



# Town of Arlington

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN 2015-2022



# Town of Arlington

## Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2015-2022

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Cover photo: Hill's Pond in Menotomy Rocks Park. Credit: David Bean

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# 1

## Plan Summary

The Town of Arlington is a densely populated suburban community with few large open spaces remaining within its borders and limited direct access to open space resources in adjacent towns. The need to preserve, protect, and properly maintain existing open spaces and recreational resources is widely recognized and deeply felt by Arlington residents.



*A bird's eye view of Arlington in 1884.  
Courtesy of Norman B. Leventhal Map Center, Boston Public Library*

Changing demographics in Arlington over the past decade have altered the needs for and demands on limited public resources for many outdoor recreation, physical fitness, and sports facilities, such as the Minuteman Bikeway, playing fields, playgrounds, and other sites. Residents also regularly express their desire for more natural green spaces for walking, bird watching, and other contemplative pleasures.

This document is Arlington's fourth Open Space and Recreation Plan. It focuses on many specific accomplishments and other steps taken to address the goals, objectives, and actions outlined in the 2007 Plan and the update to the Action Plan as approved through 2014.



*All ages enjoy the Minuteman Bikeway. Courtesy of Open Space Committee*

The Town continues to face serious management, staffing, and financial challenges to address these diverse needs for conservation land, parks, playgrounds, and outdoor sports facilities. Progress has been made over the past seven years to enhance several key sites, and several new volunteer Friends groups have been formed to advocate and raise funds for specific parks. However, the Town also needs to develop a stronger town-wide open space management program and incorporate regional solutions to meet the competing demands of many different constituencies.

This 2015 Plan presents an expanded inventory of Arlington's open spaces, documents open space and recreation needs, and establishes open space aspirations. Arlington's natural environment is a precious and limited resource that has been difficult to acquire and maintain, and it needs to be protected ardently. This Plan presents open space goals, objectives, and actions that will guide Arlington's open space philosophy, planning, and management through 2022.

- Acquire ecologically valuable undeveloped lands or ensure their protection through conservation restrictions or other means.
- Preserve, maintain, and enhance existing open spaces, including watersheds, water bodies, and natural areas; parks, playgrounds and outdoor recreational facilities; and historic sites and cultural landscapes.
- Coordinate and strengthen local and regional planning and management of open spaces in conjunction with various Town departments, commissions, and volunteer groups, and work closely with nearby towns and regional entities and with state and federal officials and agencies.
- Increase public awareness, accessibility, and community stewardship of the Town's open spaces and recreational facilities.
- Use environmentally sustainable planning and engineering approaches for climate change and natural resources management.



*Volunteers work at the Wildlife Habitat Garden at the Arlington Reservoir.  
Credit David White*



# 2

## Introduction



Fall colors at the Arlington Reservoir. Courtesy of Open Space Committee

### A. Statement of Purpose

This Open Space and Recreation Plan reflects Arlington's intention to preserve, protect, and enhance its valued open spaces. Through research and analysis of the Town's open space needs and past accomplishments, this Plan aims to:

- establish Arlington's short-term and long-term open space goals, objectives, and priorities;

- present a broad statement about Arlington's long-term open space philosophy;
- document Arlington's current open space inventory; and
- provide updated information as required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts guidelines for open space plans.

This Plan for 2015-2022 builds on Arlington's 1996, 2002, and 2007 Open Space and Recreation Plans, reinforces the Town's original goals, reports on accomplishments to date and goals that have not yet been implemented, and outlines new goals and actions to be addressed during the next seven years and beyond. An important overriding purpose of this Plan and the entire open space planning process is to foster public awareness of open space issues and to encourage the participation of Town officials and concerned citizens in the Plan's implementation.

### B. Planning Process and Public Participation

One of the key recommendations of the original 1996 Plan was establishment of a standing committee of citizens and Town representatives involved with open space issues to "facilitate, implement, update and further" the goals, objectives, and actions outlined in that Plan. Town Meeting approved creation of the Open Space Committee and the first members were appointed by the Town Manager in 1996.

Since then, representatives of several Town entities (including the Park and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, Redevelopment Board, and the Departments of Planning and Community Development, Public Works, and Human Services) and concerned citizens have met regularly to exchange ideas and discuss ways to further protect the Town's natural resources and enhance appropriate uses of its open spaces and recreational facilities.

The Open Space Committee (OSC) serves an oversight function but does not have direct responsibility for the management of any specific Town properties. Its primary purpose is to enhance communication and coordination among those entities that do have management authority.

In addition, the OSC seeks to raise broad-based community concerns and to advocate for the planning, stewardship, and use of the Town's natural resources, which are a major element in our quality of life. The OSC believes that the best way to fully address the needs and problems of the Town's open spaces is to develop goals, procedures, and policies in a comprehensive way.

### *Open Space Committee Members (2014)*

- Jane Auger (Citizen)
- Teresa DeBenedictis (Department of Public Works)
- Lisa Decker (Redevelopment Board)
- Joey Glushko (Planning and Community Development Department)
- Michele Hassler (Cemetery Commission)
- Elizabeth Karpati (Vision 2020)
- Patsy Kraemer (Department of Human Services)
- Ann LeRoy (Citizen), Chair
- Leslie Mayer (Park and Recreation Commission)
- David White (Conservation Commission), Vice Chair

In addition to their "official" representation as listed above, Open Space Committee members participate in numerous other open-space related activities in Town. For example, two members are elected Town Meeting representatives (LeRoy, Mayer). Members also sit on various other volunteer committees, including: Vision 2020 Standing Committee (Glushko, Karpati); Vision 2020 Reservoir Committee (Karpati, LeRoy, White); Vision 2020 Spy Pond (Glushko) and Sustainable Arlington committees (Karpati); Tree Committee (Decker); Arlington Garden Club (Kraemer); Master Plan Advisory Committee (LeRoy), and Arlington Land Trust (LeRoy). Through these various connections and networks, the committee members actively sought input from a broad range of perspectives, including Town officials, civic activists, and concerned residents, to make this Plan as complete as possible.

### *Town Committees and Community Groups*

The level of public participation in open space and recreation issues has continued to increase since the 1996 Plan began focusing attention on open space needs. The proliferation of volunteer citizen groups concerned with specific neighborhood parks or recreational facilities has been very exciting. As the Town's population continues to change, current residents seem to be more actively engaged in their environment and concerned about the limited resources within our densely developed community. Representatives of Friends groups, land stewards, and other groups meet regularly on matters of common concern, including ways to raise funds for the maintenance of parks and open spaces.

Following is a sampling of the Town committees and volunteer community groups that hold regular meetings relating to open space and recreation issues:

#### **Town Committees**

- Arlington Historical Commission
- Arlington Redevelopment Board
- Conservation Commission
- Park and Recreation Commission
- Tree Committee
- Tourism and Economic Development (A-TED)
- Vision 2020 Committees (Standing, Environment, Reservoir, Spy Pond, Sustainable Arlington)

#### **Community and Nonprofit Groups**

- Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Arlington Land Trust
- Arlington Parks Alliance
- Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows
- Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park
- Friends of Robbins Farm Park
- Friends of Spy Pond Park

- Friends of Symmes Conservation Area
- Friends of Waldo Park
- Friends of the Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden
- Land Conservation Stewards Program
- East Arlington Good Neighbor Committee
- East Arlington Livable Streets
- Sunnyside Neighborhood Association

### *Town Meeting and Annual Reports*

Town Meeting has responded positively to a number of specific planning and open space issues over the past several years. In its sessions from 2002 through 2014 Town Meeting expanded and/or clarified numerous details regarding the open space district zone, historic districts boundaries, and wetlands bylaws; adopted goals for the Reservoir proposed by the Vision 2020 Reservoir Committee; established a Tree Committee and a Cemetery Expansion Study Committee; and approved bylaws to enhance the use and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities, including off-leash dog activity, playing field usage, and graffiti and vandalism.

Previously, Town Meeting voted in 2000 to approve the 1996 Plan’s goal of acquiring the Mugar parcel for open space purposes, and approved new zoning regulations concerning transportation districts in Town, in particular as those regulations affect the Marquis/Minuteman Bikeway. In May 2001, Town Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to preserving the Mugar property as open space and approved a new open space zoning district and the designation of nearly 50 sites to be transferred into that district.

In most years since 1996 the Town has received Annual Reports from the Open Space Committee for inclusion in the Town-wide Annual Report, which is published each spring (see Appendix A for recent reports).

### *Surveys*

Surveys are useful to gauge the level of residents’ awareness and concern with open space and recreation issues. Vision 2020 is a committee of the

Town that works in a partnership with its residents, employees, and leaders on a vast range of goals and projects. As part of the annual Town Census mailing, Vision 2020 distributes a survey to help identify concerns and priorities.

The January 2014 Survey addressed the following key questions related to open space: awareness and access to smaller and lesser-known open space and recreational facilities; the adequate number of various types of facilities; why residents do or do not visit local open spaces; and how they prefer to learn about open space and recreational resources and programs (see Appendix B).

Results from about 6,500 households included the following highlights:

- Among the twelve lesser-known sites listed, only three had been visited by more than 40% of respondents. Most of the sites were unknown by 30% to 56 % of respondents.
- Outdoor/indoor swimming received the highest “inadequate” response, followed by outdoor ice skating and community gardens. Other types of facilities, including playgrounds, neighborhood parks, and tennis courts, were considered to be adequately available.
- 71% of households responded that they do use Arlington’s open spaces and recreational facilities. The main reasons for not using them were lack of awareness and lack of interest.
- In response to the question about how to learn about these facilities and programs, most respondents noted websites (32%) or other on-line sources (20%), while others cited seasonal brochures (21%) or printed news media (17%).

### *Public Process for the Master Plan*

From October 2012 to May 2015, the Town undertook a comprehensive Master Plan process, including several web-based surveys and nearly 50 public meetings to address open space, recreation, and natural resources,

as well as other land use and planning elements such as land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and historic/cultural resources. The survey findings combined with formal and informal input from many committees and groups, as well as from many other individual sources, helped form the foundation of public participation and support for open space and recreation goals that make this planning process relevant and timely to Arlington residents. The chair of the Open Space Committee was one of eleven volunteer members of the Master Plan Advisory Committee, and led the committee's work on the Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources sections of the Plan, thus ensuring consistency and compatibility with the Open Space and Recreation Plan public process.



*Master Plan meeting at Arlington High School. Courtesy of Department of Planning and Community Development*

This annotated list highlights some of the most important meetings in the Master Plan process, especially as they pertain to open space, recreation, and natural resource issues. Publicity efforts to inform residents about all of these public meetings over two-and-a-half years included hundreds of Town-generated email announcements, notices in the local weekly newspaper and on several online blogs, and notices on the local community broadcast media, which also filmed the public hearings for immediate or subsequent viewing by those who could not attend. Meetings were held at different schools and in other town buildings to ensure access to residents in all parts of town, including those in designated environmental justice block groups near Arlington Center and in East Arlington.

- October 17, 2012, World Cafe at Town Hall. About 150 people attended this kick-off meeting for the Master Plan. The questions asked for the roundtables to discuss were: What does the community value; What is special; What is worth keeping; What is missing; What is possible; and What is worth cultivating? Consistently, "open space" or other references to the natural environment and recreation were ranked in the top ten, along with issues such as affordable housing, better business environment, schools, and civic engagement. Some specific open space items were repeatedly seen in the responses to each of the above questions (and throughout the entire process): parks and playgrounds, the Minuteman Bikeway, the Mill Brook, dog parks, street trees, bike friendliness, and walkability. Concerns most often cited were maintenance and enhancement of the valued parks and natural resources that Arlington already has.
- June and July 2013, Stakeholder interviews. The Master Plan consultants held interviews in small groups, providing input from representatives of many civic groups, Town committees, and Town government, including those involved in open space and recreation activities.
- June 2013, Three Vision Workshops and an online survey. The workshops presented SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) discussions to elicit priorities and concerns regarding Arlington's future. The survey asked respondents to rate and rank key ideas generated at the World Café to help

inform the goals and policies of the Master Plan. More than 400 participants gave additional input for the master plan in all of the key elements.

- July 2013, Workshops for Natural Resources, Open Space, and Cultural and Historic Resources. Two meetings focused on goal-setting and other ideas from invited representatives of about 35 active groups in the community, such as the Bicycle Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, several park Friends groups, Garden Club, Land Trust, Vision 2020, Historical Society, and Public Art Committee. More than a dozen people participated in the discussions, representing these groups' concerns and interests.
- September 2013, Town Day. The Master Plan Advisory Committee and Town Planning Department sponsored an information booth at this annual community block party on Massachusetts Avenue near the Civic Block.
- November 2013, Public Presentation. The Town Planning Department and consultants presented an interim report on existing conditions research and findings, including the report on Natural Resources and Open Space.
- May 2014, Public presentation for the Natural Resources and Open Space report. This public hearing on the open space element (chapter) of the Plan integrated information from previous meetings and comments on earlier draft reports, results of an online survey on this topic, and feedback from the dozen or so participants.
- August 2014, Visual Preference Survey. This online survey sought reactions to the visual "look and feel" of Arlington streetscapes, buildings, open spaces, and other features.
- September 2014, Town Day.
- November 2014, Presentation of Draft Master Plan.
- January 2014 and February 2015, Public Hearings. These were the final hearings for presenting and receiving feedback on the entire Master Plan.
- February 2015, Adoption of the Master Plan by the Arlington Redevelopment Board.
- March-April 2015, Outreach to Town Meeting Members. Meetings were held at different sites around town to inform Town Meeting members about the final plan.

- May 2015, Endorsement of the Master Plan by Town Meeting.
- Summer 2015, Establishment of the Master Plan Implementation Committee.



## arlington master plan

YOUR TOWN, YOUR FUTURE



*Master Plan meeting at the Hardy School. Courtesy of Department of Planning and Community Development*

### Consultant Services

In the spring of 2014, the Open Space Committee requested and received \$9,900 from the Town's Community Development Block Grant program to hire a consultant to help the committee members develop the new 2015-2022 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Town Meeting approved those funds, and in May the Town selected Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) to prepare the Plan with the Open Space Committee. Senior planner Ralph Willmer FAICP was designated the project manager for VHB, as he had been for Arlington's 2007-2012 Plan.

## C. Accomplishments, 2008-2014

This section lists many of the accomplishments since 2008 that have protected and enhanced Arlington's open spaces and recreational facilities, and have addressed related issues of community involvement, sustainable development, climate change, and other concerns. It follows the format established in February 2010, when the Open Space Committee submitted an update for the Chapter 9 Action Plan of the 2007-2012 Open Space and Recreation Plan. That updated list of goals and objectives covered the period from 2008 to 2014, as authorized by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

Some of these accomplishments were expressed as general ideas or goals in the Town's earlier Open Space Plans, but they took shape through the hard work and cooperation of many Town boards and commissions, residents, private groups, and Town employees. The Open Space Committee wishes to acknowledge the contributions of many individuals and organizations that recognized a wide range of opportunities to advocate for and work towards protecting our Town's open space and recreation resources.

### **Goal 1. Acquire undeveloped lands for permanent protection as open space in neighborhoods throughout the Town.**

#### **Elizabeth Island**

The major success over the past seven years is the Arlington Land Trust's 2010 acquisition of Elizabeth Island in Spy Pond. Long privately owned and zoned decades ago for two housing lots, the 2-acre island was put up for sale in 2006. The owner first tried to sell it for housing for nearly one million dollars, but after receiving no offers she was eventually convinced to sell it for a more modest sum. The Arlington Land Trust (ALT), established in late 1999 as a nonprofit organization that works to acquire and hold easements on privately owned land for conservation purposes, conducted the lengthy negotiations with technical help from the Massachusetts Audubon Society.



*Elizabeth Island in Spy Pond. Courtesy of Arlington Land Trust*



## The Campaign to Protect Elizabeth Island

The state Conservation Partnership Grant Program contributed \$85,000, and ALT ran a local fundraising campaign that brought in \$180,000 in private donations. The island was purchased by ALT in December 2010. It will remain undeveloped, with minimal improvements planned to enable it to be used safely for public access and environmental education. Mass Audubon and the Arlington Conservation Commission jointly hold the conservation restriction.

### Symmes Hospital Site

After many years of uncertainty, more than 8.7 acres of open space at the 18-acre former Symmes Hospital site have been preserved, including two new landscaped parks and other wooded areas open to the public. The Arlington Conservation Commission and Arlington Land Trust hold the conservation restriction on these privately owned lands, and a neighborhood Friends group is being established to monitor the site. Maintenance and use of the open space is overseen by the management company.



*View of Boston from Hattie Symmes Park. Credit: Ann LeRoy*

The former hospital property had been put up for sale in 2001 by then owners, Lahey Clinic and HealthSouth. It was acquired by the Town in 2004 after an extensive community planning process, including a Proposition 2½ override, in order to control redevelopment of the site and preserve its open space. After many delays and revisions due to subsequent problems in the housing market, the Town sold the land to developers and construction began in 2012. The project, now known as Arlington 360,

includes 12 townhouse condos and 164 apartments, of which 15 percent are set aside as affordable units. A separate 90-unit assisted living facility is owned and managed by BrightView. Sales and rentals at both properties began in 2013, and residents began moving into them in spring 2014.

### **Mugar Site**

The 17-acre Mugar property in East Arlington remains the highest priority goal for acquisition and protection as open space and floodwater storage. Town Meeting voted nearly unanimously in 2000 and again in 2001 to seek to acquire the property. The Arlington Land Trust and Town officials negotiated an acquisition agreement with the owner in 2010, however, the owner withdrew once the ballot question to abolish MGL 40B failed to pass. In the last five years a developer working with the Mugar family has expressed intentions to pursue some development.

In 2010 FEMA released updated floodplain maps that show much of the Mugar land encumbered by several levels of flood zones, making extensive development difficult. The Arlington Redevelopment Board voted in 2011 to formally adopt the Open Space and Recreation Plan, thereby making the Plan, including acquisition and preservation of the Mugar property, Town policy, and thus signaling the Town's discouragement of any development of the property.

### **A Lost Opportunity**

One example of a lost acquisition opportunity was a narrow plot of undeveloped land at the southeast corner of Spy Pond in the Kelwyn Manor neighborhood which was sold for a house lot despite efforts by the Town to acquire it from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston. A small benefit of the sale was that the new owner cleared it of a tangle of invasive plants, mainly oriental bittersweet, that had spread to nearby open areas including the path next to Spy Pond along Route 2.

**Goal 2. Preserve, protect, and enhance existing open spaces, including watersheds and natural areas; parks, playgrounds, and outdoor recreational facilities; and historic sites and cultural landscapes.**

### **2-a. Preserve and protect the Town's natural heritage, including watersheds, water bodies, native flora and fauna, and all existing natural areas.**

#### **Management Plans**

The management plans for major open spaces and recreational facilities developed under the previous Open Space Plan were reviewed and updated, but no new plans were added. It was determined to be difficult to implement the plans because many different entities hold responsibility for the oversight of parks and conservation areas, and the Open Space Committee has no authority to enforce use of the site-specific management plans.

#### **Mill Brook**

Mill Brook flows nearly three miles through the central valley of Arlington and was the site for much of the early, water-powered commercial activity in the town. The waterway has remained essentially unchanged for decades, since extensive channeling and culverting were done to control its flow and fill in former mill ponds for town playing fields and other uses (Arlington Historical Commission 1976).

Several recent efforts to enhance the physical and ecological integrity of the Mill Brook corridor have been made during occasional clean-ups and some improvements by abutters, such as landscaping at the Old Schwamb Mill historic preservation site. The developers of the former Brigham's property, adjacent to an open stretch of the brook and a small park at the Arlington High School, renovated the area as part of their housing project.

A linear park along Mill Brook was first proposed in the 1920s, and was revisited in a graduate student design study by Mia Lehrer (now a well-known landscape architect) in 1976. The idea was revived again in 2009 by the Open Space Committee (OSC) with participation from other interested





*Mill Brook in Arlington Heights. Credit: Brian Barber*

individuals and representatives of groups such as the Park and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, and Redevelopment Board. The study group inspected current conditions along the brook, which is now about one-third each culverted, channeled, and free-flowing, and listed the ownership of the lands through which it flows, which is largely private and developed. The group prepared a report, Mill Brook Linear Park Report, describing these conditions and offering a vision of what could be done, such as a series of “pocket parks” on still-available land. The report was presented to the Board of Selectmen in 2010. It was publicized through an exhibit in Robbins Library and is displayed at the annual Open Space Committee booth on Town Day.

Interest in the Mill Brook corridor has been heightened as an element of the Arlington Master Plan, a major planning initiative that will be completed in 2015. Pending any funding for further feasibility studies and implementation, the report serves to show what could be done and perhaps to inspire private projects in the area to be planned.

#### **Trees and Native Vegetation**

Arlington currently has around 18,000 trees on public property which are cared for by the Department of Public Work’s Natural Resources Division. Many of the trees planted years ago are not native, including the abundant and invasive Norway Maples. The DPW website offers some helpful links about Arlington’s tree population and what to do if residents suspect a Town tree is diseased or damaged, recommended trees for planting, and other tree- related information.

The DPW also works with the Arlington Tree Committee, which was established in 2010 by the Arlington Board of Selectmen, to promote the protection, planting, and care of trees by residents in Arlington. The BOS, DPW, and committee have expressed ongoing concern with NStar’s severe pruning of street trees that causes damage to the trees and unsightly streetscapes. This oversight must weigh appropriate tree trimming against the potential loss of power from storm damage and fallen trees or branches.

Arlington values its street trees, but has lost a lot of trees in microbursts and other storms that hit East Arlington in particular over the past several years. The Tree Committee created a list of recommended native trees for replanting. The Town also maintains a tree program that includes sales of street trees to residents, who are asked to keep the new trees watered until they are well established, and the replacement of trees that must be removed because of disease or safety concerns.

Rain gardens are a relatively new idea for creating native perennial gardens in areas that can capture rain and runoff. In 2011 The Arlington Garden Club worked with the DPW and Sustainable Arlington to create a demonstration rain garden at Spy Pond Park, and in 2012 gardens were established at the Hardy School and near Hurd Field. A simultaneous EPA demonstration project repaved half of the parking lot at Hurd Field with pervious pavement and half with conventional material. This project is intended to prevent erosion and runoff into the adjacent Mill Brook.

### **Invasive Plants**

Invasive plants, notably Japanese knotweed, buckthorn, black swallowwort, garlic mustard, and Oriental bittersweet, are found throughout Arlington. On Town properties and along the Minuteman Bikeway, the DPW and/or volunteer Friends groups regularly work to remove invasives, but it is a continual struggle. Sustainable Arlington, the Garden Club, Conservation Commission, and other groups actively promote public education around invasives and encourage the use of native plants for private landscaping.

Spy Pond is periodically treated with the chemical Sonar to control the resurgent population of Eurasian water milfoil. This compound works by interfering with photosynthesis and thus does not harm animal life.

Two large stands of phragmites in Spy Pond, at Kelwyn Manor Park and on the south side of Elizabeth Island, have existed for years, and had begun to spread to other shoreline properties, including that of the chairman of the Vision 2020 Spy Pond Committee. He and the committee spearheaded an effort to control the spreading reeds, carried out a fundraising campaign, and obtained the consent of the abutters to continue treatments. The

Town manages the contract (with the same company that treats the pond for underwater weeds) and handles the money as a subset of the Water Bodies Fund. Beginning in 2009, three years of spraying killed most of the plants; the dead stalks were knocked down by volunteers and carted away by DPW. Control of small patches that regenerate from surviving roots is ongoing, and the cleared areas have been seeded with appropriate native plant species.

The Water Bodies Fund also supports regular removal of water chestnuts in Arlington Reservoir and treatment of Eurasian milfoil, nonnative curly-leaved pondweed, and filamentous algae in Hill's Pond in Menotomy Rocks Park.

### **Accomplishments at Selected Major Sites**

#### **Spy Pond**

The Vision 2020 Spy Pond Committee's Trails Days project of improvements along the state-owned path between Route 2 and the south end of Spy Pond celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2014. This effort has enlisted the help of various groups, notably the Appalachian Mountain Club, which supplied muscle and the needed expertise for building steps in several places, using broken curbstone pieces donated by Arlington DPW. Now fishermen and other visitors can reach the water's edge without eroding the slope. Poison ivy has been nearly eradicated, and volunteers from the committee and the community have cleaned up massive amounts of trash. The worn and bumpy footpath at the southern end of Spy Pond, connecting Pleasant Street and Lake Street, was repaved in 2011 by MassHighway, which owns it, to the delight of both walkers and bicycle commuters.

The Vision 2020 Spy Pond Committee also continues to produce its annual flyer asking people to use low- or no-phosphorus fertilizer to protect the pond from having excess phosphorus washed into it and thereby unintentionally promoting weed growth. The effect is hard to measure, but it probably keeps the weed problem from being even worse. The leaflets are distributed by students from the high school "Workplace" program

throughout the Spy Pond watershed. Several volunteers have been trained and licensed to addle Canada Geese eggs each spring to keep that population from increasing, with some success.

The nonprofit Friends of Spy Pond Park is another very active volunteer group. From April to October they have monthly work days for cleanup and removal of invasive plants in the park, enlisting both community groups and casual park visitors in the effort. They consult with DPW to try to mitigate erosion along the park paths, and members are on the alert to explain to people seen feeding the Canada Geese that this is both harmful and contrary to Town bylaws. The Friends group also sponsors an annual Fun Day with activities for all ages. In collaboration with the Arlington Land Trust and the Arlington-Belmont Crew, the day includes boat trips to Elizabeth Island and guided tours by Land Trust members. The Crew's high school students, who train on Spy Pond, have participated in a variety of other community programs, including the removal of invasive plants.



*At the boat launch during Spy Pond Fun Day. Credit: Ann LeRoyer*

The Park and Recreation Commission has overseen several improvements on their recreational facilities around the pond, including replacement of the safety surfacing at the Spy Pond Playground to eradicate a sand wasp issue in 2009, replacement of tot ride-on equipment, and the repair of cracks at the Spy Pond Tennis Courts, with funds raised through volunteer friends groups. The courts will be completely rebuilt in 2015. The use of Spy Pond for water sports has also been enhanced with canoe and kayak rentals during the summer months. In 2009 and 2010, a private company oversaw the rentals, and since 2011 the Recreation Department has managed the rental program. The private Boys and Girls Club, located on the pond, also hosts a number of water-based activities for children in its programs.

#### Arlington Reservoir

After the Reservoir dam was reinforced and a new spillway was completed in 2006, an anonymous donor gave \$3,000 for beautification of the area. After some delays in planning, a volunteer landscape architect designed a Wildlife Habitat Garden, which was installed in the spring of 2010 on both sides of the bridge over the new spillway. It features native plantings, grasses, and flowers on the sunny side and a few trees, shrubs, and other flowers on the shady side, as well as some rocks and logs to provide habitat for small wildlife and seating for visitors. Arlington DPW was very helpful in preparing the site with its heavy equipment, providing large rocks and logs, wood chips, and mulch, and installing a water line. A small but dedicated group of volunteers planted the garden and has been maintaining it. Most of the plants have grown exuberantly and the garden has garnered appreciative comments from people walking around the Reservoir.

The Reservoir regularly becomes badly infested with water chestnuts, which are removed by mechanical harvesters and by volunteers in canoes. The Water Bodies Fund supports this nearly annual project to keep the invasives under control.

In 2012 the Reservoir Committee of Vision 2020 created a calendar with members' photographs of the Res and the habitat garden and sold it at

Town Day and through several local stores to raise funds for additions to the garden. The committee also organizes occasional work days to clean up around the Reservoir and to spread wood chips on the perimeter path. The high school cross-country team, which uses the path for practice, has participated vigorously in the latter effort.

Since 2010 the Reservoir Beach has been named one of the state’s top 10 “swimming holes” by Boston.com. A 2013 survey of residents about the usage, concerns and suggestions for improvements at the Reservoir revealed the continuing popularity of the beach for family-oriented activities and year-round use as a passive recreation destination. Many suggestions for improvements will be prioritized in the coming years. The sale of seasonal beach tags and daily passes for families and individuals has remained strong over the past six years, and several concerts for youth and adults were sponsored by the Recreation Department during beach hours in 2014. The proceeds from beach tags and other events are used to maintain the beach environment.

