	yes	boat ramp; fishing pier
9	Stratton School Pheasant Avenue Park	Mountain Avenue			yes		yes		yes	yes	
8	Summer Street Sports Complex	Summer Street	yes	baseball; field hockey	yes		yes			yes	Ed Burns Arena, ice skating rink
10	Symmes Woods and Parks	Summer Street/ Symmes Road						yes	yes	yes	Boston vistas
23	Thorndike Fields	Margaret Street	yes	3 multi-purpose							off-leash dog park
6	Turkey Hill Reservation	Dodge Street						yes			vistas

Map No.*	Resource	Street Location	Bikeway Access	Playing Fields	Play-ground	Tennis Court	Basketball Court	Woods, Trails	Garden	Picnic Sitting Areas	Other Features
21	Waldo Park	Waldo Street			yes		yes				
36	Wellington Park	Grove St.	yes		yes	yes (5)		yes		yes	Mill Brook Corridor; climbing wall
34	Whittemore Park	Mass Avenue/ Mystic Street	yes							yes	Dallin Art Museum
11	Window-On-The-Mystic	Mystic Street						yes		yes	views of Mystic Lakes
34	Uncle Sam Plaza	Mass Avenue/ Mystic Street	yes							yes	Visitor Center

* See Map 5-1 and associated key.

1. Corridors and Greenways

Alewife Brook Reservation and Greenway

The 1.4-mile-long section of the Alewife Brook Reservation and Greenway in Arlington runs beside the Alewife Brook on the town's eastern border, parallel to Alewife Brook Parkway. This area is part of the Alewife Brook Reservation, a Massachusetts state park located in Cambridge, Arlington, and Somerville, managed by DCR. The Greenway consists of an accessible pathway and boardwalks over several wetland stretches. Completed in 2013, it starts at the Minuteman Bikeway near Magnolia and Thorndike Fields and the MBTA Alewife T Station, follows the Alewife Brook to

Bicentennial Park at Massachusetts Avenue and then continues to the intersection with the Mystic Valley Parkway near the Medford line. The pathway offers a pleasant walk or bicycle ride, and the brook is accessible by canoe or kayak when the water level is high enough. The Greenway links to the Fresh Pond Pathway and Watertown Greenway along the Charles River. To the north, it links to Medford and the Mystic River Reservation.

Size: 120 acres total with approximately 15 acres in Arlington

Managing Agency/Owner: DCR

Current Use: Transportation/Recreation

Mill Brook Corridor

Mill Brook is formed by the confluence of Munroe and Sickie Brooks (a.k.a. Cataldo Brook), which flow south and east from Lexington and meet next to the Arlington Reservoir. Arlington's Great Meadows in East Lexington is a large wetland that contributes to the source and flow of water in Mill Brook. Munroe Brook was dammed in the early 1870s to form the Arlington Reservoir, and spillways now control the amount of water discharged into Mill Brook.

Mill Brook drops about 140 feet on its way from the Reservoir to Lower Mystic Lake over a distance of about 2.7 miles. Mill Brook flows parallel to Massachusetts Avenue and the Minuteman Bikeway eastward to Arlington Center, where the brook turns northeastward to cross under Mystic Street and flows through Mount Pleasant Cemetery and Meadowbrook Park into Lower Mystic Lake. More than 40% of the brook is culverted and 30% is channelized but exposed. Only a few short sections of the brook are in an open, natural condition.

About 35% of the land within 100 yards of the brook is owned by the Town of Arlington, and these public areas are used primarily for open space and recreational activities (e.g., playing fields, tennis courts, climbing wall, playgrounds, and parks). The areas not owned by the Town are largely industrial and commercial

properties, a few historical sites, and several residential neighborhoods.

The entire brook corridor needs substantial restoration and remediation to improve biodiversity, water quality, drainage, and flood control. The 2010 Mill Brook Linear Park Report examined the brook in seven sections, assessing conditions, challenges, and opportunities related to environmental, recreational, flood control, economic, and transportation issues. In 2019, Arlington completed the Mill Brook Corridor Report, which supplements the 2010 report and outlines new opportunities to create a vision and identity for the corridor. Recommendations of the Corridor Report include improving environmental quality and public access.

Managing Agency/Owner: More than 100 public and private owners/abutters

Current Use: Recreation/Conservation

Minuteman Bikeway

The Minuteman Bikeway, a converted Boston and Maine Railroad corridor, was completed in 1992 after more than 20 years of planning and construction. At just over 10 miles long, it begins at the Arlington/Cambridge border near the Alewife Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Station, passes through Arlington and Lexington, and ends near Bedford Center.

Each of the three towns is responsible for the section in its community, and efforts to strengthen regional oversight are on-going. In 2000 the approximately three-mile section that passes through the entire length of Arlington was renamed the Donald R. Marquis/ Minuteman Bikeway in recognition of the former Town Manager who was a strong supporter and advocate for the creation of the Bikeway.

The Bikeway travels through commercial, industrial, and residential areas and open spaces. In addition to being a popular commuter route, the Bikeway is a linear park that connects significant historical sites and attractions as well as many conservation areas and park lands in Arlington, Lexington, and Bedford.

Volunteers coordinated by the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee conduct counts of Bikeway users regularly on a weekday and weekend day. Due to the pandemic, the last count was done in 2019. Volunteers tallied 1,037 users on Tuesday, May 14, and 4,865 users on Saturday, May 18, for a total of 5,902. Cyclists made up the majority at 55% of all users, followed by walkers at 29%, joggers at 11%, children in carriers at 3%, and others making up 2%.



Minuteman Bikeway. Photo credit: Wendy Richter

DPW plows the Arlington stretch following winter storms, so it is accessible to bikers and walkers. Severe weather events, including flood damage and microbursts, regularly damage the Bikeway surface, and the DPW has had difficulty keeping up with maintenance of both the surface and vegetated shoulders. Local volunteers help with landscape maintenance of invasive plants and trash clean-ups. Several study projects and grants to improve Bikeway conditions and connections to other trails are being conducted (see Sections 7 and 9).

Size: 30.1 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Towns of Arlington, Lexington, and Bedford/MBTA

Current Use: Transportation/Recreation

Mystic River Reservation

The Mystic River Reservation is a state park and nature preserve managed by DCR encompassing about 330 acres in the communities of Arlington, Winchester, Medford, Somerville, Everett, and Chelsea. The narrow section in Arlington parallels the Mystic River and Parkway starting at the river's intersection with Alewife Brook in northeast Arlington and continuing to the parkway's intersection with Mystic Street. A walking path and/or sidewalk and some benches are available the length of the Arlington section of the reservation.

Following an oil spill in 2013 on the parkway near the intersection with Park Street, Arlington was able to obtain funding for natural resource restoration through the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The restoration project, completed in 2019, created a native riverbank (riparian) habitat, added flood storage, improved stormwater quality, and provided opportunities for community participation and educational signage.

Size: Approximately 12 acres in Arlington

Managing Agency/Owner: DCR

Current Use: Transportation/Recreation/Conservation

2. Major Open Spaces and Recreational Resources

The following descriptions of the Town's major open spaces and recreational resources include individual site maps depicting major entrances (E), parking areas (P), and walking trails (dotted lines).

Arlington's Great Meadows

The largest open space resource owned by the Town of Arlington contains approximately 183 acres of land but is located entirely in Lexington as a result of a water supply management system installed during the mid-nineteenth century and later discontinued. The largest part of Arlington's Great Meadows is a flat, marshy plain containing a series of hummocks. Surrounding the plain are wooded uplands braided by walking trails. The Minuteman Bikeway forms the southern border and offers the most direct access to the trails. Other borders are mostly residential and there are only a few access points. Arlington's Great Meadows is included in several of the ACROSS Lexington trail loops.

More than 50% of the site is certified vegetated wetland. The Lexington zoning bylaw protects the

wetlands in Arlington's Great Meadows by zoning them as Wetland Protection District. The Lexington

Conservation Commission and various resident groups have taken an active role in assuring that the Great Meadows remain in its natural state. A consultant was hired by the Arlington Conservation Commission in 1999 to prepare an inventory of the natural resources of this area, along with some management recommendations (Clark 2001).

Since publication of that report, an active Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows organization of Arlington and Lexington residents has served as stewards of the property. The group has completed extensive surveying of plants and animals, restored some upland meadow areas, organized annual bird watching and geology walks, improved signage and visitor facilities, and protected the environment in the wettest sections of the Meadows by building a series of boardwalks.

Size: 183.3 acres (entirely in Lexington)

Managing Agency/Owner: Select Board/Department of Public Works/Town of Arlington

Current Use: Conservation/Passive recreation



Arlington Reservoir and Hurd/Reservoir Fields

The Arlington Reservoir site incorporates a variety of natural and recreational resources. Created in the early 1870s to supply Arlington's municipal water system, the Reservoir has not been used for public drinking water since the town joined the MWRA in 1899, yet the name "reservoir" remains in use. The Reservoir and its adjacent land areas are about 65 acres. The water body of about 29 acres is a man-made recreational and flood-control pond on the Arlington/Lexington border in the northwestern section of town. Less than half of the area is in Arlington, yet the Town owns and manages the entire site, as well as part of Munroe Brook, the Reservoir's primary source whose watershed includes Reed's Brook. Several Lexington storm drains also send water into this water body.

The Reservoir has a mile-long wooded walking trail around its circumference that is a recreational resource for walking, birding, jogging, and cross-country skiing, and the Arlington High School cross-country team uses the trail for meets and training.

The sandy beach includes a filtered/chlorinated swimming area with a ramp for people with disabilities, a bathhouse, a concession area, and playground. The beach is supervised by certified lifeguards and other Recreation Department staff when open during the



summer months. The Reservoir also provides a diverse habitat for wildlife, and nearly 220 species of birds have been sighted there. A Wildlife Habitat Garden was established in 2010 following repairs to the earthen dam around the Reservoir. It is maintained by the volunteer Reservoir Committee.

In 2017-18, the Town developed a Master Plan for the entire Reservoir area to guide improvements to address water quality, amenities, and accessibility of the property. The beach and the entire Reservoir area are currently being updated in several phases through 2022. Among the improvements are a fully Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible perimeter walking path, playground, fishing docks, benches, a picnic pavilion, and a volleyball/multi-sport court. Significant environmental improvements include removal of invasive vegetation, erosion control of the Reservoir banks with native plantings, and a new porous parking lot.

Hurd and Reservoir fields, adjacent to the Reservoir off Drake Road, offer two softball/youth baseball diamonds. Hurd Field is lighted and used for adult softball play in addition to youth baseball and softball. A Community Preservation Act-funded project is currently underway to redesign and renovate these fields, including to repair safety issues, address ADA guidelines, and

provide a safe connection to the nearby Minuteman Bikeway.

Arlington Reservoir

Size: 21.3 acres in Arlington (65 acres total in Arlington and Lexington)

Managing Agency/Owner: Department of Public Works/ Park and Recreation Commission/Town of Arlington

Current Use: Passive and active recreation/Flood control/Conservation

Hurd and Reservoir Fields

Size: 6.1 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Park and Recreation Commission/Town of Arlington

Current Use: Active and passive recreation/ Conservation



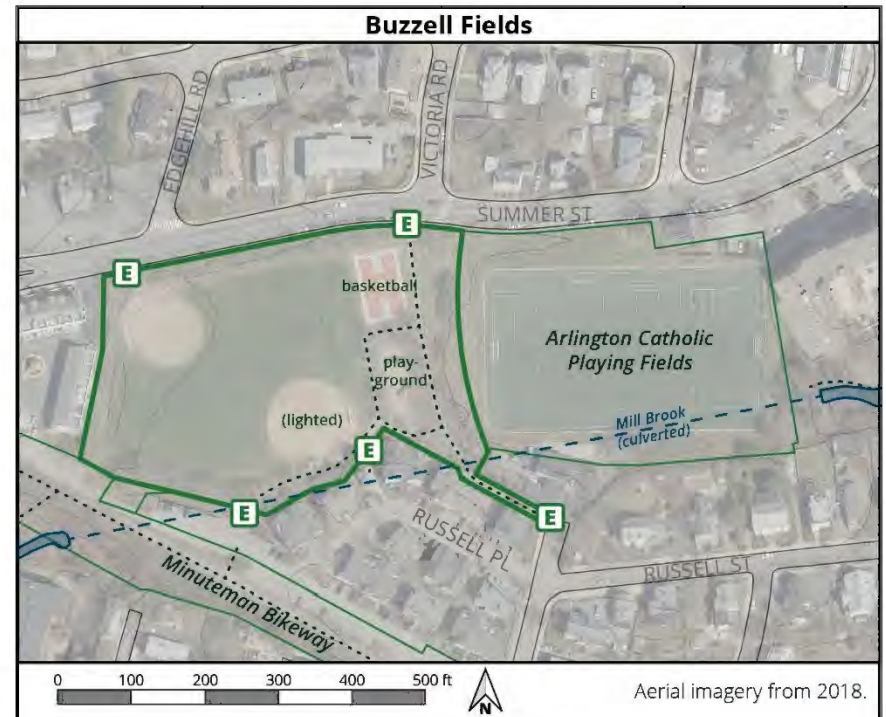
Buzzell Fields

Located on Summer St. just beyond the intersection with Mill Street, this former mill pond and later town landfill was redeveloped into a recreation site and dedicated to Navy Lieutenant Richard H. Buzzell, a 1961 graduate of Arlington High School killed on the battlefield during the Vietnam War. The park has two youth baseball/softball fields with outfield lights for night play, a basketball court, picnic tables, and a playground with slides, swings, and a sandbox. On-street parking is available, and the fields are adjacent to the Minuteman Bikeway.

Size: 3.6 acres

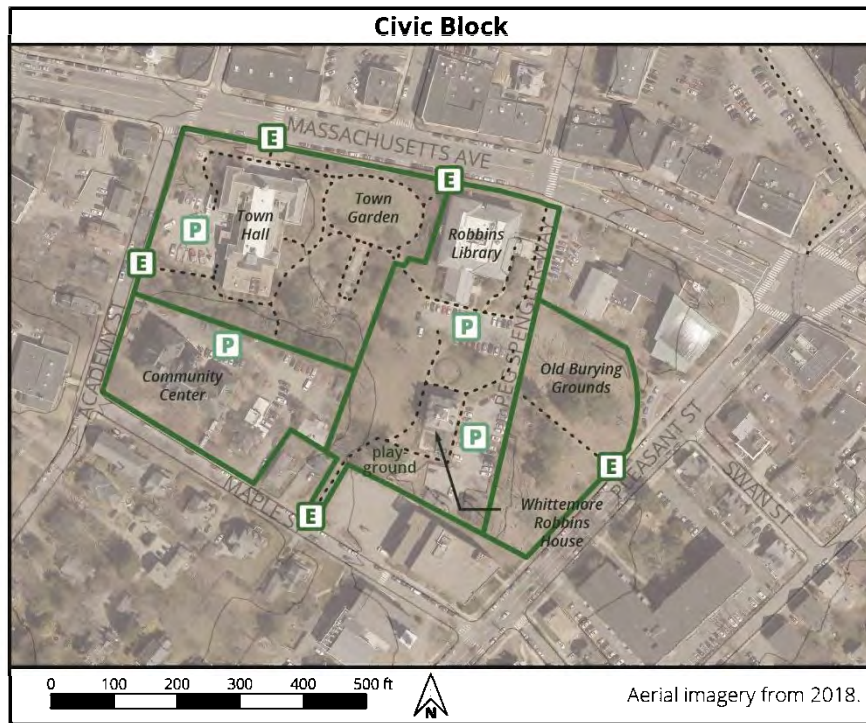
Managing Agency/Owner: Park and Recreation Commission/Town of Arlington

Current Use: Active recreation



Civic Block

Located on Massachusetts Avenue in the heart of Arlington Center, the Civic Block contains three of Arlington's most iconic civic institutions: Robbins Memorial Town Hall, the Robbins Library, and the Whittemore-Robbins House. They are interconnected by the landscaped grounds and brick walkways of the Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden. The Civic Block represents the generosity of the Robbins family, who donated funds for construction of these impressive landmarks. This historic block also includes the Old



Burying Ground and the Central School/Community Center. All buildings within the Civic Block are designated within the Arlington Center National Register Historic District.

The Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden (1913) was laid out as part of the Town Hall construction project. The original garden design included the Cyrus Dallin sculpture known as "The Menotomy Indian Hunter." In 1939, the Olmsted Brothers reconfigured the garden in a more natural design with a rubble rock base for the

Dallin sculpture, with flowering trees and bushes, winding brick paths, a circular fountain and a pool, and a masonry garden wall surrounding the grounds. Arlington has a preservation master plan for the garden and repairs to the garden's sandstone and limestone wall were completed in 2013 and the reflecting pool and surrounding landscape were restored in 2019 with Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding. Volunteers with the Friends of Robbins Town Gardens and the Arlington Garden Club continue to work on the landscaped plantings. The garden is protected by a preservation restriction and is used for both community and private events.

Size: 2.7 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Town of Arlington

Current Use: Passive recreation/Historic preservation

Cooke's Hollow

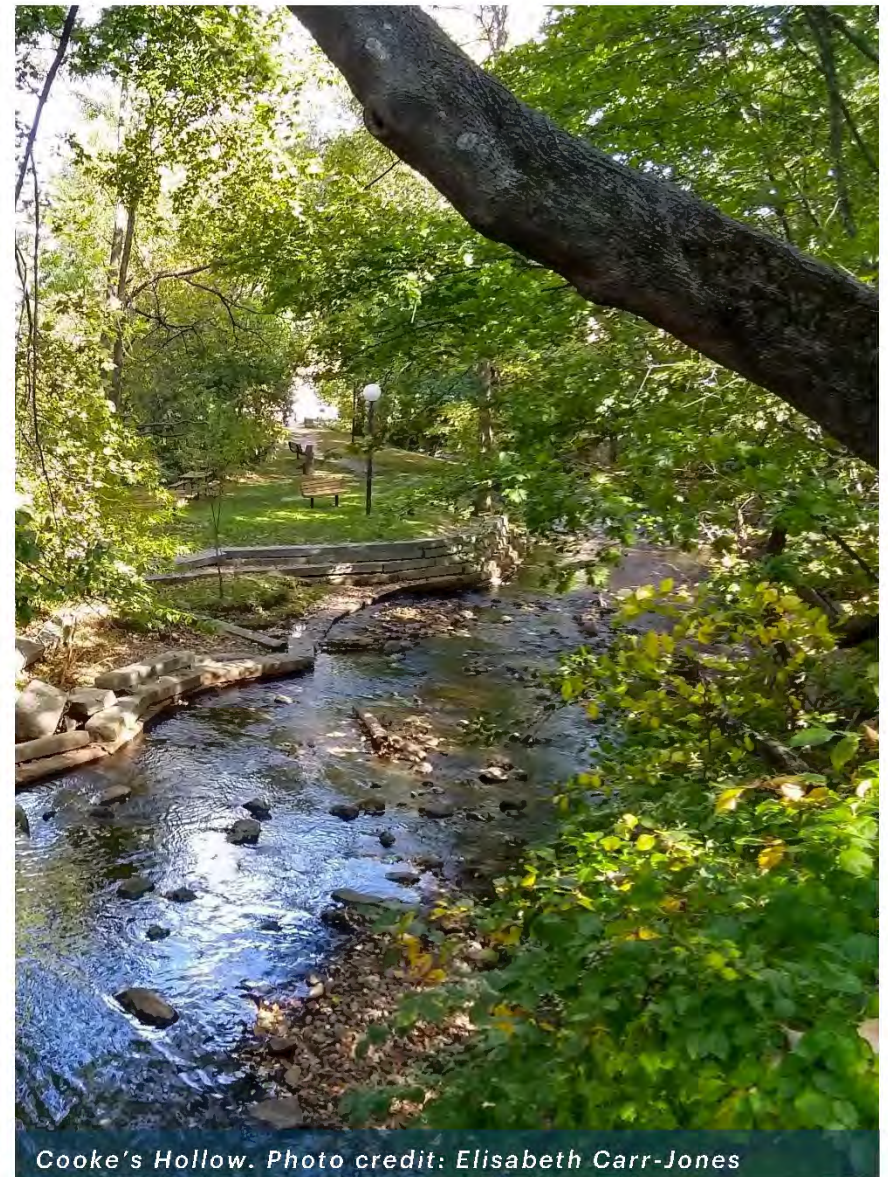
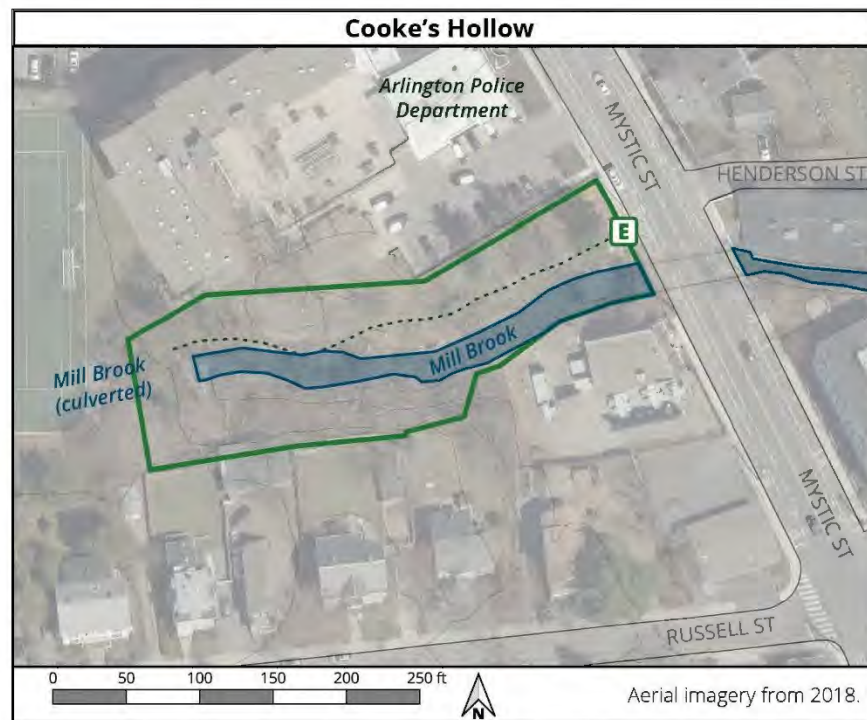
Cooke's Hollow is a long, narrow, partially landscaped area on both sides of Mill Brook near Mystic Street. This small park with the town's only waterfall provides scenic vistas, a short walking path, and benches. Arlington acquired Cooke's Hollow from several sources in 1969, and the Arlington Garden Club was instrumental in developing gardens and public access at the site. The area has deep historical and cultural roots dating back to the 1630s when Captain George Cooke built the first water-powered grist mill in Arlington (then known as

Menotomy and still part of Cambridge). Volunteer stewards have worked to reduce overgrown invasive plants along the brook and have advocated for new benches and other amenities.

