

II. EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

1. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

A. Population

Trends and Projections. Arlington was settled in the mid-1600s and its population grew slowly until the early twentieth century. Between 1870 and 1920, Arlington’s population increased six-fold, from 3,261 to 18,665, and it would double again between 1920 and 1930. The population peaked at 53,524 during the 1970s. According to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Arlington’s population will not change much between now and 2035 (Table 1.1). MAPC has made a similar forecast for most neighboring communities in the region. The lack of population growth in these communities reflects a combination of declining household sizes, lack of developable land, high housing costs, and zoning that controls the potential higher-density housing. Arlington’s population is not expected to increase or decrease dramatically in the near future, but the make-up of its population and households will continue to change in terms of population age, household sizes, and household wealth.

Table 1.1: Historical Population and Future Population Projections

Year	Population	% Change
1920	18,665	-
1930	36,094	93.4%
1940	40,013	10.9%
1950	44,353	10.8%
1960	49,953	12.6%
1970	53,524	7.1%
1980	48,219	-9.9%
1990	44,630	-7.4%
2000	42,389	-5.0%
2010	42,844	1.1%
2020	41,284	-3.6%
2030	41,600	0.8%
2035	42,156	1.3%

Sources: Massachusetts Data Center, 2011. Metropolitan Area Planning Council 2011, Metrofuture 2035 Update

Population Density. Arlington is divided into eight *census tracts*: small areas delineated for statistical purposes in order to track and report demographic change (Map 1.1). Census tracts are intended to be stable and fairly permanent, but the boundaries sometimes change due to significant population growth or change in one part of town. By Census Bureau policy, the maximum population for a census tract is 8,000 people. When a tract approximates or exceeds the maximum, the Census Bureau will divide it into two smaller tracts, but the outer boundaries of the original or “parent” tract rarely change. Due to the land area and number of residents in each tract in Arlington, population density varies through the town (Table 1.2).

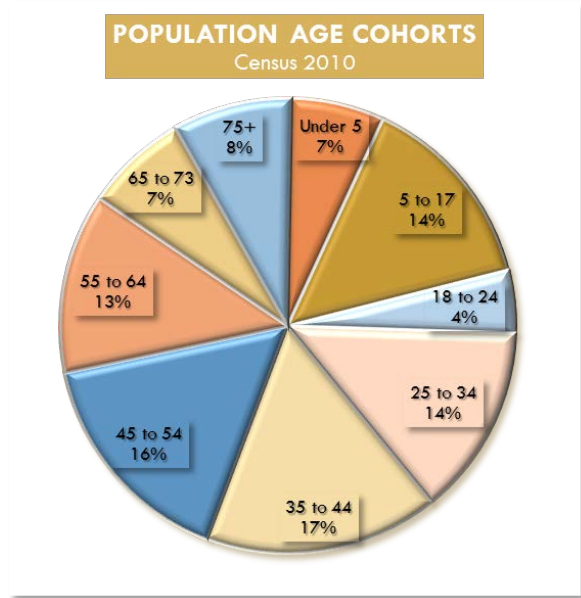
Table 1.2. Population Density

	Population	Land Area	Density/Sq. Mi.
Town	42,844	5.2	8,239.2
Tract 3561	3,110	0.3	11,060.0
Tract 3563	5,040	0.4	12,033.6
Tract 3564	7,247	1.4	5,132.5
Tract 3565	6,580	0.9	7,388.2
Tract 3566.01	4,216	0.5	8,391.8
Tract 3566.02	4,169	0.5	8,627.6
Tract 3567.01	5,844	0.4	13,244.0
Tract 3567.02	6,638	1.1	6,244.3

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1010, and MassGIS, Census 2010 Boundary Files. Note: land area numbers may not total due to rounding.