#### Arlington’s Great Meadows

This important 183-acre wetland area is owned by the Town of Arlington, but is located within Lexington. This unusual arrangement has made it difficult to establish permanent protection of the property as conservation land. In 2009-2010 the Friends of Arlington’s Great Meadows, with the help of experts from Mass Audubon, determined that a growing wooded area of the Great Meadows should remain open, and they carried out a tree-cutting project to restore and maintain the area as an upland meadow. Other recent Friends projects include construction of two boardwalks, a footbridge, trail maintenance, educational programs, and control of invasive plants.



*All ages enjoy the Reservoir beach. Courtesy of Open Space Committee*

**2-b. Preserve, protect and enhance Arlington’s parks, playgrounds, playing fields, and other outdoor recreation spaces.**

**Upgraded Park and Recreation Facilities**

The Town's Park and Recreation Commission and Recreation Department have policy and management oversight for parks, playgrounds, playing fields, and other facilities, but the Department of Public Works is responsible for regular maintenance. Capital plans for parks and recreational facilities are reviewed and approved by the Town's Capital Planning Committee.

In 2009, a Master Plan was completed for the Summer Street Sports Complex and approval was received from Town Meeting for a one million dollar rink facility renovation project, followed in 2010 by a major overhaul to the Town’s only ice skating facility. Replacement and expansion of the rink bed and board system, installation of a lower ceiling for energy efficiency, and dehumidification improvements were among the enhancements made to the aging facility. On December 28, 2010, a dedication ceremony was held to celebrate the naming of the renovated Ed Burns Arena.

In 2010, upgrades and safety improvements to the Thorndike Field parking area were completed. The area, adjacent to the Minuteman Bikeway, sees heavy use by cyclists, pedestrians commuting to the Alewife T-station, and field users. Off-site overflow parking alternatives and signage to help control access were identified. The project focused on improving pedestrian and vehicular safety, traffic flow, drainage, and landscaping improvements in an environmentally sensitive location.

Renovations were completed in 2011 on the Summer Street Playground, basketball court and multi-generational area. The project was designed to work within the context of the Sports Complex Master Plan, and incorporated recommendations from the Arlington Police Department to help improve safety and reduce vandalism. A highlight of the renovation is a large completely handicapped accessible children’s play structure with zero-entry ramp, located between Buck and Hill’s Hill fields. A tree-shaded

multi-generational area behind Summer Street Field provides bocce courts, game tables, a circular walking path with fitness stations, and young child play elements.



*Accessible play structures at Buck Field off Summer Street. Credit: Ann LeRoy*

In 2012 the Wellington Tennis Courts were completely renovated, and lights were installed, making it Arlington’s first lighted tennis facility.

In the fall of 2013, the renovation of the Florence Avenue Playground, in the park adjacent to the Dallin School, was completed. The new playground area was laid out along the front side of the park and includes play elements and swings for multiple ages, a zip line, and a splash pad. A new welcoming entrance and landscaping were incorporated, and the area that formerly had outdated toddler play equipment was left as a grassy area for more passive recreation.

The renovation of Hibbert Street Park/Playground in 2014 replaced outdated play equipment and improved the layout and entrances of this small neighborhood “pocket park.”

The 2014 North Union Spray Park project focused on total replacement of all water play features and the outdated systems for this recreational asset that is heavily used by many in the warm days of summer.

### **Public/Private Partnerships**

Several recreational facilities have benefited from collaborative projects. Buck Field, the youth baseball field located on Summer Street, was renovated with funds and oversight provided by the Arlington Youth Baseball and Softball Association as a gift to the town. With financial assistance from the Friends of Robbins Farm Park, the two hill slides at the playground were replaced in 2011. Through the efforts of the Friends of Waldo Park, an installation of public art was completed in 2013. A swan sculpture was created for and installed in Spy Pond Park in 2014, with support from the Town's Public Art Fund.

### **Fundraising**

In 2014, a fundraising event to benefit the parks in Town was held at the Arlington Reservoir in coordination with members of the Arlington Parks Alliance. An Annual Golf Tournament to raise funds for recreation programs is held at the Hillview Country Club. Other recent fundraising campaigns have supported Phragmites control efforts in Spy Pond and maintenance of the Wildlife Habitat Garden at the Reservoir.

### **Other Amenities**

A successful pilot program was approved and monitored for the seasonal installation of portable restrooms at many parks and fields over the past several years. With help from the Disability Commission in obtaining CDBG funds, this commitment ensures that all of the portable restrooms, which are funded by donations from local sports organizations and Friends groups, are handicapped accessible units.

### **Off-leash Recreational Area (OLRA)**

In the spring of 2010, Town Meeting approved a bylaw amendment for limited off-leash morning hours at selected Town parks. The Recreation Department and Park and Recreation Commission have developed rules

and regulations for where and when off-leash dog activity is allowed and published a brochure for reference. In addition, following a feasibility study highlighting several potential options, Thorndike Field was selected as the location for Arlington's first dedicated fenced off-leash recreation area (OLRA) for dogs and their owners. Funding for the project came mainly from a gift by the Stanton Foundation, and construction of the facility was completed in the spring of 2012.

### **Minuteman Bikeway**

The Minuteman Bikeway is a rail conversion amenity which extends from Arlington's eastern border near the MBTA Alewife Station through the Town and on to Lexington and Bedford; it is almost 11 miles in length. The three communities each have jurisdiction over the segment in their own town. With funding from the State's Recreation Trails Program in 2011, the three communities worked with a consultant on a report (Navigating the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway) to develop programs to unify the policies and look of the Bikeway; they produced a new bikeway map in 2013, and are working on a signage and way-finding program.



*The Minuteman Bikeway is popular all year. Credit: Ann LeRoyer*

Representatives from the three communities meet at least annually to work on common and coordinated efforts. The Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee organizes clean-up efforts and monitors the Bikeway for safety issues, and promotes the ease of cycling around town with an annual spring family-oriented bike tour. In May, July, and September Bikeway User Counts are performed by volunteers to document the high (and increasing) user volume on the Bikeway. While pedestrian and cyclist numbers have increased each year, a marked increase in the use of the Bikeway by joggers has also been noted. This increased activity, in types of users as well as numbers, speaks to the Bikeway's popularity, as well as the need to fund regular maintenance for the amenity.

**2-c. Preserve, protect, and enhance Arlington's historic open spaces and cultural landscapes.**

**Identify, Protect, and Maintain Key Sites**

Arlington values its historical and cultural landscapes, and has several Town commissions, nonprofit organizations, and other volunteer groups that work to identify, protect, and maintain key sites. These include the Historical Commission, Historic District Commissions, Arlington Historical Society, Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture, the Old Schwamb Mill Preservation Trust, and the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum in the historic Jefferson Cutter House.

The Battle Road Scenic Byway links four towns – Arlington, Lexington, Lincoln, and Concord– through which the British regulars passed on April 19, 1775 at the beginning of the American Revolution. These towns, with Minute Man National Historical Park, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, are collaborating to highlight the historic, cultural, recreational, scenic, and natural resources along this route.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts officially designated the Battle Road Scenic Byway on November 6, 2006, and MAPC completed a Corridor Management Plan for the Byway in Spring 2011. It proposes strategies to manage transportation, land use, and tourism along the Byway. The plan

provides a guide for preserving and promoting Byway resources while recognizing that development pressures and opportunities exist in close proximity to these esteemed resources. In Arlington some of these resources along Massachusetts Avenue are the Old Schwamb Mill, Benjamin Locke house and store, and Foot of the Rocks in the Heights; Jason Russell House, the Civic Block, and Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in the Center; and the Butterfield-Whittemore House and Alewife Brook Reservation near the Cambridge border.

Related to this project, in 2013, the Freedom's Way Heritage Association launched Patriots Paths, an outreach effort to identify Revolutionary sites and compile local stories from ten participating communities, including Arlington. The Freedom's Way website includes a list of venues in Arlington that represent the path of the patriots in 1775. These sites include historic houses, civic buildings, burial grounds, and sites.



*Historic Jason Russell House. Credit: Ann LeRoyer*

The Arlington Committee on Tourism and Economic Development (A-TED) serves as a link between history, art, culture, and economic development. Board members include a Selectmen, the Planning Director, and representatives from the Redevelopment Board, Cultural Council, Historical Commission, Chamber of Commerce, and School Committee. ATED's mission is to promote and develop Arlington as a destination for business, culture, recreation, and entertainment. The group recently co-hosted a Summer Arts Festival, funded in part with a grant from the Cultural Council.

In addition, A-TED secured funding from Town Meeting to construct a small interpretative center near the Uncle Sam Monument. The visitor center opened in the late summer of 2014. Other projects include the development of distinctive directional signage for Arlington's four museums/cultural institutions and other cultural resources, and development of a website to promote cultural and economic resources.

**Selected Interpretative Programs**

- Old Schwamb Mill maintains active membership and school education programs relating to historic mill operations, the mill pond system, and Mill Brook, and offers walking tours of the area with other organizations such as Walking in Arlington.
- Jason Russell House and Smith Museum, owned and managed by the Arlington Historical Society, continue varied programs on Arlington history.
- Patriot's Day parade and Minuteman Revolutionary War re-enactments occur annually.
- Cyrus Dallin Art Museum, located in the historic Jefferson Cutter House in Arlington Center, offers regular exhibits, educational programs, and other events relating to the work of well-known sculptor Cyrus Dallin who lived and worked in Arlington for nearly 40 years. A special gallery in the lower level of the house is available for changing exhibits by local artists.

- The Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park and Friends of Robbins Farm Park, with the Arlington Center for the Arts and local businesses, cosponsor outdoor performances of Shakespeare plays.
- Other public art programs in the parks and around town are being sponsored by the Vision 2020 Public Art Committee, in cooperation with other Town boards and committees. The first Art Rocks Menotomy project, a temporary installation of artwork in that park, was held in the summer of 2014. Art Rocks Spy Pond will occur in 2015, and other events are planned for the future. The Public Art Committee also sponsors an annual decorated chair exhibit, "Chairful Where You Sit," and has begun a program for local artists to paint transformer boxes on public streets.
- Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows offers natural history tours and other education programs in that historic 183-acre watershed.

**Goal 3. Coordinate and strengthen local and regional planning and management of open spaces in conjunction with various Town departments, commissions, and volunteer groups, and work closely with nearby towns and regional entities and with state and federal officials and agencies.**

**3-a. Work within the Town of Arlington to better coordinate and manage open space goals and objectives.**

**Role of the Open Space Committee**

The OSC submits annual reports to the Town Meeting for publication in the Town's Annual Report (see Appendix A). Diverse representation on the committee (Conservation Commission, Planning Dept., Redevelopment Board, Public Works Dept., Cemetery Commission, Human Services Dept., Park and Recreation Commission, Vision 2020) encourages the coordinated efforts of users and caretakers in the management of open spaces. The committee meets with Friends groups and other interested parties to hear about concerns and helps to coordinate efforts to address roles,



interaction, and support of DPW personnel with volunteers and stewards. The committee also worked with the Master Plan Advisory Committee and Planning Department on drafting sections of the master plan relating to open space, natural resources, and recreation.

### **Cemetery Expansion**

The Cemetery Expansion Study Committee established by Town Meeting in 2006 recommended establishing a columbarium in Cooke’s Hollow, but this proposal was not approved by Town Meeting in 2011. After reexamination of an area formerly thought unsuitable for burials, some additional space for cremains purposes was found within the boundaries of Mount Pleasant Cemetery. Currently the Cemetery Commission is in the process of finding a bidder for the columbarium project based on the approved architectural design. It is hoped that the Mt. Pleasant Columbarium will be finished by July 1, 2015.

In addition to this project, the cemetery has set aside two areas for expansion. One area is for the start of a green cemetery for cremains only and the other area is to be the next dedicated veterans section for those who have served in the Gulf and Middle Eastern conflicts. After the last of the earth burial space has been used, the columbarium and green cemetery will be the only options available in the 59-acre cemetery.

### **Town Policies on the Use of Open Space**

The Park and Recreation Commission has developed and revised a number of policies regarding the use of parks and recreational facilities under its jurisdiction. A Policy Handbook of all existing PRC policies was published in 2014. Following are some of the highlights:

- The playing field policy was reviewed in 2010 with an eye to the increased use of lights and amplification equipment. The policy was enhanced to control the use of these amenities to minimize disruption to neighborhoods and to require compliance with independent monitoring and the provision of penalties. In its first year of implementation, 100 percent compliance by field users was achieved.

The policy defines “no loitering” time limits for groups with permits to use parks and fields.

- To help ensure equity and the protection of Town properties a policy for the placement and use of storage sheds on Town fields was developed. Sports league expansions and the use of Town facilities continues to be monitored, including working with the Arlington/Belmont Crew program to insure its compliance with the Town’s motorboat bylaw in its use of Spy Pond.
- In 2013 policies and forms for members of the community to request picnics and special events at Arlington’s parks were reviewed and updated, and are available online. The field permit policy, gifting policy and a Town-wide policy on leaving toys and other items at parks, fields and playground were all reviewed and updated in 2013. Efforts to develop an equitable policy related to requests for hanging informational banners about special events on Park and Recreation properties were met with obstacles and were abandoned. Policies related to the temporary and permanent installation of art in the parks and a standard design for park and field entrance signs are currently being developed.

### **Natural Resources Staffing**

OSC appreciates the ongoing cooperation of DPW as described in other sections of this report, but the planning and budgeting needed for a senior natural resources professional and additional workers have not yet been approved or implemented. These human resources are badly needed.

### **Ecological Impacts**

The warrant article passed by Town Meeting to create a fund to support regular water quality testing and monitoring of all the Town’s water bodies, and treatment as found to be needed, was approved by the State Legislature in 2008. The Water Bodies Fund receives annual appropriations from Town Meeting, which has made possible weed control in several water bodies at the most appropriate time in the weeds’ life cycle.

Sustainable Arlington, a committee of Vision 2020, and other groups work on various projects related to environmentally sensitive areas that may be subject to climate change impacts, such as flooding in East Arlington, control of invasive plants, and energy efficiency initiatives.

### **Capital Improvements Planning**

The Park and Recreation Commission continues to develop and manage a multi-year capital plan for open space and recreation improvements, maintenance and new upgrades of facilities, but specific projects and progress are dependent on funding availability each year (Appendix C).

### **Electronic Communications and GIS Tools**

A new Town systems manager and director of GIS (Adam Kurowski) is producing more and better GIS-based maps. See the Town-wide maps throughout this report and the site maps in chapter 5 for examples. The Town also enhanced its website in July 2014, making more information about resources and services, including maps, available to residents and other users.

### **Collaborative Planning for Open Space**

There are many cases of Town boards and other organizations collaborating with the Open Space Committee, Park and Recreation Commission, and Conservation Commission on specific open space projects. For example, the Arlington Redevelopment Board worked with the developer of the former Brigham's site to enhance an adjacent park and areas along Mill Brook, and to use ecological designs for swales and plantings around the large new apartment building.

The Department of Public Works collaborates regularly with PRC and CC on maintenance and special projects on Town-owned properties. Many recreational projects and cleanup efforts at parks and trails have also received support for equipment and refreshments from town businesses including: local grocery and hardware stores, Bowes Realtors, Starbucks, Dunkin' Donuts, Trader Joe's, Cambridge Savings Bank, the Fields Pond Foundation, and others.

The Workplace Program, an alternative high school program, has helped with volunteer maintenance efforts at several parks and open space areas, and students distribute the annual Spy Pond fertilizer flyer. In addition, arts programs offered at local parks seasonally have been supported by the Regent Theatre and the Arlington Cultural Council.

### **3-b. Work at the regional level to coordinate planning and development initiatives that protect and enhance open space across jurisdictions.**

#### **Coordinate with Regional Organizations and Nearby Towns**

The Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) sponsors many programs on watershed education, including removal of invasive plants, water quality testing, and seasonal monitoring of herring runs. Arlington provides office space to MyRWA at no charge at the Central School.

The ABC (Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge) Tri-Community group (created in 2002 and reauthorized in 2014) has been working to resolve flooding and CSO issues in the Alewife Brook and nearby areas.

Sustainable Arlington and other local groups and individuals have been working with Friends of Alewife Reservation, Coalition to Protect the Belmont Uplands, and other groups to prevent development of nearly 300 apartments in the Silver Maple forest, which is part of the flood-prone wetland area on the Belmont-Cambridge border, adjacent to Route 2 and East Arlington. In spite of years of work, the developer was authorized to begin clearing the area for construction in late 2014.

More positive activities in the Alewife Brook area include working with the state Department of Conservation and Recreation on construction of the Alewife Brook Greenway, a bicycle and pedestrian trail on DCR land in Arlington.

Several important open spaces are shared by Arlington and Lexington. Great Meadows, owned by Arlington but located entirely in East Lexington, is served by cooperative efforts of the Friends of Arlington's Great

Meadows, Lexington’s Conservation Commission, students of the nearby Waldorf School, and scouts in creating an informational signboard, boardwalk, and invasive plant removal efforts. ACROSS Lexington is a new project to mark and enhance walking trails throughout that town, and in cooperation with the Arlington Conservation Commission on Arlington land.



*Arlington's Great Meadows next to the Minuteman Bikeway. Credit: David White*

The Arlington Reservoir, also partly in Lexington, has experienced vegetative clearing and the deposition of yard debris from nearby residents. At the request of the Vision 2020 Reservoir Committee, Lexington Conservation Commission sent letters to Lexington abutters of the Reservoir to explain Arlington’s ownership of the land around the Reservoir, and to discourage dumping and clearing of vegetation. Arlington is attempting to get Lexington to share the cost of water chestnut removal, but to date has not been successful.

When the former Busa Farm property adjacent to the Arlington Reservoir was sold by the Busa family and purchased by the Town of Lexington using Community Preservation Act funding, many Arlington residents and Town officials and organizations supported its continued use as a community farm. That effort was successful and most of the acreage is now managed

as Lex Farm. However, Arlington is concerned about housing being planned on part of the land abutting the Reservoir due to storm drainage and runoff issues. Mutual discussions are continuing.

### **Regional Historic Connections**

The Battle Road Scenic Byway links four towns – Arlington, Lexington, Lincoln, and Concord– through which the British regulars passed on April 19, 1775 at the beginning of the American Revolution. These towns, with Minute Man National Historical Park, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, are collaborating to highlight the historic, cultural, recreational, scenic, and natural resources along this route. See section 2-c for more information.

### **3-c. Engage state officials and state and federal agencies in Town efforts to acquire, maintain, and manage space and recreation resources.**

#### **Community Preservation Act**

The Community Preservation Act was enacted by the state in 2000 to enable cities and towns in Massachusetts to create a local dedicated fund for open space, historic preservation, affordable housing, and outdoor recreation projects. Cities and towns that adopt the act also receive funds from the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund each year to help fund these projects. In spring 2014, Arlington Town Meeting voted to put adoption of CPA on the ballot in November, and the initiative passed by a 54 to 46 margin. All of Arlington’s state legislators supported this effort. Next steps are for Town Meeting to appoint a local Community Preservation Committee which will administer the funds and recommend projects for approval in subsequent Town Meetings.

### **Goal 4. Increase public awareness, accessibility, and community stewardship of the Town’s open spaces.**

#### **4-a. Support volunteer groups for major open spaces and recreational facilities.**

Many volunteer Friends groups and informal committees have been established around specific sites, including Spy Pond Park, Arlington Reservoir, Robbins Farm Park, Menotomy Rocks Park, and many playgrounds (Waldo, Summer Street, North Union, and Greeley Park at Stratton School). A new Friends of Symmes Conservation Area was formed in 2014 to monitor the new conservation lands and parks at the former hospital site, now partially developed as the Arlington 360 housing complex and BrightView assisted living facility.

The Arlington Parks Alliance (APA), started in 2006 as Friends of Parks, continues to meet with representatives of the Park and Recreation Commission and Recreation Department to share concerns and plans for park maintenance and new ideas for fundraising strategies. The APA sponsored a Reservoir Beach Party in September 2014 as a fundraiser for the parks.

The Land Stewards program coordinated by the Conservation Commission has been reactivated under a new coordinator in 2014, with active members attending to Turkey Hill, Hill’s Hill, Crusher Lot, Arlington’s Great Meadows, and other sites.

DPW supports various Friends groups by providing trash pick-up for their clean-up efforts, and delivery of wood chips and other items for trail improvements. The recycling coordinator has established and publicized procedures for keeping compostable plant materials that are collected as yard waste separate from trash and invasive plants, which need to be destroyed.

School, scout, and other groups have also sponsored clean-ups on the Minuteman Bikeway and participated in other cleanups.

**4-b. Increase public awareness and educate Town residents about open space and recreational resources.**



*High School cross country team spreading wood chips on the Reservoir trail. Credit: Rachel James*

**Develop Materials and Resources, Public Meetings**

The Recreation Department prepares and distributes seasonal catalogues on all its programs, and posts information online, along with online registration for adult and children’s programs.

Bulletin boards host information at many sites, including Menotomy Rocks Park, the Reservoir, Robbins Farm Park, Spy Pond Park, and Waldo Park.

Sustainable Arlington, the Arlington Garden Club, and the Department of Public Works have been cooperating since 2009 to organize an annual “EcoFest” which brings together information presented by groups promoting sustainable and energy efficient practices and vendors of appropriate products. Past topics have included water and food; the spring 2014 theme was “Rethink Recycling: Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose,” and one exhibit showed how broken pieces of curbstone were repurposed for erosion-preventing steps to the water’s edge at Spy Pond. The 2015 program will focus on energy awareness and related issues.

The Public Works Department has an active public education program on composting, rainwater storage, hazardous waste disposal, and stormwater awareness programs and presentations. The DPW makes compost bins and rainwater barrels available at a very reasonable cost. It also distributes to every household a schedule of recycling information.

### **Environmental Education Programs**

Friends groups regularly conduct activities like nature walks and special educational events in their areas. For example, Friends of Spy Pond Park sponsors an annual Fun Day in collaboration with the Arlington Land Trust and the Arlington-Belmont Crew, which transports visitors to Elizabeth Island for guided tours by ALT members.

Organizations like the Mystic River Watershed Association (headquartered in Arlington) and Friends of Alewife Reservation also conduct activities which may take place wholly or partly in Arlington.

The Menotomy Bird Club, which was formed in 2003, sponsors seasonal birding trips and monthly lectures and maintains a very informative website. Lists of birds recorded in specific areas such as the Reservoir, Spy Pond, Great Meadows, and Menotomy Rocks Park have been compiled and printed. These lists are available at Town Day and are updated periodically as additional species are spotted.

### **Educate Landowners**

The Arlington Land Trust works with private homeowners who are interested in protecting their land with a conservation restriction or easement to prevent future development. Several CRs are now in place on privately owned lots.

### **Adopt-an-Island and Streetscapes**

The Arlington Garden Club works with support from the Town's Department of Public Works and other entities to coordinate the adoption of street planters and islands by residents and businesses to beautify intersections and small public spaces. Around 60 areas are usually adopted

due to the Club's encouragement of citizen participation through publicity and offers of assistance on plant selection. Invited volunteer judges select winning sites each year.

The Club has maintained concrete planters at Broadway Plaza in Arlington Center in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce for many years. In 2014-2015, a redesign program removed the planters and future plans include policy development on how nearby businesses and the public may use this space. Club members also designed and planted an authentic eighteenth-century herb garden at the historic Jason Russell House in 1975 for the Bicentennial celebrations, and they maintain it and another flower garden on the property. They have adopted several areas within the historic Civic Block, including the Town Hall Gardens, Whittemore Robbins House Garden, and planters around the Cyrus Dallin flagpole, and they maintain a demonstration rain garden at Spy Pond Park.

### **Town Day**

Arlington's annual Town Day is an important event for promoting awareness and information and all kinds of community activities. Groups like the Open Space Committee, Arlington Land Trust, and Conservation Commission have their own booths and hand out materials, and the Spy Pond and Reservoir Committees are featured prominently at the Vision 2020 booth. A number of Friends groups concerned with various parks and playgrounds, including the Friends of Spy Pond Park, Menotomy Rocks Park, Robbins Farm Park, and Great Meadows, also traditionally have their own Town Day booths.

### **Local and Regional Media**

The Town's website ([www.arlingtonma.gov](http://www.arlingtonma.gov)) was significantly upgraded in 2014 and includes information pages for the Open Space Committee (including the current Open Space and Recreation Plan), Park and Recreation Commission, and Recreation Department activities, among many other resources and links to Friends groups and other committees. Recreation program sign-ups can be completed online.

The Open Space Committee, Park and Recreation Commission, Vision 2020 committees, and Conservation Commission hold regular monthly or bimonthly meetings that are announced on the Town website, and are open to the public. Minutes are available online and at the Robbins Library.

Regular articles and announcements about open space issues and events appear in the weekly *Arlington Advocate* (in print and online), on the Community Access Cable channel (ACMi), on the Town's website, and on the Arlington email list (arlington@arlingtonlist.org). In 2014, at the suggestion of the Open Space Committee, the *Advocate* published a series on "Hidden Gems" to highlight some of the Town's smaller and less known open spaces. The newspaper also ran a major story about the protection and public accessibility of Elizabeth Island in Spy Pond.

More specialized media are also used. For example, the newsletter of the Friends of Spy Pond Park is publishing a series of articles on various invasive plants that infest or are trying to infest the park.

#### **4-c. Provide greater use of and improved access to key water bodies, natural areas, and recreational facilities.**

##### **Review Accessibility Concerns**

Working with the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD), the Town conducted an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) study in 2014 focused on surveying the Park and Recreation sites and programs with the following goals:

- Provide an evaluation for the Town Recreation Department of services and programs to determine compliance with ADA regulations;
- Provide an evaluation of Town Park and Recreation Commission facilities, including buildings, playgrounds, fields and parks;
- Prepare a Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan that complies with the current ADA standards;

- Establish a grievance procedure and public notice that conforms to ADA/504 requirements;
- Provide the Town with a cost estimate for remediation work required as a result of the evaluations.

##### **Increase Recreation Options for Varied Demographics**

In addition to the many organized and pick-up sports activities, Arlington's parks and open spaces continued to provide the community with venues for a wide variety of recreational opportunities. Organized star gazing, movie nights, picnics, school fairs and field days, a fishing derby, Shakespeare performances, an arts festival, concerts, a tennis tournament, and "Spooky Walk" are some of the special events held.

Collaborations between the Recreation Dept. and other groups have resulted in recreational events such as the Town Day Road Race, Daddy Daughter Dance, Egg Hunt, Halloween and Special Winter Public Skate and a Special Needs Skate Program assisted by the Arlington Catholic High School Boys' & Girls' Hockey teams and their coaching staff.

New programs offered by the Recreation Department over the last several years have included: archery, futbol, Saturday Night Lights Flag Football, lacrosse for girls grades K-4, Lego classes, toddler art classes, Stroller Fit classes, Rock & Roll Babies, Special Needs soccer classes, volleyball clinics, Thundercats After School Sports program at three elementary schools, Middle School Ski Club, film making, game design, youth and adult golf classes, zumba and tai chi for adults, expanded adult tennis lessons, Fit Doggie and Me Training and the I Can Shine Learn to Bike program for youth with special needs.

##### **Improve Access to Various Water Bodies**

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has built a boardwalk in part of the Alewife Reservation creating the Alewife Brook Greenway linkage from Alewife T Station to the Mystic Valley Parkway area, near the future extension of the Green Line subway into Medford. DCR

also built a new dam and spillway area between Upper and Lower Mystic Lakes, though most access is on the Medford side. This has become an active site for watching Bald Eagles and many other permanent and migratory birds.

Mill Brook has become better known as a result of a 2010 report by an Open Space Committee study group that drew attention to areas along the brook that are Town-owned and publicly accessible. That report is also used by the Arlington Redevelopment Board and the Master Plan Advisory Committee as a basis for reevaluating both economic development potential and passive recreational opportunities along the Mill Brook corridor.



*Granite steps built by volunteers at Spy Pond. Credit: L. Stroker Rogovin*

Most of the land around Spy Pond is privately owned and not accessible to the public. Spy Pond Park on the north side of the pond and the pathway on the south side are accessible and widely used. The Spy Pond Committee has received help from the professional trail crew of the Appalachian Mountain Club as well as town residents for its annual Trails Days project

of improvements on property under the jurisdiction of MassHighway along Route 2. The Town is continuing to work with MassHighway for the removal of runoff deposition of particulates at the Route 2 storm drain, which empties into Spy Pond.

In spite of substantial interest by residents, additional outdoor or indoor swimming facilities have not found sponsors or locations in Arlington. Currently the Reservoir Beach offers summertime outdoor swimming, and the private Arlington Boys and Girls Club has an indoor pool.