Size: .75 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Conservation Commission/
Town of Arlington

Current Use: Passive recreation/Conservation



Cooke's Hollow. Photo credit: Elisabeth Carr-Jones

McClennen Park

Before 1959, the area around Reed's Brook was agricultural land, and from 1959 to 1969 Arlington operated a landfill on the site. The Town closed the landfill pursuant to Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) policies and regulations while planning for its restoration and reuse. Arlington reacquired this 20-acre site from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in March 1995.

As a result of many studies, the Arlington Redevelopment Board determined that the site was most

valuable to the town as open space and recommended to the 1997 Town Meeting that the land be developed for conservation and recreation use. Town Meeting appropriated \$5.8 million and the area was redeveloped to address the flooding problems, properly close the landfill, and develop new open space uses.

McClennen Park was dedicated on June 3, 2006, in tribute to former Arlington Planning Director Alan McClennen. The result is a wonderful open space with something for everyone to enjoy. The project replaced the storm drain system, created a detention pond and



new wetland areas to serve as wildlife habitat, added layers of clean soil to prevent exposure to landfill materials, and constructed two soccer fields and one baseball field, many walking trails, picnic areas, tot lots, and a skateboard park. The State reconstructed Summer Street, and an off-street parking area was added. Plans are currently being considered to improve the water quality and habitat value of the detention pond, which hosts a variety of birds and other wildlife.

Size: 20.3 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Park and Recreation Commission/Town of Arlington

Current Use: Passive and active recreation/
Conservation

Meadowbrook Park and Mt. Pleasant Cemetery

Meadowbrook Park is mostly wetlands, located adjacent to Mt. Pleasant Cemetery at the delta of the Mill Brook where it opens to the Lower Mystic Lake. The Conservation Commission manages environmentally sensitive landscaping to create a better wildlife habitat and make the area more accessible for walking and bird watching. Volunteer land stewards monitor this site, and there have also been some scout projects to improve visitor access. However, the area has deteriorated with many invasive plants, silt, and trash deposits carried down Mill Brook. Renewed consideration is being given



to what can be done to improve the public access and natural aspects of this area.

Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, dedicated in 1843, was designed as a garden-style cemetery influenced by Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge. The roadways and gentle hillsides offer a pleasant place for walking and contemplation. Markers and monuments honor many of Arlington's noted residents. In 2016 columbarium facilities were added to expand options for local burials as space for traditional plots is now limited.

Meadowbrook Park

Size: 3.3 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Conservation Commission/
Town of Arlington

Current Use: Conservation

Mt. Pleasant Cemetery

Size: 58.9 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Cemetery Commission/
Department of Public Works/Town of Arlington

Current Use: Cemetery



Menotomy Rocks Park

This historic town park, established in 1896, was also known as the “Devil’s Den” to the people of Arlington. The park is a mixture of manmade areas (Hill’s Pond, fields, and playground) and natural features (wooded and rocky sections). The park is used daily for walking, jogging, picnicking, and dog walking, and seasonally for ice skating and fishing.

The Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park was formed in 1993 to assist the town with ongoing stewardship of the park. Working with the Town, the Friends group has enabled a number of improvement projects over the years, including rebuilding the playground in the woods, replacing picnic tables, facilitating a memorial bench program, monitoring the health of Hill’s Pond, rebuilding the pond retaining wall, resurfacing the paths with permeable material to facilitate drainage and installing a pond aeration system. The Friends continue to monitor needs in the park, as well as offer educational and cultural programs.

Size: 35.1 acres

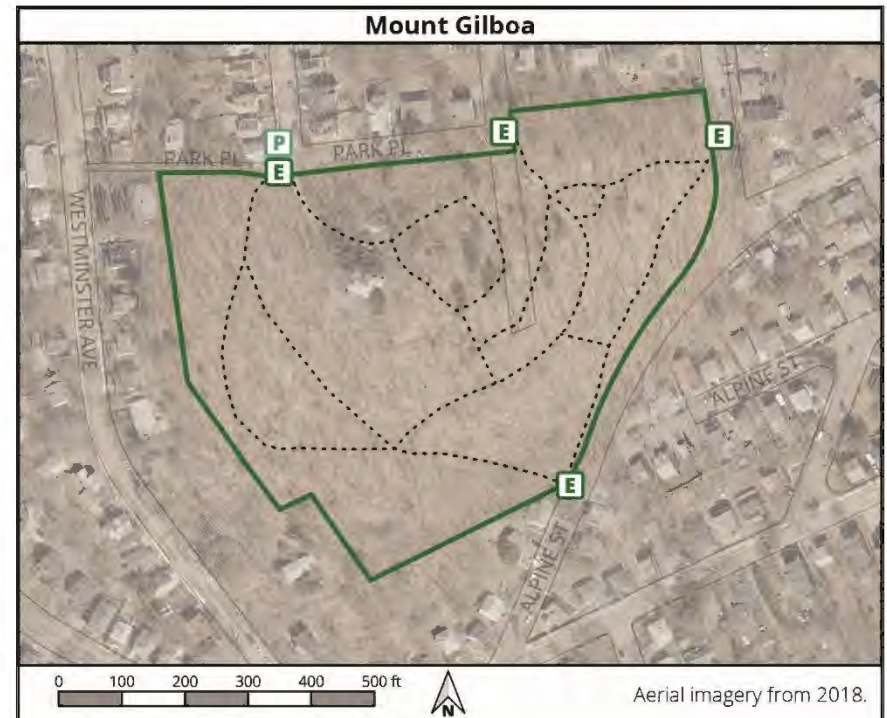
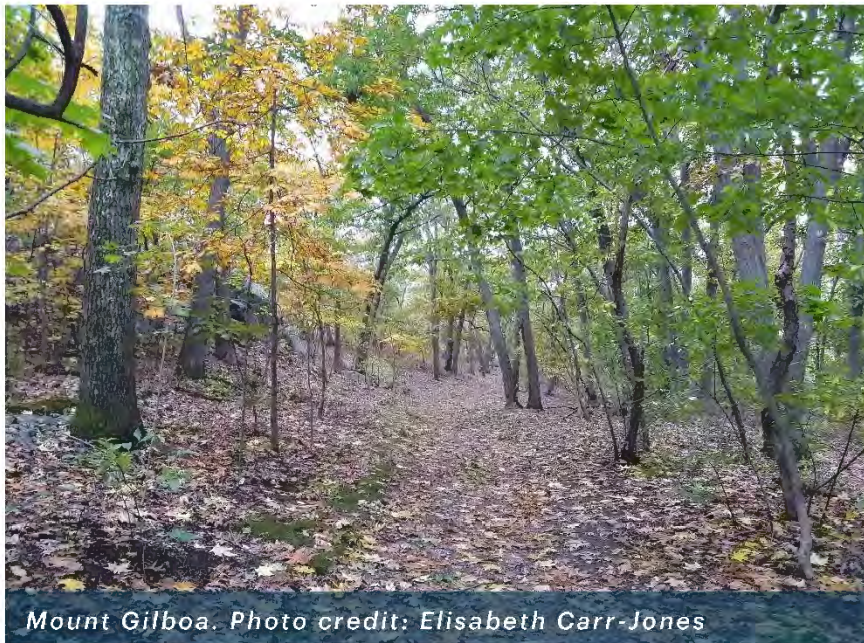
Managing Agency/Owner: Park and Recreation Commission/Town of Arlington

Current Use: Recreation/Conservation



Mount Gilboa

Mount Gilboa is a steep, tree-covered hill with a single house on top. The house belongs to the Conservation Commission and has been rented by the town. Discussions about the future of the house as a Town-owned asset are underway, including its possible removal to create a vista park or other opportunities that would benefit the community at large. Trails through the surrounding woods are used regularly for walking and bird watching, and they have been cleared and improved by various scout groups. The property is part of the Mount Gilboa Historic District.



Size: 10.7 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Conservation Commission/
Town of Arlington

Current Use: Passive recreation/Conservation

North Union Park / Lussiano Field

Located next to the Thompson School on North Union Street in East Arlington, the area has a playground, basketball court, picnic tables, softball/youth baseball field, baseball field, and multi-purpose field used for soccer. The spray pool has recently been renovated to upgrade all water features and enhance landscaping, access, and amenities. It is generally open from June to August. On-street parking is available. In 2020, the town completed a major renovation of the playground with funding from multiple sources, including CPA funds.



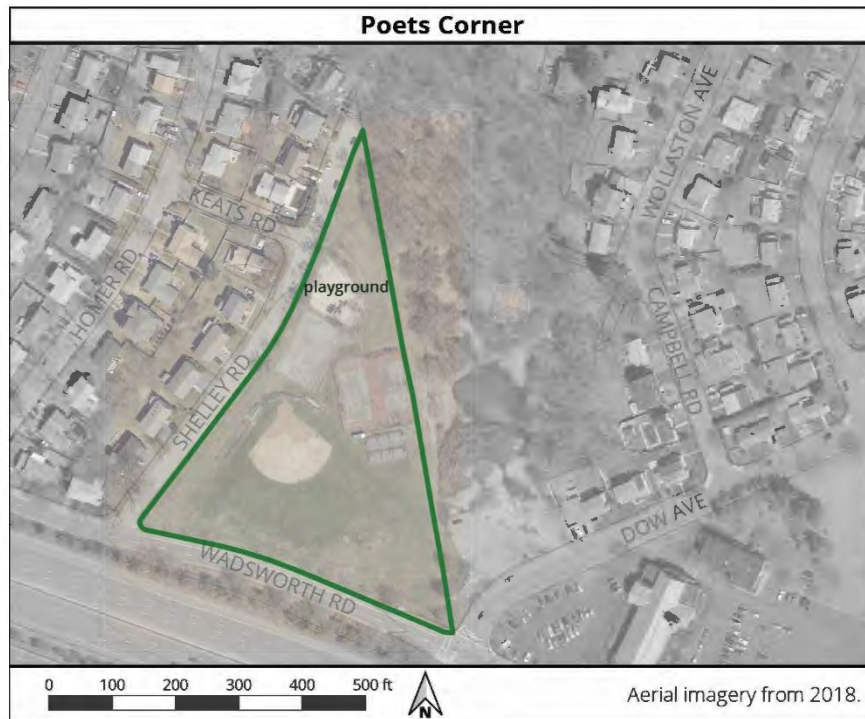
Size: 5.0 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Park and Recreation Commission/Town of Arlington

Current Use: Active and passive recreation

Poets Corner

Poets Corner Park is located in the southwest area of Arlington, off the Route 2 service road at Dow Avenue. The park currently has a playground, softball/little league field, a multi-purpose grassy outfield, basketball courts, and an area of wetlands. Major renovations are anticipated starting in 2022 through an innovative collaboration between the Town, the Archdiocese and the Belmont Hill School.



Size: 3.8 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Park and Recreation Commission/ Town of Arlington

Current Use: Recreation

Robbins Farm Park

From 1880 to 1941, at least three generations of the Robbins family farmed this land in Arlington Heights, and historical records cite a Robbins family farming the site during the Revolutionary War. In December 1941, Town Meeting voted to acquire the land for a public park by eminent domain, at a price of \$33,800.

With its spectacular view of the Boston skyline to attract them, residents use the Robbins Farm fields, basketball court, and playground year-round for a wide variety of active and passive recreational activities. Many special events, like the 4th of July celebration and a variety of concerts, are held at the park and sponsored by the Friends of Robbins Park.

Park improvements began in 2017 and continued into 2019, when Arlington's CPA Committee awarded funds to upgrade and rehabilitate the playing fields and to improve ADA accessibility to many areas of the park, including the community garden and the historic building site and dog statue. See Small Neighborhood Parks and Open Spaces below for more details on the community garden.



Size: 11.1 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Park and Recreation Commission/Town of Arlington

Current Use: Passive and active recreation



Spy Pond, Spy Pond Park and Fields, Elizabeth Island, and Kelwyn Manor Park

Spy Pond

At 100 acres, Spy Pond is the largest body of water located entirely within Arlington. Spy Pond is near the Town Center, adjacent to Route 2, and close to the Alewife Brook Reservation. Spy Pond is a "Great Pond," meaning it is a naturally occurring body of water 10 acres or greater in size. The pond was formed by a gigantic block of ice that broke away from the glacier leaving a "kettle hole" filled with glacial waters. Today, the source of the water in Spy Pond is precipitation and runoff, primarily stormwater drainage from the surrounding densely populated residential areas: no river or brook feeds it. The Town's Envision Arlington Spy Pond Committee is actively involved in stewardship and planning for pond improvements, including water quality monitoring and weed control treatments.

Historic Spy Pond is a beautiful and precious community resource, although access is limited because much of the shoreline is private residential property. Walking, boating, bird watching, fishing, and ice skating are popular pastimes, but swimming is not permitted because the water quality does not meet state bathing beach standards and no lifeguard services are provided. In recent years, a high school crew team has used the pond as its practice location, and the Recreation



Department offers canoe and kayak rentals to the general public on weekends throughout the summer.

In 2016, a feasibility study and detailed survey was awarded CPA funds to identify shoreline preservation alternatives and options to mitigate erosion on select portions of Town-owned shoreline along the edge of Spy Pond (Spy Pond Park, Scannell Field, Arlington Boys and Girls Club, and Spring Valley Street). The Conservation Commission received CPA funds in 2021 to repave the North Beach boat ramp with porous pavement material.

Spy Pond Park and Fields

The public park includes a playground, public boat ramp, rain garden, walking path, benches, and picnic tables. Friends of Spy Pond Park is an active volunteer organization that oversees stewardship of the park and sponsors regular clean-up projects and special events, including the annual fall Spy Pond Fun Day.

The Town's 2019 playground audit identified Spy Pond Park as a level "Hazard 1" playground, which indicates the playground needs immediate attention for safety reasons. CPA funds were awarded in 2021 to rebuild the playground to be ADA-compliant and meet safety standards.

The recreational facilities at Spy Pond Field (a.k.a. Hornblower Field), located on Pond Lane opposite the

Arlington Boys and Girls Club, include tennis courts (renovated in 2015), a baseball diamond used by the Arlington High School varsity baseball team, and an open multi-purpose field used for high school and youth soccer. The Play Fair Arch, bleachers and field house were originally constructed in 1910 and are in significant disrepair. In 2019 a study was conducted to review the current use and needs of the recreational facility and structure, including the need to make them ADA compliant. Scannell Field at the eastern end of Spy Pond Park has a softball/little league diamond with bleachers.

Size: 100 acres (pond) and 15 acres (park and fields)

Managing Agency/Owner: Department of Public Works/Park and Recreation Commission/Town of Arlington

Current Use: Recreation/Conservation

Elizabeth Island

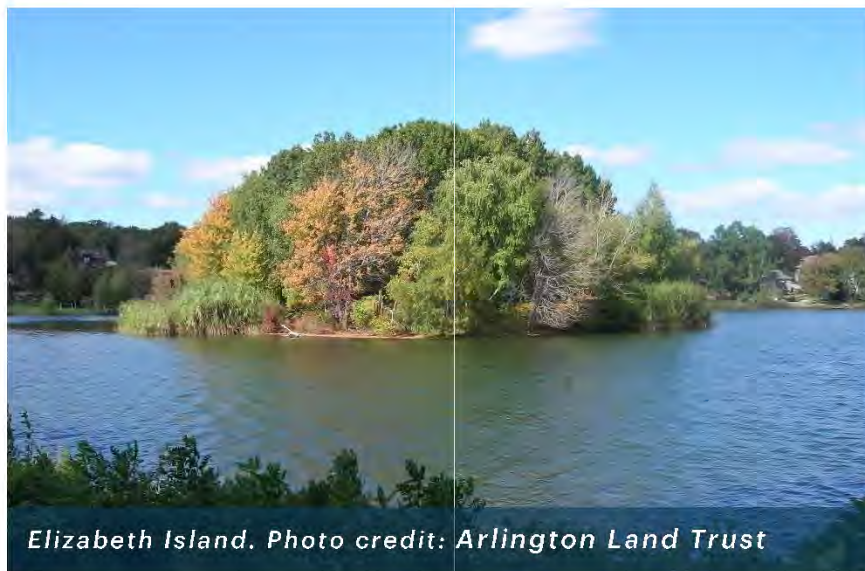
Elizabeth Island, an undeveloped, heavily vegetated island in the middle of Spy Pond, was purchased by the Arlington Land Trust (ALT) in 2010 from a private owner who had announced that it would be put up for sale. The island is now permanently protected and open to the public under a conservation restriction held jointly by the Arlington Conservation Commission and Mass Audubon. ALT is managing the island for passive recreation, with simple wooded trails and landing areas for small boats. The island provides a nesting habitat for

various species of duck, Canada Geese, Mute Swan, and other birds and wildlife. Several properly trained and licensed volunteers search for nests each spring and treat the goose eggs to keep the population under control.

Size: 2 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Arlington Land Trust

Current Use: Conservation



Kelwyn Manor Park

Kelwyn Manor Park along the eastern shore of Spy Pond was set aside by the private Kelwyn Manor Association when the former farmland was developed for housing in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The park contains a

small beach area, a playground, and other facilities. The Association continues to maintain the park with annual cleanups and mowing and uses it for occasional neighborhood events.

Size: 1.8 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Kelwyn Manor Association

Current Use: Recreation

Summer Street Sports Complex

This major multi-sport complex at 422 Summer Street includes the Ed Burns Arena, Summer Street (a.k.a. Kenny) Field, Buck Field, and Hill's Hill Field, and natural wooded areas known as Hill's Hill. The property is located adjacent to the Minuteman Bikeway, and the baseball, field hockey, youth baseball/softball, and multi-use fields are used by local high school and youth sports organizations. Baseball and youth baseball fields are lighted for evening play. The area also includes a multi-generational recreation area with fitness stations, tot play equipment, a bocce court, and basketball court. A completely accessible children's play structure with a zero-entry ramp is a major attraction.