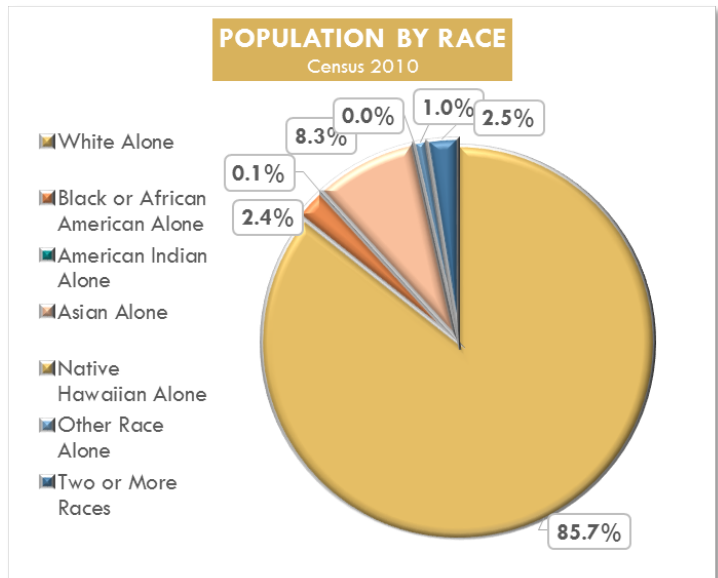
B. Population Age

Consistent with national trends, Arlington’s population is aging. From 2000 to 2010, the median population age increased from 39.5 to 41.7 years. Arlington’s population is somewhat older than that of most nearby urban communities and the state as a whole, but younger than the populations of neighboring Lexington and Winchester. The most significant population increases occurred among people between 45-64 years – the Baby Boomers – 85 and over, and preschool and school-age children. Population losses occurred among people between 20 and 34 years. Today, the “over-55” age cohort accounts for 20 percent of Arlington’s total population.¹ Future population projections call for declining numbers of school-age children and a tapering off of middle-age adults. The number of seniors is expected to increase more dramatically, as is the case just about everywhere.



C. Race, Ethnicity, and National Origin

Arlington has limited racial and ethnic diversity, but there is a noteworthy foreign-born population and many people who speak languages other than English at home. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Hispanic and racial minorities comprise 16.4 percent of Arlington’s population, and 57 percent of the minority population is Asian.² By contrast, minorities account for 27 percent of the Boston metropolitan area’s population and 23.5 percent of Middlesex County’s total population. Among Arlington’s neighbors, only Winchester has a smaller minority population percent than Arlington.³



¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, SF1 DP1, SF1 P12.

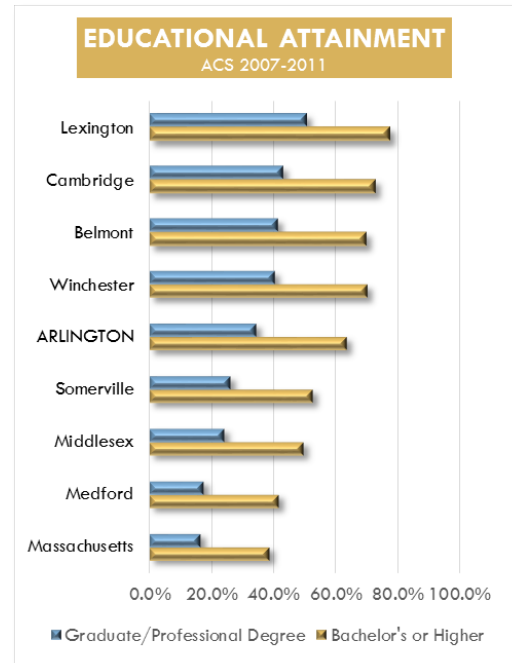
² The U.S. Census reports racial and national origin or socio-cultural groups. People may self-identify as more than one race. In addition, people who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, SF1 P2.

Approximately 15 percent of Arlington’s residents are foreign born: people who immigrated to the U.S. from some other part of the globe, and most have been in the U.S. for over a decade. Immigrant communities make up much larger shares of the populations in cities and towns around Arlington except Winchester.⁴ In addition, Arlington has fewer residents for whom English is not their native language.⁵ Still, the presence of an ancestrally mixed foreign-born population – with many families from China, India, Russia, and Greece – sheds light on why so many residents think of Arlington as a diverse town.