#### **4-d. Support Arlington's efforts for a more environmentally sound Town and region.**

##### **Link Open Space and Sustainability Concerns**

As part of the Green Communities program, the state awarded Arlington a \$247,894 grant aimed at implementing energy reduction initiatives in 2014. A total of \$7.9 million in grants to 43 communities across the Commonwealth were awarded in this latest round of the Green Communities Competitive Grants. This is the third Green Communities Grant awarded to Arlington with a cumulative total of \$698,000. This latest award will go toward energy improvement projects at the Ottoson Middle School and Arlington High School.

Town officials and representatives of Sustainable Arlington cooperate in an Energy Working Group which has made a number of efficiency improvements in the Town. In the beginning of 2013, the Town appointed its first Energy Manager under the direction of the Town Manager. The Energy Manager is charged with the task of finding new ways for the Town to reduce its energy costs and consumption as well as seeking out alternative ways to fund these efforts through grants and other available funds. This part-time position is shared with the Town of Bedford.

A Town-wide recycling program has been in effect for many years. Recycling formerly was picked up every other week, but many residents

asked for weekly pickup. This was accomplished in 2013 when the time came for the Town to negotiate a new contract for household waste and recycling hauling. Under this contract trash won't be picked up unless it is accompanied by some recycling. Recycling bins and trash containers are now located in selected parks during the outdoor recreation season.

DPW prepares and distributes an annual leaflet with recycling instructions and yard waste pickup dates, and offers compost bins at reasonable prices. A half-time Recycling Coordinator was hired in 2012. She has developed instructions for separating trash and noxious/invasive weeds from other plant material that is safe to compost. In addition, a volunteer Recycling Committee publishes periodic tips in the *Arlington Advocate* and on the Town website and Town email list, holds regular "community collection" days, and generally works to promote recycling in many ways.

The community education program at Arlington High School includes some classes every year on sustainable practices like composting.

Arlington participates in a hazardous waste collection program with neighboring towns. The collection site is in Lexington, with monthly drop-off dates in spring, summer, and fall. The DPW leaflet lists the dates and what materials will be accepted.

### **Public Transportation and Bicycle Commuting**

The MBTA operates more than ten bus routes that travel through Arlington, connecting town residents to the Alewife T Station, Harvard Square, Burlington Mall, and other destinations outside of Arlington. In 2014 LEXpress expanded its service from Lexington into Arlington Heights. This bus allows users to get on or off where they wish on the designated route, primarily along Mass Ave. Another form of public transportation, ZipCar, has offered pick-up and drop-off sites in Arlington since 2008.

The Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee (ABAC) meets regularly to promote use of the Minuteman Bikeway for commuting and recreation, and to deal with other bicycle-related issues. For example, their efforts with the Town have led to a redesign plan for Arlington Center to improve

safety and access for Bikeway users passing through the busy Mass Ave./Pleasant St. intersection. Bike lanes and sharrows have also been marked on many sections of Mass Ave. and other major streets.

Since 2011, ABAC and the Town's Planning Department have participated in a statewide program that counts users of bikeways, trails, and paths. These Bikeway user surveys, held in May, July, and September from 7 am to 7 pm, count all types of users who pass through Arlington Center on designated dates, including weekdays and weekends. Data sheets track men, women, and children on bicycles, walking, skateboarding, or rollerblading. The statistics from these surveys are used for planning purposes and to determine changing needs and demands on the Bikeway.

### **Community Gardens**

Community gardens have been established at Magnolia Field in East Arlington and Robbins Farm Park in the Heights. 2010 was the pilot year for the Robbins Farm Community/Educational Garden Project. This communal garden saw all participants work a single large plot at Robbins Farm Park and share the harvest, unlike the Magnolia Park Community Gardens where individuals work their own small plots. The Robbins Farm garden also provided an opportunity for gardening education for adults and children, including organized school trips. The Recreation Department administered the program, which was open to all residents, and after a successful first year, an expanded pilot was approved and has become a standard offering.



The Sustainable Arlington Committee has encouraged Arlington citizens to establish private gardens for their personal use. They have also espoused a program of eating food produced within 100 miles of one's home. This committee has provided information to Arlington citizens on the use of composting to help reduce the amount of garden and yard waste collected by Arlington's trash and recycling contractor.

A weekly Farmers Market brings fresh produce from surrounding farms to Arlington's Town Center parking lot on Wednesdays from late June through late October. The market is managed by a volunteer committee.



*Farmer's Market Tomatoes. Photo by Lindsey Beyerstein*

# 3

## Community Setting

### A. Regional Context

#### Physical Location

The Town of Arlington is located in eastern Massachusetts and lies at the edge of the Boston Basin (a broad, flat, flood plain). Located about six miles northwest of Boston, Arlington's population of 42,844 (2010 U.S. Census) occupies five and one half square miles or 3,509.9 acres. Arlington is part of Middlesex County and the Boston metropolitan area; its neighboring communities are Lexington, Winchester, Medford, Somerville, Cambridge, and Belmont (see Map 3-1). The 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 Board of Selectmen, an elected legislative Town Meeting of 252 members, and an appointed Town Manager, similar in governance to the adjacent towns of Lexington, Winchester, and Belmont. Like the cities of Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford, Arlington is densely developed with a high level of population per square mile (see Population Characteristics, Section 3C, for statistics on regional population density).

Arlington residents' median family income is not as high as neighboring towns (Lexington, Winchester, Belmont), but is higher than neighboring cities (Cambridge, Somerville, Medford). More than 60 percent of Arlington residents over the age of 25 have at least a bachelor's degree,

and 35 percent hold a graduate or professional degree. Town residents work in both blue collar and professional occupations. As in Arlington's surrounding communities, the Town has a large segment of aging people and a growing segment of couples with young children.

Map 3-1. Arlington and Surrounding Communities



Source: Town of Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan 2007-2012.

#### Community Development

Many factors have shaped Arlington's natural and recreational open space as the Town developed from a small farming community in the colonial period to the densely developed suburban community it is today (see Maps 3-2, 3-3, and 3-4). The biggest influence on Arlington's development

has been the growth of metropolitan Boston. The Town's close proximity to Boston and Cambridge, and to many colleges and universities in the region, makes it an ideal residential community for people affiliated with academia, financial institutions, high-tech and bio-tech industries, and other regional employment sectors.

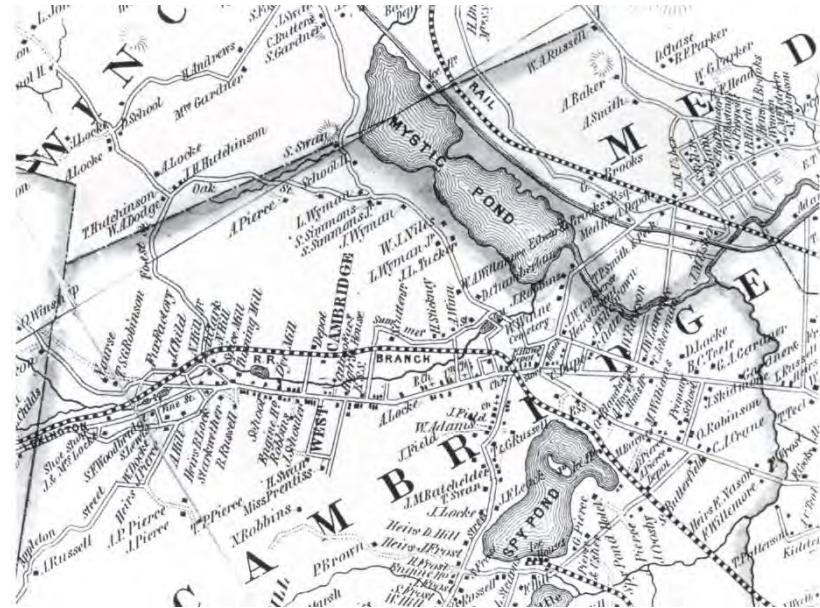
The character of Arlington's once rural community began to change in 1846 when the Lexington and West Cambridge Railroad opened to Arlington, allowing more residents to work outside of Town (Neckar and Zellie 1980). The continued growth of transportation options accelerated this change of life for Arlington residents and the change of character for the Town's landscape. As Boston grew, the pressure for the development of residential building lots within commuting distance grew as well. Over time, Arlington became less "country-like" and more "suburb-like" in character.

**Map 3-2. Arlington (then West Cambridge) in 1830**



Source: Neckar and Zellie 1980, 12.

**Map 3-3. Arlington (then West Cambridge) in 1853**



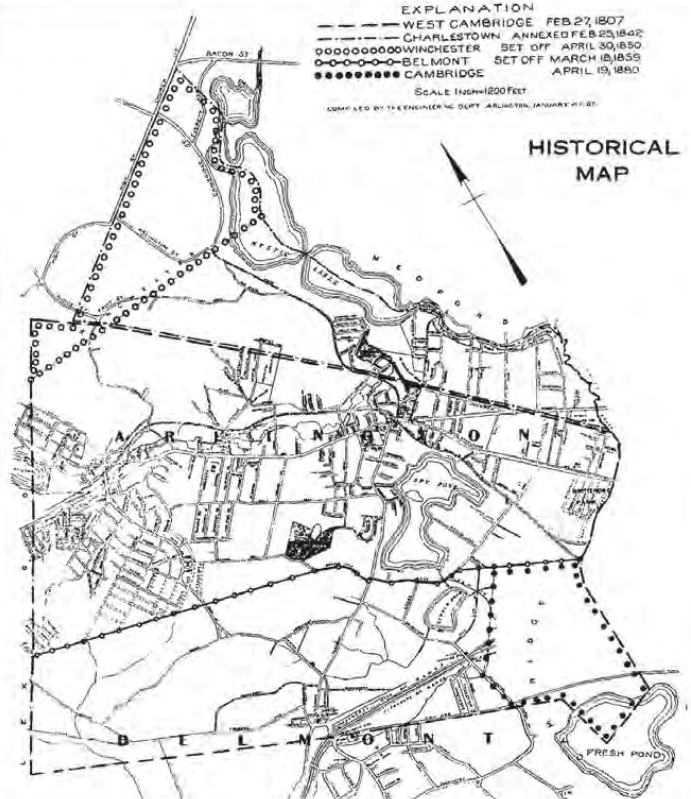
Source: Neckar and Zellie 1980, 13.

### Arlington Land Uses

#### Residential Land Use

The majority of Arlington's land use is residential—approximately 72 percent of the total land area of the Town as reported in the 2015 Arlington Master Plan land use element. Arlington is a safe and convenient place to live for people who may work in nearby cities but wish to live in a town with a more suburban character. The majority of Arlington homes are situated on small lots ranging in size from 3,500 to 9,000 square feet. These small residential lots and a relatively small amount of open space (approximately 448 acres, including both public and private land, or about 13 percent of the land within Town borders) are two of the important factors driving Arlington's need to preserve, protect, and nurture its limited open space.

### Map 3-4. Arlington in 1907



Source: Neckar and Zellie 1980, 9. This map shows how Arlington's boundaries have changed over the years.

#### Transportation and Commercial Land Uses

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. Public bus transportation also traverses Arlington, carrying commuters to regional destinations. Many of the roadways that pass through Arlington border the

Town's water bodies (for instance, Route 2 borders Spy Pond on the south, Route 16 borders Alewife Brook, and Mystic Valley Parkway borders the Mystic Lakes and Mystic River), thereby putting constraints on the use of open space abutting them. While these roadways provide many scenic views for the traveling public, their presence contributes to pollution of these waters.

Arlington does not have any major shopping malls or superstores to draw in large numbers of customers from surrounding towns. The Town's three commercial centers (East Arlington, Arlington Center, and Arlington Heights) feature small specialty stores, theaters, and restaurants frequented by residents and nonresidents. Traffic around these shopping areas and businesses (the majority of which are located along Massachusetts Avenue) is usually manageable, although residents frequently comment on the need for additional parking. Traffic around Arlington's more popular recreational resources presents additional seasonal problems.

#### Public Open Space Land Uses

Arlington has a number of relatively small open spaces that add to its character and beauty. Both residents and nonresidents enjoy Arlington's open space destinations and are invited to register for Arlington's recreational activities and programs. Arlington's largest and most popular open space destinations are described here (see chapter 5 for a complete inventory and additional information).

- 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 located in Lexington. 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.

- **Great Meadows** (located in Lexington, but owned by Arlington) is a 183-acre area with a significant amount of wetlands and wet meadows. Several entrances are available from the Minuteman Bikeway, and boardwalks have been built by volunteers in recent years to make the trails more accessible. Residents of Arlington and neighboring town often visit Great Meadows to observe the diverse flora and fauna, to cross-country ski, or to use the trails for walking and bird watching.
- **Menotomy Rocks Park**, established in 1896, includes Hill's Pond and a playground, as well as wooded areas boasting many plant and wildlife species. Visitors use the 35-acre park for ice skating, picnicking, walking, jogging, ball playing, birding, and relaxing. The park is also known for its spectacular glacial ledges.
- **Robbins Farm Park** contains 11 acres of recreation areas, open space, and a community garden. In the summer, visitors use the playground area, ball field, basketball court, and grassy areas; in the winter, visitors use the area for sledding and cross-country skiing. The site atop a steep slope provides a panoramic view of Boston's skyline and is a wonderful spot for viewing the nighttime starry sky and the Fourth of July fireworks in Boston.
- **Spy Pond and adjacent Spy Pond Park** are popular destinations for families with young children, sunbathers, boaters, birders, and anglers. The 100-acre pond provides tranquil respite for people of all ages; however, the lack of a walking trail around the entire pond limits public access. Spy Pond Park borders the pond and the Minuteman Bikeway, and contains 3.7 acres of grassy recreation area, including a tot lot and boat launching ramp. The Spy Pond Path traverses the south edge of the pond next to Route 2. The nearly two-acre Elizabeth Island was purchased by the Arlington Land Trust in 2010 as

permanent conservation land. It is accessible to the public via small boats that are permitted on the pond.

- **Historic sites and landscapes** in Arlington attract out-of-town tourists and local people alike. Several notable sites are the Jason Russell House and Smith Museum, the Samuel Wilson ("Uncle Sam") monument, the Old Schwamb Mill, the Whittemore-Robbins House and adjacent gardens in the Civic Block, and the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum in the historic Jefferson Cutter House.



*Historic Jason Russell House in Arlington Center. Credit: Ann LeRoy*

### **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.

- Minuteman Bikeway** — This rail/trail conversion was dedicated in 1992. The 11-mile paved bike trail runs from Bedford in the west through Lexington and Arlington, terminating at Cambridge's Alewife T (MBTA) Station. The Arlington section is called the Donald Marquis/Minuteman Bikeway in honor of the retired long-time town manager. Built over an abandoned railroad corridor, the bikeway abuts a mix of commercial and industrial land uses and connects them to many residential neighborhoods and open space parcels.

The future may include more opportunities for linkages between the Minuteman Bikeway and bikeways in adjacent communities. Neighboring communities of Watertown and Belmont are also working to create bikeways that would link to the Minuteman Bikeway and other communities to the West. The state Department of Conservation and Recreation's master plan for the Alewife corridor included a path extension from the Alewife T Station along Alewife Brook Parkway with a connection to the proposed Green Line T Station in West Medford. This Alewife Brook Greenway Path was completed in 2013.



*Minuteman Bikeway in Arlington. Credit: Ann LeRoyer*

- 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, and Somerville on its way to Boston Harbor. The 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 Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), formerly the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC). On the western edge of Town, the Arlington and Lexington border runs about midway through the Arlington Reservoir.
- 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 and open space value. These two roadways are owned and controlled by the DCR and are shared with surrounding 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.
- Additional Open Space Resources** — The following open space resources are among those located in neighboring towns that are also enjoyed by Arlington residents:
  - Beaver Brook Reservation (DCR) in Belmont and Waltham
  - Habitat, a Massachusetts Audubon Society sanctuary in Belmont
  - Rock Meadow in Belmont (town conservation land that was part of the former Metropolitan State Hospital Complex)
  - The Western Greenway traversing numerous public and private properties in Belmont, Waltham, and Lexington

- Fresh Pond, Mt. Auburn Cemetery, and the Charles River in Cambridge
- Alewife Reservation (DCR) in Cambridge, bordering Belmont and Arlington
- Great Meadows in Lexington (owned by Arlington)
- Whipple Hill, Willard Woods, and other conservation lands in Lexington
- Middlesex Fells (DCR) in Winchester, Medford, Melrose and Stoneham
- Dilboy Field in Somerville, offering a stadium, other sports fields, playgrounds, and walking trails

### *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).

Arlington consults the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) in its open space planning. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) produces the SCORP, which documents the available recreational resources across the state.<sup>1</sup> It also documents problems in providing recreation access and protecting resources. The relevant portions of the most recent Massachusetts SCORP (2012) are summarized in chapter 7.

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

and activism. One of the major groups in the area is the Friends of Alewife Reservation, which is dedicated to the protection and preservation of the water quality and wildlife habitat of that state-owned land in the adjacent communities of Arlington, Belmont, and Cambridge.

The Coalition to Preserve the Belmont Uplands has also worked hard to preserve the Silver Maple Forest in Belmont. A long-standing controversy with the developer of a proposed chapter 40B residential development came to a head in the summer of 2014, when most of the forested area was cleared in preparation for the development. Local residents in all three communities are concerned about the loss of land in this ecologically sensitive area and its role in providing water absorption and flood prevention, habitats for many varieties of animals, an outdoor oasis for area residents, and an environment in which the largest Silver Maple Forest in the Boston area can thrive.

To further address water pollution and flooding issues in and around Alewife Brook, 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 Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA; 2001) works to protect the Mystic River watershed 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's members represent Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge, Medford, Somerville, Lexington, Winchester and Woburn. The river and much of the land along the waterway is managed by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation, which is undertaking a master plan for the area. MyRWA headquarters are located in the former Central School next to Town Hall in Arlington.

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<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2012, p. 1

## B. History of the Community

### *Menotomy: Pre-Colonial Era*

#### *The Massachuset Tribe*

When the first English colonists arrived in the Boston area, the only inhabitants of the region were members of the Massachuset tribe. The Massachuset occupied valleys of the Charles and Neponset rivers in eastern Massachusetts, including the present site of Arlington, which they called Menotomy (meaning "place of swiftly running water"). The name Massachuset means "at the range of hills," probably with reference to the ring of hills surrounding the Boston Basin created during the last ice age.

The Massachuset tribe spoke what linguists call the Algonquian N-dialect. The same dialect was spoken by the neighboring Narragansett, Nauset, Niantic and Wampanoag. Algonquian (or Algonquin) is the name used for the largest pre-colonial language group in North America. Some evidence of the migrations of ancestors of the Massachuset tribe lies in the fact that Algonquian dialects are spoken from Montana to Massachusetts by the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Gros Ventres, Blackfoot, Cree, Ojibwe, Ottawa, Potawatomi, and numerous tribes along the Atlantic coast from Hudson Bay to South Carolina.

In 1614, when Captain John Smith explored the coast of New England, there may have been as many as 3,000 Massachuset living in 20 villages around Boston Bay. They were divided into six sub-tribes named after their chiefs or sachems. Between 1614 and 1617, disaster struck in the form of three separate epidemics of European diseases. During the same period, the Abenaki tribe from the north attacked the Massachuset villages. In 1620 the Pilgrims found that most of the Massachuset villages in the region were empty and only recently abandoned. When the first Puritans settled at Boston in 1629, only 500 Massachuset were left in the immediate area, and smallpox killed many of these in 1633. No organized groups of the Massachuset are known to have survived after 1800.

The Massachuset are memorialized in Arlington today by "The Menotomy Indian Hunter," a sculpture by Cyrus Dallin located in the Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden next to the Town Hall.

#### *The Squaw Sachem*

The hereditary chief of the sub-tribe that occupied Menotomy was a woman whose full name is unknown. She is known by her title, Squaw Sachem, and she was married to Nanapeshemet (or the New Moon), one of the greatest sachems in New England, ruling over a larger area than any other. He resided in what is now the city of Lynn until the war with the Abenaki (aka Tarratines), which began in 1615. He then retreated to a hill on the banks of the Mystic River (in Medford), where he built a house and fortified himself. The Abenaki pursued him to his retreat and killed him in 1619. At his death, his widow became sachem because his sons were too young to rule. After about a decade, however, the two eldest sons were old enough that the English recognized them as chiefs in Charlestown and Saugus. They both died in 1633, so again there was no sachem. The settlers' deeds were executed with the Squaw Sachem. In some of those documents, her name is joined with that of her second husband, Web Cowet, a "great physician," whom she married before 1635.

The Squaw Sachem conducted raids against tribes that tried to encroach on her territory. These raids ceased after 1625, because her tribe had gotten too small for such aggressive action. To survive, she had to establish a friendly relationship with the English colonists. Following is the text of the agreement by which she sold Menotomy and adjacent land to the colonists.

" The 15th of the 2d mo.,1639.

Wee Web-Cowet and Squaw Sachem do sell vnto the Inhabitants of the Towne of Charlestowne, all the land within the line granted them bythe court, (excepting the farmes and the ground, on the west of the two great Ponds called Misticke ponds, from the south side of Mr. Nowell's lott, neere the vpper end of the Ponds, vnto the little runnet that cometh from Capt. Cook's mills, which the



Squaw reserveth to their vse, for her life, for the Indians to to plant and hunt vpon, and the weare above the pons, they also reserve for the Indians to fish at whiles the Squaw liveth, and after the death of Squaw Sachem, she doth leave all her lands from Mr. Mayhue's house to neere Salem to the present Governor, Mr. John Winthrop, Sen'r, Mr. Increase Nowell, Mr. John Wilson, Mr. Edward Gibbons to dispose of, and all Indians to depart, and for sattisfactio from Charlestowne, wee acknowledge to have received in full sattisfaction, twenty and one coates, ninten fathom of wampom, and three bushels of corne: In witness wherof we have here vnto sett o'r hands the day and yeare above named. the marke of Squaw Sachem, the marke of Web Cowet."

There are records of several other sales of land by the Squaw Sachem and Web Cowet to the English settlers. In addition to the proceeds from such sales, they received help and goods from the settlers. In May 1640, Cambridge was ordered to give the Squaw Sachem a coat every winter for life. In 1641, Cambridge was enjoined to give her 35 bushels of corn and four coats (for two years). In 1643, the court granted her gunpowder and shot and ordered "her piece to be mended." The Squaw Sachem died circa 1667. She was buried in what is now Medford; the exact location is unknown.

### *Post-Colonial Era*

When first settled by the English around 1635, Arlington was known as Menotomy and was part of Cambridge. Almost 200 years later, in 1807, Arlington was incorporated as West Cambridge. In 1850 a part of West Cambridge was annexed to Winchester and in 1856 another part of West Cambridge was separated to create Belmont. Arlington adopted its present name in 1867 to honor civil war veterans buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

In Arlington's early colonial years, industry and agriculture thrived. Gristmills for corn and wheat, sawmills, ice harvesting, dairying and market gardening provided work for Town residents. Small family-owned mills along Mill Brook and its series of millponds also powered shoemaking,

calico printing, woodturning, paint grinding, and other industries. The industrial and agricultural nature of the community began to change with transportation improvements, notably the construction of a railroad in 1846 and later the use of electric streetcars (Neckar and Zellie 1980).

The historic Old Schwamb Mill on Mill Lane reflects the changing character and economic foundation of the Town over time (Old Schwamb Mill 1993). The mill was established in 1650 at the Foot of the Rocks as a gristmill and saw mill, where water-powered millstones ground grains and spices and where logs were sawn into planks. In 1864 Charles Schwamb, a German immigrant woodworker, and his partner converted the mill into a woodworking shop for the manufacture of high-quality oval and circular picture frames and picture frame moldings. The business thrived for 105 years, until the late 1960s, when cheap imports and other technologies reduced demand for high-quality wooden frames. The mill was protected by a group of Arlington preservationists and established as a working museum in 1969.

By the late 1800s, the Town's character changed dramatically, as Arlington became part of the greater Boston metropolitan area, both economically and socially. Civic and state leaders became aware of the need to preserve the Town's open space, and in 1896 land was assembled to create the Town-owned Menotomy Rocks Park (Mattheisen 1996). As the twentieth century progressed, however, the development of businesses, new homes and road construction began depleting more and more of the Town's land (Neckar and Zellie 1980). The post-World War II home-building boom was significant in some lowland areas of the Town that previously had been preserved in farmland and floodplains.

Until 1972, when Arlington put a development moratorium on building permits, commercial and residential development boomed. In 1975, after overhauling many of its zoning bylaws, the Town adopted a modified set to better regulate development. The 1975 zoning bylaws did not save much open space, however, because the Town had little open space left to save by that time. The effect of this intense history of development remains visible in Arlington today.

## C. Population 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 statistical demographics and then analyzes how Arlington's open space planning can respond to those demographics.

Unless otherwise noted, the 2010 U.S. Census provides the demographic statistics referenced in this subsection. Though collected five years ago, these data continue to be the most up-to-date and reliable that exist currently. The 2010 Census documents 42,844 residents in Arlington. This represents a small gain since 2000, when the population was 42,389. The 2010 population statistics show that the majority of Arlington's population is between 20 and 64 years of age. In general, the age ranges of under 14 years old and 55-64 have shown increases and the rest of the age cohorts have shown various levels of decline. Overall, Arlington is seeing an aging population where the median age is 41.7 in 2010 compared to 37 in 1990 and 39.5 in 2000. The Town's 18,969 households have declined slightly in number from 19,011 in 2000 but increased slightly in size from 2.22 to 2.24 occupants since 2000.

As recorded in the 2010 Census, Arlington's 5.5 square miles (5.2 sq. mi. in land, .3 sq. mi. in water) were populated with 42,844 people, presenting a population density of about 7,790 persons per square mile—far more than 2,082 persons per square mile, which is the average population density of other MAPC member communities. With the exception of Lexington, the cities and towns abutting Arlington also have a relatively high population density average, indicating that abundant open space resources for Arlington residents are not available nearby.

More evidence of Arlington's densely settled residential character is the relatively small size of its average house lot (6,800 square feet). Small house lots mean that residents may not have ample yard space for recreation and may need to use Town-owned resources. The results of the 2014 Vision 2020 Open Space Survey indicated that residents desire more

natural open space areas, swimming and ice skating facilities, off-leash dog walking areas, and community garden space (see Appendix B).

### *Population Statistics*

This section uses information from the 2010 U.S. Census, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and the University of Massachusetts-based Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER). The following population data and projections represent our best understanding of current population configurations and estimates.

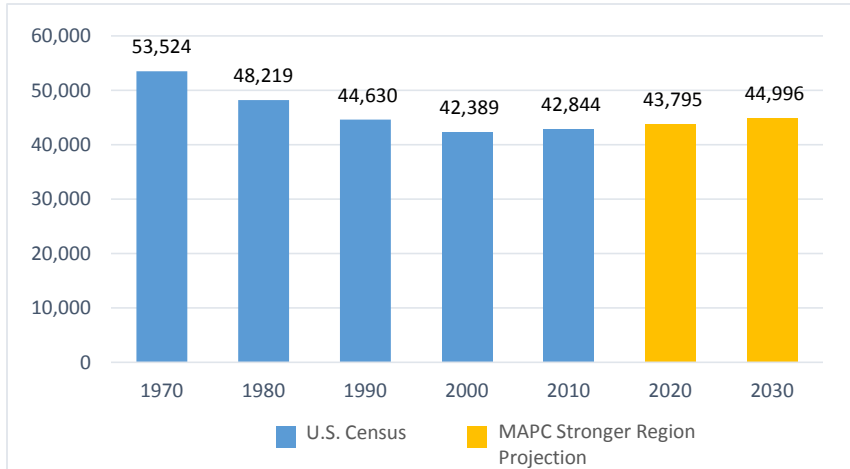
#### ***Arlington's Current and Projected Population***

As mentioned, the 2010 U.S. Census reported that Arlington had a population of 42,844 persons. Figure 3-1 shows that Arlington's population has declined from a peak of more than 53,000 in 1970 to 42,389 in 2000. This loss of population is related to such national trends as declining birth rate, aging population, and smaller household size. However the 2010 U.S. Census indicated a slight population gain of 455 people between 2000 and 2010. Furthermore, according to the Metro Boston Population and Housing Demand Projections conducted by MAPC in 2014, Arlington will continue to expect a growing population through 2030 under the Stronger Region scenario<sup>2</sup>. Arlington is projected to have a population of nearly 45,000 by 2030.