The state-owned Ed Burns Arena also houses the Arlington Recreation Department's headquarters. Built in 1971, the facility originally offered only a seasonal regulation-size ice skating rink. The arena is now a year-round, multi-sport facility with an ice rink that operates

during the fall and winter, and batting cages, indoor soccer programs, and summer camps in the spring and summer. It is used for a variety of special events and serves as home facility for the Arlington Hockey and Figure Skating Association and Arlington High School and Arlington Catholic High School boys and girls hockey teams. Public skating as an activity for both adults and children has grown significantly, and the department offers a variety of instructional programs and special skating events. Skate rentals, sharpening and concessions are also offered.

Size: 12.7 acres (fields) and 2.4 acres (arena and parking)

Managing Agency/Owner: Park and Recreation Commission/Town of Arlington and Department of Conservation and Recreation/Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Current Use: Active and passive recreation



Symmes Woods and Parks

After Symmes Hospital closed in 1999, Arlington voters approved a debt exclusion in 2001 to allow the Town to acquire the entire 18-acre property off Summer Street in order to be able to control its development. After a lengthy public process and delays associated with the 2008 recession, a new owner began construction in the spring of 2012. By 2014 the developer, Arlington 360 LLC, had completed a 164-unit apartment complex and 12 townhouse condominiums. Arlington 360 LLC sold a two-acre portion of the Symmes site halfway up the hill to Shelter/Brightview Arlington for a 90-unit assisted living facility.

The most prominent open space features of the development are two parks and about six acres of woods and buffer zones. The half-acre Hattie Symmes Park at the top of the hill has commanding views of Arlington and Boston to the east. Named for the daughter of Stephen Symmes who founded the hospital, the park features pathways, benches, and extensive landscaping. A second hillside park of almost two acres abuts the upper boundary of the Symmes Woods. It is designed for passive recreation with views of the Boston skyline through the trees. Named for Nora A. Brown, the long-time head of the nurses' facility at the hospital, it contains pervious pathways, mowed strips within an



open meadow area, and landscaped beds, as well as some benches and picnic tables.

Both parks are owned and maintained by Arlington 360 LLC but are open to the public under the same rules and regulations as for other town parks. The Symmes Woods covers the relatively flat area between Summer Street and the assisted living facility.

Management of the parks and woods is governed by a plan agreed to by the developers, the Arlington Redevelopment Board, the Arlington Land Trust, and the Conservation Commission. The parks and woodlands are protected by a conservation restriction and Public Access Easement held by the Arlington Land Trust and Conservation Commission. The conservation restriction, which offers permanent legal protection for the land, was signed off by the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and by the Town of Arlington in 2014. Small property markers designate the conservation restriction boundaries.

Size: 8.7 acres of the total 18-acre site

Managing Agency/Owner: Arlington 360 LLC

Current Use: Conservation/Passive recreation



Thorndike and Magnolia Park and Fields

Located in southeastern Arlington close to Route 2 and the Alewife MBTA station in Cambridge, three multi-purpose fields are used for soccer and lacrosse, and a dedicated off-leash dog recreation area was established in 2012 next to the Thorndike fields. In 2017, the facilities at Magnolia Park were renovated to include 54 community garden plots, several playground areas for different ages, a multi-purpose field for soccer and other sports, walking paths, and picnic areas. Both properties have direct access to the Minuteman Bikeway, and a porous pavement parking area next to

Thorndike Field services the entire recreational complex.

Size: 13.3 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Park and Recreation Commission/Town of Arlington

Current Use: Active and passive recreation



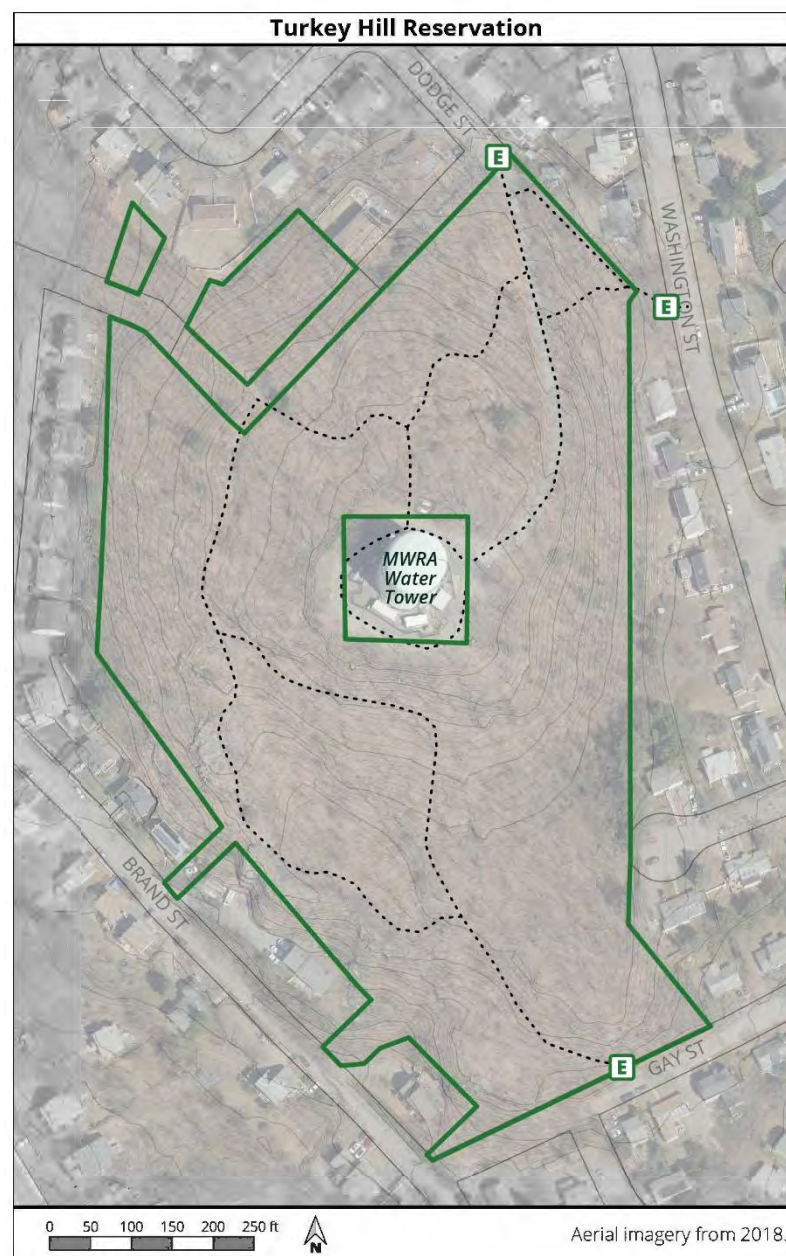
Turkey Hill Reservation

Turkey Hill Reservation contains the Turkey Hill water tower and land immediately surrounding it, which are owned by the MWRA. The Park and Recreation Commission has jurisdiction over most of the land beyond the water tower, and the Conservation Commission oversees several adjacent small parcels. This area is heavily wooded, with many internal trails and foot paths that connect with adjacent roads, including a main access point at Dodge Street. A stewardship group organized through the Conservation Commission Land Stewards Program cares for the site.

Size: 10.7 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Park and Recreation Commission /Conservation Commission/Town of Arlington/MWRA

Current Use: Passive recreation/Conservation



Wellington Park

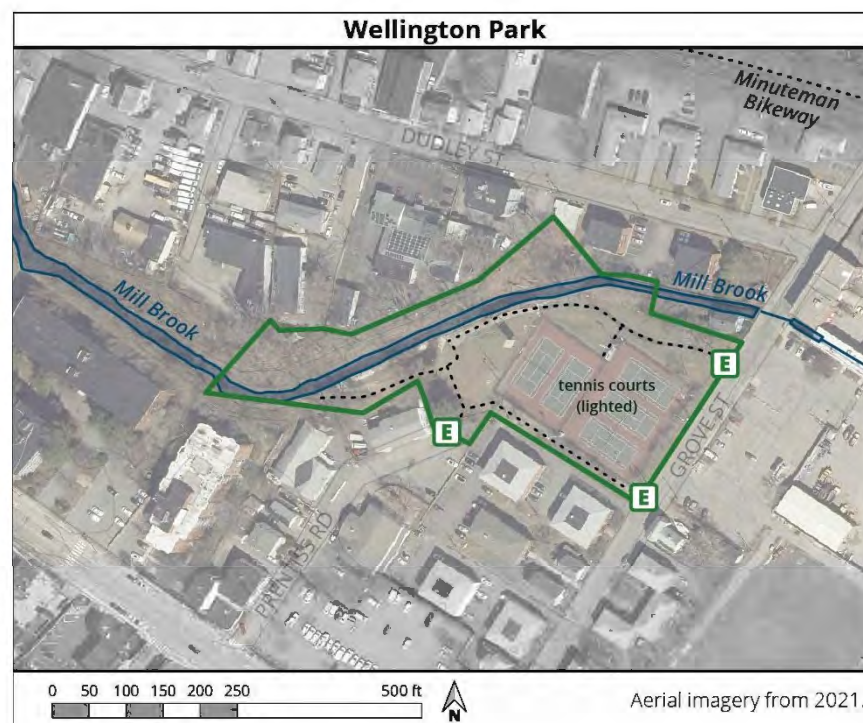
The Ethel Wellington Park is located on Grove St. across from Arlington's Department of Public Works headquarters. The park has five lighted tennis courts, which were last renovated in 2011, and an adventure/ropes course that was installed with funds from a Carol M. White federal physical education grant to help promote health and wellness programs in the community.

Building off the 2019 Mill Brook Corridor Report and other planning efforts related to flooding concerns, the Town has made significant improvements to Wellington Park in conjunction with Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) and its Greenways Initiative. The recently completed project includes a boardwalk, natural play area, accessible walkways, benches, educational signage, native plantings, and an engineered retention area for flood control. The work was funded by the CPA Committee, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, and other sources.

Size: 3 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Park and Recreation Commission/Town of Arlington

Current Use: Active and passive recreation/Flood control



Whittemore Park and Uncle Sam Plaza

Whittemore Park

Whittemore Park, at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Mystic Street, was created when the Jefferson Cutter House was moved to the site in 1989. The park features a small section of railroad track remaining from a railroad line built in 1846. The site occupies an important crossroads of Arlington's central business district, the Civic Block and its cultural district. The park hosts community and art-related events throughout the year and the parking lot behind the site is used for the

seasonal Farmer's Market. The Jefferson Cutter House is home to the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum, the Cutter Gallery, and the Arlington Chamber of Commerce offices.

The current Whittemore Park Revitalization Project has two phases which will improve the landscape for passive recreation and civic functions. The planning process concluded in 2018 and Phase 1 renovations to the pathways and landscaping in front of the Cutter House were completed in September 2021. Phase 2 will provide new accessible pathways to the front and rear doors of the Cutter House, improvements to the rear stairway, new garden plantings and fencing. This work will begin in the spring of 2022. This project is supported by CPA, CDBG funds, and Town funding.

Size: .3 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Town of Arlington

Current Use: Passive recreation/Historic preservation

Uncle Sam Plaza

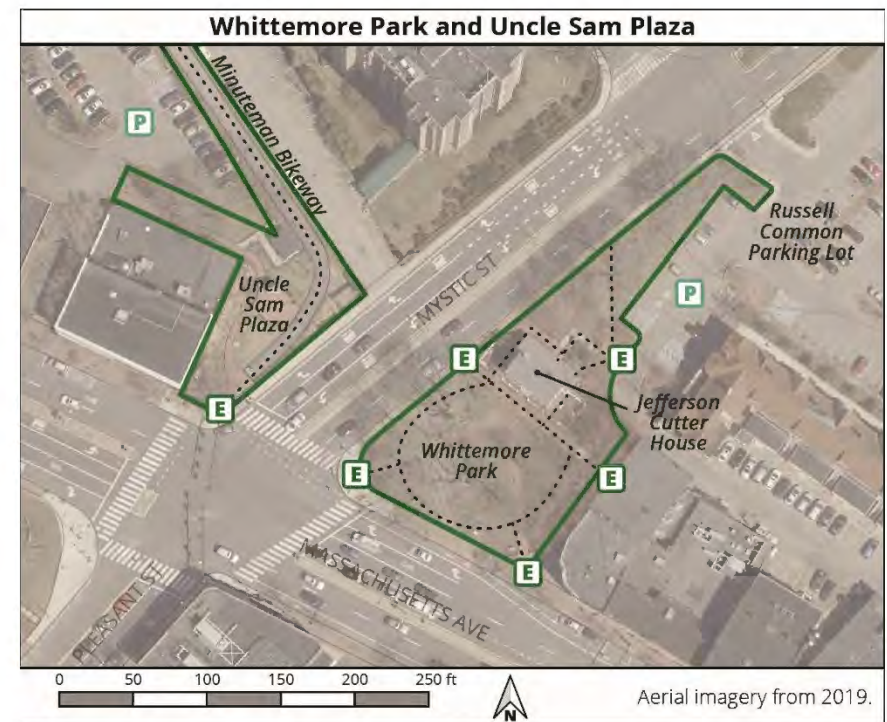
Uncle Sam Plaza is located across Mystic Street from Whittemore Park, complementing the historic and civic park environment in the center of Arlington. The plaza honors Samuel (Uncle Sam) Wilson who was born nearby in 1766 and became famous as the personification of the United States. The monument was constructed in 1976 and restored in 2018. The restoration included treatment

of both the bronze and stone components, as well as the application of protective coatings to the statue. The Minuteman Bikeway traverses the park, and the Arlington Visitor Center is located next to the statue. Numerous music and performance events are held in the park during the summer months.

Size: .25 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Town of Arlington

Current Use: Passive recreation/Historic preservation



Window-On-The-Mystic / Mystic Lakes

Window-On-The-Mystic is a three-acre waterfront parcel offering trails and views of the Upper Mystic Lake near the Winchester line. Arlington purchased this parcel in 1975 from private owners, with partial funding from CDBG funds and the Massachusetts Department of Natural Resources. Several Eagle Scout projects have made some access improvements to the site.

The Upper and Lower Mystic Lakes are glacial lakes that straddle the boundaries of Arlington, Winchester, and Medford. While there is ample access from the Mystic Valley Parkway along the northern shore in Medford and Winchester, most of the shoreline in Arlington abuts roadways or privately held land with developed house lots. The lakes have become known for seasonal sightings of Bald Eagles, Red-Tailed Hawks, Kestrels, and other raptors, as well as many species of ducks, shorebirds, and other fauna.

Window-On-The-Mystic

Size: 3 acres

Managing Agency/Owner: Conservation Commission/Town of Arlington

Current Use: Conservation/Passive recreation

Mystic Lakes

Size: 99 acres in Arlington

Managing Agency/Owner: Department of Conservation and Recreation/Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Current Use: Recreation/Conservation



3. Small Neighborhood Parks and Open Spaces

In addition to the larger open spaces, parks, and recreational resources describe above, Arlington has numerous smaller, diverse parks and open spaces distributed throughout town. These spaces provide residents with access to unique opportunities near where they live to take advantage of recreational resources, connect with nature, understand local history, and gather with neighbors. The sites are grouped into several categories: historic landscapes, school facilities and neighborhood parks, community gardens, small conservation areas, and streetscapes.

Historic Landscapes

Arlington's major historic sites are described in Section 4.F Scenic Resources and Unique Environments, but these small, isolated historic sites are also valued as green spaces in their neighborhoods.

The **Foot of the Rocks**, at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Lowell Street, is a small park with markers to commemorate the Colonial Minutemen and British soldiers who fought and died nearby on April 19, 1775, the first day of the Revolutionary War. A granite water trough, now used as a planter, was donated by the Robbins sisters in memory of their brother Olney.

Monument Square, at the intersection of Broadway and Massachusetts Avenue, adjacent to the Central Fire Station, is a small park that hosts a Civil War Monument and Arlington Veterans Roll Call. The annual Veterans Day Parade ends here for a ceremony and placing of wreathes.

Park Circle Water Tower, located 377 feet above sea level next to Park Avenue in Arlington Heights, is owned and managed by the MWRA. The Town owns the 1.8 acres of open space surrounding the tower, which is planted with a variety of fruit trees and other vegetation. The metal water tank was built in 1921 and in 1924 the tank was enclosed by the 80-foot-high ornamental "Greek temple" designed by Arlington architect Frederic F. Low, with funds donated by the Robbins sisters.

Prince Hall Mystic Cemetery on Gardner Street in East Arlington is the site of the only Black Masonic Cemetery in the northeastern United States. Dedicated in 1864, it held members of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge F & AM, formed in 1776. Though much of the cemetery has since been developed, a geophysical survey of the site in 1988 found remains of the original gate and an obelisk. This site is part of the town-wide Archeological Reconnaissance Survey to be undertaken in 2022.

School Facilities and Neighborhood Parks

Arlington's public schools host a variety of neighborhood-based recreation opportunities that are open to all ages to enjoy.

Arlington High School on Massachusetts Avenue hosts a full range of sports facilities, including playing fields for football, baseball, soccer, and lacrosse, as well as basketball courts, track lanes, and several indoor gyms. When the new high school buildings and landscaping are completed in 2024, additional passive and active outdoor spaces will be made available.

Bishop School on Columbia Road has basketball courts, a softball/little league field, an open field area, a playground, a fenced school vegetable garden with outdoor classroom seating, and a pollinator garden with nearby picnic benches and outdoor sculptures.

Brackett School on Eastern Avenue has two playgrounds, a basketball area, and a small garden space. It is adjacent to Robbins Farm Park, which offers additional recreational facilities.

Dallin School and adjacent Florence Avenue Park on Florence Avenue have a softball/little league field, multi-purpose/soccer field, two playgrounds, a

basketball practice area, a school garden, and a seasonal water sprinkler.

Gibbs School between Foster and Tufts Streets has two playground areas, a basketball court, and a large school garden area.



Bishop School field. Photo credit: Elisabeth Carr-Jones

Hardy School on Lake Street has two fenced playgrounds, a basketball court, a soccer court, a children's running track, and a small experimental garden.

Ottoson Middle School on Acton Street has a softball field, a multi-use field, and a vegetable garden with a plastic bottle greenhouse.

Peirce School on Park Avenue Extension has a basketball court, two playgrounds, a small school vegetable and herb garden with seating, and an open space with trees.

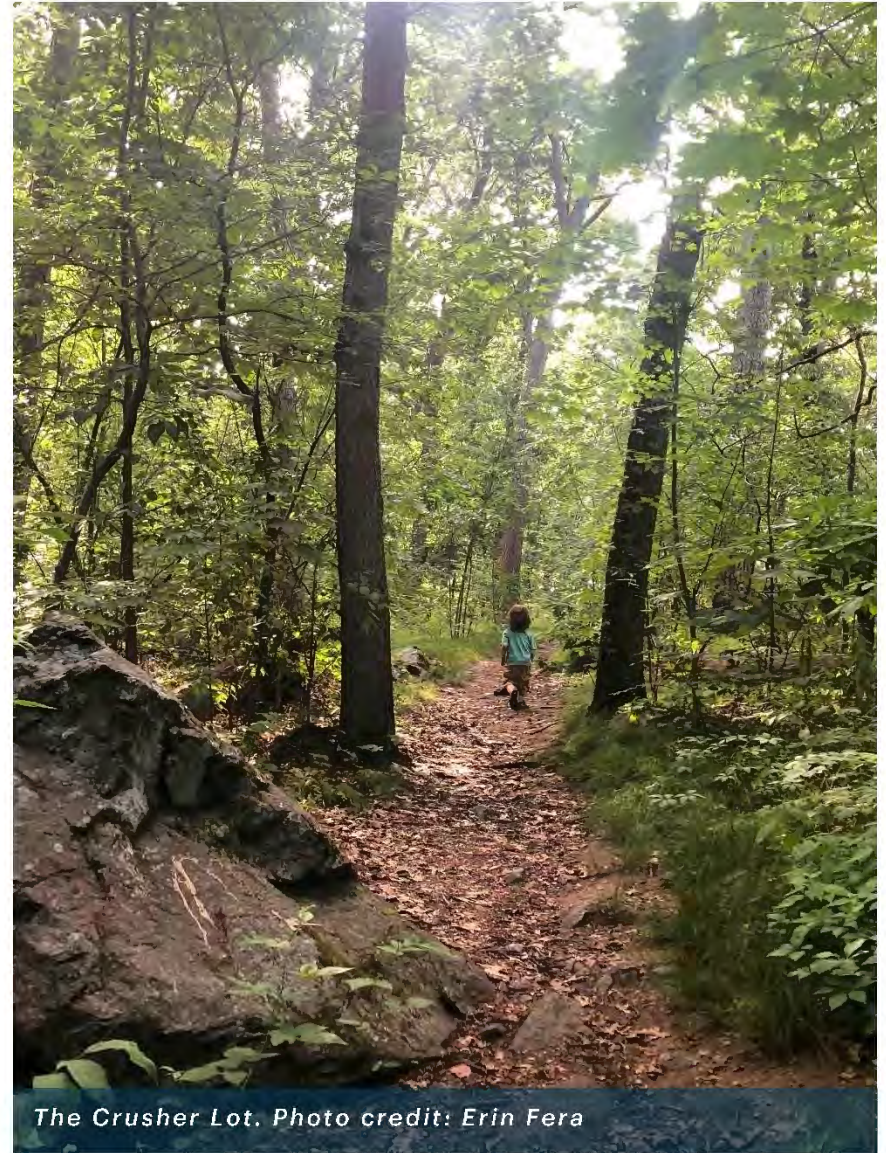
Stratton School and the adjacent Pheasant Avenue Park have a basketball court, paved and green space, some school garden areas, and a playground.