D. Education

Massachusetts has the most highly educated population of all fifty states, and the Boston Metro population is particularly well educated. Arlington residents are indicative of the region’s high levels of educational attainment, for nearly 64 percent of the population 25 and over has at least a bachelor’s degree – much higher than the state’s 38.7 percent. Moreover, 35 percent of the over-25 population in Arlington holds a graduate or professional degree, compared with 17 percent statewide. Most of Arlington’s neighbors are home to exceptionally well educated residents, too, notably Lexington, where over half the adult population has a graduate or professional degree, and Winchester, at 40 percent.⁶



E. Geographic Mobility

Arlington has a fairly stable population. Over 88 percent of its residents lived in the same house a year ago, which is quite a bit more than Cambridge (72 percent) and Somerville (77 percent): cities with a large number of rental units and transient populations of college and graduate students. The difference between recent move-ins and longer-term residents is noteworthy. The median age of residents living in the same house at least one year ago is 43.6 years; among move-ins from some other part of Massachusetts, 29.8 years, and for new arrivals from another state, 31.9 years.⁷

F. Households and Families

A **household** consists of one or more people occupying a single housing unit. The federal census divides households into two groups – **families** and **non-family households** – the former being households of two or more people related by blood, marriage, or adoption, and the latter including all other types of households, including single people living alone.⁸ Compared with surrounding

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2007-2011 Five-Year Estimates, DP2, B05006.

⁵ ACS 2007-2011, B06007.

⁶ ACS 2007-2011, DP2.

⁷ ACS 2007-2011, B07002.

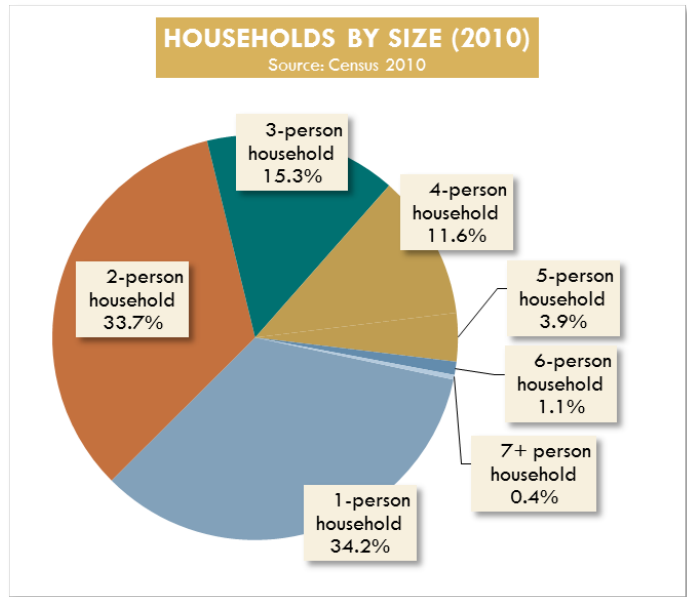
⁸ Note: the Census Bureau reports all same-sex couples as non-family households regardless of their marital status under state law.

towns (excluding the cities), Arlington has a larger share of non-family households (42 percent), and single people living alone comprise the overwhelming majority of these non-family households (Table 1.3). The number of families overall increased slightly from 2000 to 2010, and families remain Arlington’s most common household type. Still, they represent less than 60 percent of all households today. Married-couple families account for 81 percent of all family households in Arlington. The number of single-parent women increased 7 percent in the past ten years, and they make up 14 percent.

	2000	2010	
	Number	Number	
HOUSEHOLD TYPE			
Total households	19,011	18,969	-0.2%
Family households	10,779	10,981	1.9%
Male householder	7,426	7,390	-0.5%
Female householder	3,353	3,591	7.1%
Nonfamily households	8,232	7,988	-3.0%
Male householder	3,122	3,088	-1.1%
Living alone	2,291	2,378	3.8%
Female householder	5,110	4,900	-4.1%
Living alone	4,210	4,085	-3.0%
Average household size	2.22	2.24	
Average family size	2.91	2.93	

Source: US Census 2000, QT-P10, US Census 2010, QT-P11

Although household sizes have slowly decreased throughout the U.S., Arlington has experienced a somewhat different trend. Here, the number of households with two or three people declined between 2000 and 2010 and the number of four-person households increased. Of Arlington’s 11,000 families, 48 percent have dependent children, up 5 percent from 2000. This is consistent with K-12 enrollment growth in the Arlington Public Schools over the past decade. Given the increase in number of families and the shift in household sizes, Arlington seems to have attracted small families looking for a reasonably affordable place to live in the Boston Metro area.