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<sup>2</sup> MAPC projections include two scenarios for regional growth. Each scenario reflects different assumptions about key trends. The "Status Quo" scenario is based on the continuation of existing rates of births, deaths, migration, and housing occupancy. Alternatively, the "Stronger Region" scenario explores how changing trends could result in higher population growth, greater housing demand, and a substantially larger workforce. The "Stronger Region" scenario is considered in this study as more comprehensive and dynamic, and therefore is used for demographic trend analysis.

**Figure 3-1. Population Trends, Arlington, 1970-2030**



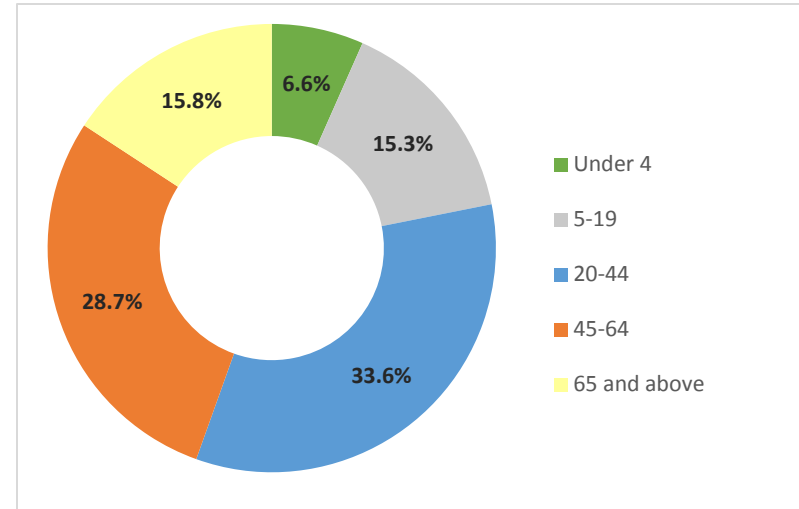
Source: U.S. Census and MAPC. *Metro Boston Population and Housing Demand Projections, 2014* (<http://www.mapc.org>).

**Age Distribution of Arlington Residents**

Change in the size of Arlington's population is one of the factors causing changes in the age composition of its residents. Figure 3-2a indicates the 2010 age composition for Arlington residents while Figure 3-2b shows the change of age composition between 2000 and 2010.

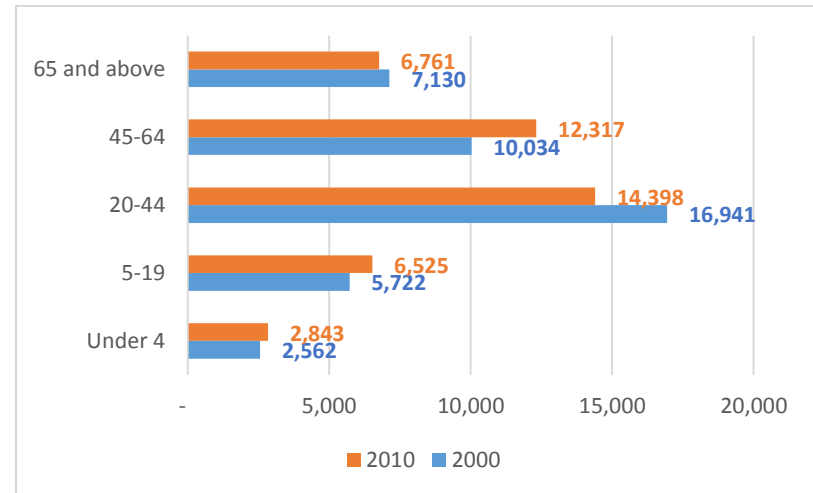
The 2010 data show that most of Arlington's population is between 20 and 64 years of age. The town has seen slight population growth in the infant and young child group and in those 5 to 19 over the decade. The most significant population increase occurred among people between 45 and 64 years (the Baby Boomers). Yet the adult population ages 20 to 44 declined significantly during the same period, in addition to a slight decrease in elderly population above 65 years. Given the significant increase in the 45-64 cohort, the Town can expect that the elderly population is likely to increase dramatically between now and 2030. Overall, Arlington is seeing an aging population where the median age is 41.7 in 2010 compared to 37 in 1990 and 39.5 in 2000.

**Figure 3-2a. Age Distribution of Arlington Residents, 2010**



Source: U.S. Census.

**Figure 3-2b. Change of Age Distribution of Arlington Residents, 2000 and 2010**



Source: U.S. Census.

## Employment Characteristics

Arlington's residents are predominantly employed in white-collar managerial, professional, or technical jobs. Among Arlington's 23,733 civilian employed population 16 years and over in 2010, nearly 64 percent have management, business, science, and arts occupations. More than 21 percent of the Town's employed residents work in sales and office related industries, and nearly 9 percent are employed in the service sector.

The number of people working in jobs requiring manual labor, such as construction, maintenance, production, transportation and material moving, has been declining since 1970, and they together account for 6.4 percent of Arlington's employed population in 2010. Although Arlington has lost most of its industrial and manufacturing employers, the Town has a growing service sector, including retail, medical and information technology, and restaurants and food-related services. While the majority of Arlington residents work outside of the Town, a growing number of residents have home offices in Arlington.

Perhaps because of Arlington's proximity to many Boston and Cambridge-area universities and colleges, the Town is also home to many people associated with higher education, such as teachers, professors, graduate students, and staff. Also, due to Arlington's close location to Boston, Cambridge, and Routes 2, 93, and 128, the Town is an ideal place for entrepreneurs and technology-based small businesses, many of which start as "kitchen-table" enterprises and provide employment on a part-time or small-scale basis.

## Environmental Justice Populations

According to MassGIS data definitions, Arlington has six environmental justice block groups out of 44 (13.6 percent). The total population in these block groups was 7,333 in 2010, or 17.1 percent of the total population of 42,844. The two relevant MassGIS definitions for EJ populations are:

- *Minority: Any Block Group with a % Minority  $\geq$  %25*
- *Income: Any Block Group with a median household income in 2010 (B19013) less than or equal to \$40,673.*

## Minority Characteristics

Arlington has limited racial and ethnic diversity, but there is a growing foreign-born population and some people speak languages other than English at home. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 85.7 percent of Arlington's population is white, with racial minorities comprising 14.3 percent. The majority of this group, and the fastest growing race, is Asian (8.3 percent, mostly Asian Indian and Chinese), with 2.4 percent identifying as African American and 2.5 percent identifying two or more races. Only 3.3 percent identify as Hispanic or Latino, but they may be of any race. By contrast, minorities account for 27 percent of the Boston metropolitan area's population and 23.5 percent of Middlesex County's total population (U.S. Census Bureau 2010).

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 most cities and towns around Arlington. In addition, Arlington has fewer residents for whom English is not their native language. Still, the presence of an ancestrally mixed foreign-born population – with many families from China, India, Japan, Russia, Italy, Ireland, and Greece – sheds light on why so many residents think of Arlington as a diverse town.

## Income Characteristics

A comparison of 1999 U.S. Census data and 2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates are used for income characteristics analysis. The figures in Table 3-1 show increases of income for all households including family and nonfamily households, at a growth rate of respectively 34 percent and 36 percent between 1999 and 2010. Overall, Arlington's median household income exceeded that of Middlesex County and the state as a whole. Approximately 39 percent of all Arlington households had annual incomes over \$100,000 in 2010, including families and nonfamilies.

Despite Arlington's relatively low poverty rates in the Boston Metro area, approximately 4.9 percent of Arlington's population is determined as living

**Table 3-1. Median Income in Arlington and Middlesex County, 1999 and 2010**

	1999			2010		
	Arlington	Middlesex County	MA	Arlington	Middlesex County	MA
Median family income (persons living in a household who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption)	\$78,741	\$74,194	\$61,664	\$105,316	\$97,382	\$81,165
Median non-family household income (persons living in a household who are not related by birth, marriage, or adoption)	\$42,269	\$36,954	\$29,774	\$57,656	\$46,680	\$37,606
Median household income (avg. of both family and non-family households)	\$64,344	\$60,821	\$50,502	\$82,771	\$77,377	\$64,509

Source: U.S. Census.

below the poverty level. Approximately 25.5 percent of households receive Social Security income in 2010, with another 6.6 percent receiving Supplemental Security Income, public assistance income, or Food Stamp/SNAP assistance. The childhood poverty rate was very low at 2.3 percent, but the poverty rate for seniors was 7.5 percent.

**Characteristics of EJ Block Groups**

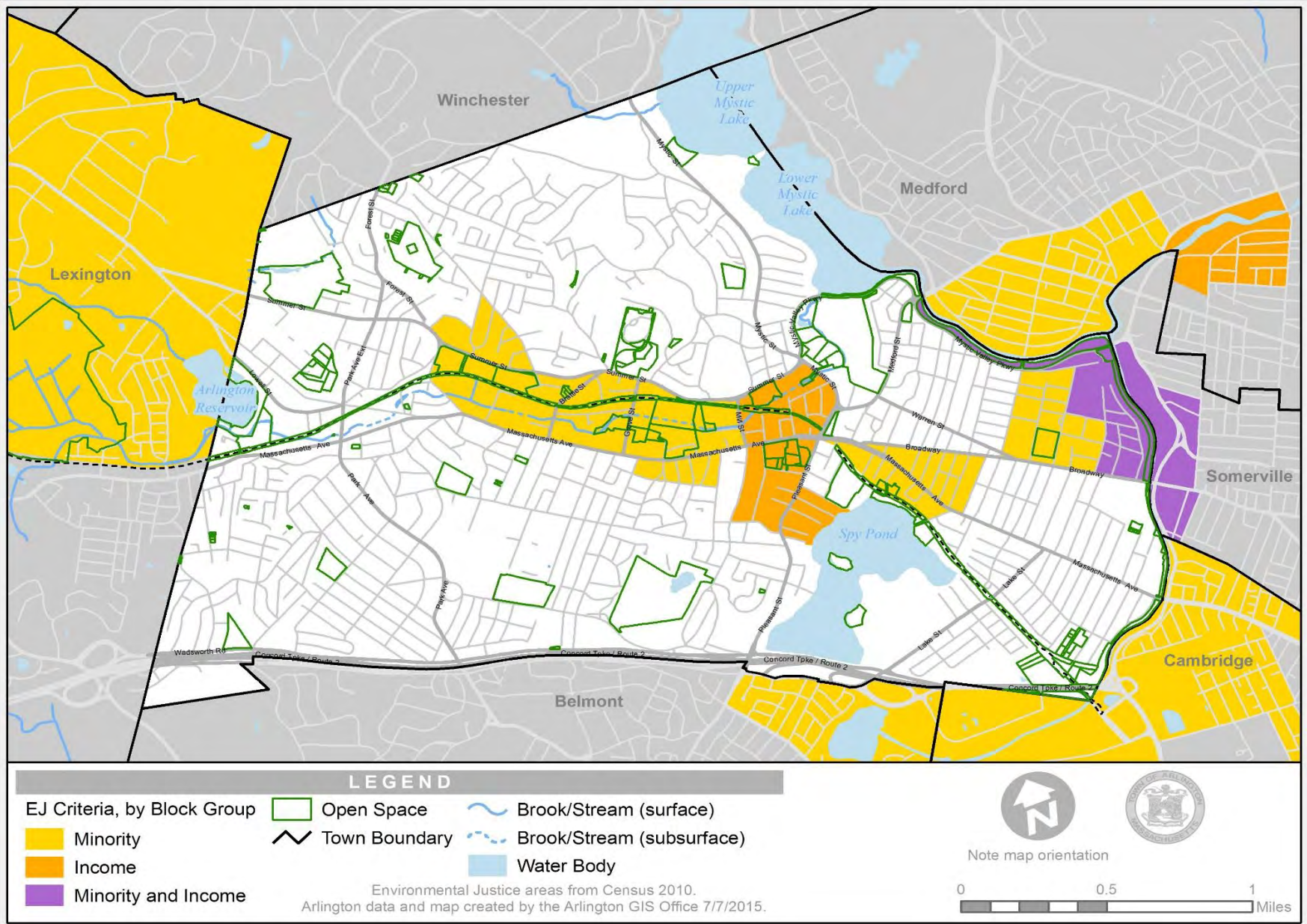
The six MassGIS designated environmental justice block groups in Arlington are shown in Map 3-5 and briefly described below:

- Two Minority areas west of Arlington Center and north of Mass Ave and – many large apartment buildings and multi-family homes with rental units, close to mass transit, some commercial development;
- Minority area east of the Center between Mass Ave and Broadway – many two- and three-family homes, close to mass transit, some commercial development;
- Income area in Arlington Center – commercial district and location of several group homes for adults and juveniles, elderly and disabled housing managed by the Arlington Housing Authority, and clusters of larger condos and rental apartments;
- Two areas, one Minority and the other Minority/Income, in East Arlington adjacent to Somerville and Medford – Thompson School district with the town's most diverse student body; Menotomy Manor public housing complex; multiple apartment buildings.

These areas are different from other outlying single-family and two-family neighborhoods in Arlington due to their proximity to denser and more urbanized areas of Somerville and Medford, and their concentration around the commercial spine of Massachusetts Avenue, where larger rental apartment buildings and public housing complexes are also located.

Nevertheless, all of these areas are close to open space and recreational resources, as shown on the map. Since Arlington is a compact town, access to other facilities is also quite easy. The minority or income areas in the center are adjacent to the mass transit on Mass. Avenue and are bisected by or adjacent to both the Minuteman Bikeway and the Mill Brook corridor. They are also near numerous playgrounds, parks, and playing fields (i.e., Summer Street Sports Complex, Buzzell fields, and Spy Pond), and they are close to the Civic Block of administrative and historic resources. The East Arlington area is adjacent to state DCR land along the Alewife Brook and Mystic Brook Reservations, and the North Union Park and Lussiano Field next to the Thompson School.

**Map 3-5. Environmental Justice Populations in Arlington**



## *People with Disabilities*

In 2012, about 3,600 Arlington residents (8.5 percent of the population of about 42,800) had some sort of mobility and/or self-care limitations; approximately 1,752 people with disability, or 26 percent of the total population, are 65 years and over (U.S. Census Bureau 2008-2012).

## *Population Impacts on Open Space Needs*

The following discussion is based on Arlington's population demographics and is not a final open space needs analysis. Refer to chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 for analysis and detail on the Town's open space goals, needs, objectives, and actions.

### **Senior Citizens' Needs**

Arlington residents over 65 comprised about 16 percent of the population in 2010, a slight decrease from 17 percent in 2000. Arlington will need to continue planning for the open space needs of senior citizens and increasing their access to facilities. Some senior residents in Arlington live on limited or fixed incomes; thus, while many Town residents can travel for their recreational needs and enjoy sports requiring expensive equipment or large amounts of open space, many senior citizen residents need open space and recreation resources that are easily accessible by walking or public transportation in all seasons. For example, over the past several years the Town has contracted for the Minuteman Bikeway to be plowed after snowstorms, for both bicycle commuters and pedestrians.

Also, although there are a number of indoor facilities and programs for senior citizens, they need more programmed outdoor activities, especially as seniors remain stronger and healthier longer than in the past. Areas for passive recreation, such as walking, picnicking and bird watching, and events for the elderly, such as sightseeing tours, are popular with the over 65 group and should be made more easily accessible and available to them. Installing benches and establishing rest areas at recreational areas, commercial pedestrian spaces and local neighborhood parks may help to make some open spaces more accessible to the elderly. For example, a

new multi-generational park with bocce court and game tables was built as part of renovations around the Summer Street Sports Complex in 2011.

### **Adults' Needs**

Arlington residents between the ages of 20 and 44 comprised 33.6 percent of Arlington's population in 2010, and those between the ages of 45 and 64 accounted for 28.7 percent, totaling over 62 percent of the population. Although the 20-44 age group is projected to decline, the 45-64 group will increase. Thus the adult population, not including senior citizens, will likely be about 60 percent. These residents need active recreational facilities and resources for ball sports and biking, and passive recreation resources to enjoy activities such as picnicking and watching wildlife.

### **Toddlers', Children's and Teens' Needs**

Toddlers, children and teens (ages 0-19) make up almost 22 percent of Arlington's population according to the 2010 U.S. Census, up from 20 percent in 2000. Arlington has limited park and recreation space for the number of young people in Town, and existing spaces are not evenly distributed throughout the neighborhoods. The household demographic trend points to a continued need for parks and play areas for very young children, including ample access to Spy Pond, the Reservoir, and other waterways for walking and observing wildlife. The Town is experiencing increased demands for playing fields for soccer, baseball, lacrosse and football by both boys' and girls' teams at Arlington High School and Arlington Catholic High School, as well as growing demands by league sports, especially soccer and baseball, for youngsters of all ages.

### **People with Disabilities' Needs**

Almost 8.5 percent of Arlington's population has some kind of mobility or self-care limitation (U.S. Census Bureau 2008-2012) and the Town will continue to increase the amount of open spaces accessible to people with disabilities, particularly parks, playgrounds, and passive recreation areas.

Under the national Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Town has an obligation to plan for people

with disabilities to participate in all aspects of Town government (see Appendix D). In 2014 the Town and the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHDC) completed an ADA study that focused on parks and recreational sites and programs (see Appendix E).

Arlington makes it a point to ensure the inclusion of people of all ages and abilities in Town open space activities. For instance, people with disabilities are explicitly invited (in the Town's seasonal recreation pamphlet) to participate in Arlington Recreation Department activities and programs. Furthermore, the Park and Recreation Commission assures accessibility for people with disabilities in all of its renovation and expansion plans. And, as part of new capital investments, Town policy is to upgrade its open space facilities to national accessibility standards for people with disabilities.

### ***Cross-age Group Needs***

Arlington needs to better maintain its parks, playgrounds, and team playing fields for the recreational enjoyment of Arlington residents of all ages. The Park and Recreation Commission regularly assesses the needs for improving the Town's recreational facilities and has developed a multi-year capital planning process for scheduling park and playground renovations.

### ***Low-income and Minority Family Needs***

While Arlington is primarily a middle-income community, approximately 4.9 percent of the population is determined as living below the poverty level, and several neighborhoods have been designated as environmental justice areas based on minority status and/or income. Approximately 25.5 percent of all households in Arlington received Social Security income in 2010, with another 6.6 percent receiving Supplemental Security Income, public assistance income or Food Stamp/SNAP assistance. Thus, despite the increase in average household income, the Town still needs to address the percentage of its population that cannot afford to spend time and money to access recreation programs, especially those requiring fees.

The Arlington Boys and Girls Club, Fidelity House, Boy and Girl Scouts, and various church groups, sports leagues and clubs offer their recreation programs to all residents, regardless of income level. Community

Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds help to subsidize scholarships for these programs. Many private groups also offer assistance (through scholarships and other methods) to people in need.

### ***Summary of Needs***

User needs for and concerns about access to open space and recreational facilities for all ages have persisted in recent years. Demands on parks, playgrounds, and playing fields for youth and adult activities are recognized throughout the Town. Volunteer neighborhood groups have worked with the Park and Recreation Commission to organize tot lots and playground renovations in several areas. The proliferation of Friends groups to support parks such as Menotomy Rocks, Robbins Farm, and Spy Pond also illustrates the need and desire of citizens to be directly involved in their neighborhood open space resources, and to supplement Town efforts on maintenance and beautification projects.

Arlington is also more actively committed to providing additional affordable housing, elderly housing, and assisted living facilities for low-income and elderly residents, and their needs for open space and recreational facilities must be addressed. In addition, new condominium and rental apartments near Arlington Center and the Arlington 360 apartments at the former Symmes Hospital site are attracting younger working people who appreciate the convenience of Arlington, as well as its suburban character, restaurants, and recreational opportunities, especially the Minuteman Bikeway. The resulting increased use of these resources means that even more attention to maintenance will be needed in the future.



## D. Growth and Development Patterns

### Land Use Patterns and Trends

Arlington has evolved from a farming community during colonial times to a Town where roughly 88 percent of the land available for development is currently developed for a combination of residential and commercial uses. Because Arlington is almost completely developed, it is unlikely that significant change in the land use patterns will occur.

The majority of Arlington's land use today is residential (72 percent). Arlington has a base of single-family homes, but sizable portions of Arlington's population live in two-and-three family homes, condominiums, and apartment buildings. House lots in Arlington are generally quite small (3,500 to 9,000 square feet – an average of 6,800 square feet) and do not usually provide sufficient recreational space. Residents, therefore, rely on the Town's open space, which is also quite limited because of Arlington's population density.

#### Arlington's Land Use

Arlington contains 3,509.9 acres within its borders. Arlington's land use, divided by 19 zoning designations and acreage, is shown in Table 3-3.

#### Arlington Zoning and Open Space

Arlington Town Meeting in 2001 voted to approve the creation of an open space district, increasing the number of zoning districts to 19. 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 to those designated sites. Eight of Arlington's other zones are residential, six are business, and the others are zones for special uses, such as industry and transportation.

**Table 3-3. Arlington's Zoning Districts by Land Area**

Zoning District (Abbr.)	District Name	Acres	Zoning District (Abbr.)	District Name	Acres
R0	Large Lot Single Family	238.2	B1	Neighborhood Office	25.9
R1	Single Family	1,771.5	B2	Neighborhood Business	16.9
R2	Two Family	619.7	B2A	Major Business	22.2
R3	Three Family	8.3	B3	Village Business	30.2
R4	Town House	19.4	B4	Vehicular Oriented Business	30.0
R5	Apartments Low Density	63.7	B5	Central Business	10.3
R6	Apartments Medium Density	49.0	I	Industrial	48.7
R7	Apartments High Density	18.7	MU	Multi-Use	18.0
OS	Open Space	275.9	T	Transportation	0.8
PUD	Planned Unit Development	16.2			
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 3,509.89 acres (5.6 sq. mi.) as found in the 2015 Arlington Master Plan.

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.<sup>3</sup> Most major development projects have to undergo EDR by Arlington's Redevelopment Board. EDRs have strict review standards. As part of the

<sup>3</sup> Special permits are regulated under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40A, "The Zoning Act." The other special permit granting authority in Arlington is the Zoning Board of Appeals. Arlington grants special permits for uses that are desirable but that need special consideration and attention to limit any possible adverse impact.

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 also provide buffer zones between adjacent land uses.

Projects that undergo EDR are typically located along major thoroughfares. These projects have an important effect on Arlington's open space system. For example, when conducting an EDR on a proposed development, the Arlington Redevelopment Board considers the site's proximity to major or significant open space. If the proposed site abutted the Minuteman Bikeway, for instance, the proposed project would be reviewed in terms of its relationship to the Bikeway. The Board might then recommend that the proposed project offer access to and from the bikeway. Projects near major water bodies or special features, such as entryways into the Town, would also undergo careful EDR. An EDR enhances Arlington's character and assures that major development parcels will maximize visual potential and consider their relation to the surrounding environment.

### *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 residential development has increased in recent years.

### *Transportation Systems*

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

- The Town's well-developed road system consists of 102 miles of public streets, 23 miles of private streets, and 6 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 11 miles through Lexington and into Bedford. In recent years, bike lanes and shared use designations have been marked on many sections of Massachusetts Avenue and on a few other Town roads.

- The Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) provides bus service that connects to the Alewife T Station, to parts of Cambridge (including Harvard Square), and to other communities, including Somerville, Lexington, Bedford, Medford, and Burlington. The MBTA also provides The Ride, a van for low-income handicapped residents.
- The Council on Aging provides a jitney (van) service called "Dial-A-Ride." This service provides individualized routes and time of service to suit peoples' transportation needs. This service is supported by a federal grant for people with disabilities, the elderly, and lower-income people. The Council 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.

### *Water Supply Systems*

Arlington receives its drinking water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). Very few wells remain in Arlington, so they do not play a significant role in long-term planning.

### *Sewer Service*

The MWRA disposes of Arlington's sewage. Arlington's sewer system consists of approximately 117 miles of pipe. There are five combined sewer outfalls (CSOs) on Alewife Brook between Massachusetts Avenue and the Mystic River (from the Somerville and Cambridge sides). The MWRA has proposed significant improvements to these outfalls to reduce wet weather discharges to Alewife Brook, and some work has been done. While the MWRA Sewer System serves the entire Town, a small number of septic systems remain in Arlington.

### *Long-term Development Patterns*

As mentioned, the long-term development patterns of Arlington are already in place since the Town is almost fully developed. Land use regulatory policy now centers more around the redevelopment of existing sites and regulation by special permit for new uses rather than new subdivision control. The town is preparing a master plan (to be completed in 2015) to look 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.

Control of land subdivision rests with the Arlington Redevelopment Board, acting in its capacity 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. This arrangement is unusual in Massachusetts (usually the Town planning board is in control of subdivision) and is due to historical factors in the Town's early-twentieth-century development. Arlington's Department of Planning and Community Development provides planning research and advice to Town officials and boards.

Arlington's Zoning Map 3-6 shows the Town's 19 zoning districts, including single- and multi-family residential, open space, business, transportation, industrial, multi-use (MU), and planned unit development (PUD).

### *Long-term Changes to Land Use Patterns*

The existing pattern of Arlington's land use may evolve naturally over time with changes in local or regional circumstances, but major changes are not anticipated.

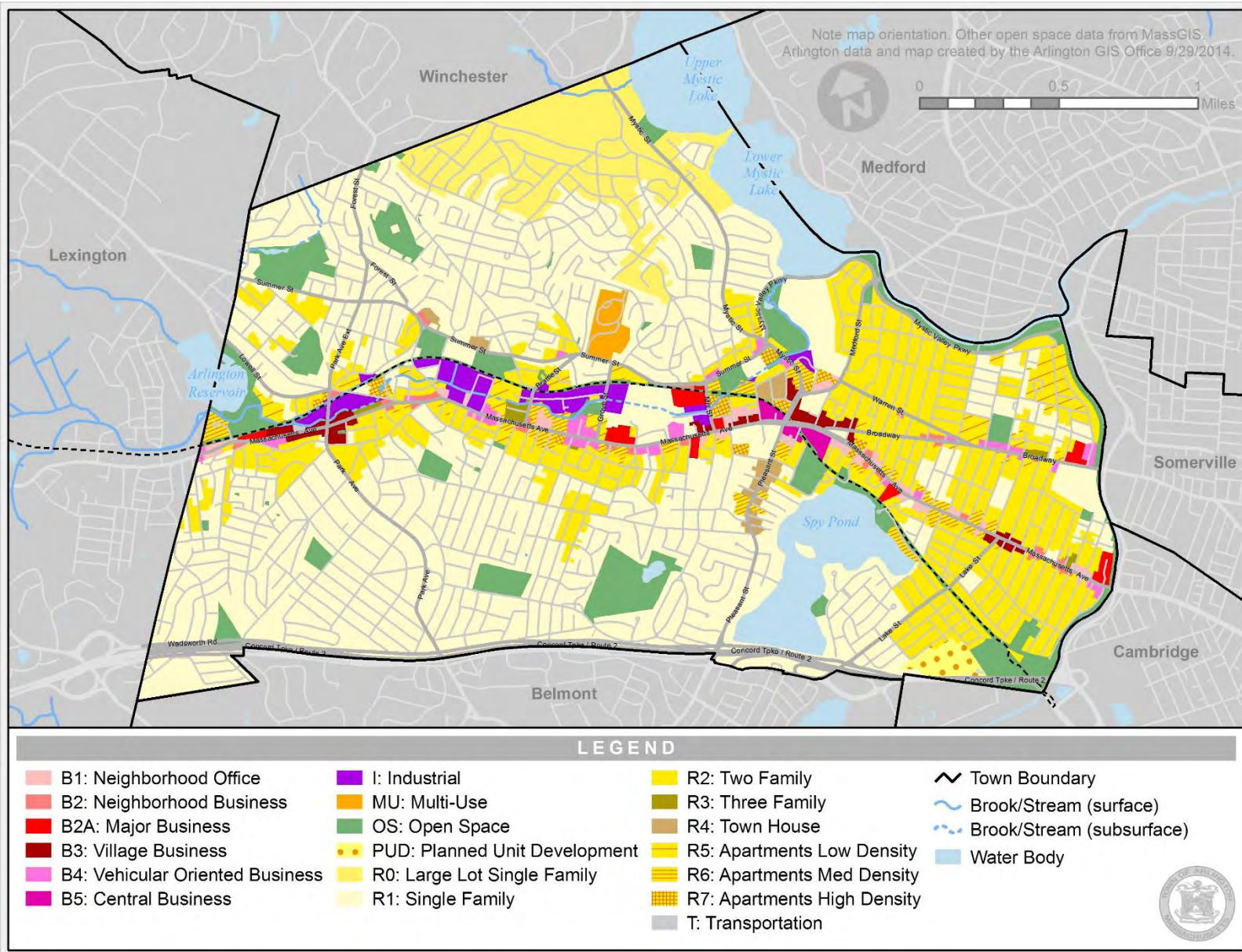
A significant circumstance that could change Arlington's land use patterns would be economic pressure for even more intense development that would cause the rezoning of land. Arlington has only a few vacant properties with development potential. Usually, though, these properties also have development constraints. For instance, the undeveloped land that comprises the Mugar site, located in East Arlington, is largely wetlands

and floodplains, although it has been the subject of numerous development proposals. Town Meeting has voted several times to protect the property as open space.