Thompson School has two playgrounds and a fenced school vegetable garden. The school is also adjacent to North Union Street Park and Lussiano Field.

Other open space and recreational resources are located on Town-owned land or are managed by Town departments and commissions.

Crosby School Park is a nearly four-acre property adjacent to the private Lesley Ellis School (previously the Town's Crosby School) between Oxford and Winter Streets. It has open spaces for field sports and a playground, four tennis courts, a tennis backboard, and a basketball court.

The Crusher Lot is a five-acre undeveloped Town property at the corner of Gray Street and Oakland

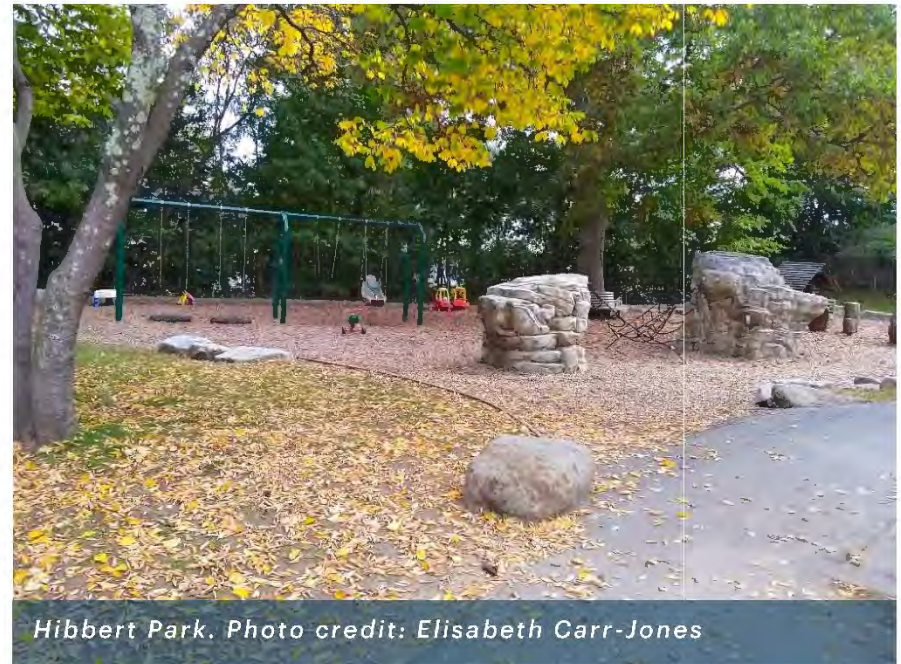


The Crusher Lot. Photo credit: Erin Fera

Avenue, adjacent to the Ottoson Middle School. This site hosts a mature stand of native and non-native trees, other vegetation, and wildlife, including foxes, squirrels, raccoons, owls, turkeys, and woodpeckers. Trails through the woods are used by students and others to get around the neighborhood and for afterschool programs. Historically this parcel was used as a source of gravel for street construction. It became known as the Crusher Lot because of the steam-powered stone crusher located there to create the gravel. The lot is across Oakland Avenue from the former home of Cyrus and Vittoria Dallin, who advocated for having the area preserved as open space after the gravel operation closed and the Junior High School West (now Ottoson Middle School) was built at the bottom of the hillside in 1921.

Hibbert Park is a half-acre property in Arlington Heights between Hibbert Street and Lancaster Road. This intimate neighborhood open space offers naturalistic playground structures nestled into a quiet setting with seating areas and mature trees.

Locke School Playground is a 0.2-acre playground space on Davis Road adjacent to the former Locke School, which is now condominiums. Buffered on one side by trees, it has terraced mulched and paved areas with playground equipment and picnic tables.



Hibbert Park. Photo credit: Elisabeth Carr-Jones

Parallel Park, a 1.2-acre parcel at the corner of Medford Street and Mystic Valley Parkway, is owned by DCR and leased to the Town. Flanked by majestic mature trees, this park includes separated playground areas, a basketball court, grassy open space, and shaded areas with benches and picnic tables. The park also provides another green link to the Mystic River Reservation.

Parmenter School Park on the corner of Irving and Academy Streets offers a playground and basketball court next to the Parmenter School, a Town property now rented to private educational organizations. The

playground is scheduled to be renovated and made ADA accessible in 2022-2023.

Reinhart Playground is a half-acre neighborhood park between School Street and Robbins Road adjacent to the former Cutter School, which is now condominiums. It has wooded and open areas with benches. The playground is a memorial to Nicole Reinhart, a cyclist who was killed while participating in the BMC Bike Race in Arlington.

Waldo Park is in East Arlington between Waldo Road and Teel Street, adjacent to St. Paul's Catholic Cemetery. This one-acre landscaped park has playground areas, a basketball court, seating areas, paved pathways, benches, and open green space encircled by trees.

Community Gardens

Community-based gardens sponsored by a variety of Town departments and private groups have become an important part of Arlington's open space fabric.

Arlington Community Orchard was established by HomeHarvest, a local company dedicated to edible landscapes, on land owned by the MWRA off Brattle Court. The orchard features 50+ fruit trees, hundreds of medicinal herbs, edible berries, custom sculptures,



picnic tables, and a social space for workshops and public enjoyment. The company hosts occasional workshops to show the types of regenerative agriculture possible in a public park context.

Magnolia Community Garden was rebuilt as a prominent feature of the Magnolia Park renovations in 2017. Engineered drainage in this flood-prone area further enhanced the 54 highly-sought-after garden allotment plots and related facilities available to Arlington residents through the Recreation Department.

The **colonial kitchen garden at the Jason Russell House** on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and

Jason Street was designed and is maintained by the Arlington Garden Club. This annotated garden displays household culinary and medicinal plants typically found in a colonial kitchen garden in the mid-1700s. The garden area includes two historically accurate apple trees, and the Club uses the garden to educate the public about the uses of a colonial kitchen.

The **Mystic Charles Pollinator Pathways** group is a volunteer coalition of gardeners and native plant enthusiasts who promote and create more pollinator habitats in response to the significant declines in native pollinator species such as bees, butterflies, wasps, and moths. The group is mapping private and public pollinator gardens in the Mystic and Metrowest Charles River watershed communities to show existing resources and identify where more are needed. More than 30 private residential gardens and several Town-owned landscapes are included on the organization's online map.

Robbins Farm Learning Garden in Robbins Farm Park was created as an educational gardening resource for the community and to continue the agricultural tradition of the farm. This cooperative vegetable garden is part of Arlington Recreation and is run by a small active group who maintain the garden, along with informative and educational gardening websites.

The **Wildlife Habitat Garden** at the Arlington Reservoir is planted with native shrubs, grasses and wildflowers that provide shelter and food for a wide variety of wildlife, including rabbits, turtles, toads, birds, butterflies, bees, and dragonflies. Started in 2010 and maintained by the Reservoir Committee of Envision Arlington, the garden represents a collaboration with the Arlington Land Trust, Park and Recreation Commission, Department of Public Works, and residents.

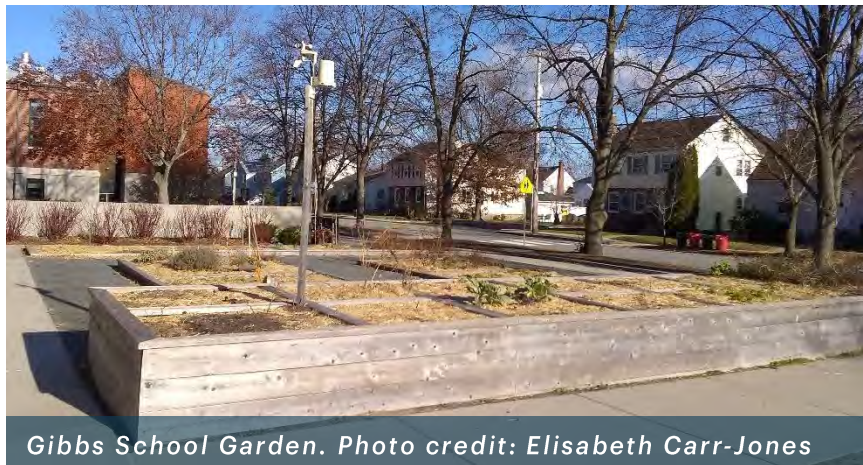


Robbins Farm Learning Garden. Photo credit: Alan Jones

Rain gardens are one of a variety of practices designed to treat polluted stormwater runoff and control localized flooding through ecological landscape design. These gardens have been planted

in or near Spy Pond Park, Wellington Park, Hurd Field, Scannell Field, and the CVS parking lot near the High School. Rain gardens have also been incorporated into several sidewalks in East Arlington through a collaborative project of the Town and MyRWA.

Arlington's neighborhood schools each host educational gardens. Many of these demonstration gardens have specific themes, developed with the guidance and support of the Arlington School Sustainability Coordinator. The gardens are part of a broad environmental and sustainability focus at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, recognized in the Arlington Public Schools receiving the 2018 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School District Sustainability Award.



Small Conservation Areas

The Arlington Conservation Commission oversees more than 30 acres of conservation lands, including Mount Gilboa, Turkey Hill, Meadowbrook Park, Window on the Mystic, and Cooke's Hollow, which are described under Major Open Spaces and Recreational Resources above. The following small conservation parcels of less than one acre each are part of the Commission's holdings and/or are monitored by the Arlington Land Stewards program.

- Brattle Street, a U-shaped parcel surrounding 54 Brattle Street.
- Brand Street, including two parcels, left of 72 Brand and right of 36 Brand Street.
- Central Street, on the Adamian property at the end of Central Street.
- Concord Turnpike, between Scituate and Newport Streets, Concord Turnpike and Arlmont Streets.
- Forest Street, opposite the intersection with Dunster Lane at the Winchester town line.
- Hemlock Street, uphill from 5 Hemlock, near Arlington 360.
- Inverness Road, next to 36 Inverness.
- Kilsythe Road, an area landlocked behind 44 and 48 Kilsythe.
- Madison Avenue, adjacent to Mt. Gilboa lands.

- Mohawk Road, including two parcels at the intersection of Washington and Mohawk Streets.
- Park Avenue, at the rear of 53 Park Avenue.
- Philemon Street, on the south side of 32 Philemon St, with access to Whipple Hill lands in Lexington.
- Ridge Street, at the north end of the street.
- Rublee Street, at the intersection of Rublee and Udine, at the entrance to Sutherland Woods in East Lexington.
- Short Street, between 8 Short and 11 West Streets.
- Spring Street, across from 120 Spring Street.
- Stone Road, across from 24 Stone Road.
- Udine Street, on Lexington border.
- Water Street, an area with two benches north of the Minuteman Bikeway next to Buzzell Field.
- Woodside Lane, across from 26, 30, 34 Woodside Lane.

Streetscapes

Arlington hosts a variety of small landscapes and memorial sites throughout its commercial corridors. These spaces create interest and make an area more attractive.

Sidewalk Plazas and Street Parklets: During the COVID-19 pandemic, Arlington's Department of Planning and Community Development coordinated with many restaurants and other business owners to create seasonal outdoor seating options on adjacent sidewalks

and roadways, primarily along Massachusetts Avenue and nearby streets in three business districts. The Medford Street parklet in Arlington Center was installed in fall 2020 and enhanced in 2021 with a MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces grant. This pedestrian-friendly area offers outdoor seating and other furnishings, including an at-grade accessible parklet platform, solar-powered umbrellas featuring LED lights and phone chargers, and seasonal plantings. Because of their popularity, it is anticipated that these spaces will continue after the pandemic.

Traffic Island Gardens and Planters: With town support, the Arlington Garden Club coordinates the adoption of traffic islands and public planters by individual volunteer gardeners and nearby businesses. More than 60 islands and sidewalk planters are adopted and maintained each year. Some of the larger plantings are at Broadway Plaza, the intersection of Jason Street/ Mill Street/Massachusetts Avenue, and the Ridge Street Circle.

Veterans Memorials and Markers: The Town's Department of Veterans' Services documents 24 Memorial Plaques recognizing Arlington veterans on traffic islands and street corners throughout town. An online map designates these locations, as well as notations of three Revolutionary War markers along Massachusetts Avenue.

SECTION 6. COMMUNITY VISION

A. Description of Process

Arlington's community vision for its open space and recreation resources and the goals described below are derived from those of the 2015-2022 OSRP. The statement has been revised as a result of the values expressed by participants in the public engagement process described in Section 2, including public workshops and surveys. The Open Space Committee also considered broader goals recently articulated in a wide range of planning initiatives that complement open space and recreational planning in Arlington, including but not limited to the following documents:

- Connect Arlington (2021)
- Net Zero Action Plan (2021)
- Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020)
- Arlington Heights Neighborhood Action Plan (2019)
- Mill Brook Corridor Report (2019)
- Historic Preservation Survey Master Plan Final Report (2019)
- Arlington Reservoir Master Plan (2018)
- Arlington Tree Management Plan (2018)
- Arts and Culture Action Plan (2017)

- Community Resiliency Building/Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Workshop (2017)
- Arlington Master Plan (2015)
- Complete Streets Prioritization Plan (2016-2021, with update in process)

B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Community Goals

Envision Arlington has adopted these Statements of Community Values, which also serve as the Town's overall open space and recreation community goals:

Community: We value Arlington's geographic neighborhoods, common interest groups, and the sense of community in our town. We value active and compassionate volunteers and programs delivering services in our community. We will be known for the vitality of our neighborhoods and as a community of people helping others.

The Environment and Sustainability: We value the physical beauty and natural habitats of our town – parks, ponds and wetlands, dramatic vistas, and tree-lined streets – as they contribute to the well-being of our community. Recognizing the fragility of

our natural resources, we must ensure that Arlington's residential areas, commercial centers, and infrastructures are developed in harmony with environmental concerns. We will be known for our commitment to the preservation of Arlington's beauty, limited open space and resources, as well as our place in the regional and global community.

Culture and Recreation: We value the many opportunities to meet, play, and grow in Arlington while treasuring and preserving our unique historical resources. Our social, cultural, artistic, historic, athletic, recreational, and other community groups strengthen ,own life. We will be known for the breadth and richness of our resources and activities available to Arlington residents.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: We value the diversity of our population. Our,town's mix of ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, as well as economic and personal circumstances, enriches us. We will be known for the warm welcome and respect we extend to all.

The fulfillment of the above community goals will make Arlington a more desirable and pleasant town to live in, work, and visit. Further, by bringing these community goals to fruition, Arlington's community may acquire a

greater sense of awareness of and appreciation for the Town's open space and recreational resources.



SECTION 7. ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

To achieve its overall statement of open space and recreational goals in Section 6, the Town must understand the gaps and needs in the community. This analysis of needs takes into consideration several sources:

- Needs and values expressed by residents during the public engagement process, which included two public workshops, a community survey, and the 2020 Envision Arlington Annual Survey (see summaries in Appendix C).
- Interviews with Town staff and meetings with Town boards, commissions, and committees.
- Socioeconomic data trends.
- Environmental challenges identified in Section 4.
- Needs identified in past planning efforts and current initiatives that support the enhancement and protection of the Town's open space and recreational resources.

In addition to describing what is lacking in Arlington, the needs analysis points to where the Town is already working to meet challenges and identify additional solutions. As noted in the last bullet above, the Town has undertaken many initiatives that are aimed at improving the quality of life in Arlington. Many of these

plans are highlighted below, and opportunities for making progress toward addressing Town needs are further articulated in Sections 8 and 9.

A. Summary of Natural Resource Protection Needs

This section focuses on protecting and improving the environmental integrity of natural resources on public and private lands. The Town's local regulations and policies are designed to protect these resources from the impacts of development and human activities. Additional discussion on this subject is provided in Section C on management needs below. A common thread throughout is greater environmental stewardship among Arlington residents and businesses, as discussed in the last subsection.

1. Water Resources

Arlington has been working for many years to improve the water quality of its rivers, streams, ponds, and wetlands. All are impacted by pollutants in runoff from streets and parking lots treated with salt and sand and from residential and business lawns treated with fertilizers and pesticides. These pollutants choke native

plants and allow invasive species to take over natural habitats.

Stormwater Management

The Town's Stormwater Management Program, bylaw, and standards are tools to ensure that new development and redevelopment are minimizing the runoff from their sites into nearby waterways. Standards could go even further to expand and diversify stormwater management approaches and require the use of more nature-based solutions (NBS) that filter pollutants in runoff, and also provide floodwater storage, green space, and other benefits to mitigate climate change.

Mill Brook

Mill Brook is identified by the Water Bodies Working Group of the Conservation Commission as being in poor condition with many long-standing water quality issues. The *Mill Brook Corridor Report* (2019) outlines ongoing priorities for the corridor, as well as near-, mid-, and long-term strategies that will improve water quality, increase public access and amenities, manage invasive species, stabilize the shoreline, mitigate flooding, and increase public awareness of this ecological and historical resource.

The corridor encompasses a mix of public and private ownership, which requires coordination and collaboration and could offer opportunities for property

Nature Based Solutions (NBS)

NBS are adaptation measures focused on the **PROTECTION, RESTORATION, and/or MANAGEMENT** of ecological systems to safeguard public health, provide clean air and water, increase natural hazard resilience, and sequester carbon. Incorporating NBS in local planning and design projects produces long-term solutions that benefit human and natural systems.

- Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program

acquisition or conservation restrictions or easements. Arlington's Design Guidelines encourage private landowners to be partners with the Town in improving natural systems and increasing public access along the corridor.

At Wellington Park, the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) and the Town were able to use Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds and a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program Action Grant to begin implementing the recommendations of the Corridor Report. The project enhanced access to a half-acre of the park that had been overgrown with invasive species, built a new

boardwalk, porous pathways, and seating areas that allowed access to the brook, and installed additional native plantings and nature-based flood protection measures to help capture localized flooding in the area. The Town should continue to look for other opportunities that help meet the larger vision for the Corridor.

Spy Pond

Spy Pond is another high-priority water body for the Water Bodies Working Group of the Conservation Commission. It is impacted by erosion of its shoreline and sedimentation from stormwater runoff, wave and ice action, and high recreational use on its banks. It is also impacted by invasive species. The Town is moving forward with the Spy Pond Edge and Erosion Control Project that includes shoreline stabilization, invasive species treatment and removal, and revegetation of banks of Town-owned property along the pond. The Spy Pond Committee annually prepares an educational flyer about the hazards of fertilizer use, which is distributed to residences around Spy Pond and other water bodies. The Town will continue monitoring to ensure Spy Pond is meeting recreational and environmental objectives.