Family and non-family households are not evenly distributed throughout Arlington (Table 1.4). Non-family households in general and one-person households in particular are more prevalent in the neighborhoods of East Arlington and Arlington Center. It is not surprising to find family households concentrated in predominantly single-family home neighborhoods, such as Morningside/Turkey Hill, where families make up 70 percent of all households. Families with children generally make up the same proportion of families in each part of town, however.

Table 1.4. Distribution of Households and Families by Census Tract

	Total Households	Total Families	Pct. Households	Families With Children Under 18	Pct. Families	Non-Family Households	Pct. Households
Town	18,969	10,981	57.9%	5,107	46.5%	7,988	42.1%
Tract 3561	1,379	784	56.9%	338	43.1%	595	43.1%
Tract 3563	2,320	1,260	54.3%	614	48.7%	1,060	45.7%
Tract 3564	2,882	2,027	70.3%	903	44.5%	855	29.7%
Tract 3565	2,839	1,781	62.7%	850	47.7%	1,058	37.3%
Tract 3566.01	1,939	1,097	56.6%	538	49.0%	842	43.4%
Tract 3566.02	1,691	1,025	60.6%	502	49.0%	666	39.4%
Tract 3567.01	2,931	1,310	44.7%	566	43.2%	1,621	55.3%
Tract 3567.02	2,988	1,697	56.8%	796	46.9%	1,291	43.2%

Source: Census 2010, DP1.

G. Household and Family Incomes

Arlington is becoming a wealthier town. Today, its median household income exceeds that of Middlesex County and the state as a whole. For budgeting and financial planning purposes, Arlington tracks several **comparison towns**: contiguous and non-contiguous communities that are reasonably similar to Arlington. Population wealth is among the factors used to determine comparability. Table 1.5 shows that in 1969, Arlington was less affluent than Melrose and Stoneham, the two communities with most comparable median family incomes to Arlington.

Table 1.5: Median Family Income (Inflation-Adjusted to 2009 Dollars) Adjacent Towns and Financial Plan Comparison Communities

	1969	1979	1989	1999	2009
ARLINGTON*	\$71,206	\$72,963	\$91,263	\$101,398	\$106,280
Belmont*	\$78,104	\$81,911	\$105,618	\$122,408	\$121,301
Brookline*	\$79,022	\$75,026	\$106,921	\$119,751	\$139,558
Cambridge	\$57,375	\$52,733	\$69,188	\$76,521	\$88,574
Lexington	\$96,010	\$103,394	\$132,200	\$144,096	\$154,625
Medford*	\$64,449	\$63,359	\$78,777	\$80,366	\$76,527
Melrose*	\$72,042	\$73,740	\$93,196	\$100,629	\$99,101
Milton*	\$85,692	\$84,234	\$107,206	\$121,510	\$124,938
Natick*	\$75,643	\$75,836	\$96,879	\$110,378	\$115,327
Needham*	\$91,760	\$93,950	\$120,270	\$138,522	\$162,813
Reading*	\$77,198	\$83,214	\$105,402	\$114,706	\$116,250
Somerville	\$56,084	\$53,841	\$66,666	\$65,988	\$73,772
Stoneham*	\$71,341	\$72,476	\$88,706	\$91,859	\$96,399
Watertown*	\$66,056	\$65,298	\$85,585	\$86,846	\$85,596
Winchester*	\$92,701	\$97,564	\$129,572	\$141,942	\$156,364

Source: HUD 2013, SOCDs & ACS 2009, 3 Year Estimates, S1907.
 Note: * refers to Arlington’s Budget and Financial Plan comparison towns. The Financial Plan towns also include North Andover, but it is omitted from Table 1.5 due to the unavailability of historic income data.

By 1989, this was no longer the case. The income gap between Arlington and communities such as Natick and Reading is decreasing, too.