Arlington is now focused more on preservation of existing protected lands and on acquisition of small parcels of open space where possible. Open space acquisition will likely occur on a piecemeal basis when properties in which the Town has interest come up for sale on the open market.

### *Build-out Analysis*

Because Arlington 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 zoning. This type of analysis is more revealing for rural or more suburban communities than for an older developed suburb like Arlington.



Map 3-6. Arlington's Zoning Map

Town of Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2015-2022  
3-Community Setting

# 4

## Environmental Inventory and Analysis

### A. Topography, Geology, and Soils

Arlington is situated in the Coastal Plain of Eastern Massachusetts. Approximately 8 percent (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 (see Map 4-1).

#### *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'), 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. 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.

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.

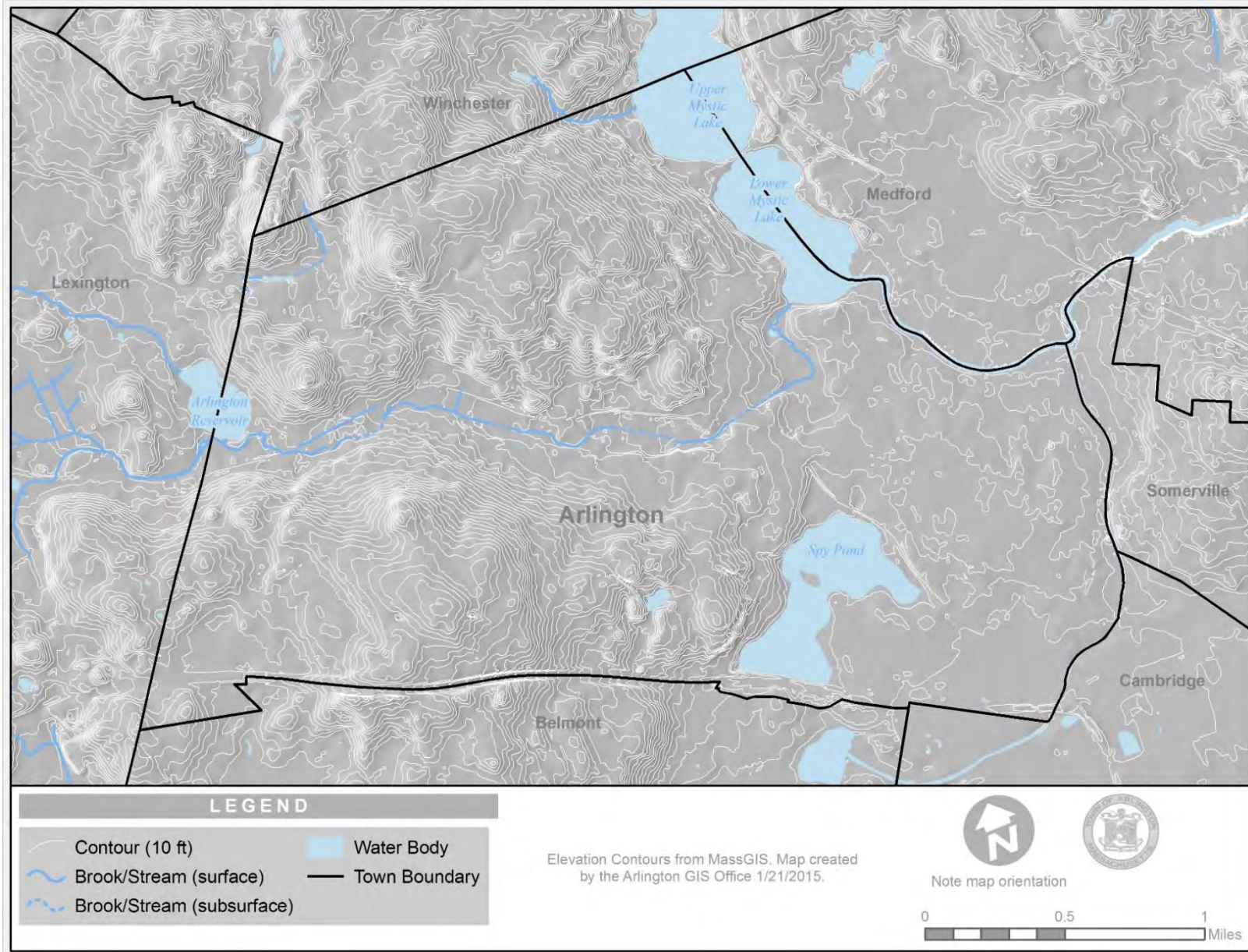
#### *Soils*

Most of the soils in Arlington 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 percent. 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 3-15 percent slopes and tend to be silty loam.

East Arlington contains primarily a Merrimac-Urban Land Complex soil found on 0-8 percent slopes. Merrimac soils are excessively drained soils on glacial outwash plains and are sandy loams over a loose sand and gravel

**Map 4-1. Topography at Ten-foot Intervals in and around Arlington**



layer at 18-30 inches (adapted from McLaughlin 1994, 13). These soils contain approximately 75 percent urban land/disturbed soils. There are also some pockets of Sandy Unorthents and Unorthents wet substratum soils by the lakes, streams, and wet areas. Unorthents soils have "been excavated and/or deposited due to construction operations" (USDA Soil Conservation 1991, 27). Map 4-2 shows the location of Arlington's most prominent soils and special landscape features.

## 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 (see Map 4-4).

Arlington's most common soils and topographical and geological characteristics pose little hindrance to potential development or redevelopment. The majority of buildable land has already been used for housing development, and very little land is available for other purposes, including open space and recreational use. Nevertheless, water resources, parks, and other recreational facilities are found in neighborhoods throughout the town. Only one significant parcel, the Mugar land in East Arlington, is still undeveloped, but it is largely wetland and has limited potential for extensive development of any kind.

## 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. Map 4-3 shows Arlington's water resources, wetlands, and floodplains based on recent FEMA analysis.

### *Watersheds*

As indicated on Map 4-3, over 90 percent 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, which is open to Arlington residents and the general public, is 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 of Arlington. Information is 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. The series is filmed by the local public access TV station and archived for future viewing.

The offices of the Mystic River Watershed Association (<http://mysticriver.org/>) are located in Arlington, and the organization has been actively involved with the town in a number of ways. One recent program has been the creation of demonstration rain gardens on public properties to manage stormwater runoff.

## Surface Water

Surface water makes up roughly 8 percent (286 acres) of Arlington’s area (3,517.5 acres). The numerous water bodies make water resources a unique attribute of the town and its open space assets, compared to other metro-Boston communities (see 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 Streams
Arlington Reservoir	Alewife Brook
Hill’s Pond	Mill Brook
Lower Mystic Lake	Mystic River
Upper Mystic Lake	Reed’s Brook
Spy Pond	

According to the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) 314 CMR 4.00 (as most recently amended in December 2013), all Arlington water resources have a classification of B or better, indicating either the water body's current class or its goal classification. The DEP defines waters classified as B or better as water bodies that "are designated as a habitat for fish, other aquatic life, and wildlife, including for their reproduction, migration, growth and other critical functions, and for primary and secondary contact recreation."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See DEP Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards - 314 CMR 4.05(3)b).

## Aquifer Recharge Areas

There are no existing or potential drinking water supply aquifers in Arlington. There are also to our knowledge no private drinking water wells in the town. As mentioned earlier, Arlington imports water from the MWRA for its domestic and commercial consumption; therefore, the issue of aquifer recharge is not relevant to Arlington.

## Flood Hazard Areas

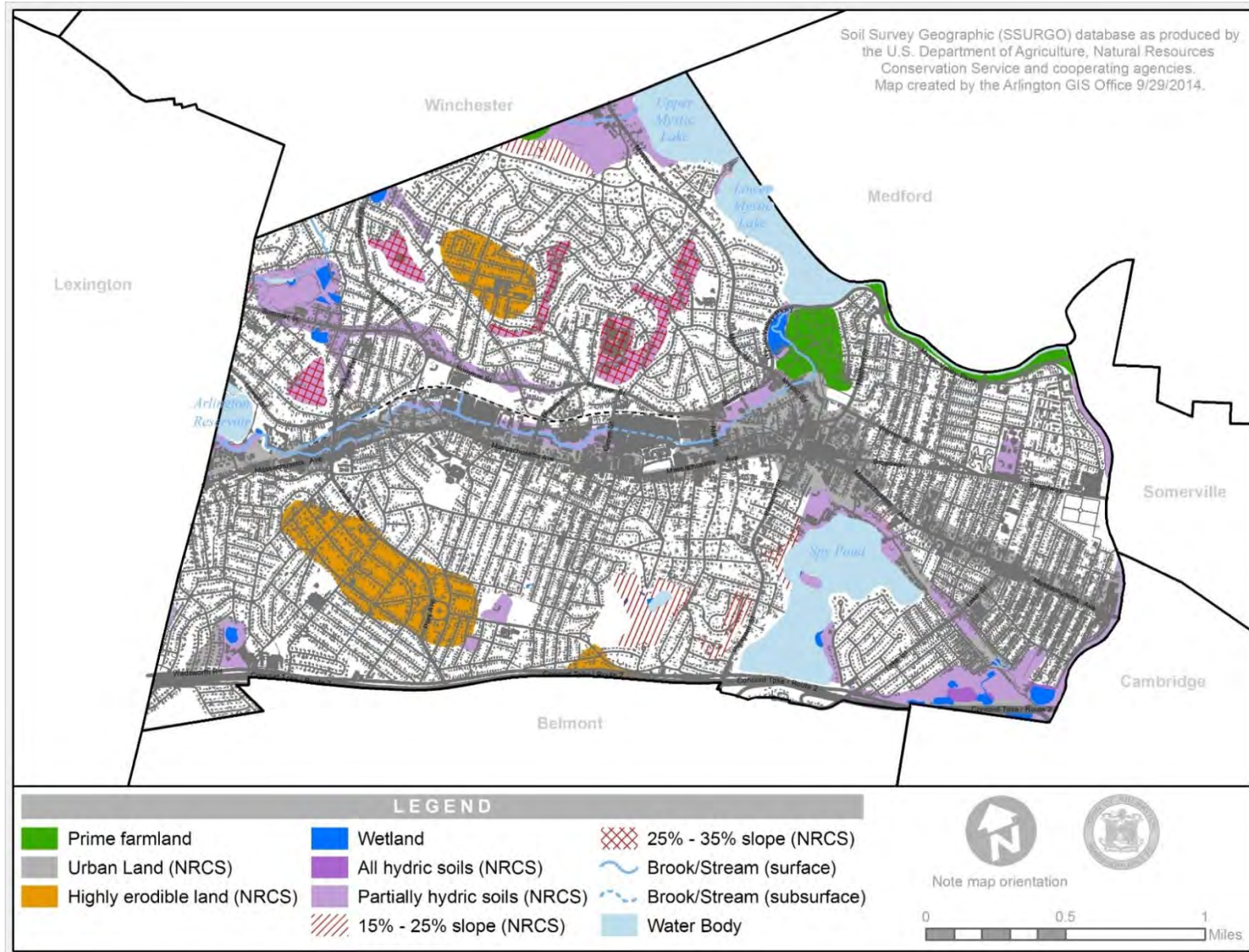
Major flooding problems caused by severe storms have been experienced every few years. The areas around Reed’s Brook (northwest), Mill Brook (central corridor), and Alewife Brook and the so-called Mugar property wetlands in East Arlington were particularly affected. A recently proposed development project on the privately owned Mugar property is of particular concern because of the history of flooding in that part of town, and throughout the highly developed Cambridge-Belmont-Arlington region, which was part of the Great Swamp dating to the colonial period. The FEMA 100-year floodplain areas are shown in yellow on Map 4-3.

## Wetlands

Arlington's wetlands provide opportunities for nature observation, as well as walking and bird watching in adjacent uplands. The largest wetland area in Arlington in 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. As noted, the area of southeastern Arlington in and around the Mugar property is another significant wetland zone. Some of the wetland areas are used as open space and recreational resources, such as McClennen Park in the Reed's Brook area of northwestern Arlington, and Poet's Corner in the southwestern corner.

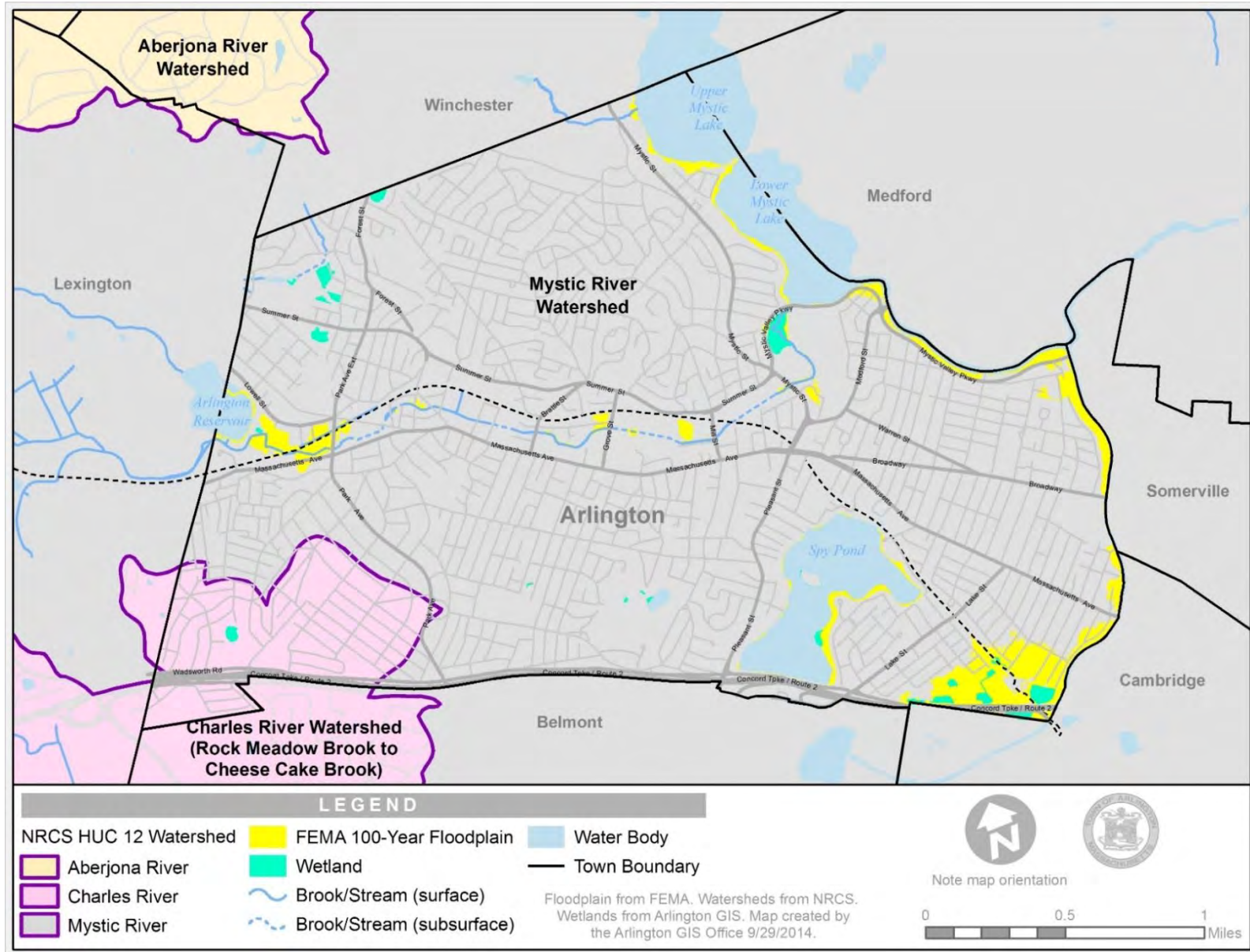


Map 4-2. Soils and Special Landscape Features



Town of Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2015-2022  
4-Environmental Inventory and Analysis

Map 4-3. Water Resources, Wetlands, and Floodplains



## 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. The Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest (Chapter 5) 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 and Belmont. Access points to walking paths along the brook 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 phragmites marsh adjacent to the brook. DCR's construction of the Alewife Brook Greenway linking the Minuteman Bikeway and Mystic Valley Parkway with a walking and bicycling path along the brook has increased access and enhanced landscaping in the area since its completion in 2013.

However, recently constructed and proposed residential and commercial developments in Arlington, Belmont, and Cambridge continue to threaten the hydrology and nature of the upper Alewife Brook drainage area. The threat of flooding conditions to wildlife habitat, native vegetation, and public access for passive recreation is very serious and has 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, one of the few left in the Boston area. The brook and its banks attract many varieties of birds, small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

### **Arlington Reservoir**

*Access:* The Arlington Reservoir, which is located in both Arlington and Lexington, is accessible from several streets and neighborhoods via paths to the walking trail around the water body. A parking lot on Lowell Street 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 also the potential to connect the Reservoir to Arlington's Great Meadows in Lexington via walking trails along Munroe Brook and existing roadways. Another trail along Sickle Brook links the Reservoir to the Minuteman Bikeway in East Lexington.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM) notified the town in 1998 that the earthen dam around the southern (Arlington) end of the Reservoir posed a high hazard to downstream residents and property. The initial remediation proposal called for the removal of trees and other vegetation and the rehabilitation of the dam. In response to active community involvement, a mitigation plan was developed over the next several years that met safety concerns yet also preserved the natural habitats. The dam was reinforced with an I-Wall barrier that protects against seepage and breaching while also preserving most of the trees.

The work, which also added a new spillway and bridge, was completed in 2006. The project won the Public Works Project of the Year for 2006 from the American Public Works Association and a state award. Beyond habitat concerns and scenic/passive recreational benefits from the walking path around the Reservoir, the initial, more drastic changes to the dam and the water level would have had important consequences for public access to the swimming area and beach.

*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 within the Reservoir 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 this area (called Reservoir Beach) in the summertime for swimming and other recreation. The Reservoir and its one-mile walking trail is used throughout the year for birding, cross-country running, fishing, jogging, and skating.

*Wildlife Use:* Arlington Reservoir supports the most diverse aquatic wildlife in town. Over 60 species of water birds and shorebirds have been found there among the more than 200 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.



*Great Blue Heron at Arlington Reservoir. Courtesy of Open Space Committee.*

### **Hill's Pond**

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

*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, and some of it is industrial, so access is limited. Several sections of the brook run through underground culverts. The public can access the brook at Meadowbrook Park, Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Cooke's Hollow conservation area (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, where the brook begins. Town policy requires that all new developments or redevelopment abutting Mill Brook provide public access.

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

### **Mystic Lakes**

*Access:* Access to the Mystic Lakes in Arlington is limited because most of the shore land is privately owned. 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.

*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 seasonal and migrating water birds. Bald Eagles have been seen regularly over the past several winters.

### **Mystic River**

*Access:* Access to the Mystic River is available along the Arlington portion of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) parkways. The only parking area along the Arlington side of the river is near the intersection of Alewife Brook and Mystic Valley Parkway at the northern end of the new 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 a small herring run 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 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 on the northeastern shore. Access to the pond also exists along a paved path on its southern shore, adjacent to Route 2. The Spy Pond Committee of Vision 2020, 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. A major landscape renovation of the park land was implemented in 2005 through the Park and Recreation Commission. In addition, the Town received a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM) for a Lake and Pond Watershed Restoration Project, which incorporated innovative and comprehensive storm water management measures in an effort to restore this urban pond to recreational usability.

*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 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, so most of the existing vegetation is second or third growth. An in-depth, townwide 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). The Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park has surveyed the vegetation in that park, and the Town now has a Tree Committee that is primarily concerned with protection and replacement of street trees.

### Woodland Areas

A few small woodlands in Arlington provide peaceful areas for passive recreational activities, walking and nature observation, and are second-growth 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 Symmes property, 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.

Nonnative 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.

### 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, line the edge of Spy Pond, Thorndike Field, and Arlington Reservoir. Reed pads and aquatic weeds are found in and along the edges of the watercourses, inland marshes, Mystic Lakes, and Spy Pond.



Wetlands in Menotomy Rocks Park. Courtesy of Open Space Committee.

### Landscaped and Mowed Areas

Arlington contains many landscaped and mowed parks and reservations that are accessible for sporting activities, sledding, picnicking, strolling, relaxation, and scenic viewing. Robbins Farm, Town Hall Garden, Poets Corner, Hibbert Street Playground, 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 and reservations 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, and Tansy are among the plants that have managed to take root amidst the grasses. Nonnative Japanese Knotweed often invades paved or mowed areas, and is especially prevalent along the Minuteman Bikeway.

Tree plantings in 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 gained ground through the efforts of the Arlington Conservation Commission and its native plant list, and through the policies of the Town Department of Public Works to use native trees and plants in its own work.

### Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species

Currently six species of vascular plants are listed as threatened (T) or endangered (E) on the Massachusetts Endangered Species List (see Table 4-2). 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 4-2. Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Plant Species**

Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	MESA Status	Most Recent Observation
Vascular Plant	<i>Aristida purpurascens</i>	Purple Needlegrass	T	1913
Vascular Plant	<i>Cyperus engelmannii</i>	Engelmann's Umbrella-sedge	T	2010
Vascular Plant	<i>Sagittaria montevidensis</i> ssp. <i>spongiosa</i>	Estuary Arrowhead	E	1870
Vascular Plant	<i>Houstonia longifolia</i> var. <i>longifolia</i>	Long-leaved Bluet	E	1898
Vascular Plant	<i>Galium boreale</i>	Northern Bedstraw	E	1890
Vascular Plant	<i>Asclepias verticillata</i>	Linear-leaved Milkweed	T	1854

Source: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/species-information-and-conservation/town-species-viewer.html>

### 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. Arlingtonians value the town's natural areas, and protection of wildlife is an important aspect of preserving those open spaces and natural corridors.

## *Fauna, in General*

The variety of fauna in Arlington is linked directly to the quantity, quality, and diversity of soils, water, and vegetation, but their relative abundance is also constrained by human activity. Thus, 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 and the relative ease with which they can be documented. 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.

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 good examples of these poor 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.

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 of urban North America. However, because of its well-planted residential areas, existing undeveloped open spaces, small wildlife corridors, and the close proximity of open space in neighboring towns, Arlington hosts a surprising array of wildlife for a town of its size and development.

## *Invertebrates*

Thousands of species of invertebrates inhabit Arlington, but none have been well surveyed. 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 from the obvious butterflies (e.g., Monarch, Viceroy, Cabbage Butterfly, and Black and Tiger Swallowtails), to the dragonflies, to the many other pest and nonpest species. The abundance and distribution of common insects in Arlington is unknown. Numbers of species of spiders, crustacea, and mollusca are also unknown.

## *Fishes*

The Mystic River watershed has very few species of fishes; biologists have documented only 29 species (23 native and 6 introduced or stocked; Hartel, Halliwell, and Launer 2002). Due to the geology, the relative 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. While not listed state-wide, two species of river herring have declined drastically in the Cambridge/Arlington area. They currently migrate in small numbers in Little River and the lower parts of Mill Brook from the Mystic River. The Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) has been active in promoting enhancement of the passage of migrating native anadromous herrings wherever they have potential access in the watershed.

There is a limited amount of sport and ice fishing in Arlington's major water bodies. Large Carp, Bluegill, and Pumpkinseed Sunfish are common, and even 2-3 pound Largemouth Bass appear occasionally. Spy Pond was first stocked as early as 1918. The infertile hybrid tiger-musky was later introduced into Spy Pond as a trophy fish and as biological control for overpopulated sunfishes.

## *Reptiles and Amphibians*

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 easily be found in Arlington: Eastern Red-backed Salamander, Bullfrog, Green Frog, Garter Snake, Snapping Turtle, and Painted Turtle.

### Birds

Over the past 25 years, careful observers have recorded nearly 240 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



*Menotomy Bird Club on an outing. Credit: Menotomy Bird Club*

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, Semi-palmated and Solitary Sandpipers, along with Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, are found regularly. Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons are quite common.

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 237 species of birds reported in Arlington, more than 40 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 may not be listed officially as rare, but they form a special part of the very urban nature of Arlington and Greater Boston. Such species include the Bald Eagle, 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 warblers 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 Great Meadows, or the mature trees at Menotomy Rocks Park.

### 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, Gray Squirrel, House Mouse, and Norway Rat. Other species are found less frequently, such as Northern Short-tailed Shrew, Little Brown Bat, Eastern Chipmunk, White-footed Mouse, and Eastern Cottontail. 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 generally absent from Arlington, although White-tailed Deer, Red Fox, Coyote, Fisher Cat, and Woodchuck are seen regularly. Several coyote dens have been reported in different parts of town (Clark 2001).

### Rare, Threatened or Endangered Species

There are few federal- or state-listed threatened (T), endangered (E), or special concern (SC) species in Arlington (Table 4-3). One bird—the Golden-winged Warbler—is listed as endangered.<sup>2</sup> Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program Town Species Viewer, 2014. The Mystic Valley Amphipod *Crangonyx aberans*, is known from Great Meadows and possibly other water bodies (Smith 1983; 1991). The Bridle Shiner *Notropis bifrenatus* is found, or was known from, the Mystic River just east of Arlington and might have occurred in Arlington in the past. Arlington also has breeding populations of the uncommon Black-billed

<sup>2</sup> Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program Town Species Viewer, 2014.

Cuckoo and Orchard Oriole. Other state-listed species, such as Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Harrier and American Bittern, are also recorded occasionally but are not known to breed in Arlington (Andrews 1993; Viet and Peterson 1993). No state or federally listed fishes or mammals have been found in Arlington.

**Table 4-3. Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Fisheries and Wildlife Species**

Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	MESA Status	Most Recent Observation
Amphibian	Ambystoma laterale	Blue-spotted Salamander	SC	1895
Amphibian	Ambystoma opacum	Marbled Salamander	T	Historic
Beetle	Cicindela duodecimguttata	Twelve-spotted Tiger Beetle	SC	1923
Beetle	Cicindela rufiventris hentzii	Eastern Red-bellied Tiger Beetle	T	1930
Bird	Circus cyaneus	Northern Harrier	T	1879
Bird	Vermivora chrysoptera	Golden-winged Warbler	E	1874
Butterfly / Moth	Eacles imperialis	Imperial Moth	T	1903
Reptile	Glyptemys insculpta	Wood Turtle	SC	1898

Source: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/species-information-and-conservation/town-species-viewer.html>

### Wildlife Corridors

Natural corridors that connect two or more habitat areas allow the free movement of wildlife. In densely populated communities such as Arlington,

wildlife may be forced to use train tracks, rail trails, bike paths or power lines as corridors, as well as streams, rivers, undeveloped wetlands and riparian buffers.

Due to its proximity to many open space parcels, Mill Brook, and other water bodies in Arlington, the Minuteman Bikeway forms an important spine of habitat movement. It runs roughly west to east from the northwest portion of Arlington near the Arlington Reservoir to the southeast corner and Spy Pond (the area of BioMap Core Habitat and Priority Habitat of Rare Species in Arlington). Open space access from the bikeway near Buzzell Field leads to 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. To the south the habitat corridor continues with the Minuteman Bikeway leading into Cambridge, with links to the Alewife Brook Reservation on both sides of the brook. Much wildlife activity has been observed at the Arlington Reservoir along the Munroe Brook toward Lexington, as well as in neighborhoods between wooded parcels such as near the Symmes Hospital site and Turkey Hill.

## F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

Arlington's scenic areas contribute to the character of Arlington and remain cherished by town residents and visitors. Fortunately, the town's zoning bylaws protect most of these significant areas. Some of Arlington's unique natural and historical resources and features are shown in Map 4-4.

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. Most streets are tree-lined, making Arlington feel less urban than neighboring Cambridge or Somerville.

With houses dating back to the eighteenth 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 is now designated the Battle Road Scenic Byway and features numerous historic markers.