Arlington Reservoir

The *Arlington Reservoir Master Plan* (2018) is the guiding document to improve environmental health and recreational amenities at The Res. Recent upgrades and

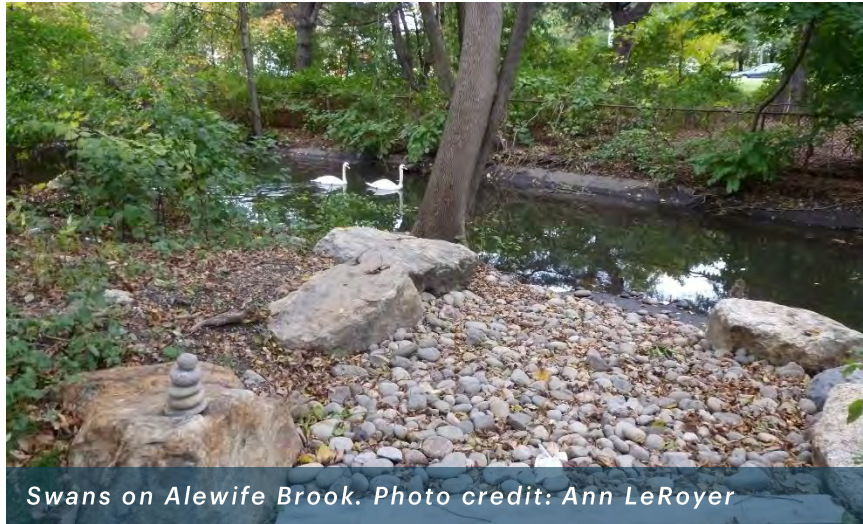
site improvements include a new filtration and UV system at the pump house, pump replacement, and building improvements. The Town continues implementation of the Master Plan to address water quality, erosion control/bank stabilization, invasive species management, and accessibility.

Mystic River, Mystic Lakes, and Alewife Brook

These waterbodies are shared with neighboring communities and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). In its annual report card, the MyRWA gave the Mystic River a good water quality rating of B+ and Upper and Lower Mystic Lakes an A; however, Alewife Brook continues to maintain a poor grade of D (see Table 4-3). Recent projects in Arlington include the installation of NBS such as rain gardens and improved stormwater management infrastructure in East Arlington.

Somerville and Cambridge are serviced by combined stormwater and sewer systems, and during heavy storm events the system discharges polluted water through combined sewer overflow (CSO) outfalls into Alewife Brook, which affects several East Arlington neighborhoods. As directed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), the cities are taking action to implement control measures at the CSOs to improve water quality. The Town continues to advocate for removal of the CSOs and to

monitor progress. The poor grade of D in Alewife Brook is based on bacteria contamination; therefore, removal of CSOs would greatly enhance the health of the brook.



Swans on Alewife Brook. Photo credit: Ann LeRoyer

2. Wooded Areas and Trees

The presence of trees in urban settings has been found to provide positive psychological and social impacts, including stress relief, as well as important environmental and economic benefits:

- Reduce surface water runoff and soil erosion
- Mitigate urban heat island effects
- Absorb air and water pollution and associated health benefits
- Reduce surface wind speeds
- Minimize noise

- Create wildlife habitat
- Enhance property values
- Climate change mitigation and resilience through carbon sequestration and carbon dioxide uptake

The Town has taken steps towards managing its wooded conservation areas and increasing the tree canopy species diversity to achieve these benefits. While respondents to the Community Survey felt the Town was doing a good job in protecting trees, many agreed more needs to be done to build on this effort.

Wooded Areas on Town Properties

Small, wooded lots owned by the Town should be evaluated for forestry management needs. Of greatest concern are invasive species, which have proliferated throughout Arlington (e.g., Norway Maple, Japanese Knotweed, Garlic Mustard, Asiatic Bittersweet). Site-specific management plans for parks and conservation areas noted under Section C can include alternative forestry management components to ensure a healthy forest system with diversified species. Sites that could benefit from better resource management include Menotomy Rocks Park, Turkey Hill, Hill's Hill, and the Crusher Lot at the Ottoson Middle School.

Public Shade Trees

The *Arlington Tree Management Plan* continues to guide the planting, replacement, and removal of public trees

at the Town's schools, parks, cemeteries, and other public spaces and along local streets. The plan was developed based on the tree inventory and assessment conducted in 2017 and includes a summary of the findings. Overall goals of the plan are to:

- Increase the town's tree canopy by replenishing trees along Town streets.
- Continue planting initiatives on public parks, fields, schools, and other open spaces.
- Encourage residents to plant trees on private property.

The majority of new trees will be native species. The Tree Department of the Department of Public Works is responsible for implementation of the management plan, including overall maintenance and plantings of trees on Town properties as well as trees planted by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT).

The Town has a goal of planting 300 trees annually (on average, 150 to 200 are removed annually), with a goal of a net increase of 2,000 trees in 20 years. The long-term management of these new trees to ensure their survival remains a challenge. Staffing and other resources are needed to install new plantings, address hazardous trees, and implement routine upkeep and maintenance. The existing inventory is a great resource,

but an overall data management system should be developed to update the inventory as work is completed. Additionally, a schedule should be established to outline needs for tree maintenance on a yearly or multi-year cycle. The Arlington Tree Committee does outreach to residents and business owners to help with watering of newly planted street trees, along with other educational projects.



Tree planting in 2021. Photo credit: Town of Arlington

Private Trees

The Arlington Tree Committee notes that more education is needed to help private property owners and developers understand the importance of protecting mature trees, planting new trees to expand the tree canopy, replacing older trees in poor condition, and using native species. Outreach to developers and the public is also noted below in Section C.

3. Wildlife Habitats and Corridors

Protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat strengthens biodiversity, which is important to support healthy ecosystems, but past development in Arlington has resulted in habitat loss, altered natural processes such as stream flow, and cut off travel corridors for wildlife.

Arlington has initiatives in place that, while focused on meeting other objectives, will also support reestablishing habitat, natural processes, and wildlife corridors, particularly around the Town's water resources as discussed earlier. These projects are

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life and the natural processes that sustain life, such as water, nutrient, and energy cycling.

- MassWildlife

improving aquatic habitat through invasive species management, use of NBS to filter pollutants, and shoreline stabilization. For example, efforts along the Mill Brook Corridor will not only improve water quality but also reestablish a natural floodplain along its banks, creating space for wildlife passage and protecting downstream property by slowing floodwaters during storms. Other existing corridors include the Minuteman Bikeway and Alewife Brook Reservation/Mystic River Reservation.

Acquiring land for wildlife habitat is limited in Arlington. However, there may be opportunities to protect some small parcels, through acquisition, conservation restrictions, or other means, to support the work being done to improve and protect the Town's natural resources. For example, the Town may want to evaluate and consider ways to connect existing conservation areas, open spaces, and recreational resources with "green corridors" to support wildlife passage and create connections for pedestrians, such as along Mill Brook and at Spy Pond and Cooke's Hollow. Other types of green infrastructure and habitats that are being explored are rain gardens, pollinator pathways, and meadow areas to attract insects and small wildlife.

4. Environmental Stewardship

The Town and its partners lead local efforts to protect Arlington's natural resources, such as the Conservation Commission's Land Stewards Program. However, it is important to empower residents and businesses to recognize their own roles as well. Personal choices can have a collective, positive impact. The Town has hosted EcoWeek and EcoFest to engage and educate residents about local environmental issues and projects. Other outreach events could include demonstrations and trainings on do-it-yourself sustainability projects, such as using native and pollinator plants, environment-friendly gardening and lawn care best practices to reduce fertilizer and pesticide use, and water conservation strategies.

These efforts should also be linked with the larger community goal of reducing the town's collective carbon footprint and being more resilient. The Town should promote projects to show their multiple benefits, not only improving the natural environment but also helping the community adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Collaboration with the Clean Energy Future Committee and its implementation of the *Net Zero Action Plan* can focus on energy efficiency and reduction, for example. This can be further supported by the implementation of *Connect Arlington*, the Town's 20-year transportation plan, which focuses on building

connections for walking, biking, and taking transit instead of driving to get around and through Arlington.



B. Summary of Community Needs

This section focuses on the needs of residents to experience nature and have access to active recreational opportunities. Overall, attendees at the public workshops and respondents to the Community Survey felt Arlington offers a good variety of recreational amenities, including playgrounds and playing fields, as well as formal and informal programming. However, some residents' needs are not being met, and the Town needs to look for ways to improve access, use, and management of resources.

1. Safe Walking and Biking Paths and Connections

Walkable and bikeable neighborhoods have health, environmental, and financial benefits, making it easier to get around and fostering a greater sense of community. Walking and biking are more than just recreational activities and can be the primary way to do daily activities, like shopping, going to school, or commuting to work. Connecting destinations with walking and biking networks and getting people out of their cars minimizes greenhouse gas emissions and supports the Town's goal to be more resilient to climate impacts. Having these options for residents promotes healthy choices as well.

Walkable and bikeable neighborhoods need to be safe and accessible, and this is a top priority for Arlington residents. The Town has existing plans and initiatives in place to help address connection gaps, safety concerns, and lack of amenities. As mentioned earlier, Connect Arlington focuses on increasing multi-modal opportunities in town, and outlines detailed strategies to address safety, access, and efficiency of walking, biking, and transit use.

The Town has applied for and received funds from MassDOT's Safe Routes to School Project to improve access for students to walk and bike safely. For

example, Arlington's current project at Stratton Elementary School will provide a fully accessible walking route with safe roadway crossings along Hemlock Street between Brattle Street and Dickson Avenue, along Dickson Avenue between Hemlock Street and Mountain Avenue, and along Mountain Avenue to Wheeler Lane.

Finally, the Town's Complete Streets Policy guides decision makers on implementing street designs that consider all modes: walking, biking, car, and transit. Any new street or redesign of an existing street must consider access for all users. Building on these projects, the OSRP prioritizes safe access and connections to its conservation areas, public open spaces, and recreational amenities, particularly from local neighborhoods.

Minuteman Bikeway

The Minuteman Bikeway is a valued resource, but access and connections to it raised significant concerns from some residents who felt the Bikeway is too crowded and dangerous for walkers. Some suggested widening the path to separate walkers and cyclists, using better signage about safety, and more lighting. The Bikeway also has limited access points, concentrated where the path crosses a street. More access points and designs that are accessible for people with disabilities are

needed. Specific areas in need of improvement (from east to west) included:

- Massachusetts Avenue at Kickstand Café
- Near Arlington High School
- Grove Street
- Near “The Bike Stop”
- Brattle Street
- Ryder Street
- Bow Street
- Near Park Avenue

New access points to the Bikeway were suggested at Margaret Street (instead of going through the Thorndike Field parking lot) and between Forest Street and Brattle Street.

More direct, safer connections between neighborhoods and the Bikeway are also needed. Residents see the need for more maintenance along the Bikeway, including addressing pavement condition (potholes and cracks) and invasive species.

The Town is undertaking two current efforts relative to the Bikeway. One feasibility project, started in early 2022, is exploring preliminary scenarios to create a connection from the Mystic River Path along the Mystic Valley Parkway to the Bikeway near Arlington Center. A second effort, the Minuteman Bikeway Planning Study, began in September 2021 to help address safety and

connectivity by identifying community goals and priorities and describing an implementation plan for improvements to the Bikeway. The plan will prioritize a series of infrastructure upgrades and include corresponding conceptual designs with estimated costs.

2. Environmental Equity

Open space and recreation planning with an equity lens seeks to ensure that all residents have access to a healthy environment, open space, and recreational amenities and opportunities, particularly in neighborhoods with predominately lower income populations and communities of color. These residents have historically been left out of the decision making and planning process and often lack amenities in their neighborhoods and overall access to resources. These neighborhoods have also been historically burdened by land use decisions that result in degraded water quality, air pollution, and other adverse environmental impacts. By focusing on these areas, Arlington can learn about residents’ experiences and make more equitable decisions going forward.

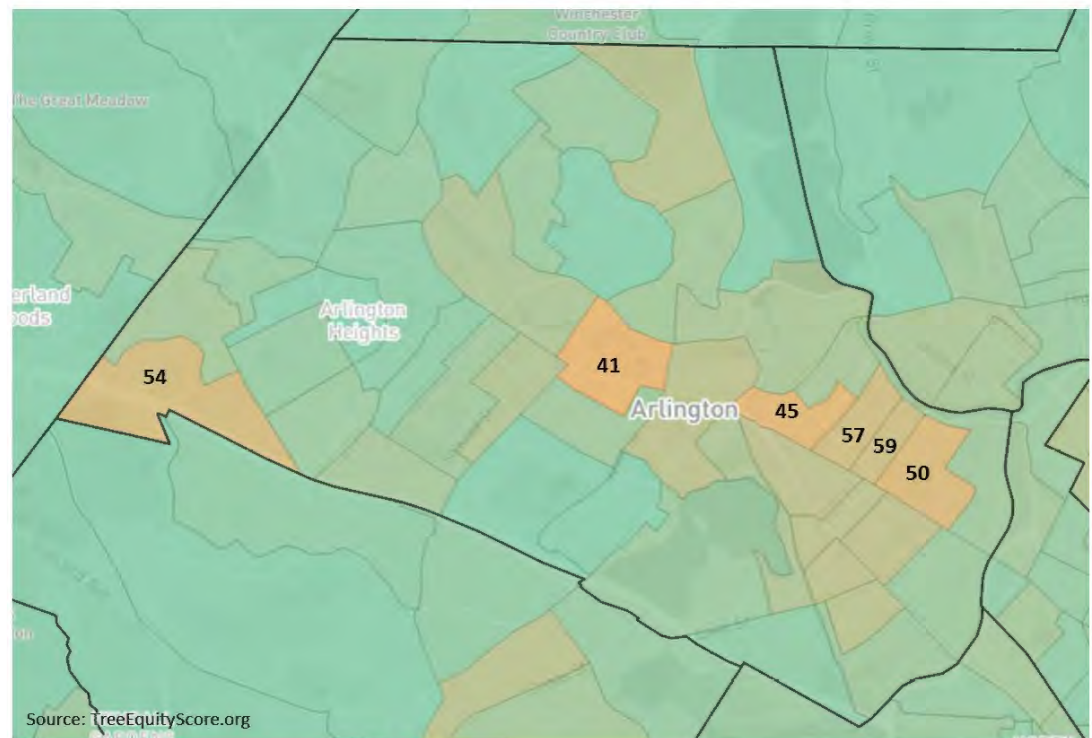
Map 4-4 indicates which areas of Arlington are considered Environmental Justice (EJ) communities, as defined by the Massachusetts EJ Policy and by U.S. Census Block Groups with lower income households eligible for Community Development Block Grant

(CDBG) funds. The overlap of these two criteria highlights priorities for evaluating access to resources and identifies neighborhoods that may be lacking opportunities. The map indicates that most of the people living in areas meeting both criteria have park space within their neighborhood or could walk to one in five to ten minutes (about one quarter mile). However, during the public engagement process, some residents noted that there are areas of Arlington that do not have easy access to a variety of parks or facilities. More targeted engagement is needed to understand specific neighborhood concerns and whether or not current resources are fulfilling neighborhood needs.

These neighborhoods also tend to have lower Tree Equity scores. American Forests defines Tree Equity as “having enough trees so all people experience the health, economic, and other benefits that trees provide.” The Tree Equity Score is a tool to help identify areas in Arlington that lack access to the benefits of trees. The score is derived from tree canopy cover, climate, and socioeconomic data. These metrics are combined into a single score between 0 and 100. A score of 100 means that

a neighborhood has achieved Tree Equity. Tree Equity Scores vary across Arlington, but lower scores are concentrated along Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway, corresponding to identified EJ neighborhoods and CDBG eligible Census Blocks.⁴ Map 7-1 below shows those areas with the lowest scores that should be prioritized for new tree plantings.

Map 7-1. Arlington’s Tree Equity Score



⁴ <https://www.treeequityscore.org/map/#12.68/42.41719/-71.16274>

3. New Resources, Amenities, and Opportunities

Through the public engagement process, new resources and amenities were requested to expand upon available opportunities in Town. Ideas ranged from new fields to accommodate team sports to more flexible spaces at the neighborhood level.

Recreational Facilities and Programming

Overall, residents feel the Town offers a good variety of playgrounds, playing fields, and recreational programming. With that said, some expressed a need for more types of playing fields, citing an increasing interest in soccer and lacrosse while the popularity of baseball and softball is declining. Field programming should reflect this trend. Volleyball fields and outdoor exercise and fitness parks were also recommended for new field uses. The Town should also explore opportunities for accommodating the growing popularity of pickleball and mountain biking.

Some residents commented that existing fields are allocated for organized team sports, leaving limited space for unorganized activities such as frisbee or “pickup” games. They are looking for more flexible spaces for unprogrammed and unstructured sports and events, including sports fields, open areas, indoor activity spaces and other facilities for all ages. Special

attention needs to be paid to outdoor activities directed to senior citizens, such as chess and checkers tables and regular exercise or yoga sessions, walking groups, and other such programs.

Some residents expressed concern about the scheduling of upkeep and maintenance of playgrounds, which is discussed in more detail under Section C. Summary of Management Needs and Potential Change of Use. They are looking for more modern, accessible equipment, including amenities that provide shade and shelter. Residents also noted a lack of play spaces for older children. A similar observation is made in the assessment of the Town’s playgrounds by Playground Inspections of New England, LLC (November 2019). It notes that playgrounds vary in play opportunities for two-to-five-year-olds and five-to-12-year-olds, and that the Town should consider age appropriateness when playground and play area improvements are planned in the future.

New Public Spaces, Amenities, and Opportunities

Input from all stakeholders and residents on the types of new public spaces, programming, and amenities that could be offered in Arlington was diverse. As the Town explores these ideas, it will be important to ensure any use proposed on a site currently designated as protected open space or for recreation is allowed under

the Zoning Bylaw, Article 97, and other measures protecting and regulating site uses.

Non-traditional kinds of open spaces, such as more pocket parks, streetscapes, community gardens, and landscaping, can have multiple benefits, such as improving aesthetics, reducing pavement, and adding a neighborhood gathering place. Opportunities for these strategies can be made within wider road rights-of-way, on small town-owned vacant lots, or by finding private property owners to dedicate portions of their land for installations. The latter may not have to allow public access, but the added trees, landscaping, or plantings can still contribute to the quality of the neighborhood.

Many residents advocated for an indoor or outdoor swimming facility to supplement the seasonal beach at the Arlington Reservoir and the indoor pool at the private Boys and Girls Club. Some respondents noted the cost of such a facility could be prohibitive and should be considered against other needs of the Town.

Residents overall have mixed reactions to dog parks. Some residents like the Town's current dog park next to Thorndike Field in East Arlington, and some advocated for additional spaces to allow dogs off leash. Others call for more dog waste bag receptacles and trash bins and for more enforcement of leash requirements in Town

parks to encourage dog owners to control and clean up after their pets.



Residents want to make better connections between the Town's historic and cultural resources and its conservation, open space, and recreational areas. Incorporating events around the arts or historical happenings can increase activities in these areas and bring residents together in shared public art and performance experiences.

Finally, consistent signage and wayfinding among Town resources can improve accessibility and knowledge about these sites. A signage program could be part of a larger town-wide effort that links conservation areas, recreational facilities, historic sites, and other public spaces. Kiosks and boards could describe site-specific information and educate visitors about the area. To be more accessible to a broader audience, information should be available in multiple languages. Apps for smartphones are a simple way to provide translations. Signage should also be accessible for people with disabilities and designed with tactile, braille, and larger print options.

4. Targeted Populations

To ensure that the Town is inclusive with its planning for open spaces and recreational resources, the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) focuses on the needs of specific populations in the community.

People with Disabilities

Identifying and removing barriers at Town-owned conservation areas, recreational facilities, and other public spaces are an integral part of this OSRP, which focuses on properties managed by the Park and Recreation Commission and the Conservation Commission. The Arlington Disability Commission was consulted to understand concerns and priorities for

Accessible Design describes a site, building, facility, or portion thereof that complies with the minimum accessibility standards as set forth under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Architectural Barriers Act, or local building code. Accessible Design has the distinct purpose of meeting the environmental and communication needs of the functional limitations of people with disabilities. Accessible design aims at minimum requirements to achieve usability.

Universal Design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design (Center for Universal Design, 1997). The term Universal Design was first coined by architect and advocate Ron Mace, who was the Director of the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University. While Accessible Design is focused on the needs of people with disabilities, Universal Design considers the wide spectrum of human abilities. It aims to exceed minimum standards to meet the needs of the greatest number of people.

- National Center for Accessibility, Indiana University, Bloomington

<http://www.ncaonline.org/resources/articles/playground-universaldesign.shtml>

improvements from the disability community. They acknowledged the work done to date by the Town to remove barriers and offered an extensive “wish list” for consideration (see Appendix D). The list includes a range of short- and long-term projects at conservation areas, recreational facilities, and other public open spaces to diversify and increase opportunities for people of all ages with disabilities. Some examples are:

- Offering adaptive equipment for rent on the Minuteman Bikeway (trikes, hand cycles, tandem cycles, etc.) and for kayaking (outriggers, adaptive paddles/paddle holders, etc.).
- Providing storage for adaptive bikes along the Bikeway and at parks and other open spaces.
- Increasing accessible access for riders with disabilities on the Bikeway.
- Installing better signage and maps, including tactile, braille, and larger print versions.
- Increasing handicap parking spots and their visibility.
- Adding accessible seating, including benches and picnic tables.
- Creating more accessible paths.