Nevertheless, household and family incomes remain higher in many neighboring towns and other Boston Metro communities. (A notable exception is the median non-family household income, which is higher in Arlington than every neighboring community except Belmont.) In addition, the income gap between Arlington and its wealthiest neighbors – Winchester and Lexington – has

widened considerably. For example, forty years ago, Arlington’s median family income was 77 percent of Winchester’s; today, it is just 68 percent.

Forty-two percent of all Arlington households have annual incomes over \$100,000. This includes families and non-families. The vast majority of Arlington’s higher-income households are families. In fact, more than one-fifth of all married-couple families have annual incomes of more than \$200,000. Non-family households have relatively low median incomes, i.e., about half of what married-couple families earn.

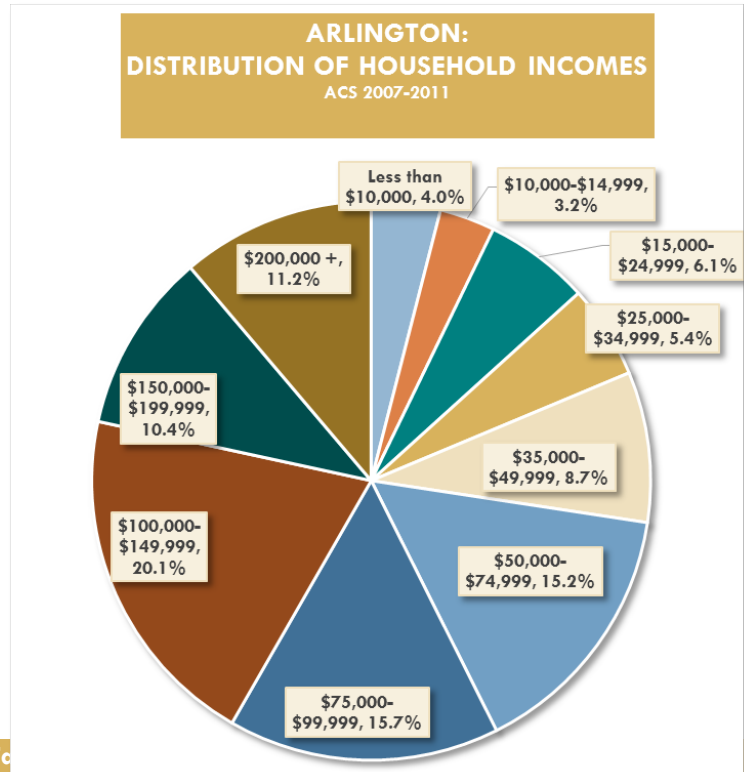
H. Poverty

Arlington has among the lowest poverty rates in the Boston Metro area. Childhood poverty rates are very low at 2.3 percent, less than a quarter of the state average. By contrast, childhood poverty is much higher in Cambridge and Somerville. Families in poverty have very few suburban housing choices, for the cities have larger inventories of affordable housing and public housing. The poverty rate of

individuals 18-64 years old is 4.3 percent, less than half the state average. Seniors have the highest poverty rate in Arlington, at 7.5 percent, which is still below average for Middlesex County.

I. Group Quarters

In Arlington and virtually all other communities, the total population consists of people in households and those living in **group quarters**. As defined by the Census Bureau, “group quarters is a place where people live or stay, in a group living arrangement, that is owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing and/or services for the residents.” Arlington’s small group quarters population (291 people) is composed primarily of adults and juveniles in group homes.⁹



Geography	Total	Under 18 years	18 to 64 years	65+ years
ARLINGTON	4.4%	2.3%	4.3%	7.5%
Belmont	5.2%	4.6%	4.9%	7.6%
Cambridge	15.1%	16.7%	15.2%	12.4%
Lexington	4.0%	2.4%	3.8%	6.9%
Medford	8.8%	6.9%	8.6%	11.4%
Somerville	14.9%	22.8%	14.0%	11.4%
Winchester	3.5%	4.2%	2.4%	6.0%
Middlesex County	7.7%	8.0%	7.5%	8.1%
Massachusetts	10.7%	13.5%	10.0%	9.3%

Source: ACS 2011, 5 Year Estimates, S1701

⁹ Census 2010, QTP12.