### *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 East, Mount Gilboa, Jason Heights, Turkey Hill, former Symmes Hospital property). The Robbins Farm playground area has such a good view of Boston that on July 4th hundreds of people gather on this steep hillside to view the Esplanade Fireworks — 8 miles away!

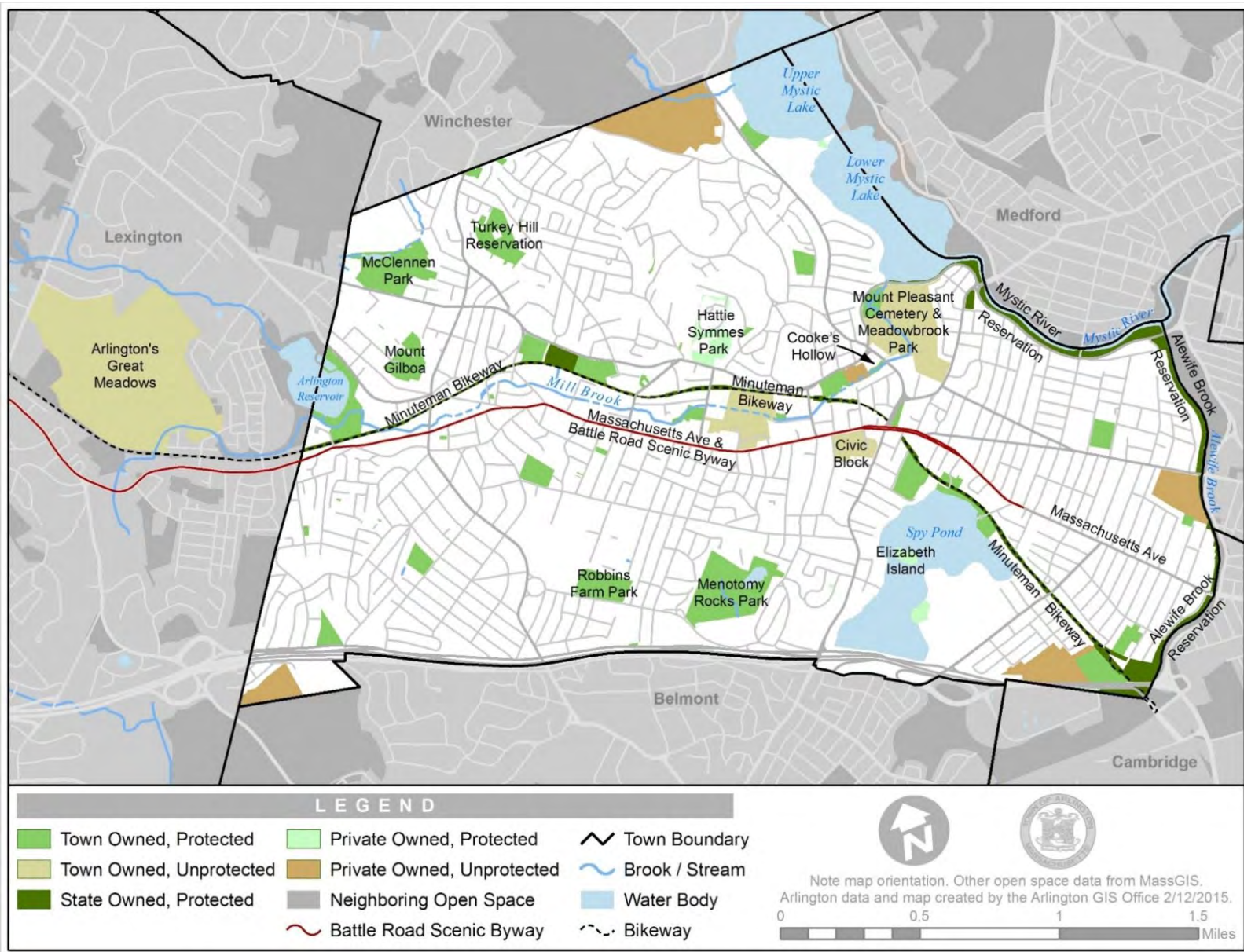
The Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden, enclosed by a wall as part of the Town Hall Civic Block, features a brick walkway through a formal garden of flowering trees and shrubs (designed by Olmsted Brothers) and a statue of a Native American (called "Menotomy Indian Hunter") by Cyrus E. Dallin, the famous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

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 Lake. A bench has been provided by the Arlington Conservation Commission. Mt. Pleasant Cemetery also offers pleasing views of the Mystic Lakes.

Mystic River views are best from areas along the Mystic Valley Parkway (DCR land).

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 shore at Spy Pond Park.

**Map 4-4. Unique Resources and Features in Arlington**



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

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

Arlington Reservoir is reached from its beach area on Lowell Street, the walking trail around the reservoir, and the Mount Gilboa hillside. Parking is also available on the Massachusetts Avenue side next to the Drake Village elderly housing complex and Hurd Field, with access available by crossing the field.

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

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

Views of historic houses and buildings 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 (situated on Whittemore Park in Arlington Center), the Old Schwamb Mill complex (situated on Mill Lane in Arlington Heights), and the Whittemore-Robbins House (behind the Robbins Library in Arlington Center).

The Minuteman Bikeway is scenic because of landscaping, converted railroad bridges, historic landmarks, (e.g., Jefferson Cutter House), and abutting open space (e.g., Spy Pond Park playground, Hurd Field, 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, and helps to sustain a sense of community in the town.

Mount Pleasant Cemetery, the town's public cemetery, adds green open space near Arlington Center. Trees and rolling hills and many historic markers provide picturesque scenery and complement adjacent open space in Meadowbrook Park, which is protected by the Conservation Commission. Mill Brook runs through the cemetery and park and empties into the Lower Mystic Lake, creating wetlands that are home to many bird species.



*Cleaning up around Mill Brook in Meadowbrook Park. Credit: David White*

The former Symmes Hospital property was acquired by the town in early 2001 to control its redevelopment and to protect public access to this hilltop following construction. After a lengthy public process and delays associated with the downturn in the economy in 2008, construction of a large residential condominium and apartment project and a separate

assisted living facility was finally completed in 2014. The project also included two new public parks at the top of the steep hill and woodlands totaling nearly 9 acres, all of which is protected by a conservation restriction and is maintained by the development association. Hattie Symmes Park at the very top of the hill offers expansive views of Boston.

### *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.

### *Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*

According to the Massachusetts Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) program, administered by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Arlington does not have any areas of critical environmental concern.

### *Cultural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources*

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

#### *Performing and Visual Arts*

In Arlington Center, the renovated 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.

The Arlington Center for the Arts, located at the former Gibbs Junior High School in East Arlington, is a vibrant center with studios for visual, print, and performing artists, as well as a resident theater (Arlington Children's Theater). This center 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

Throughout Arlington, churches, libraries, and other halls (Robbins Memorial Town Hall Auditorium, Arlington High School Lowe Auditorium) provide rehearsal and performance space for dance, choral, and other performing arts groups.

Arlington Public Art (APA) is a new collaboration of the Arlington Center for the Arts (ACA) and Vision 2020. The group works with the schools and other town departments to engage the community and enrich public spaces through original public art that celebrates and adds to Arlington's unique historic, cultural, natural, and human resources.

#### *Festivals, Fairs, and Parades*

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

East Arlington celebrates the Feast of the East, a springtime street fair sponsored by restaurants, art galleries, and other businesses in that neighborhood and business district.

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, picnic, and fireworks.

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.

### ***Cultural Organizations***

The Cyrus E. Dallin Art Museum, founded in 1995 by a dedicated volunteer group of Arlington residents, is housed in the Jefferson Cutter House in Arlington Center. Many of Dallin’s 60 Town-owned sculptures are exhibited there, and plans are underway to locate the collection to a larger facility.

The Arlington Cultural Council (ACC) supports public programs in the community that promote access, education, diversity, and excellence in the arts, humanities, and the interpretive sciences. The ACC is a local council of the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) and disburses funds allocated by the MCC to successful grant applicants.

Arlington’s Vision 2020 Culture and Recreation Task Group works to maintain and establish a variety of cultural and recreational activities.

The Commission on Arts and Culture (ACAC) is a new organization that seeks to preserve and promote the cultural and artistic resources in Town and work toward establishing Arlington as a significant cultural destination through promotion, education, advocacy, and related activities.

### ***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 6 1/2 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), the town conducted archaeological excavations 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.

### ***Historic Organizations***

Several historic organizations in Arlington focus on the town’s heritage, including:

- Arlington Historical Society (private nonprofit)
- Arlington Historical Commission (Town)
- Arlington Historic District Commissions (Town).

### ***Historic Districts***

Arlington has three multi-property National Register Districts, three National Register Districts encompassing three or fewer properties, and 57 properties that are individually listed in the National Register. The Arlington Center National Register Historic District encompasses eleven 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 with a combined total of 359 properties. These districts are under the jurisdiction of the Arlington Historic District Commissions (see Map 4-5).

- The Broadway Historic District

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

The town also has demolition delay bylaws that protects 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 and Paul Revere Road. Several of the town's key historic attractions are described below.

The Jason Russell House (ca. 1740), which is open for public tours, is the centerpiece of the town's history. 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 took place 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 Burial 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 location of one of the town's first houses in Arlington Center. This house now serves as the town's Visitor Center (sponsored by the Arlington Chamber of Commerce) and houses the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum, which displays many of his sculptures. The Cutter House has meeting and gallery space in its basement, which provides public exhibition space for rotating exhibits by local artists throughout the year.



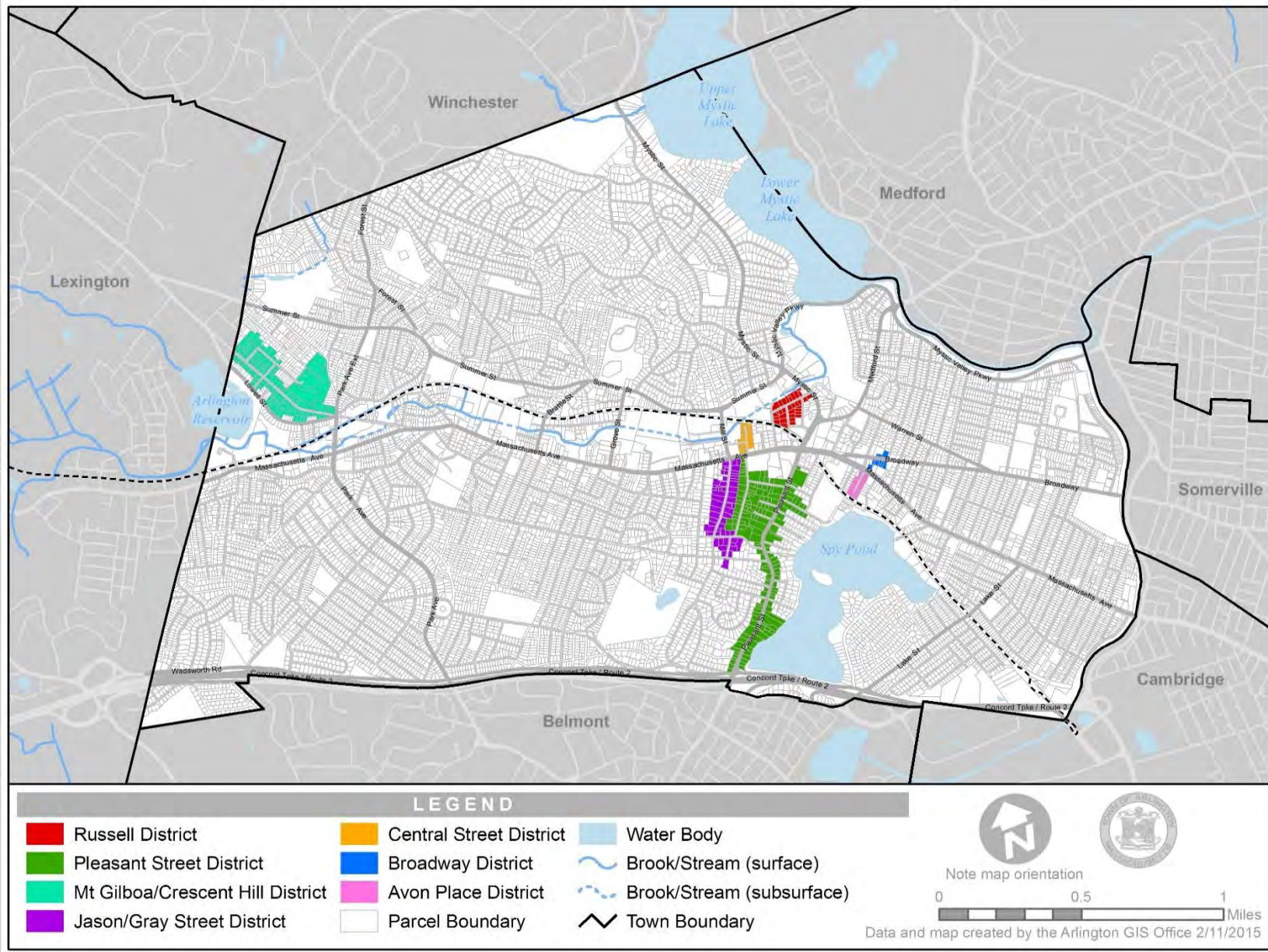
*Jefferson Cutter House, home of the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum, in Whittemore Park. Credit: Ann LeRoy*

The Old Schwamb Mill (ca. 1861), now a working museum, 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. It is the only place left in the United States that practices this craft.

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 Mass. Ave.).



Map 4-5. Local Historic Districts



Town of Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2015-2022  
4-Environmental Inventory and Analysis

## G. Environmental Challenges

Arlington's environmental problems and challenges are typical of other communities in northwest suburban Boston. The major types of environmental problems the town faces include hazardous waste site remediation, stormwater and drainage control, and wetland enforcement matters. As the threats of climate change become better known and are experienced in this region, Arlington will have to consider policies and actions to introduce environmental planning for adaptation and mitigation of those changes.

### Hazardous Waste Sites

Most of Arlington's required hazardous waste remediation efforts are the responsibility of private parties. According to the DEP's Reportable Release Lookup table, there have been 193 reported disposal incidents in Arlington since 1987. The vast majority of incidents reported to DEP were relatively minor or low risk, involving a response that did not require oversight by DEP or a Licensed Site Professional (LSP).

Seven incidents are "Tier classified," however, meaning a type or an extent of contamination that poses a higher risk to the public. Arlington has no Tier 1A (highest risk) sites, but there are two Tier 1D sites and five Tier 2 sites, as shown in Table 4-4. Tier 1D is a default classification that DEP 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 do not involve a high enough risk to require a DEP permit.

DEP has identified six sites in Arlington that are subject to Activity and Use Limitations (AUL): remediated (and sometimes unremediated) sites that can be used for new purposes, subject to restrictions recorded with the deed (Table 4-5).

**Table 4-4 – DEP Tier Classified Sites in Arlington**

Site Name	Address	Contamination Type	Chapter 21E Status
Arlington High School	869 Massachusetts Ave.	Hazardous Material	Tier 1D
Dry Cleaners	1092 Massachusetts Ave.	Not Identified	Tier 2
Former Arrow Pontiac	25 Massachusetts Ave.	Not Identified	Tier 2
Residential Group Home	44 School St.	Oil	Tier 2
Mile Marker 132	Route 2 West	Oil	Tier 1D
MBTA Bus Station	1389 Massachusetts Ave.	Oil and Hazardous Material	Tier 2
TD Bank	880 Massachusetts Ave.	Hazardous Material	Tier 2

Sources: MassGIS, Chapter 21 Database, and Dept. of Environmental Protection, Reportable Release Lookup, September 2013.

**Table 4-5 – DEP Sites with Activity and Use Limitations (AUL)**

Site Name	Address	Status	RAO Class	AUL Date
Arlington Catholic Playing Field	Summer St.	RAO*	B2†	2009-11-19
MBTA Parking Lot	1395-1425 Massachusetts Ave.	INVSUB**		2002-07-24
Brighams, Inc. Brighams, East Edge of Parking Lot	30 Mill St.	RAO	A2‡	2012-04-04
Unnamed Site	24 Central St.	RAO	A3§	1998-05-01
Unnamed Site	1386 Massachusetts Ave.	RAO	B2	2002-10-03
Unnamed Site	180 Mountain Ave.	RAO	A3	2012-10-15

Source: MassGIS.  
Notes:  
\*RAO means "Response Action Outcome," or a report filed with DEP that actions taken have eliminated substantial hazards and no significant risk exists on the site.  
\*\*INVSUB means the RAO filed with DEP is invalid.  
†Class B2: no remedial action required if AULs are implemented.  
‡Class A2: Permanent solution achieved, but some contamination remains.  
§Class A3: Permanent solution achieved; but some contamination remains; AULs have been implemented.

### *Environmental Challenges at Waste Sites*

Two current open space and recreational sites in Arlington were used as waste disposal sites at some time in history, and are known to contain hazardous waste contaminants in the soil and/or groundwater: the former Reed's Brook site in the northwest area of town and an Arlington High School athletic field site. Reed's Brook, a town landfill from 1959 to 1969, has undergone a Comprehensive Site Assessment as part of a closure process and was redeveloped and dedicated as McClennen Park in June 2006. The Arlington High School fields were investigated under DEP governance because of the chromium and manufactured gas products discovered in the soil. The Town reached an agreement with Massachusetts Electric and Honeywell for remediation of the site. Remediation began in 2004 and the fields were completed and have been in use since 2006.

In another area, a "due diligence" review for the Town's purchase of the Lahey Clinic/Health South Symmes Hospital site in 2002, alerted Town officials to the presence of two hazardous waste areas on the property. One site was the result of oil storage leakage, and the second site was contaminated with elevator oil. The Town sold the property in June 2007, and the new owners performed the remediation. Nearly nine acres of the redeveloped site have been set aside as open space and recreational areas with a conservation restriction held by the Town's Conservation Commission and the Arlington Land Trust.

### *Landfills/Solid Waste*

There are no active landfill sites in Arlington. In previous decades municipal solid waste was dumped at Reed's Brook and at several sites along lower Mill Brook which are now playing fields. All of those sites have been capped, evaluated, and appropriately remediated.

Arlington has an extensive trash and curbside recycling program, including collection of seasonal yard waste, carried out under a contract with JRM Hauling and Recycling. A recycling coordinator with the Department of

Public Works oversees this program. One recent initiative has been the distribution of educational materials about separating invasive plant material from other yard waste.

### *Erosion*

Arlington is almost totally developed with paved streets and a complete network of storm sewers, so it has very few erosion problems. There are a number of localized erosion areas along the Minuteman Bikeway, which is a converted rail line. Efforts have been made to reinforce those areas and minimize erosion. 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.

### *Chronic Flooding*

Two areas in Arlington have chronic flooding problems: East Arlington near Alewife Brook, and the Colonial Village complex in the Heights next to Mill Brook and the Arlington Reservoir. The greatest concern is for East Arlington, which is very flat and not far above sea level. This is the area of the former Great Swamp. Stormwater runoff from Belmont, Cambridge, and Route 2 have been a frequent source of flooding in the Alewife area during heavy rainfalls. This problem is likely aggravated by continued development in the area that reduces the land's water storage potential and increases run off. As noted in other sections, the proposed development on the Mugar property in the heart of this vulnerable region is of great concern.

### *Sedimentation*

Sedimentation is not a problem in Arlington's open spaces, with the exception of 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.

### *New Development*

Arlington is almost totally built out, although the Mugar property in East Arlington along Route 2 near Alewife Brook is the last remaining undeveloped site that could be threatened. Nearly all of that area is in the FEMA-designated floodplain, and many residents are concerned that any development there could increase flooding events. There is also potential for redevelopment of some light industrial sites along the Mill Brook corridor. Both the Master Plan and this Open Space and Recreation Plan stress that a major goal of the town is to ensure that any new development is done in an environmentally friendly manner that enhances the open space values of the corridor.

### *Ground and Surface Water Pollution*

All of the water bodies in Arlington (particularly Spy Pond, Arlington Reservoir, Mystic Lake, Mill Brook, and Alewife Brook) face the threat of nonpoint pollution from roadway, house, business, and stormwater runoff. Nonpoint pollution is pollution that is not traceable to a specific structure. For instance, a pipe that might dump volumes of pollution into the water body at one "point" would be traceable. Nonpoint pollution travels through runoff or sheets of rainwater that travel across the land. For example, Spy Pond receives roadway runoff from Route 2, and Arlington Reservoir has received pesticide and fertilizer runoff from nearby farmland.

### *Water Resources and Impaired Water Bodies*

All of the water bodies in Arlington (particularly Spy Pond, Arlington Reservoir, Mystic Lake, Mill Brook, and Alewife Brook) face the threat of nonpoint pollution from roadway, house, business, and storm water runoff. Nonpoint pollution is pollution that is not traceable to a specific structure. For instance, a pipe that might dump volumes of pollution into the water body at one "point" would be traceable. Nonpoint pollution travels through runoff or sheets of rainwater that travel across the land. For example, Spy Pond receives roadway runoff from Route 2, and Arlington Reservoir receives pesticide and fertilizer runoff from nearby lands.

Refer to chapter 7 of this Plan regarding Water Resource Protection Needs for more details on the specific problems faced by each of Arlington's major water resource areas.

### *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 have to be removed. Many of them are also growing under utility wires, so they are susceptible to extreme pruning for storm hazard and safety reasons. The Town has a goal of planting new and replacement trees regularly, but the loss ratio is greater than would be desired.

The Arlington Tree Committee was established in 2010 by the Arlington Board of Selectmen. 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.

### *Environmental Equity*

Chapter 3 addresses issues related to Arlington's environmental justice block areas, which are found primarily in the central and eastern parts of town. There are no unusual environmental problems in any of those areas, and open space and recreational facilities are well distributed throughout all of the neighborhoods to provide equitable access to resources for all ages and abilities (see Map 3-5).

# 5

## Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

Arlington's open space is 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 many 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. Much of the open space inventory that exists along the Mill Brook, for example, 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 from 1926 have lived on in subsequent open space plans of 1973 and 1979, 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. Comments and objectives in other sections of this 2015 Plan address both the linear park and water body access issues.

Open space has been and will likely continue to be a concern for the Town of Arlington. As an inner suburb of the Boston/Cambridge metropolitan region, Arlington has been nearly built out for decades, and its population is again increasing as many younger families and retirees want to live in an attractive town with public transportation close to the city. Concerns about encroachment on the few remaining natural areas remain as pressure for new housing and commercial development also increase.

Arlington has had no opportunity to avail itself of means designed for legal protections for forestry and agriculture and 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 (formerly Metropolitan District Commission/MDC) is part of the Alewife Reservation, and 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 also manage a number of parcels, and Mass Highway 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 Park and Recreation Department or the Conservation Commission. The protection that is 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, as listed in the accompanying table, also receive this protection.

Local bylaws add a level of protection in our efforts to preserve our recreational and undeveloped areas. Town Meeting in 2001 created an Open Space Zoning District to further protect recreational and undeveloped public land. Arlington’s limited open spaces that are owned by the Town have been placed under the jurisdiction of a Town department or commission most appropriate for the designated use of the land; they are the stewards of those lands under their jurisdiction. By so doing, disposition of these properties must be brought before Town Meeting for public hearing and approval. Similarly, a change in zoning designation would require Town Meeting approval. Additionally, all change of outdoor use or new development for outdoor use requires an Environmental Design Review by the Arlington Redevelopment Board (Zoning Bylaw, Article 11.06).

## B. Arlington's Open Space—Major Parcels and Facilities

Currently Arlington has more than 550 acres of publicly held open space, which includes Arlington’s Great Meadows and some of the land surrounding the Arlington Reservoir located in the Town of Lexington (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. Of those, only the Winchester Country Club is open to the public for a fee.

The most significant changes in open space acreage since the 2007 Plan are the sale and protection of land at the former Symmes Hospital site and Elizabeth Island in Spy Pond. Both are privately held lands with state-approved conservation restrictions protecting all or part of the property for conservation and public access. At Symmes, 8.7 acres of the 18-acre site are protected in two landscaped parks and separate woodlands, and at Elizabeth Island the entire 2-acre island is owned by the Arlington Land Trust.

The narratives in this chapter briefly describe these and other large and noteworthy open spaces, including a brief history of the parcel and its conservation and/or recreational use. The first section describes three corridors and greenways that span much of the town, and the following section includes descriptions and site maps of 20 major open spaces and recreational facilities. All public and private open space and recreation sites in Arlington are listed in Table 5.2 at the back of this section.

### Key to Sites on Map 5-1. Open Spaces and Recreational Facilities

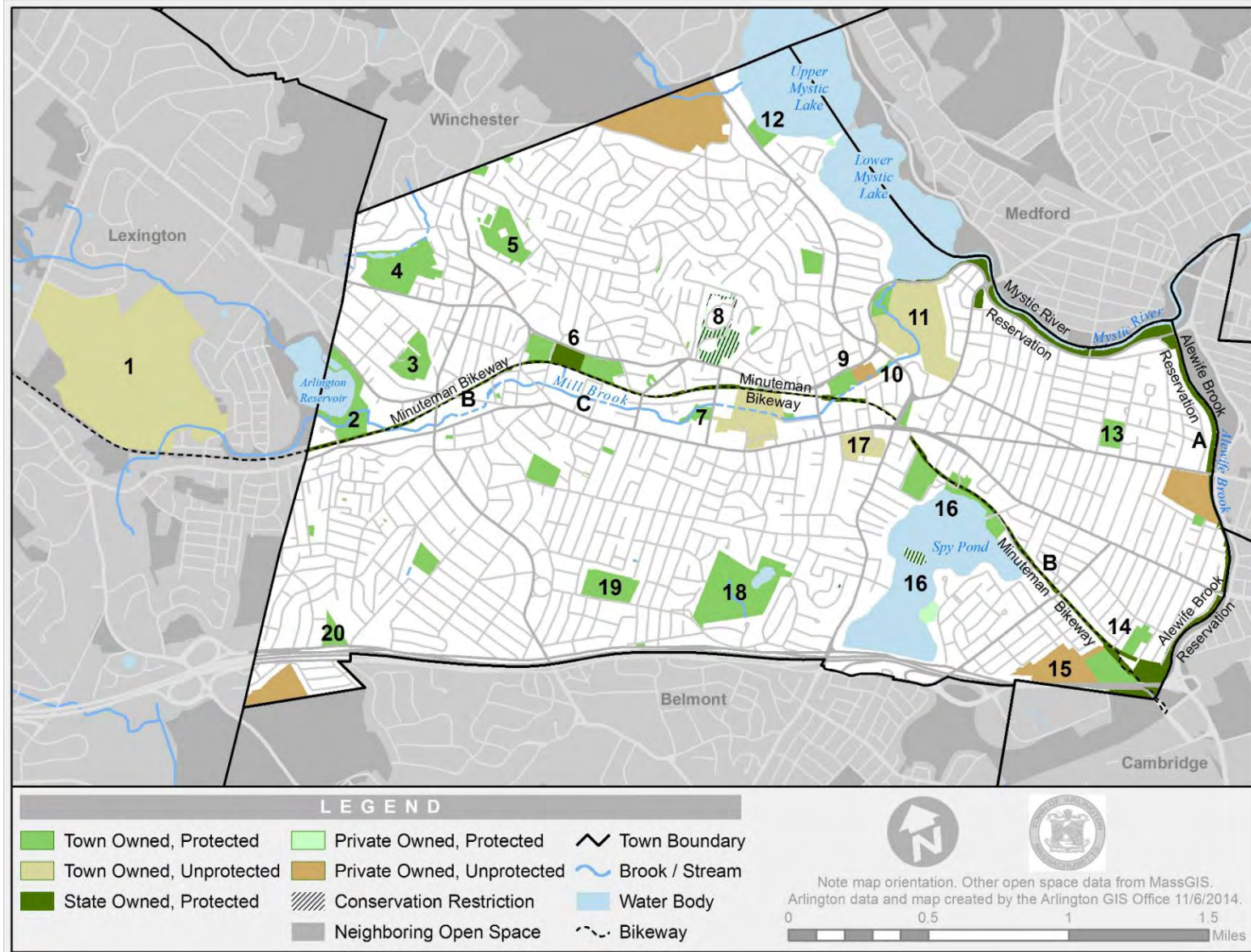
#### Corridors and Greenways

- A. Alewife Brook Reservation and Greenway
- B. Minuteman Bikeway
- C. Mill Brook

#### Open Spaces and Recreational Facilities

- 1. Arlington's Great Meadows
- 2. Arlington Reservoir and Hurd/Reservoir Fields
- 3. Mount Gilboa
- 4. McClennen Park
- 5. Turkey Hill Reservation
- 6. Summer Street Sports Complex
- 7. Wellington Park
- 8. Symmes Woods and Parks
- 9. Buzzell Fields
- 10. Cooke's Hollow
- 11. Meadowbrook Park and Mt. Pleasant Cemetery
- 12. Mystic Lakes and Window-On-The-Mystic
- 13. North Union Park/Lussiano Field
- 14. Thorndike and Magnolia Park and Fields
- 15. Mugar Land
- 16. Spy Pond, Spy Pond Park and Fields, Elizabeth Island, and Kelwyn Manor Park
- 17. Civic Block
- 18. Menotomy Rocks Park
- 19. Robbins Farm Park
- 20. Poets Corner

**Map 5-1. Major Open Space Parcels and Recreational Facilities**



Town of Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2015-2022  
5-Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

## Corridors and Greenways

### *A. Alewife Brook Reservation and Greenway*

Starting from the Minuteman Bikeway near Magnolia and Thorndike Fields, the Alewife Brook Greenway, completed in 2013, follows the Alewife Brook to Bicentennial Park at Massachusetts Avenue and then continues past Broadway to the intersection with the Mystic Valley Parkway near the Medford line. The greenway path and boardwalks are part of the Alewife Brook Reservation, a Massachusetts state park located in Cambridge, Arlington, and Somerville, managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Most of this 120-acre urban wild is in Cambridge, including extensive wetlands, the Little River, and some wooded upland and meadow areas. The reservation serves as a habitat for numerous indigenous and migratory birds and other fauna including deer and coyote. Little Pond and Blair Pond provide spring spawning grounds for anadromous herring, which migrate from the Atlantic Ocean via the Mystic River and Alewife Brook, a tributary that drains the Little River.