It is widely recognized that the Town needs to adapt more playgrounds with accessible equipment and structures for children with disabilities and special needs. Renovating playgrounds, and all parks, using the principles of universal design expands opportunities for all ages and abilities, regardless of experience, knowledge, or language.

The following evaluations are used by the Town to prioritize improvements to address accessibility barriers:

Conservation Commission Self Evaluation and Transition Plan (2022):

Self-evaluation of the sites it manages, updating the evaluation done for the 2015 OSRP with noted improvements (see Appendix D and Open Space and Recreational Resource Inventory in Appendix B).

Field and Playground Feasibility Study (2021):

Evaluation of 13 selected athletic fields and playgrounds that assessed existing conditions and developed recommendations to address issues associated with drainage, safety, turf, walkways, seating, and other amenities, including ways to enhance a site's ADA accessibility. Prepared by Stantec Planning and Landscape Architecture P.C.

ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (2019):

Evaluation to assess the current level of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance in programs, services, and activities and Town-owned facilities, which included four public safety buildings, 12 public school facilities, two libraries, two facilities managed by the Arlington Redevelopment Board, one cemetery building, one Recreation Department facility, and five Town-owned buildings. Prepared by the Institute for Human Centered Design. Not all these facilities are relevant to the OSRP.

Aging Population

Community programs for seniors provide personal and health benefits, allowing them to stay physically and socially active. The Arlington Council on Aging (COA) offers diverse social services, programs, and activities for the Town's older residents, including health care support, transportation, and financial assistance. Fitness programs include a weekly walking group, yoga, and other exercise classes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the COA was able to transition to virtual programming and develop "at-home" classes. Currently, the former Senior Center is undergoing major renovations and will reopen in 2022 as the Arlington Community Center with expanded programs and facilities.

The COA is developing an Age-Friendly Community Action Plan,⁵ which focuses on creating a place where people of all ages are supported and are able to have a good quality of life. Outcomes of the plan will be policies and programs that result in walkable neighborhoods, transportation options, access to key services, opportunities to engage in community activities, and affordable housing options, all of which align with other initiatives the Town is undertaking. Accessible open spaces and recreational opportunities are also integral to an age-friendly community. The Town anticipates its population over the age of 65 will

⁵ <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/>

continue to increase. It is important to maintain a diversity of programs and activities that meet the needs and interests of this broader audience.

Youth and Teens

Creating recreational programs and activities for the Town's teens are an opportunity to promote youth development and show them they are valued in the community.⁶ Activities allow young people to foster positive social relationships with adults and other youth, learn conflict resolution, and value civic engagement.

Many residents expressed the need for dedicated spaces and programming for tweens and teens that are not sports or team oriented. The skate park at McClennen Park is a great amenity but is a very specific use that may not appeal to all teens. Some would like to see a new community center that is fully multigenerational and could incorporate opportunities for teen activities along with a new swimming facility.

5. The Impacts of the Pandemic

All residents were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic starting in 2020, but certain members were more at risk, including people 65 years and older, those with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes, obesity, and heart disease, and those struggling with mental health

issues. Lower income residents, communities of color, and persons with disabilities were also more likely to experience hardships as a result of the pandemic. The inequities of these impacts arise from many existing socioeconomic conditions, particularly barriers to accessing health care, quality housing, healthy foods, and quality open space and recreational opportunities, among others. During the early months of the pandemic, Executive Orders from the Governor closed essential businesses and places to the public, including state and local parks and recreational areas. Recognizing the importance of these resources for physical and mental wellbeing, residents still sought out opportunities to be active and be in natural settings.

Even while the impact of the pandemic waxes and wanes, there is opportunity to look at open space and recreational planning with a new lens and consider a possible "new normal." It also allows the Town to reflect on lessons learned and areas for improvement. Some questions to consider:

- How well did the Town keep programming and services available to residents while ensuring public health and safety during situations that warrant social distancing?

⁶ <https://www.nrpa.org/globalassets/research/witt-caldwell-full-research-paper.pdf>

- How can the Town continue to engage residents, particularly those that are most vulnerable and struggle in social isolation?
- How did Arlington make its parks and public spaces safe when social distancing was required?
- How should the town design future parks and spaces with these situations in mind?

The National Recreation and Park Association discusses these issues and challenges recreation professions to be creative and innovative while ensuring equitable access for all residents.⁷ Arlington can work with its regional partners to share ideas, lessons learned, and resources. Advocating for parks and recreational areas as essential for overall community public health should be discussed.

C. Summary of Management Needs and Potential Change of Use

This section focuses on the needs of Town staff and local boards and committees to manage and maintain the Town's open spaces and recreational resources. These needs include, but are not limited to, financial resources, technical assistance, staffing capacity, and regulations and policies to guide decision makers. They

could also address potential changes of use to meet open space and recreation goals.

1. Infill Development and Redevelopment

As a community with limited undeveloped land, infill development and redevelopment are the primary ways Arlington meets growing demands for more affordable housing and economic development. Even with this pressure, the Town must balance development with natural resource protection needs, resilience goals, and quality of life in Arlington. To the greatest extent practical, existing mature trees and native vegetation on a site should be maintained. Further, integrating new design features that enhance these natural areas and add open spaces into the site design can benefit future residents and those living in the neighborhood.

Examples of what this looks like include:

- Walking and biking connections between development projects and nearby conservation areas, recreational facilities, and public spaces.
- NBS to manage stormwater and contribute to landscaping design.
- Meaningful public spaces within the development that have benches, tables, or other seating, landscaping, and shade trees.

⁷ <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/health-wellness/coronavirus-disease-2019/>

The Town has existing bylaws and policies in place to protect a site's significant vegetation, such as for development that goes through the Environmental Design Review (EDR) process (see Section 3.D. Development Patterns and Trends). Projects that fall under Title V Article 16 Tree Protection and Preservation of the Town's Bylaws must protect trees with a certain diameter and height. If they are to be removed, a Tree Plan must be developed and approved by the Town's Tree Warden and payment made to the Tree Fund for the planting of public shade trees to compensate for the loss of trees. Meeting stormwater management requirements also requires a development to maintain and enhance natural features of a site. The Town's Design Standards for commercial corridors also encourage the inclusion of rain gardens, mature trees, and other forms of green infrastructure in the public realm of a development as well as linking sites with nearby amenities. These standards are a resource for the Redevelopment Board as part of their review of Special Permits.

Looking ahead, the Town should review recent infill and redevelopment projects and measure the natural resource benefits achieved through their design. A review might identify progress on improvements to resources and sites, as well as any missed opportunities to add amenities. For example, there may be opportunities to amend bylaws or policies to look at

developments that should include NBS in their design, or to "require" over "encourage" the use of NBS for stormwater management in all development. For higher-density development that may not be able to accommodate open or public space on site, the Town might want to consider other options. For example, it could prioritize investments in walking and biking connections to nearby parks or recreation amenities.

Whether the Town requires these amenities or encourages them through incentives, it must clearly articulate to the public, property owners, and decision makers why natural features are important in infill and redevelopment project design. The environmental, economic, and social benefits meet so many community needs. They are also key in adapting to and mitigating the impacts of natural hazards and climate change, specifically reaching multiple goals stated in Arlington's Net Zero Action Plan and addressing priorities of the Community Resilience Building Workshop, among other plans and projects.

2. Improvements, Maintenance, and Upkeep of Resources

Maintaining high quality park and recreation amenities and services to all residents is a challenge for all communities. Conservation areas, recreational facilities, and other public spaces in Arlington are diverse and at

times require different resources and equipment for their upkeep. The Department of Public Works, School Department, and Recreation Department all work together, but are guided by several committees, including the Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee, School Committee, Park and Recreation Commission, Arlington Redevelopment Board, and Select Board. The Town has begun a process to develop a town-wide Public Land Management Plan, which would encompass all Town-owned land assets, including recreation facilities, water bodies, conservation areas, and historic sites. The plan would create a larger vision around the management of these properties to better utilize and manage these resources. While this larger plan is in development, there remain specific needs at recreational facilities and conservation areas.

Recreation Areas

Key needs for recreation facilities focus on regular maintenance, staffing, coordination, and funding. Several long-standing issues are associated with maintenance and upkeep of facilities. One relates to addressing immediate complaints and the availability of staff. Department of Public Works staff perform maintenance at all Town properties, including parks, schools, athletic fields, and playgrounds. A complaint about an issue at a park or playground typically is made to the Recreation Department, which in turn reaches out

to the Department of Public Works. The two departments work together to resolve the complaint, but there are times when it is not always clear who will respond to a complaint. There is always room for improvement in the communication between the departments and the public.



During the warmer months, the Town's parks and conservation areas are used more intensely and demand increased attention to general site clean-up, turf and landscaping maintenance, and other needs. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, park use increased dramatically and put further strain on these

resources, requiring more time and effort from existing Public Works staff. At times, it would take longer to fix equipment or address complaints. Residents continue to appreciate the public health benefits of parks and demand will likely continue to be high. Meeting these demands could strain staff and resources.

A larger issue around upkeep focuses on long-term maintenance. Several responses to the Community Survey noted that playgrounds need to be updated before they are in major disrepair and cannot be used because of safety concerns. Of note were those at Menotomy Rocks Park, Brackett School, Robbins Farm Park, Peirce School, Poet's Corner, and Cutter School. Other people commented that many fields need drainage improvements and new turf, such as Hill's Hill, Crosby School, Peirce School, and Ottoson Middle School soccer fields.

Through a collaboration between the Department of Public Works and the Recreation Department, the Town needs a regular maintenance schedule that prioritizes the replacement and updating of recreational equipment and/or amenities. The Town has made a lot of investments in its parks, playgrounds, and ballfields in recent years. Long-term care and upkeep will ensure these facilities remain attractive and safe. Further investments are needed at other sites and the level of investment may vary depending on the age and

condition of equipment. The *Town of Arlington Fields and Playground Feasibility Study* (2021) and the playground audit by Playground Inspections of New England, LLC (2019) provide existing conditions, recommendations for improvement, and estimated costs. These are a great starting point to identify sites most in need of upgrades and outline a long-term strategy. The Public Land Management Plan can also help prioritize and coordinate resources with the needs of other assets.

Implementation of a long-term maintenance schedule needs a sustainable funding source. There are two primary municipal sources of funding available to the Recreation Department, and both are competitive with other departments and projects. Through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), town funds are allocated over a five-year period for the maintenance and improvement of municipal assets, including projects at recreational areas. CPA funds can also be used to develop open space and recreational facilities, preserve open space and historic sites, and create affordable housing. Recreation Department projects have been funded by both sources. State funds are also available to develop and maintain recreational amenities and address accessibility issues, but these funding options are highly competitive with other municipalities in the Commonwealth. Presenting a long-term maintenance schedule that outlines clear objectives gives the

Department some leverage in securing funding in these competitive situations, particularly with the multiyear CIP.

Finally, programming of the Recreation Department throughout the year is administered with minimal staff. The department oversees year-round recreational programs for all ages at most of the Town's parks and facilities. Ten to 12 organizations rent the facilities annually to offer many of these programs. The department also manages the Ed Burns Arena and Ice-skating Rink and the seasonal swimming beach at the Reservoir. It also oversees the 54 plots at the Magnolia Park Community Gardens, which currently has a three to four year waiting list. Before the pandemic, the department offered a summer canoe and kayak rental program at Spy Pond. Additional staff, both seasonal and year-round, can help support the work and programming of the department.

Town Conservation and Open Space Areas

The needs to improve and maintain the ecological integrity of natural systems on the Town-managed conservation and open space areas detailed in Section A. Summary of Natural Resources Protection Needs. From a management perspective, key needs focus on maintenance, staffing, coordination, and funding. The Department of Public Works also performs upkeep and maintenance on these sites with guidance from the

Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee. The Conservation Land Stewards is a group of volunteers who take an active role in the upkeep of the Town's conservation lands and other public spaces through clean-up efforts, invasive species control, trail maintenance, and erosion control and planting projects. The Town also relies heavily on "friends" groups that have been organized at many Town parks for these efforts. It is important to have a diverse pool of new volunteers and Land Stewards to ensure that existing volunteers are not overburdened.

Management of the Town's conservation and natural resource areas can also be guided in a comprehensive and strategic way through the pending Public Land Management Plan, particularly where there are similar needs, such as invasive species management, trail maintenance, signage, or accessibility. However, some sites have unique challenges such as erosion, sedimentation, water quality, impacts of pesticides and herbicides on wildlife, and the impact of artificial surfaces on heat islands and the quality of wildlife habitat. Development of site-specific management plans can help tackle these challenges more directly. The Arlington Reservoir Master Plan and the Mill Brook Corridor Study demonstrate the importance of these types of site-specific plans that move recommendations through implementation. The CPA Committee has also helped to fund conservation areas in need of site-

specific plans, and in 2022 is supporting proposed studies of Cooke's Hollow and Mount Gilboa Conservation Area.

3. Sustainability and Resilience

As stated throughout this needs analysis, Arlington has made it a priority to meet the challenges of natural hazards and climate change. The plans that are moving the Town toward a more sustainable and resilient future include:

- Connect Arlington (May 2021)
- Net Zero Action Plan (February 2021)
- Hazard Mitigation Plan (May 2020)
- Community Resiliency Building Workshop supported by the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program (2017)

While the OSRP is a separate document with a particular action agenda, it works in concert with these plans and makes references to them to create a continued focus on these common objectives. As noted earlier, natural resources and processes, while impacted by climate change, can also build resilience. The Town continues to ensure the health and productivity of its resources to maintain their values and functions through local regulations, conservation efforts, and mitigation and enhancement projects. Broad strategies include:



- Review local bylaws and regulations to ensure they meet anticipated impacts of more intense and frequent storm events and more extreme precipitation and temperature cycles, among other projections.
- Review stormwater management infrastructure to identify opportunities to incorporate more natural features to slow and collect rain runoff during storms.
- Find natural areas, such as wetland, streambanks, and wooded areas, that would benefit from preservation and enhancement to maintain and support their ecological functions that build resiliency.

- Monitor changing environmental conditions, including waterways, floodplains, and wetlands, among other vulnerable areas.

Approaches that focus on natural resources go hand in hand with other adaptive strategies to improve roadways and utility infrastructure and policies that promote development with less impervious surface area.

Preparing for the impacts of natural hazards and climate change involves all municipal departments in a coordinated effort, beyond those that participate directly in open space and recreational planning. The Town has invested in its municipal leadership and built staff capacity, including a Sustainability Manager and a Schools Sustainability Coordinator. Completing actions outlined in the OSRP Action Plan (Section 9) will require coordination among all these individuals and the various town committees they support.

D. Regional and Statewide Needs

The Town of Arlington's OSRP builds on and supports open space and recreational planning efforts to meet broader goals and needs in the Greater Boston region and beyond. Many of these plans and related projects are highlighted in earlier sections of this plan.

1. DCR Parkways Master Plan

The DCR *Parkways Master Plan* (2020) focuses on parkways within the Boston metropolitan region to build an interconnected network of walkways and bikeways. The Mystic Valley Parkway is included in the study, and there are 1.6 miles of the Parkway within Arlington. The plan notes areas where there are no bicycle or pedestrian accommodations along the Parkway, such as where bike lanes or pedestrian crossings are lacking, and recommends short- and long-term alternatives to address these gaps. Arlington will continue to coordinate with DCR and neighboring communities through its ongoing bicycle network plans and the implementation of Arlington Connect. In addition, the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) kicked off the Mystic River Path to Minuteman Bikeway Feasibility Study in January 2022. This project will review the existing trails and feasibility of creating new trails along the Mystic River from Decatur Street in East Arlington, along the Mystic Valley Parkway to Summer Street and then connect to the Minuteman Bikeway through Buzzell Field or via Mill Street.

2. MAPC's *MetroCommon 2050*

Arlington's OSRP builds on and contributes to the success of MAPC's *MetroCommon 2050*, the Greater Boston Region's 30-year plan to better the lives of the people who live and work in Metropolitan Boston

between now and 2050. It includes 10 specific goals for the year 2050, as well as objectives that will be used to measure progress toward achieving those goals.

Arlington's OSRP goals and objectives, as well as the action plan are consistent with the following goals and objectives from *MetroCommon 2050*:

Goal A. Getting Around the Region: Traveling around Metro Boston is safe, affordable, convenient, and enjoyable.

4. Bicycle, pedestrian, and other personal mobility infrastructure is safe, extensive, high quality, and linked to other modes, so that people frequently use active transportation as a preferred mode of travel.

Arlington's OSRP strongly supports and continues to build on local efforts to maintain and enhance its bicycle and pedestrian network. The Town is dedicated to identifying gaps to establish safe connections between residential areas, parks, conservation areas, schools, and other destinations. The Minuteman Bikeway is an important regional resource, and the Town is working to make it more accessible and safer for all users.

Goal C. A Climate Resilient Region: Metro Boston is prepared for—and resilient to—the impacts of climate change.

6. Green infrastructure beautifies neighborhoods. It is included in all developments, providing multiple co-benefits, such as stormwater filtration, shade, cleaner air, carbon storage, and cooling.

Arlington's OSRP strongly supports protecting the natural environment to retain beneficial functions and values and increasing access to recreational resources to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change and natural hazards. The Town is building resilience with local projects and through collaboration in the region that will help Arlington prepare for and respond to future climate challenges.

Goal F. A Healthy Environment: Greater Boston's air, water, land, and other natural resources are clean and protected—for us and for the rest of the ecosystem.

1. Water is clean and sustainably managed. Waterways exceed Clean Water Act standards and meet the appropriate needs of residents, industry, forests, farms, and wildlife.
2. A robust network of protected open space, waterways, farms, parks, and greenways provide wildlife habitat, ecological benefits, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty.
3. Farms, fisheries, community gardens, and natural landscapes are prevalent, and able to adapt and

thrive in the face of the changing climate. They offer residents access to fresh, affordable, healthy, and local food.

4. Populations who experienced historic environmental injustices enjoy air, energy, and water as clean as any other residents enjoy.
6. Few contaminated sites exist. Former contaminated sites have been redeveloped to create jobs or homes, or restored to support green infrastructure and habitat, and to mitigate climate impacts.

The major purpose of Arlington’s OSRP is to maintain and enhance the environmental, economic, and social benefits of the Town’s natural environment and recreational resources for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Goal I. Healthy and Safe Neighborhoods: We are safe, healthy, and connected to one another.

7. State and local governments have the resources to maintain their parks, public squares, sidewalks, and open spaces.

The Town is committed to building local capacity to support the planning, protection, management, and sustainable use of environmental and recreational resources. Arlington’s OSRP strongly supports

advocating for sustainable municipal funding sources and participating in regional planning initiatives.

Goal H. Thriving Arts, Culture, and Heritage: Greater Boston is full of unique places and experiences that bring joy and foster diversity and social cohesion.

1. People of all ages and backgrounds are able to participate in arts, cultural, and social activities, building community and social cohesion.
2. Public art and programming contribute to our understanding of our region’s people, places, and history.
4. Historic buildings, properties, and landscapes are adapted to meet contemporary challenges, including climate, housing, accessibility, and recreational needs.
6. Urban design, public art, and new development contribute to a human-centered, safe, and delightful public realm.

Arlington’s OSRP highlights how many of the Town’s historic and cultural resources connect to its public spaces and recreational areas and looks for opportunities to incorporate public art and cultural events into these spaces.

3. Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

The 2017 Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) was developed by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). The SCORP is a planning document that assesses the availability of recreational resources and the needs of residents throughout the Commonwealth as a way to identify gaps. It is also one method for states to meet multiple goals of the National Park Service and remain eligible for funding from the National Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). In Massachusetts, EEA administers LWCF grants to Commonwealth communities with approved OSRPs. Grants can be used for activities that address recreation and open space needs, including land acquisition for conservation or recreation purposes or park renovation.