The 1.4 mile long section of the reservation in Arlington runs beside the Alewife Brook on the town's eastern border, parallel to Alewife Brook Parkway. It 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

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

**Current Use:** Transportation/Recreation

### *B. 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. Nearly 11 miles long, it begins in Cambridge (at the Arlington border near the Alewife MBTA Station), passes through Arlington and Lexington, and ends near Bedford Center. Each community is responsible for the section in its community, and efforts to strengthen the tri-community 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 an advocate for the creation of the Bikeway, and a strong supporter of it.

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. Bikeway use by both commuters and recreational users has more than doubled since 2010; volunteers participate in seasonal user counts, and the DPW plows the Arlington stretch following winter storms so it is accessible to bikers and walkers.

Severe weather events, including flood damage and microbursts near Spy Pond, regularly damage the Bikeway surface, and the DPW has had difficulty keeping up with maintenance of both surface and shoulders. Local volunteers help with landscape maintenance and clean-up in spring and fall. Current issues affecting the Bikeway include extending the hours of use, roadway crossings, installation of lighting, drainage improvements, and surface maintenance.

**Size:** 30.1 acres

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

**Current Use:** Transportation/Recreation



### C. Mill Brook

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 near the Lexington boundary.

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 Mystic Street and flow through Mount Pleasant Cemetery into Lower Mystic Lake. More than 40 percent of the brook is culverted and 30 percent is channelized but exposed. Only a few short sections of the brook are in an open, natural condition. The entire brook is in need of substantial restoration and remediation to improve biodiversity, water quality, drainage, and flood control.

About 35 percent 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.

Proposals for restoring Mill Brook and creating a park on its banks date back to the Town's Comprehensive Plan of 1926, which recommended a series of pocket parks along the brook. Subsequently the Town acquired the abutting areas now known as Wellington Park and Cooke's Hollow. A 1977 study for the Arlington Conservation Commission resulted in a general plan for developing such a linear park. As subsequent development occurred in the Mill Brook area, some special permit approvals were "conditioned" with requirements that could contribute to the linear park concept. Direction and momentum for the park has always been

fragmented, however, and the Town has not persevered to bring the park to fruition. In 2014-2015 the Town is undertaking a master plan process,



*Mill Brook and the waterfall at Cooke's Hollow. Credit: Brian Barber*

and revival of the Mill Brook Linear Park idea is an element in the plan.

### Open Spaces and Recreational Facilities

#### 1. Arlington's Great Meadows

The largest open space resource owned by the Town of Arlington, containing approximately 183 acres of land, 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 criss-crossed 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.

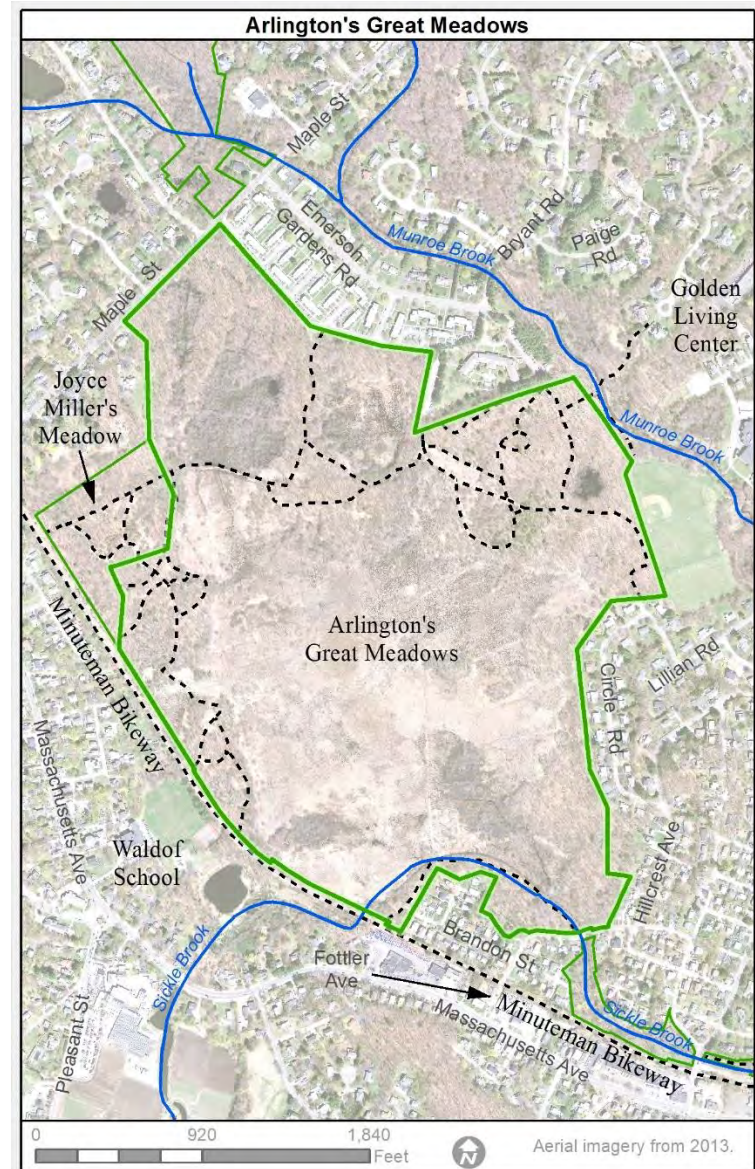
More than 50 percent of the site is certified vegetated wetland. The Lexington zoning bylaw protects the wetlands in Great Meadows by zoning them as Wetland Protection District (WPD). The Lexington Conservation Commission and various citizen groups have taken an active role in assuring that the Great 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 the report, a very active Friends of Arlington Great Meadows (FoAGM) organization of Arlington and Lexington residents has formed to serve as stewards of the property. The group has completed extensive surveying of plants and animals, organized annual bird watching and geology walks, and has improved the visitor support facilities and better protected the environment in the Meadows by building a series of boardwalks. A recent project has been controlled clearing of an upland meadow area to provide a more open habitat for wildlife and visitors. For information about this and other projects, visit the Friends website at [www.foagm.org/](http://www.foagm.org/).

**Size:** 183.3 acres (entirely in Lexington)

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

**Current Use:** Conservation/Passive recreation



## 2. 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 Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) in 1899, yet the name "reservoir" remains in use. It is a 65-acre man-made recreational and flood-control pond on the Arlington/Lexington border in the northwestern section of Town. Less than half of the open water is in Arlington, yet the Town owns and manages the entire perimeter as well as part of Munroe Brook, its primary source whose watershed includes Reed's Brook and Arlington's Great Meadows (located in Lexington). 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 open to the public. At different times throughout the year, the Reservoir is a recreational resource for walking, birding, jogging, and cross-country skiing, and the Arlington High School cross-country team uses the trails for meets and training. The Reservoir provides a diverse habitat for wildlife, and nearly 200 species of birds have been sighted there.

In 1935, the Arlington Board of Park Commissioners engaged the national Works Progress Administration (WPA) to develop a sandy beach on the Reservoir's eastern shore. The Town significantly improved this beach in the late 1970s, adding filters and an embankment to separate the swimming area from the rest of the Reservoir. The beach now includes a filtered/chlorinated swimming area with a ramp for people with disabilities, a bathhouse, vending machines, a concession area, and playground. The beach is supervised by certified lifeguards and other beach staff when open. Boston.com recently listed Reservoir Beach as one of the state's top ten swimming holes.



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The earthen dam around the southern edge of the Reservoir is some 600 yards long and as high as 14 feet, although the water level is kept much lower except during the swimming season. The water discharges into Mill Brook through a sluice gate.

In 1999, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM) expressed concern about dam safety and recommended that the Town cut down all the trees and shrubs along the dam structure and riprap the bank. Working in collaboration, Town officials, engineers from Weston & Sampson and members of the Reservoir Committee of Vision 2020 Environment Task Group partnered to accomplish three goals: improve dam safety, enhance recreation, and preserve the natural landscape. The work succeeded in balancing public health and safety with public interests and environmental issues and received two prestigious awards, from the American Public Works Association and the American Consulting Engineers Council of Massachusetts (ACEC/MA).

As part of the dam rehabilitation project, funding was committed for planting over 100 trees. An anonymous donor contributed additional funds toward the creation of a habitat garden of native plants, and volunteers from the Reservoir Committee, working closely with the Town's DPW, began construction of a Wildlife Habitat Garden along both sides of the new spillway in 2010. The garden uses native plants that attract wildlife and provides an attractive and educational opportunity for the many people who visit it.

A serious water chestnut infestation is being controlled by manual and machine harvesting. The Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works and the Reservoir Committee are actively monitoring the water quality for additional invasive waterweeds. The Reservoir Committee maintains a website with both historical and current information: [www.arlington2020.org/reservoir](http://www.arlington2020.org/reservoir).

In recent years, the Town has lost storage space for winter snow removal and has been using the parking lot of the Arlington Reservoir for temporary storage. There is some concern that the continued use of the area for this

purpose could have a negative effect on the recreational uses and water quality of this valued natural resource area.

In the summer of 2013, the Park and Recreation Commission conducted a survey of residents to determine the future needs of the Reservoir Beach area. Within the next few years, it is expected that a multi-year, multi-phase capital project will be needed to address the aging infrastructure of the beach and to upgrade the amenities. For the short-term, new picnic tables were added, along with fresh coats of paint to the facilities, and efforts to curb the geese from fouling the sand and water continue each season.

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. An open field area is used for soccer, and there is access to the Minuteman Bikeway. The Town received a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant for a Porous Pavement Education Project at Hurd Field, which funded the installation of a new porous parking surface at the field. A rain garden was also installed in 2013 with support from the Town and the Mystic River Watershed Association.

**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

### 3. Mount Gilboa

Mount Gilboa is a tall, tree-covered hill with a single house on top. The house belongs to the Conservation Commission and is 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 at the top of hill. Trails through the surrounding woods are used regularly for walking and bird watching.



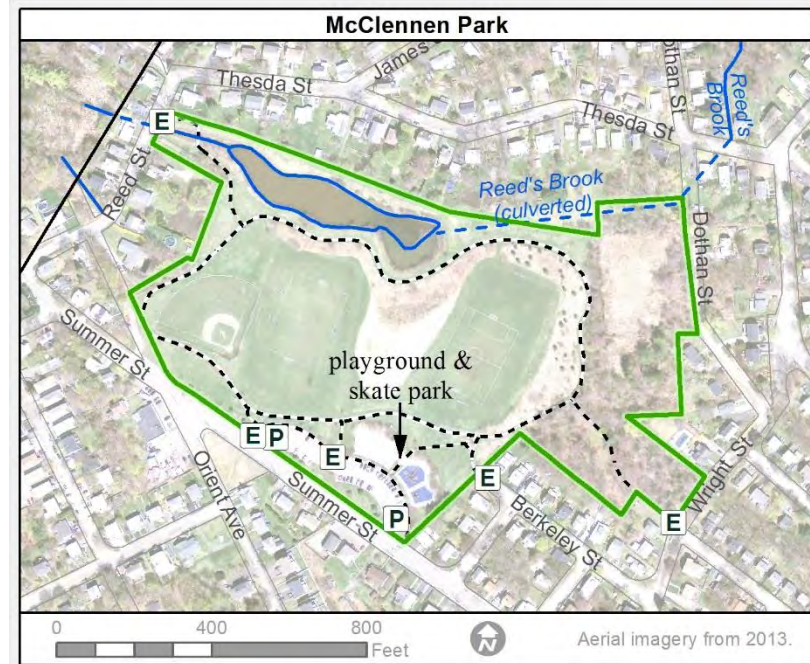
**Size:** 10.7 acres

**Managing Agency/Owner:** Conservation Commission/Town of Arlington

**Current Use:** Passive recreation/Conservation

### 4. McClennen Park

Arlington reacquired this 20-acre site from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in March 1995. Before 1959, Reed's Brook was agricultural land, and from 1959 to 1969 Arlington operated a landfill in this area. The Town closed the land pursuant to Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) policies and regulations while planning for its restoration and reuse. The Reed's Brook site is complicated by the fact that the brook runs through the site and eventually flows into the Arlington Reservoir and then to the Mill Brook. The brook was once enclosed in a culvert, but part of the culvert collapsed and has since been excavated to alleviate a flooding problem that affected the adjacent residential neighborhood.



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 areas was redeveloped to address the flooding problems, properly close the landfill, and develop new open space uses. The plan proposed to completely replace the storm drain system, create a permanent retention pond and new wetland areas to serve as wildlife habitat, prevent exposure to landfill materials, construct two soccer fields and one baseball field, many trails, picnic areas, tot lots, and totally mitigate any existing environmental issues.

McClennen Park was dedicated on June 3, 2006 in tribute to former Arlington Planning Director Alan McClennen. The result is a wonderful new open space with something for everyone to enjoy, from the toddler playground to the sports playing fields and skateboarding area to the walking paths around the pond and wetlands. The State reconstructed Summer Street, and an off-street parking area was added.

A community garden is the only element of the original plans not included, because it was determined that digging the garden might penetrate the cap over the underlying trash dump. Interest exists in adding a dog off-leash recreation area (OLRA), which would require mediation with several parties in Lexington and a permit from the state DEP.

**Size:** 20.3 acres

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

**Current Use:** Passive and active recreation

### 5. Turkey Hill Reservation

Turkey Hill Reservation contains the Turkey Hill water tower and land immediately surrounding it, which are owned by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). The Park and Recreation Commission has



jurisdiction over most of the land beyond the water tower; the Conservation Commission also oversees several 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. Security concerns of the MWRA resulted in an attempt to limit access to the area, but discussions held with neighborhood residents, the MWRA and State and Town officials resulted in an acceptable policy for continued public access during daylight hours. A stewardship group organized through the Conservation Commission Land Stewards Program cares for the site.

**Size:** 10.7 acres

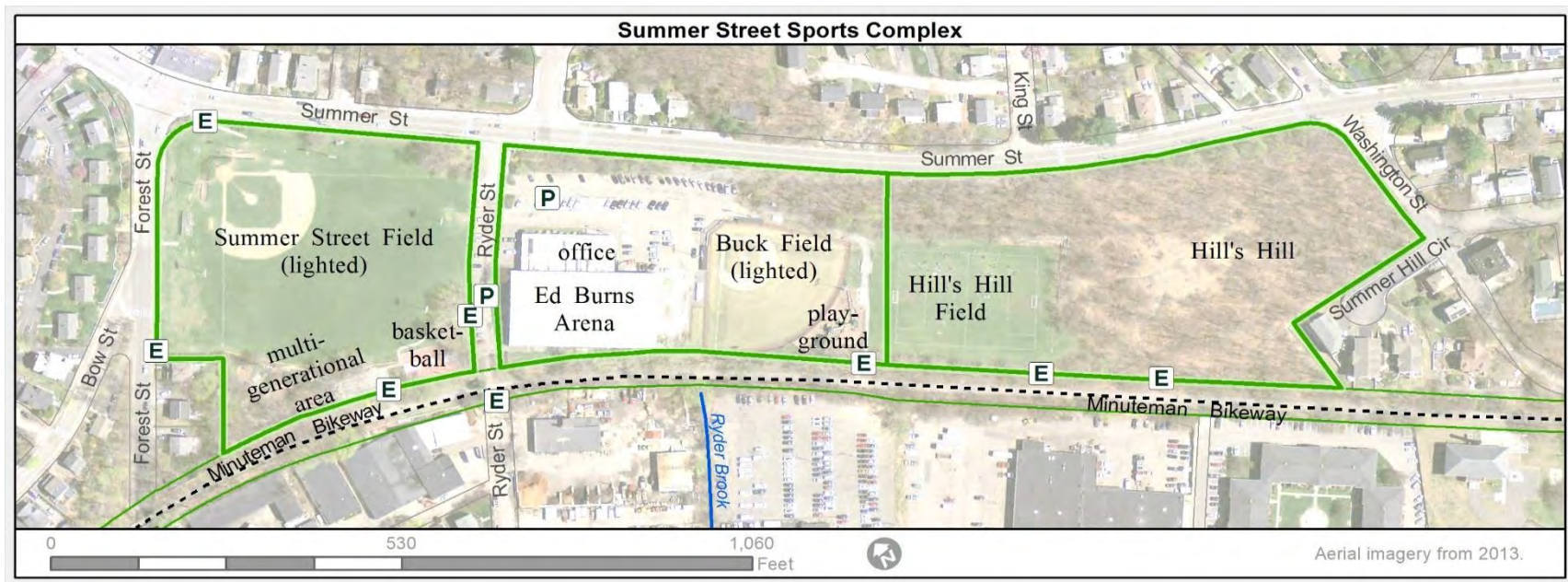
**Managing Agency/Owner:** Park and Recreation Commission /Conservation Commission/Town of Arlington/Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

**Current Use:** Recreation/Conservation

## 6. Summer Street Sports Complex

This major multi-sport complex at 422 Summer Street includes the Ed Burns Arena, Summer St. (a.k.a. Kenny) Field, Buck Field and Hill's Hill Field, and natural wooded areas. 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 handicapped accessible children's play structure with a zero-entry ramp is a major attraction that was completed within the last few years.

The state-owned Ed Burns Arena is also the Arlington Recreation Department's headquarters. Built in 1971, the facility originally offered a



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High School Hockey at the Ed Burns Arena. Credit: Ann LeRoyer

seasonal regulation-size skating rink. The Ed Burns 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 over the past several years, 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

## 7. Wellington Park

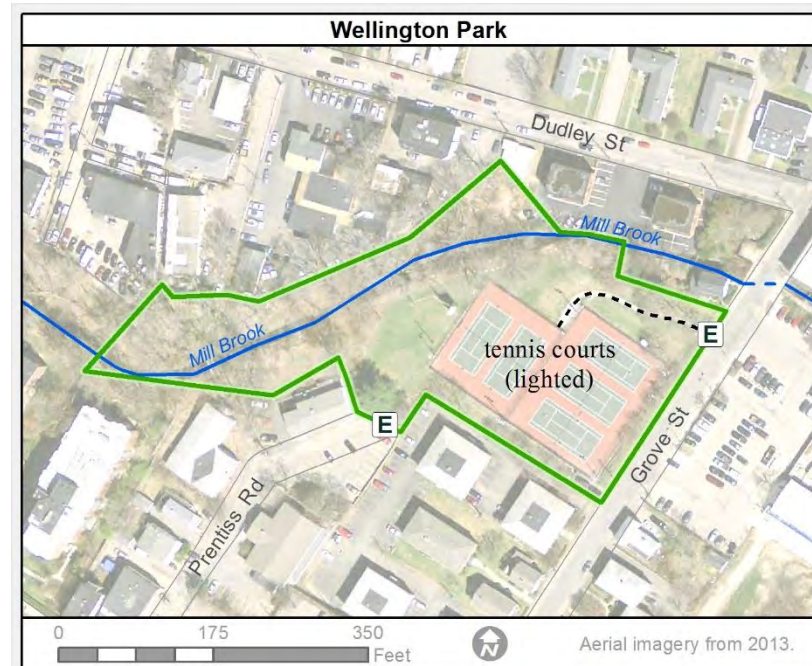
The Ethel Wellington Park is located on Grove St. across from Arlington's Department of Public Works headquarters. The park has five lighted tennis courts, which were renovated in 2011, and an adventure/ropes course that

was installed with funds from a Carol M. White federal physical education grant to the Town to help promote health and wellness programs in the community. Overgrown natural areas that abut Mill Brook are in need of attention and have great potential to become an attractive passive recreation area. On-street parking is available.

**Size:** 3 acres

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

**Current Use:** Active and passive recreation



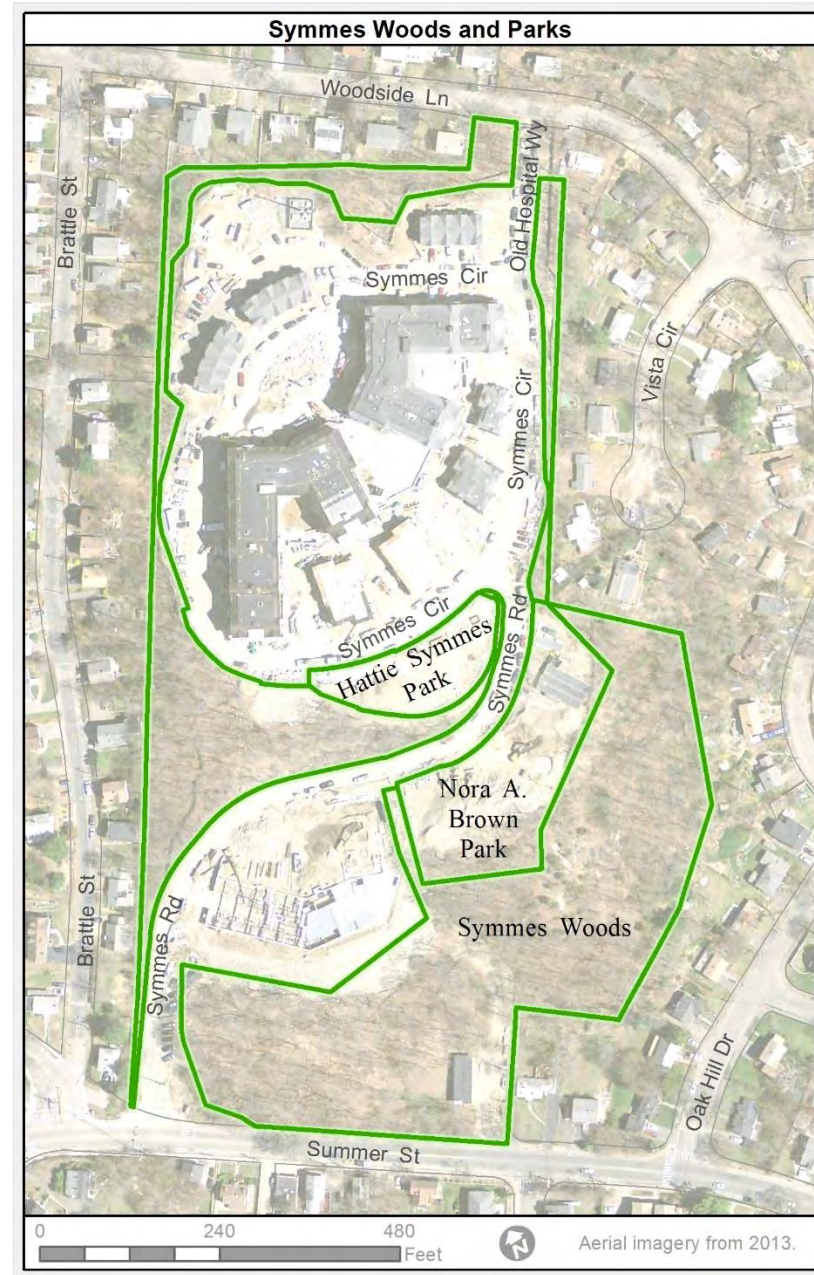


## 8. Symmes Woods and Parks

On March 31, 2001, by a margin of 64 to 36 percent, Arlington voters approved a debt exclusion to allow the Town to acquire the entire 18-acre Symmes property off Summer Street from owners Lahey Clinic and HealthSouth, in order to be able to control development of the site. The property included several former hospital buildings, a vacant former nurses' residence, several acres of parking lots, and about nine acres of undeveloped land, mostly steep wooded slopes. The purchase and sale was completed in April 2002, and the property was put under the Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB)'s jurisdiction. A Symmes Advisory Committee (SAC) created by Town Meeting held numerous meetings to help evaluate the project and the various private development options for it. The SAC submitted its final report to the ARB and Town Meeting in April 2003, and the ARB and private development entity Symmes Redevelopment Associates (SRA) finalized a Land Disposition Agreement in June 2007. Town Meeting subsequently approved zoning changes necessary for that development.

After a lengthy public process and delays associated with the downturn of the economy in 2008, 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 sold a two-acre portion of the Symmes site half way up the hill to Shelter/Brightview Arlington for a 90-unit assisted living facility. Construction began in the spring of 2013 and was completed by the summer of 2014.

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 in her honor, 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 framed through the trees. Named for Nora A. Brown, the long-time head of the nurses' facility at the





*View of Boston overlooking Nora A. Brown Park. Credit: Richard A. Duffy*

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 maintained by the development company at its expense, but are open to the public under the same rules and regulations as those of other Town parks. The Symmes Woods covers the relatively flat area between Summer Street, the new Nora Brown Park, and the assisted living facility. This former municipal tree farm is dominated by Norway Maple trees. After the area is restored, this woodland will be accessible to the public for passive use.

The Arlington Land Trust and Arlington Conservation Commission have responsibility for guiding the long-term oversight of the woodlands and will foster the creation of a "Friends of Symmes Conservation Area" group including neighbors and new residents of the development who will participate in managing the woods. Management decisions likely will include whether and where to locate foot trails and what new species of trees should be planted to increase the health of the woods.

Management of the Hattie Symmes Park, Nora A. Brown Park, and Symmes Woods is governed by a management plan agreed to by the developers, the Arlington Redevelopment Board, the Arlington Land Trust, and the Arlington Conservation Commission. When all the construction work is completed, the parks and woodlands will be protected by a Conservation Restriction (CR) and Public Access Easement held by the Land Trust and Conservation Commission. The CR, 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 CR boundaries.

**Size:** 8.7 acres of the total 18-acre site

**Managing Agency/Owner:** Arlington 360 and BrightView Assisted Living

**Current Use:** Conservation/Passive recreation



*Symmes Woods on Summer Street. Credit: Ann LeRoy*

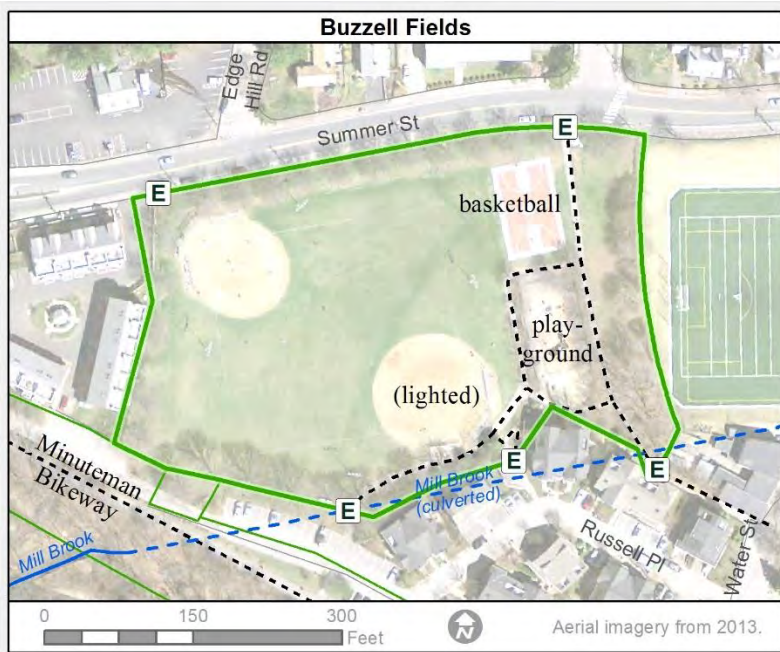
### 9. Buzzell Fields

Located on Summer St. just beyond the intersection with Mill St., 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 AHS 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 with digging tools. On-street parking and access to the Minuteman Bikeway is available. In 2008, field renovations were completed that included drainage work, the installation of irrigation, and replacement of sand surfacing at the playground.