The development of the latest SCORP involved an extensive public outreach process, including regional public meetings and surveys that targeted specific groups: recreation users, municipal employees, land trusts, and middle and high school students. Through the public participation process, these four outdoor recreation goals were identified for the 2017 SCORP:

1. Access for Underserved Populations
2. Support the Statewide Trails Initiative

3. Increase the Availability of Water-based Recreation
4. Support the Creation and Renovation of Neighborhood Parks

Arlington's OSRP incorporates similar themes in its goals as the SCORP. The Town values the diversity of its population and recognizes that individuals should have access to open space and recreation resources that are safe, accessible, and equitably distributed across the community. Arlington's OSRP envisions a network of corridors—for people and wildlife—to connect resources and other public space and encourage non-vehicular transit. The OSRP also recognizes the importance of regional planning initiatives to strengthen walking and biking connections with neighboring communities. Arlington is fortunate to have water resources with substantial scenic, recreational, and ecological value in the community. The OSRP reiterates Arlington's commitment to working locally and with regional partners to improve the quality of shared water resources to benefit water-based recreation and aquatic life. Finally, the Town wants to create new recreational opportunities, including neighborhood parks, based on community preference and manage its existing resources responsively. The Town will continue to support events, programs, and other opportunities for users at neighborhood parks to recreate.

The following is an overview of the SCORP's public outreach results organized by different users and providers of recreation spaces. This section also identifies commonalities between the SCORP and Arlington's OSRP public engagement results and comments on how the Town's OSRP addresses specific regional needs and opportunities.

Recreation Users and Youth

Through the SCORP surveys, most recreation users said outdoor activity was very important to them for physical fitness, mental well-being, and being close to nature. When asked why they visited a specific outdoor recreation facility, most responded that it was closest to their home. About three-quarters of survey respondents had a park or conservation area within walking or biking distance to their homes, but more than half drove to more distant locations. Lack of time was the number one reason why respondents did not visit outdoor recreation sites more frequently.

Most respondents to the survey felt that programming at a facility was somewhat or very important, particularly for seniors, young children (four to 12 years old), and teens. The most popular recreational activities respondents engaged in over the past 12 months were water-based recreation (boating, swimming, etc.) and trail-based recreation (hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, etc.). Desired amenities or activities included

more trails, inclusive playgrounds for young children of all abilities, and more water-based recreation.

The most popular activities for middle and high school-aged youth were team activities like soccer, lacrosse, and football. Teens also favored swimming, hiking, running/jogging, walking, and road biking. Youth and teens frequented outdoor recreation facilities closest to where they lived for fun and enjoyment, spending time with friends and family, and to be outside. Lack of time, weather, and use of the Internet were noted as primary reasons why some younger respondents did not visit facilities or participate in recreational programming. Desired amenities included more recreational sites close to home, more equipment at sites, and spaces that are "just for kids my age."

Similar needs were expressed in Arlington. Access to a park or public open space in their neighborhood was voiced as a benefit by some residents and is a specific focus when looking at Environmental Justice communities. Many residents also expressed the need for more inclusive playgrounds for children of all ages. More diverse youth programming was also desired.

Municipal Employees

Municipal land and conservation staff were asked about the types and quality of resources available to their residents. Out of 351 Massachusetts communities, 58

municipalities (17%) responded to a survey. Most responses (about one third) came from local conservation commissions followed by parks and recreation departments. More than half (69%) of respondents had part- or full-time recreation staff and 82% had part- or full-time conservation staff. The SCORP noted that this demonstrates that communities are able to provide many types of outdoor recreation facilities for their residents. Important factors to consider when determining a community's staffing and financial capacity to provide quality resources and programming are the number of sites a community has, the types of amenities offered at each site, regular maintenance required, and the size of the sites, among other attributes.

About half of the respondents offered more than nine programs annually. Those providing fewer activities focused on those that connected children to the outdoors. Only 16% responded that they offered more than four activities per year for people with disabilities.

Since the passage of the Community Preservation Act, Arlington has been able to fund projects that improve open space and recreational opportunities. Staffing capacity continues to be a challenge to providing a high level of recreational amenities and programming, and more inter-departmental coordination is needed for ongoing upkeep and maintenance. Long-range planning

for scheduling updates and major renovations is also needed.

Land Trusts

About one-third of land trusts in the Commonwealth responded to the SCORP survey. Most cited connecting the public with nature as the most important issue for their organization, followed by connecting with local neighborhoods and schools. Popular activities on land trust properties were walking/jogging/hiking, dog walking, and nature study. The top three issues facing land trusts are trail work, conservation restriction stewardship, and acquiring new land. Invasive species are the greatest physical issue faced by land trusts. As to social issues, littering and dumping are encountered most frequently.

The Arlington Land Trust owns and manages Elizabeth Island in Spy Pond and co-holds conservation restrictions on several private properties, including the parks and woods at Arlington 360 (the former Symmes Hospital site). It brings awareness of the benefits of conservation and environmental stewardship to residents through educational events and outreach. The all-volunteer group also advocates for the protection of the limited remaining undeveloped land in Arlington.

Managing Town-owned conservation areas and other open spaces in Arlington falls under the purview of the

Conservation Commission, the Department of Public Works, and volunteers. Primary issues in these areas are implementation of wetlands bylaws and other regulations, invasive species management and minimizing the use of harmful chemicals, environmental stewardship including litter cleanup, and managing disparate uses.

SECTION 8. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives were developed to address community concerns described in the Analysis of Needs (Section 7) and to build on the goals expressed in the Town's ongoing initiatives related to climate resilience, natural resource management, and recreation planning.

Goal 1. Protect the natural environment to retain its important functions and values, and help Arlington adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Objective 1.A. Improve the quality and functioning of the town's waterways and wetlands to support aquatic life and biodiversity.

Objective 1.B. Protect undeveloped lands that have ecological value, wildlife corridor connections, and habitats for native flora and fauna, or that present opportunities to restore natural systems.

Objective 1.C. Protect, enhance, and diversify the town's tree canopy.

Objective 1.D. Ensure that public and private investments support and enhance the resilience of the town's natural environment.

Objective 1.E. Coordinate protection of the natural environment with other climate resilience and adaptation plans and goals.

Goal 2. Ensure that the Town's recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces meet local needs and are accessible, safe, and welcoming for all.

Objective 2.A. Ensure that public and private investments support and build upon the Town's recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces.

Objective 2.B. Improve the Town's sidewalks, streets, and recreational corridors to make them safer and more accessible for all users.

Objective 2.C. Ensure that the Town's recreational areas and programming meet local needs and are safe and accessible for all users.

Objective 2.D. Provide equitable access to and use of town open space and recreation opportunities

Goal 3. Support local and regional capacity to meet the needs for recreational opportunities, natural resource protection, and overall resource management to be resilient to climate change.

Objective 3.A. Sustain and increase Town staff and funding resources to manage conservation areas, recreational facilities, and other public spaces to meet community needs, climate resilience, and adaptation goals.

Objective 3.B. Support and participate in state and regional recreation, open space, and climate resilience planning initiatives.

Objective 3.C. Strengthen the Open Space Committee's ability to oversee implementation of the OSRP.

Goal 4. Build environmental stewardship and public awareness of the Town's recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces.

Objective 4.A. Support volunteer groups involved with recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces.

Objective 4.B. Promote environmental stewardship and climate resilience information to help users

protect the town's natural environment and their own properties.

Objective 4.C. Increase public awareness and encourage the use of the town's natural areas, recreational facilities, and other public spaces.

Objective 4.D. Expand and enhance opportunities to utilize nontraditional open spaces.



McClennen Park. Photo credit: Elisabeth Carr-Jones

SECTION 9. ACTION PLAN

The Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Action Plan is intended to guide future planning efforts to protect natural resources, improve recreational opportunities, and make Arlington a more climate resilient community over the next seven years (2029). It is designed to implement the goals and objectives outlined in Section 8 and to address the needs identified in Section 7. The Action Plan is also intended to be consistent with other local plans, specifically those outlined in Section 6, and, to the extent practical, MAPC's *MetroCommon 2050*, and the Massachusetts *Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*.

Map 9-1 highlights places in Arlington that link to select OSRP objectives.

The Open Space Committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Action Plan in collaboration with the numerous Town departments, boards, and committees, private and non-profit entities, and regional, state, and federal agencies that have ownership and management responsibilities.

The Action Plan prioritizes strategies based on a targeted completion timeframe as follows:

- Highest priority actions will be accomplished in the short term (2022-2024).
- Actions that meet intermediate needs will be accomplished in the mid-term (2025-2027).
- Lower priority actions will be accomplished in the long-term (2028-2029).
- Ongoing actions occur during the entire seven-year period.

Potential funding sources are identified for each action item, which range from available municipal budgets to applying for Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds or pursuing state or federal grant opportunities. A key is provided.

Each action item also has one or more responsible parties listed to champion its implementation either as a lead or play a supporting role.

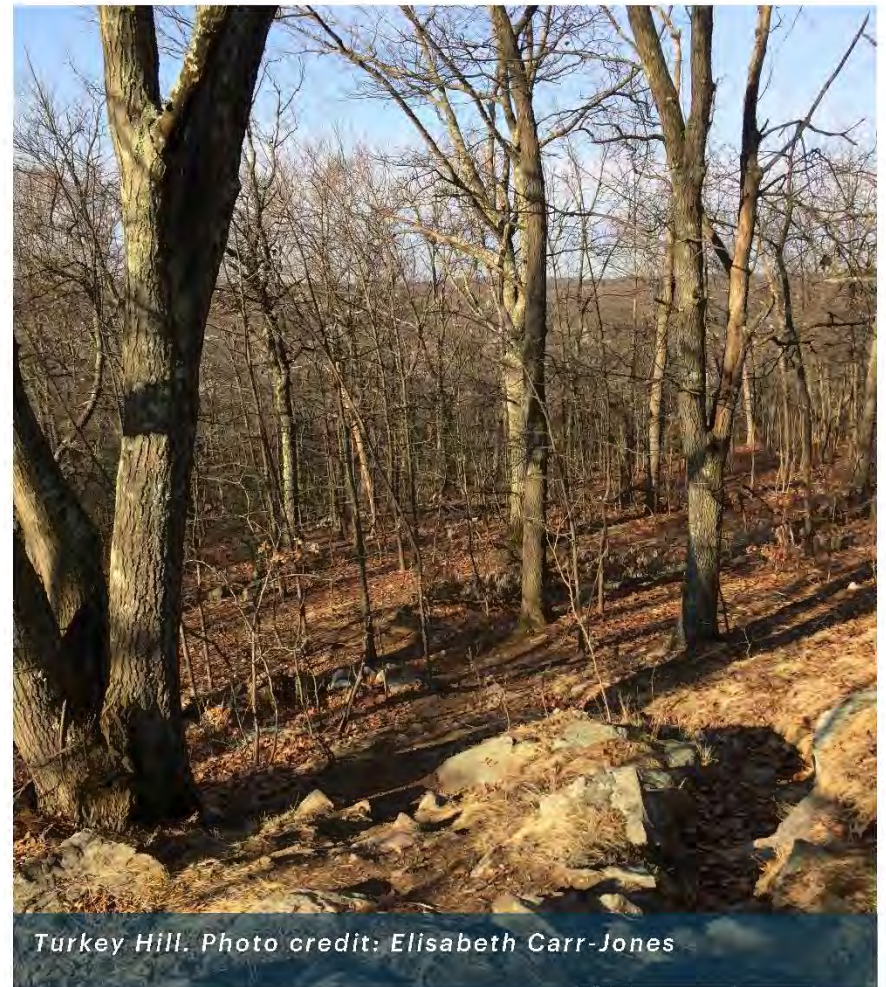
In early 2022 the Town began work on a comprehensive Public Land Management Plan to assess all municipal properties (conservation areas, recreation facilities, historic landscapes and cemeteries, ornamental historic gardens, and other public spaces), and to identify specific land management strategies. That plan will

complement and provide direction to many of the specific objectives highlighted in this Action Plan.

Implementation

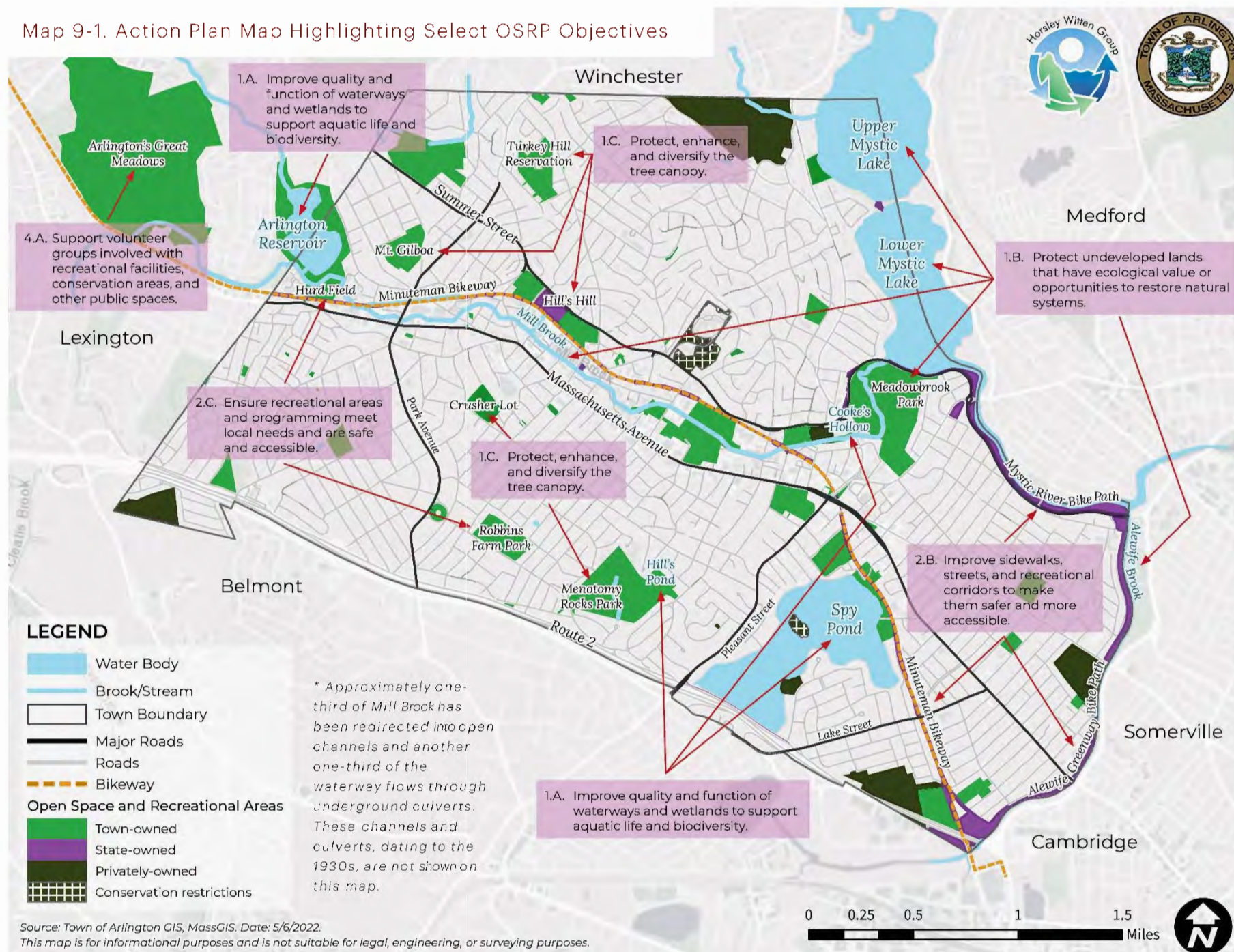
Implementing the Action Plan will take the coordinated effort of all responsible parties. As the entity responsible for the OSRP, the Open Space Committee will ask all participants in the Action Plan to report on an annual basis the status of their respective action items. Timeframes are established; however, it is recognized that circumstances may change and impact resource availability, which may cause actions to move up or down in priority. As lead parties report out to the Open Space Committee, they should discuss why actions could not be completed, or why others rose to the top. This will help the Town prepare for the next OSRP update and other open space and recreational planning efforts. As supporting documents, reports, and studies used to develop the OSRP are revised, updated, and implemented, these activities should also be reported to the Open Space Committee and documented for future OSRP updates.

All of this work will be guided by the Town of Arlington's overriding community goal: *Arlington values equity, diversity, and inclusion. We are committed to building a community where everyone is heard, respected, and protected.*



Turkey Hill. Photo credit: Elisabeth Carr-Jones

Map 9-1. Action Plan Map Highlighting Select OSRP Objectives



Action Plan

Acronym Key

Responsible Parties

ABAC	Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee	DPCD	Department of Planning and Community Development	MyRWA	Mystic River Watershed Association
ACAC	Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture	DPW	Department of Public Works	OSC	Open Space Committee
ACC	Arlington Conservation Commission	ED	Engineering Division, DPW	PLMPWG	Public Land Management Plan Working Group
AHA	Arlington Housing Authority	FoAGM	Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows	PRC	Park and Recreation Commission
AHiS	Arlington Historical Society	HC	Historic Commission	REC	Recreation Department
ALT	Arlington Land Trust	HCA	Housing Corporation of Arlington	SA	Sustainable Arlington
ARB	Arlington Redevelopment Board	HDC	Historic Districts Commission	SB	Select Board
A-TED	Arlington Tourism and Economic Development	MAPC	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	SPC	Spy Pond Committee
CC	Cemetery Commission	MBTA	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority	TAC	Transportation Advisory Commission
CEFC	Clean Energy Future Commission	MBWG	Mill Brook Working Group	TC	Tree Committee
DC	Disability Commission	MPIC	Master Plan Implementation Committee	TM	Town Manager
DCR	Department of Conservation and Recreation (state)	MWRA	Massachusetts Water Resources Authority	TW	Tree Warden
				ZBA	Zoning Board of Appeals

Potential Funding Sources

CDBG	Community Development Block Grant (federal)	LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund (state)	PARC	Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (state)
CPA	Community Preservation Act (town)	MassDOT	Complete Streets Program (state)		Safe Routes to School (state)
CPC	Capital Planning Committee (town)	MassTrails	(state)	Town	Department/committee budgets (town)
LAND	Land Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (state)	MVP	Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (state)	Town Meeting	(town)
				WBF	Water Bodies Fund (town)

Goal 1. Protect the natural environment to retain its important functions and values, and help Arlington adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
Objective 1.A. Improve the quality and functioning of the town's waterways and wetlands to support aquatic life and biodiversity.			
1.A.1. Implement the Town's stormwater management standards to require the use of nature-based solutions to treat and manage runoff to the greatest extent practical.	Ongoing	Town	ED, DPW, ACC, DPCD
1.A.2. Continue to implement strategies from the <i>Mill Brook Corridor Report</i> to expand public access and restore and enhance the natural features of the corridor, such as at Cooke's Hollow.	Ongoing	MVP, CPA, CPC, Private	DPCD, ACC, OSC ARB, MBWG, PRC
1.A.3. Continue to monitor Spy Pond, the Reservoir, and other water bodies to ensure they are meeting both recreational and environmental objectives.	Ongoing	WBF	ACC, SPC, PRC, DPW
1.A.4. Complete implementation of the <i>Arlington Reservoir Master Plan</i> .	2022-2024	CPA	PRC
1.A.5. Support continued funding for the Water Bodies Fund for the treatment and removal of invasive weeds and other plants from the Reservoir, Spy Pond, Hill's Pond, and other areas as needed.	Ongoing	TM, WBF	ACC, TM, SPC, PRC
Objective 1.B. Protect undeveloped lands that have ecological value, wildlife corridor connections, and habitats for native flora and fauna, or that present opportunities to restore natural systems.			
1.B.1. Identify opportunities to protect private lands adjacent to and near the Town's more distressed natural resources such as Mill Brook, Alewife Brook, and Spy Pond. Consider diverse approaches and incentives for property owners, including acquisition, conservation restrictions, donations, and other means of protection.	Ongoing	LAND, LWCF	DPCD, ARB, ZBA, ALT
1.B.2. Educate property owners about the benefits of conservation restrictions or other means of protection for their land and the community at large.	Ongoing	Town	ACC, ALT
1.B.3. Monitor real estate transactions and state policies that could impact Town goals to preserve and enhance natural systems, such as the Mugar property and other wetland areas near the Alewife T Station in East Arlington.	Ongoing	Town	ACC, DPCD, ARB, ZBA, ALT

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
1.B.4. Conduct an inventory of Town-owned properties not permanently protected and determine ecological and/or recreation value. Coordinate this effort with the ongoing development of a Public Land Management Plan and input from the Master Plan Implementation Committee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategies to ensure their protection, especially sites adjacent to existing open spaces, parks, wetlands, and waterways including those along Mill Brook, Spy Pond, Alewife Brook, Meadowbrook Park, and the Mystic Lakes. 	2022-2024	CPA	PLMPWG, ACC, PRC, OSC, MPIC
1.B.5. Support the monitoring and stewardship work of the Arlington Land Trust and Conservation Commission, co-holders of a conservation restriction on the open space at the Symmes site (now Arlington 360).	Ongoing	Town	ALT, ACC
Objective 1.C. Protect, enhance, and diversify the town's tree canopy.			
1.C.1. Develop forestry management plans for Town-owned properties as identified by the Public Land Management Plan. Priorities include Mt. Gilboa, Menotomy Rocks Park, Turkey Hill, Hill's Hill, and the Crusher Lot.	2022-2024	Town	DPW, TW, PRC, ACC, PLMPWG, TC
1.C.2. Develop a public education campaign for private property owners to protect mature trees and plant trees on their properties.	Ongoing	Town	TC, OSC, ACC
1.C.3. Continue to plant new public trees to reach the Town goal of a net increase of 2,000 trees in 20 years.	Ongoing	Town	DPW, ACC, TW, TC
1.C.4. Prioritize new public tree plantings in neighborhoods that have a low Tree Equity Score and/or are most affected by heat island effects.	Ongoing	Town	DPW, TW, TC
1.C.5. Develop an overall data management system for the Town's Public Tree Inventory to track tree removal and new tree plantings.	Ongoing	Town	TW, DPW, ED, DPCD, TC
1.C.6. Develop a long-range management plan for the maintenance of public trees that can include pruning, irrigation, fertilization, cabling, and other programs on a yearly, multi-year cycle, or "as needed" basis. Disposal of tree debris, including recycling options, should be considered.	Ongoing	Town	DPW, TW, TC
1.C.7. Coordinate with adjacent property owners of newly planted street trees to help with watering during the warmer months of the year.	Ongoing	Town	TC, TW, DPW

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
Objective 1.D. Ensure that public and private investments support and enhance the resilience of the town's natural environment.			
1.D.1. Continue to install nature-based solutions and green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff on public properties and to showcase the multiple benefits these installations have to the community and natural systems.	Ongoing	Town	DPW, ACC, SA, MyWRA
1.D.2. Continue to target areas with recurring flooding for new stormwater management approaches. Monitor East Arlington to ensure the objectives of stormwater and CSO improvements have been achieved.	Ongoing	MVP	DPW, MyWRA, MWRA
1.D.3. Use native and pollinator-friendly vegetation appropriate for an urban environment in Town landscaping projects. Focus along the Massachusetts Avenue corridor and other commercial streets.	Ongoing	Town	DPW, ACC, SA, ARB
1.D.4. Implement Arlington's Design Standards along the Mill Brook Corridor to enhance and protect the riverbank and water quality. Pursue opportunities to expand and enhance public access to Mill Brook by linking existing and new open spaces.	Ongoing	Town	ARB, OSC, DPCD, ACC, MBWG
1.D.5. Review Town policies and regulations to ensure that they include climate impact considerations on natural systems and their ecological functions, and identify updates as needed.	Ongoing	Town	DPCD, OSC, ACC, ARB, PRC, SA
Objective 1.E Coordinate protection of the natural environment with other climate resilience and adaptation plans and goals.			
1.E.1. Ensure that all work resulting from the OSRP conforms with town, state, regional, and federal requirements and aligns with the action steps of such plans. Priority plans and goals for alignment include the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program, <i>MetroCommon 2050</i> , and the Town's own Hazard Mitigation Plan, Mill Brook Corridor Report, Connect Arlington, and Master Plan.	Ongoing	Town	DPCD, OSC, SA

Goal 2. Ensure that the Town’s recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces meet local needs and are accessible, safe, and welcoming to all.

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
Objective 2.A. Ensure that public and private investments support and build upon the Town’s recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces.			
2.A.1 Explore future development and redevelopment projects, particularly those within environmental justice communities, to incorporate meaningful open spaces and recreational opportunities onsite for residents. Walking and biking connections should be prioritized to nearby recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces.	Ongoing	CDBG, CPA, Private	ARB, ZBA, AHA, HCA
2.A.2. Investigate establishing a “recreation and open space gift fund” for specific open space and recreational areas to capture payments or in-kind contributions to invest in nearby resources to build natural system function and capacity or enhance recreational amenities.	2025-2027	Private, Town	OSC, SB
2.A.3. Identify and develop plans to address long-term needs for public burial options in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery and other possible sites.	Ongoing	Private, Town	CC, DPCD, DPW
Objective 2.B. Improve the town’s sidewalks, streets, and recreational corridors to make them safer and more accessible for all users			
2.B.1. Continue to implement <i>Connect Arlington</i> to increase multi-modal opportunities in town and address safety, access, and efficiency of walking, biking, and transit use, particularly around Town public spaces and recreational areas.	Ongoing	MassDOT Complete Streets Program, MassTrails	DPCD, TAC, TM, SB, ARB, ABAC, Town Manager
2.B.2. Continue to identify and implement projects around local schools that would improve walking and biking safety for students.	Ongoing	Safe Routes to Schools	DPCD, TAC, School Committee
2.B.3. Find opportunities to create Green Streets—trees, landscaping, and infrastructure—in consultation with the Town’s Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.	Ongoing	Town, MassDOT Complete Streets Program	DPCD, TAC, SB, DPW
2.B.4. Work with the Tri-Community Bikeway Committee (Arlington, Lexington, Bedford) to improve maintenance, safety, and amenities on the Minuteman Bikeway.	Ongoing	Town	DPCD, ABAC, DPW, Town Manager, MBTA

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
2.B.5. Implement the <i>Minuteman Bikeway Planning Project</i> to increase safety and accessibility of the Bikeway.	Ongoing	Town, MassDOT Complete Streets Program, Private, CPA, MassTrails	DPCD, ABAC, DPW, Town Manager, MBTA, OSC
2.B.6. Implement the <i>Mystic River Path to Minuteman Bikeway Feasibility Study</i> to strengthen the walking and biking connections between the Minuteman Bikeway, Mystic River Paths, and Alewife Brook Greenway.	2025-2027	Town, MassDOT Complete Streets Program, MassTrails	DPCD, ABAC, MyRWA, DPW, Town Manager, MBTA, DCR, City of Medford, OSC
2.B.7. Improve accessibility to the Bikeway and its use by people with disabilities, particularly as part of 2.B.5. Examples of improvements could include adaptive equipment for rent at the Bikeway, adaptive cycle storage, and safer and more accessible access points and Bikeway crossings.	Ongoing	MassDOT Complete Streets Program	DPW, ABAC, DC, Town Manager, MBTA
2.B.8. Identify a network of corridors that connect the Town's recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces. These corridors can be used by people as well as wildlife. Consider connections that can be made with Town-owned properties, public rights-of-way, and possibly private easements to fill gaps.	Ongoing	CPA, MassTrails	ACC, DPCD, ABAC, MPIC, OSC, PRC, SB, Town Manager
Objective 2.C. Ensure that the Town's recreational areas and programming meet local needs and are safe and accessible for all users.			
2.C.1. Coordinate with all parties to balance competing needs and uses for open spaces	Ongoing	Town	OSC, PRC, ACC, DPCD, DPW
2.C.2. Prioritize improvements and new amenities in environmental justice communities (EJ Census Tracts and CDBG eligible Block Groups).	Ongoing	CDBG, CPA	DPCD, DC, AHA, HCA, SB, OSC, PRC, REC
2.C.3. Encourage varied uses at existing parks and playing fields, including unprogrammed and unstructured sports and nontraditional recreational activities.	Ongoing	CDBG, CPA, Town	PRC, REC
2.C.4. Encourage use of facilities and more programming for youth and teenagers beyond organized sports fields, including the Community Center and smaller open spaces.	Ongoing	Town, CDBG	PRC, REC, OSC, Community Groups, Schools

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
2.C.5. Pursue new recreational opportunities based on community preferences, such as additional indoor or outdoor swimming facilities, pickleball courts, outdoor fitness courses, and other rising interests.	Ongoing	CPA	PRC, REC
2.C.6. Create and enhance opportunities for nature-based recreation, including multiuse paths, volunteer opportunities, and other activities.	Ongoing	Town	PRC, REC, ACC, Community Groups
2.C.7. Identify additional spaces where dogs can exercise off leash.	Ongoing		PRC, REC, ADOG
2.C.8. Incorporate more public art and performing arts programs into recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces.	Ongoing	Private	PRC, REC, ACAC
2.C.9. Look for opportunities to incorporate small pocket parks in neighborhoods to add green infrastructure like rain gardens, community gardens, pollinator pathways, benches, and shade trees to create a gathering space. Consider adapting small Town-owned lots or oversized intersections or rights-of-way with similar landscaping.	Ongoing	MVP Action Grant	OSC, DPCD, DPW, ACC
2.C.10 Implement accessible upgrades and other improvements already planned for Hurd Field and for playgrounds at Robbins Farm Park, Spy Pond Park, Parmenter, Bishop, Peirce, and Stratton Schools.	2022-2024	Town, CPA	PRC, REC
Objective 2.D. Provide equitable access to and use of Town open spaces and recreation opportunities.			
2.D.1. Employ universal design principles to increase accessibility when upgrading playing fields, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities, prioritizing those highlighted in the <i>Field and Playground Feasibility Study</i> and the <i>Arlington Parks Playground Assessment and Recommendation Report</i> .	Ongoing	Town	PRC, REC, DC, DPW, Schools

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
2.D.2. Continue to work with the Disability Commission to address barriers for people with disabilities at existing recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces. Improvements may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing handicap parking spots, including for vans, and their visibility near the entrances to major parks and recreational facilities. Creating more accessible paths with interpretive signage (e.g., braille, QR codes) and seating (e.g., benches, picnic tables). Providing more accessible gardening options and equipment. Incorporating accessible playground equipment and structures that expand opportunities for all ages, abilities, or languages. 	Ongoing	Town, CDBG	DC, PRC, DPW, REC, ACC
2.D.3. Work with the Council on Aging (COA) to implement the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan to ensure that Arlington is supporting older residents in meeting their recreational needs and increasing their opportunities to be outdoors.	Ongoing	Town, CDBG	COA, PRC, REC
2.D.4. Work with the Recreation Department, Arlington Public Schools, and community groups to ensure that open spaces and recreational facilities meet the Town's goals of diversity, equity and inclusion, including language access.	Ongoing	Town	OSC, PRC, REC, TM

Goal 3. Support local and regional capacity to meet the needs for recreational opportunities, natural resource protection, and overall resource management to be resilient to climate change.

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
Objective 3.A. Sustain and increase Town staff and funding resources to manage conservation areas, recreational facilities, and other public spaces to meet community needs, climate resilience, and adaptation goals.			
3.A.1. Continue to support the Town's resilience and sustainability initiatives that coincide with recreational and open space planning, including the Net Zero Action Plan, Hazard Mitigation Plan, and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan	Ongoing	Town	DPCD, SB, OSC, ACC, ARB, SA

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
3.A.2. Support implementation of the Public Land Management Plan, including follow up to develop site-specific management plans for the Town's conservation areas to identify unique challenges, such as larger clean-up efforts, invasive species control and impacts of chemical controls on wildlife, trail maintenance and the impact of artificial surfaces on heat island effects and the quality of wildlife habitat, erosion and sedimentation control, and native planting projects.	2025-2027	CPA	DPCD, PRC, DPW, OSC, PLMPWG, ACC
3.A.3. Implement Ongoing plans for regular maintenance and upgrading of equipment and amenities at the Town's recreational facilities, playgrounds, ballfields, parks, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize locations with older, unsafe equipment, those that do not meet ADA standards, and those in EJ Census Tracts and CDBG eligible Block Groups. 	Ongoing	CPC, CPA, CDBG, Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program	PRC, DPW, REC
3.A.4. Identify a sustainable funding source to support long-range maintenance and upkeep of the Town's recreation and conservation properties and other public spaces, in addition to the Town's Capital Plan.	Ongoing	Town	TM

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
<p>3.A.5. Evaluate overall Town property operations and maintenance of recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces to ensure the upkeep and ongoing maintenance and to identify opportunities for more environment-friendly approaches and reducing energy consumption. Some considerations are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify needed staff (full-time, part-time, seasonal) to meet community needs. • Identify needs for enforcement of proper use of public spaces. • Control invasive plants with non-toxic means. • Purchase electric or more energy efficient equipment and vehicles. • Install energy efficient lighting. • Follow anti-idling practices. • Install nature-based solutions/green infrastructure to manage stormwater. • Use native plants in landscaping. • Implement sustainable turf maintenance (watering, pest management, etc.). 	2022; Ongoing	Town	DPCD, TM, PLMPWG, DPW, SA, ACC, OSC, PRC, REC
3.A.6. Ensure funding to support Town database and mapping resources, improve data quality and accuracy, and increase Town staffing and funding for the same to aid future open space and recreation planning.	Ongoing	Town	DPCD, Information Technology Dept.
Objective 3.B. Support and participate in state and regional recreation, open space, and climate resilience planning initiatives.			
3.B.1. Coordinate regional open space planning in the Alewife/Mystic region with organizations such as Mystic River Watershed Association, Friends of Alewife Reservation, the Tri-Community Group (Arlington, Somerville, Cambridge), and MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).	Ongoing	Town	DPCD, DPW
3.B.2. Continue to work closely with neighboring communities on shared open space and recreational resources, such as the Minuteman Bikeway (Cambridge, Lexington, and Bedford), Alewife Brook Reservation region (Belmont, Somerville, and Cambridge), Mystic Lakes/River region (Medford and Winchester), and Arlington's Great Meadows, Reservoir, and McClennen Park areas (Lexington).	Ongoing	Town	DPCD, ABAC, PRC, ACC, OSC

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
3.B.3. Continue to work with the MWRA, DCR, Cambridge and Somerville officials, and other stakeholders to address Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) pollution and flooding problems in areas bordering Alewife Brook and Mystic River.	Ongoing	Town	DPCD, ACC, Community Groups
3.B.4. Advocate for more state funding for the CPA to match funds raised locally, and for more dollars for local aid and grants for conservation and recreation.	Ongoing	Town	TM, CPA Committee
Objective 3.C. Strengthen the Open Space Committee's ability to oversee implementation of the OSRP.			
3.C.1. Advocate actively for implementing OSRP goals, objectives, and priorities in conjunction with other Town plans and policies supporting open space and recreation planning.	Ongoing	Town	OSC, DPCD
3.C.2. Work with all responsible parties to develop metrics and other methods to measure progress and document accomplishments on all OSRP goals, objectives, and action items.	Ongoing	Town	OSC, DPCD

Goal 4. Build environmental stewardship and public awareness of the Town's recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces.

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
Objective 4.A. Support volunteer groups involved with recreational facilities, conservation areas, and other public spaces.			
4.A.1. Identify information and training needs for volunteer groups and Friends organizations to help maintain and build capacity and to ensure a large enough pool of volunteers to minimize burnout and retain local experience. Activities can be site-specific or broad enough to cover needs across properties. Topics might include the use of native plants, sustainable control of invasive plants, and trail maintenance best practices.	Ongoing	CPA, Private	OSC, DPCD, PRC, REC, ACC, Community Groups

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
4.A.2. Support FoAGM's efforts to remove invasive plants and restore upland meadows and other habitats, to protect and support diverse wildlife and plant species, and to provide public access and public events at Arlington's Great Meadows.	Ongoing	Town, MassWildlife Habitat Management, Private	FoAGM, ACC
4.A.3. Promote the efforts of the Conservation Land Stewards Program to collaborate with residents, users, and volunteers on both fundraising and maintenance projects.	Ongoing	Town, Private	ACC, DPCD
4.A.4. Support all Town-sponsored and independent recreational and sports organizations in the funding and maintenance of playing fields, Ed Burns Arena, and other active recreational facilities.	Ongoing	Town, Private	PRC, REC, DPW, DCR
4.A.5. Encourage the involvement and coordination of youth groups, including Scouts, community service high school students), sports teams, and other users in caring for all open spaces.	Ongoing		APS, DPW, PRC, REC, ACC, DPCD
Objective 4.B. Promote environmental stewardship and climate resilience information to help users protect the town's natural environment and their own properties.			
4.B.1. Continue to hold community events like EcoWeek and Town Day to engage and educate residents about local environmental issues and projects.	Ongoing		SA, DPW, DPCD
4.B.2. Expand and formalize residential sustainability projects, such as gardening, landscaping, and water conservation strategies, to block, district, or town scale.	Ongoing	CPA, CDBG, Town, Private	SA, DPCD
4.B.3. Continue to support the "adopt an island" garden program and other activities to enhance streetscapes throughout the town.	Ongoing		DPW, Arlington Garden Club
4.B.4. Continue to support the implementation of the <i>Net Zero Action Plan</i> to promote energy efficiency and reduction with the Clean Energy Future Committee and other groups.	Ongoing		SA, DPCD
4.B.5. Assess Arlington's stewardship network, identify gaps, and overlaps in activity.	2022-2024	Town, Private	DPCD

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
4.B.6. Work with Friends groups to organize nature walks and environmental education programs for all ages (such as birding, canoeing/kayaking, and cleanup campaigns).	Ongoing	Town	APS, ACC, PRC
4.B.7. Work with local youth groups, churches, schools, scout groups, and other organizations to promote awareness about the Town's open space and recreation facilities and activities.	Ongoing	Town	OSC, PRC, REC, Community Groups
Objective 4.C. Increase public awareness and encourage the use of the town's natural areas, recreational facilities, and other public spaces.			
4.C.1. Encourage residents to participate actively in various Town committees and Friends groups to advocate for the investment in and maintenance of the Town's natural resources.	Ongoing	Town	OSC, PRC, REC, DPW, ACC, DPCD, Community Groups
4.C.2. Provide up-to-date information on the Town website, social media, and print publications about open space areas and recreational facilities. Ensure that all materials are accessible to all users.	Ongoing	Town	OSC, TM, PRC, REC, DPW, ACC, DPCD
4.C.3. Continue to upgrade and expand wayfinding, interpretive signage, and other materials that are integrated into historic sites, conservation areas, and other natural places. Ensure materials are accessible to people with diverse abilities and language needs, including translation, tactile, braille, and larger print options.	Ongoing	Town, Private	OSC, TM, PRC, REC, DPW, ACC, DPCD, AHIS, HC, HDC
4.C.4. Coordinate and support community events and educational programming at Town facilities to increase awareness and promote their use. Prioritize using sites in different parts of town to reach all residents.	Ongoing	Town	OSC, PRC, REC, Community Groups
4.C.5. Promote events and programs sponsored by independent groups such as Menotomy Bird Club, Boys and Girls Club, and Mystic River Watershed Association.	Ongoing	Town	OSC, Community Groups
4.C.6. Work with Friends groups to organize nature walks and environmental education programs for all ages (such as birding, canoeing/kayaking, and cleanup campaigns).	Ongoing	Town	APS, ACC, PRC

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
4.C.7. Work with local youth groups, churches, schools, scout groups, and other organizations to promote awareness about the Town's open space and recreation facilities and activities.	Ongoing	Town	OSC, PRC, REC, Community Groups
Objective 4.D. Expand and enhance opportunities to utilize nontraditional open spaces.			
4.D.1. Promote the availability of public plazas, outdoor restaurant seating, and other opportunities for the enjoyment of small, landscaped areas along streets and sidewalks.	Ongoing	Town	DPCD, OSC, local businesses
4.D.2. Coordinate economic development, tourism, and historic and cultural programming at the Town's historic sites and landscapes.	Ongoing	Town	DPCD, A-TED, AHIS, HC
4.D.3. Provide information about small, little-known open spaces such as conservation parcels, rain gardens and other green infrastructure, and community gardens.	Ongoing	Town	OSC, ACC, SA

SECTION 10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

See Appendix A for summaries of the public engagement activities that took place as part of the update of this plan. They include the following:

- Public Workshop, June 10, 2021
- Community Survey, June 30 to October 4, 2021
- Public Workshop, December 8, 2021
- Feedback from the Disability Commission, dated January 24, 2022

Letters of support from the Arlington Redevelopment Board, Select Board, and Conservation Commission, as well as the Metropolitan Area Planning Council are found in Appendix E.

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