**Size:** 3.6 acres

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

**Current Use:** Active recreation



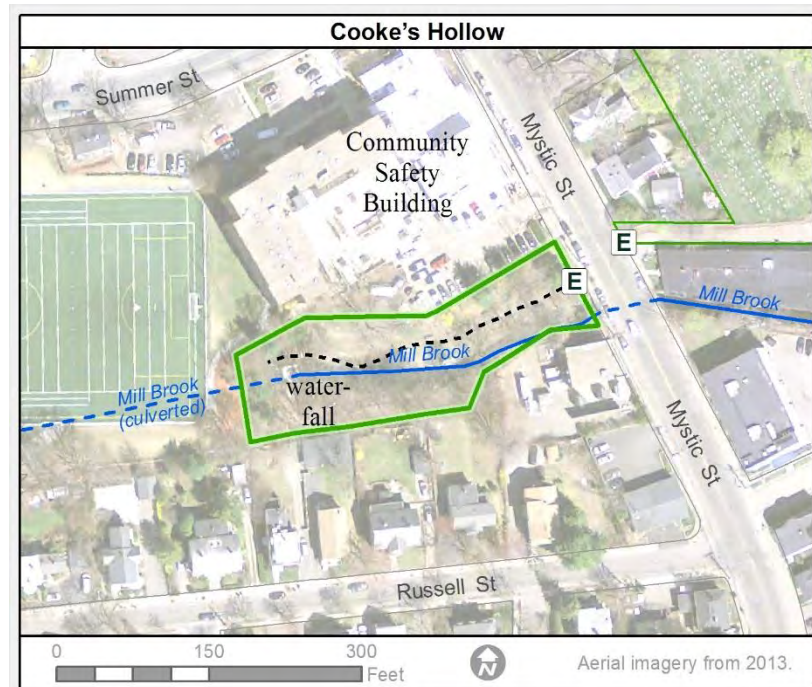
### 10. Cooke's Hollow

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 and park benches. Arlington acquired Cooke's Hollow from several sources in 1969, and the Arlington Garden Club has been 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 Menotomy and part of Cambridge). Although potentially an attractive location it needs a lot of remediation work. It is also adjacent to a very busy road and has limited public access.

**Size:** .75 acres

**Managing Agency/Owner:** Conservation Commission/Town of Arlington

**Current Use:** Passive recreation



## 11. 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 managed an environmentally sensitive landscaping project to create a better wildlife habitat and make the area more accessible for walking and bird watching. The banks were stabilized and a deep marsh was dug, while protecting the integrity of the wetland area. Invasive reeds were removed in the fall of 2000 and native wetland and aquatic plants were planted around the marshes during the spring of 2001. The Conservation Commission organizes an annual cleanup event. Land stewards monitor this site, and there have also been some scout projects to improve visitor access.

### **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



## 12. Mystic Lakes and Window on the Mystic

The Upper and Lower Mystic Lakes are glacial lakes that straddle the boundaries of Arlington, Winchester, and Medford. While there is ample access along the northern shore in Medford and Winchester from Mystic Valley Parkway, most of the shoreline in Arlington abuts roadways or privately held land with developed house lots. In recent years 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 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 Federal Community Development Block Grant Funds and the Massachusetts Department of Natural Resources. A recent Eagle Scout project made some access improvements to the site.



View of Upper Mystic Lake from Window-on-the-Mystic. Credit: David White



### Mystic Lakes

**Size:** 99 acres in Arlington

**Managing Agency/Owner:** Department of Conservation and Recreation/Commonwealth of MA

**Current Use:** Recreation/Conservation

### Window-on-the-Mystic

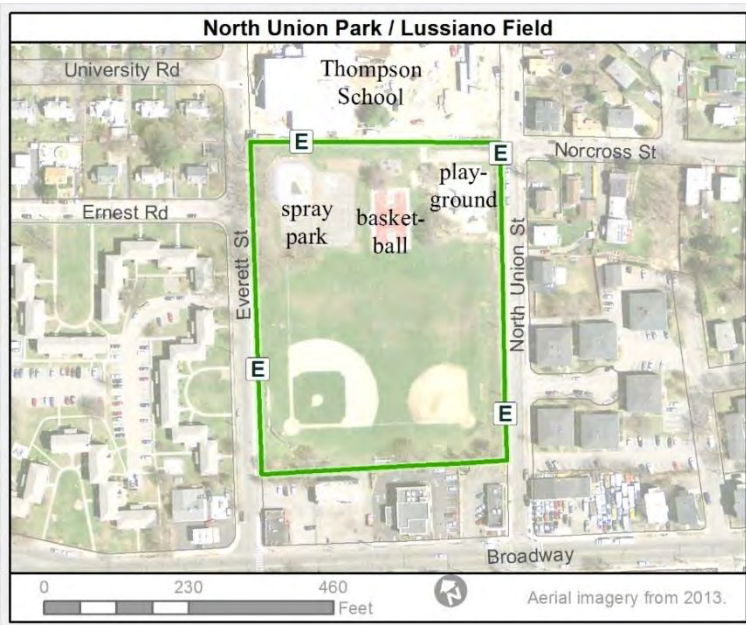
**Size:** 3 acres

**Managing Agency/Owner:** Conservation Commission/Town of Arlington

**Current Use:** Conservation/Passive Recreation

### 13. North Union Park / Lussiano Field

Located on North Union St. in East Arlington next to the rebuilt Thompson School, the area has a neighborhood playground, basketball court, picnic tables, softball/youth baseball field, baseball field, and multi-purpose field used for soccer. In 2014 the spray pool underwent a major renovation to upgrade all water features and enhance landscaping, access, and amenities. It is generally open from June to August. On-street parking is available.



**Size:** 5.0 acres

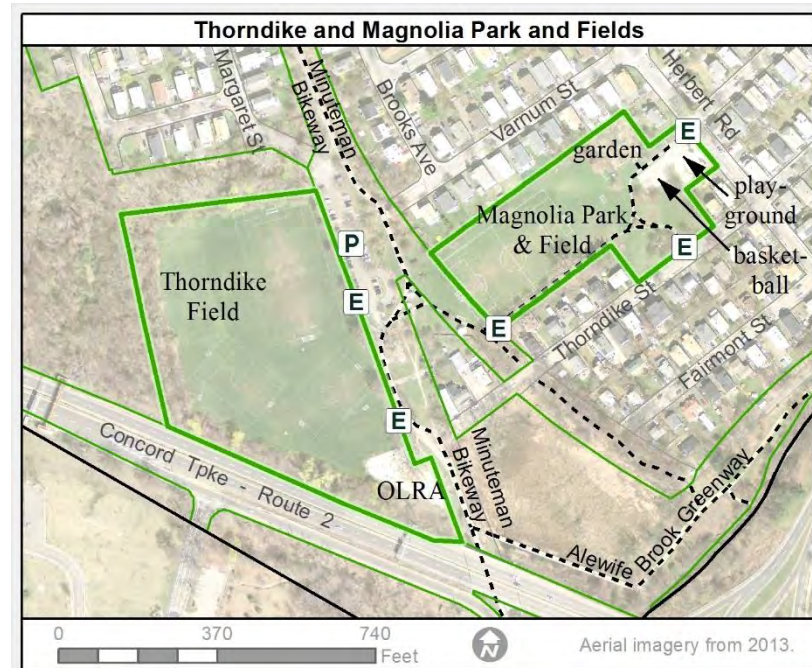
**Managing Agency/Owner:** Park and Recreation Commission/Town of Arlington

**Current Use:** Active and passive recreation

### 14. Thorndike and Magnolia Park and Fields

Located in southeastern Arlington close to Route 2 and the Alewife MBTA station in Cambridge, several multi-purpose fields are used for soccer and

lacrosse, and a dedicated off-leash dog recreation area (OLRA) was established in 2012 next to the Thorndike fields. Magnolia Park has a children's playground, community gardens, a basketball court, and a multi-purpose sports field. Both properties have direct access to the Minuteman Bikeway. The Town's first porous pavement parking area project was completed by the Park and Recreation Commission at Thorndike Field. Located at the end of Margaret St., it provides parking for the Thorndike and Magnolia facilities and the Minuteman Bikeway. At the end of Magnolia St. there is limited on-street parking available near the entrance to Magnolia.



### Thorndike and Magnolia Park and Fields

**Size:** 13.3 acres

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

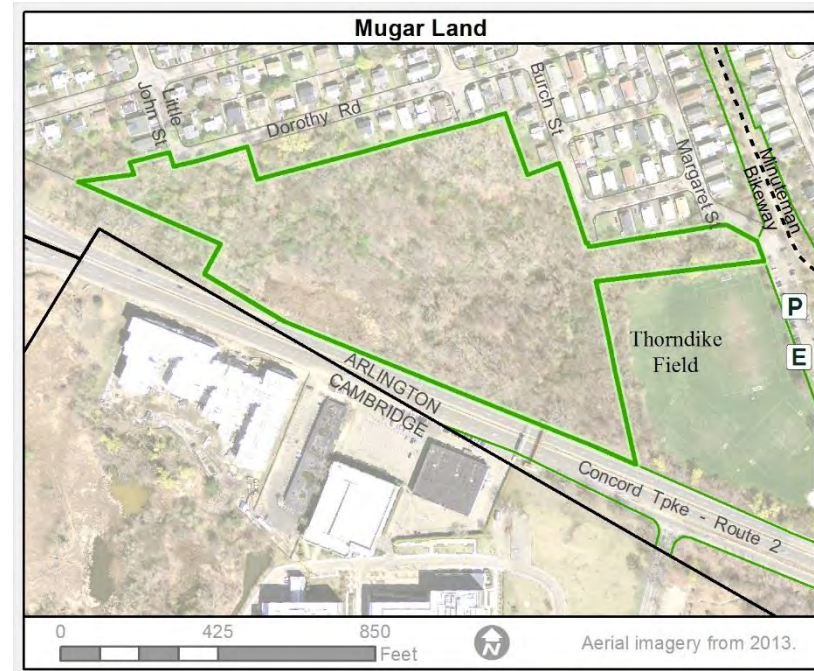
**Current Use:** Active and passive recreation

## 15. Mugar Land

The 17-acre Mugar parcel in East Arlington is the last large privately owned but undeveloped tract of land in the Town. It is adjacent to residential neighborhoods and heavily used Thorndike Field, and is bordered in part by Route 2. It is also adjacent to the Alewife Reservation, a mixed conservation and developed area in parts of North Cambridge, Belmont, and Arlington.

The Mugar property has been extensively altered and filled over many decades, but still has significant wetlands and is highly susceptible to flooding. It has been the subject of repeated yet unsuccessful development proposals for more than 60 years. Serious limitations to its development include the lack of legal access from Route 2 and the history of flooding problems. Current FEMA maps indicate that much of the parcel is considered floodplain and is not buildable.

The Town periodically hears that the Mugar family is proposing to seek permits to develop the property, but no such permits or plans have been approved. Town officials, concerned citizens, and the Arlington Land Trust have explored various ways to acquire the property in order to preserve it as undeveloped open space accessible to all Town residents. Town Meeting has voted to acquire the property as open space, but to date no significant progress has been made to either protect the land as public open space or to develop it. It remains undeveloped wetlands that is becoming even more important for flood control as extensive development continues on the Cambridge side of Route 2 and another large housing project is pending in the nearby Belmont Uplands.



**Size:** 16.8 acres

**Managing Agency/Owner:** Private

**Current Use:** Undeveloped

## 16. Spy Pond, Spy Pond Park and Fields, Elizabeth Island, and Kelwyn Manor Park

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 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.

Historic Spy Pond is a beautiful and precious community resource, although access is limited because much of the shoreline is private property. Walking, boating, bird watching, fishing, and ice skating are popular pastimes, and many people, especially families with young children, enjoy Spy Pond Park and the play area near the Arlington Boys and Girls Club.

The public park includes a playground, public boat ramp, rain garden, walking path, benches, and picnic tables. The playground and landscaped park have been renovated over the past several decades, and ongoing maintenance is provided by DPW and the Friends of Spy Pond Park. In 2010, an infestation of sand wasps in the playground required the replacement of the surfacing materials. In recent years, a high school level 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. The Town's Vision 2020 Spy Pond Committee and the Friends of Spy Pond Park are actively involved in stewardship and planning for pond and park improvements, including weed control treatments.

The major renovation of Spy Pond Park, undertaken to prevent soil erosion, improve drainage, remove invasive plant species, and deter geese, was completed in 2005, but continued monitoring and maintenance are required, as well as additional funding.







*Enjoying Spy Pond in winter. Credit: Peter Belknap*

The work included reconstruction and stabilization of the pond edge with native plantings to control erosion and deter geese; improved pond access points lined with boulders to prevent erosion; installation of a stepped stoned embankment at Linwood Circle; regrading and improved drainage; installation of a new pervious stabilized aggregate path with cobblestone edging from Pond Lane to Linwood Street; some removal of invasive plant species and pruning of existing trees and shrubs; construction of a boat ramp for emergency vehicle access and small private boats; installation of new trees, benches, picnic tables, trash receptacles, interpretive signs and ground cover; and restoration of the existing lawn area at Pond Lane.

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 that are slated for renovation 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.

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. It 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.

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 that was refurbished with new equipment in the early 2000s, a half basketball court, and a Little-League-sized baseball diamond. A small thicket of aspen, maples, sumacs, and shrubs stands beside the beach; between it and the water a large area of phragmites has been nearly eliminated and replaced with native vegetation as part of a recent campaign to manage invasive plants. The Kelwyn Manor Association continues to maintain the park with annual cleanups and mowing, and uses it for occasional neighborhood events.

**Spy Pond Park and Fields**

**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**

**Size:** 2 acres

**Managing Agency/Owner:** Arlington Land Trust

**Current Use:** Conservation

**Kelwyn Manor Park**

**Size:** 1.8 acres

**Managing Agency/Owner:** Kelwyn Manor Association

**Current Use:** Recreation

## 17. Civic Block

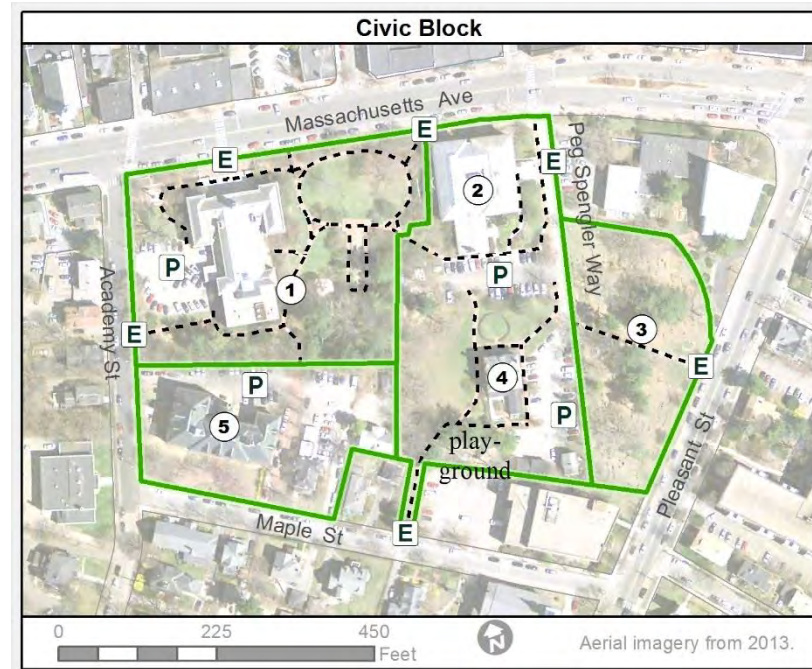
Located on Massachusetts Avenue in the heart of Arlington Center, the Civic Block contains three of Arlington's most iconic civic institutions: Robbins Memorial Town Hall (1), the Robbins Library (2), and the Whittemore-Robbins House (4). They are interconnected by the landscaped grounds and brick walkways 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 (3) and the Central School/Senior Center (5). All buildings within the Civic Block are well-preserved and 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. The Town has prepared a preservation master plan for the garden and repairs to the garden's sandstone and limestone wall were completed in 2013. Volunteers have undertaken some restoration work to the landscape. 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



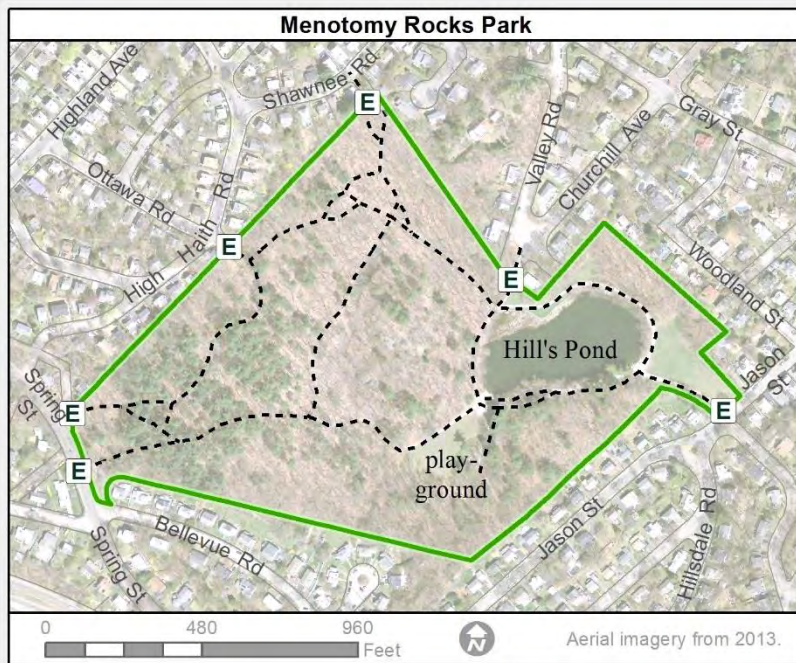
*Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden. Credit: Ann LeRoyer*

## 18. 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 blend of manmade areas (Hill’s Pond, fields and playground) and natural features (wooded and rocky sections). After a major dredging of the three-acre pond in 1993, the Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park (FoMRP) was formed 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 also helped secure funds to rebuild a crumbling pond wall originally built in the 1930s and to eradicate the invasive weeds that appeared after the dredging.



Hill's Pond in Menotomy Rocks Park. Credit: David Bean



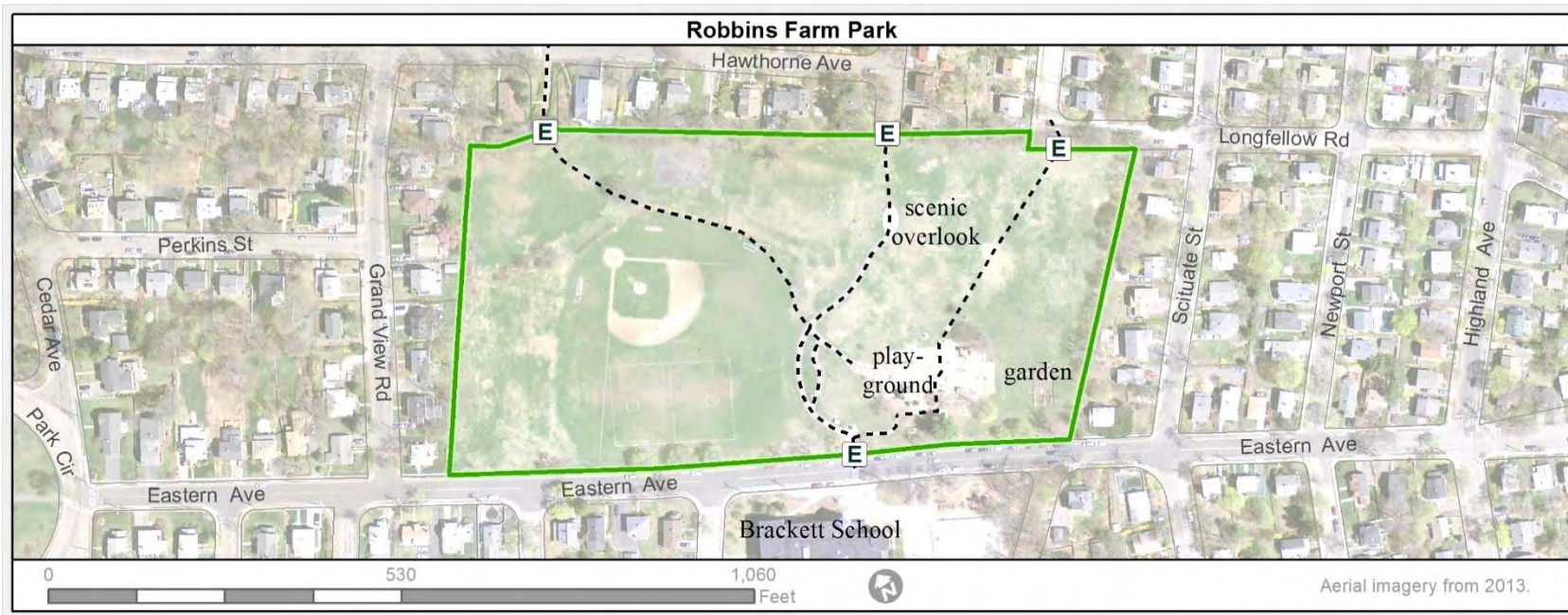
In 2007 the Town funded a capital improvement project for the property, and the park underwent an extensive renovation to its pathway system in an attempt to help control erosion and pond sedimentation. Included in the project were improved controlled access points to the pond, pond aerators, improved drainage and a renovated rear field.

The park is used daily for walking, jogging, picnicking, and dog walking, and seasonally for ice skating and fishing. Special activities include the annual "Spooky Walk" at Halloween; Shakespeare in the Park in conjunction with Arlington Center for the Arts and other Friends groups; and many other educational, sporting, and cultural events. In 2014, Menotomy Rocks Park hosted “Art Rocks Menotomy!,” a juried art installation sponsored by the Arlington Park and Recreation Commission, Arlington Public Art, and the Arlington Center for the Arts.

**Size:** 35.1 acres

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

**Current Use:** Recreation/Conservation



### 19. 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, 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 active Friends of Robbins Farm Park (FoRFP).

The Park and Recreation Commission, working with the Friends, had a master plan created for the site with students from the Radcliffe Seminar program in landscape design in 1999-2000. A final master plan and cost estimates for the entire site were prepared and a landscape architecture firm was commissioned. The first phase of the project in 2003 included renovation of the hillside slides, new paths and playground equipment, picnic area, additional trees, and the creation of a vista overlook area where the crumbling tennis courts stood. In future phases of the overall project, renovations to the baseball and soccer fields and historic amenities will be considered.

In recent years, maintaining the unique and very popular hillside slides has presented a continuing challenge. With the combined effort of the Town and FoRFP, they were again rebuilt in 2012. A co-operative educational garden has also been launched by a core group of dedicated

gardeners with garden privileges available to the general community through the Recreation Department. The ForFP are also exploring the possibility of having a replica made and installed of the statue of a dog that was favored by children of the community during the property’s farming days.

**Size:** 11.1 acres

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

**Current Use:** Passive and active recreation



*Sledding at Robbins Farm Park with a view of Boston. Credit: Roly Chaput*

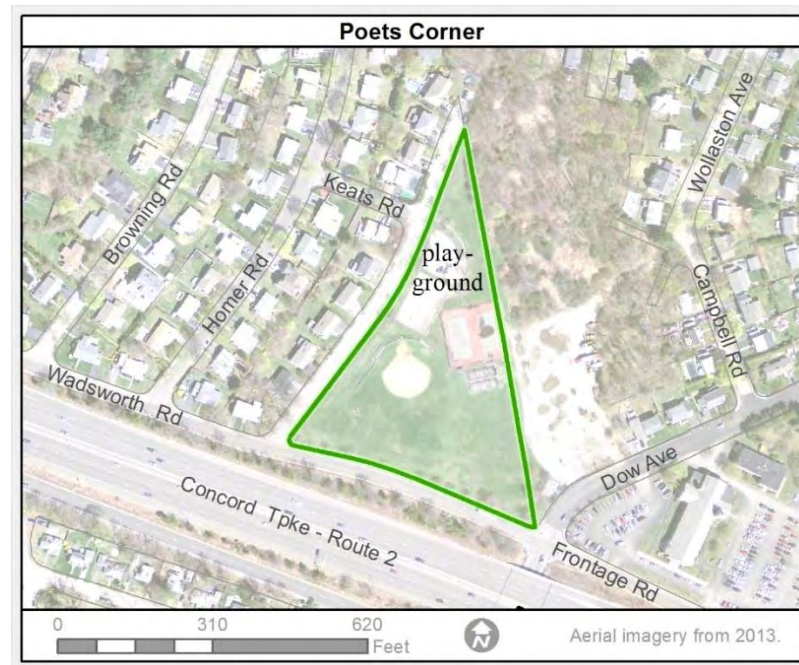
## 20. Poets Corner

Poets Corner Park is located in the southwest area of Arlington, off the Route 2 service road at Dow Avenue. The park has a playground, softball/little league field, a multi-purpose grassy outfield, basketball courts, and an area of wetlands. Tennis courts are in a deteriorated state and are no longer used. The youth baseball organization erects two batting cages seasonally that are available for use by the public when not in use by the baseball organization. Parking is available on adjacent streets. Though many uses occur in the lot that abuts the park, this land belongs to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston.

**Size:** 3.8 acres

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

**Current Use:** Recreation



# Open Space Inventory Tables

Two tables detail Arlington's publicly and privately owned open space and recreation parcels of significant value. These tables were initially prepared by the Department of Planning and Community Development and have been updated for this 2015 report. Table 5-1 lists the zoning districts in which inventoried open spaces are located. It is not an inclusive list of all zoning districts in Arlington.

**Table 5-1 List of Zoning Classes, Codes, and Brief Description:**

Full Name	Class	Code	Description
Residence 0	Residence	R0	Large lot, single-family residential
Residence 1	Residence	R1	Single-family residential
Residence 2	Residence	R2	Two-family residential
Business 3	Business	B3	Major business district
Business 5	Business	B5	Central business district
Mixed Use	Mixed Use	MU	Mixed- use district (per special permit)
Planned Unit Development	Planned Unit Development	PUD	Large-scale, multi-use development district
Industrial	Industrial	I	Industry, manufacturing, assembly, etc.
Open Space	Open Space	OS	Undeveloped and recreation land

Table 5-2 (a and b) is an inventory of public and private open spaces in the Town. The column headings are described here briefly:

**Property:** Name of the open space site.

**Acres:** Details the site's acreage.

**Location:** Names the major street(s) nearest the parcel.

**Manager/Owner:** Names the agency (or agencies) charged with managing the property and the owner of the property.

**Current Use:** Lists the most common or major uses of the site and special features and facilities.

**Condition:** Provides a general description of the maintenance/usability of the site

**Public Access:** Describes general accessibility factors, use of fees, etc.

**ADA Self-Evaluation:** Refers to the appendices where ADA-related information is explained.

**Zoning:** Indicates how the site is currently zoned by the Town.

**Protection Status/Grants/Deed Restrictions:** Lists any grants received for purchase or improvement of site, as well as Art. 97 protection or conservation restrictions.

**Structures:** Identifies buildings and other structures on the site.

**Water Resources:** Notes the water bodies on the site.

**Environmental Challenges:** Identifies key challenges on the site.

**Comments/Proposed Renovations/Recreation Potential:** Includes additional information about the site, such as any changes in status currently underway and proposed capital improvements, the names of active volunteer citizens groups, and opportunities or potential changes that could be considered on the site.

**Table 5-2a. Inventory of Open Space in Arlington, Publicly Held Property (updated Fall 2014-Spring 2015)**

Property Name (Public)	Acres	Location	Manager/ Owner	Current Use	Condition	Public Access	ADA Self-Evaluation
<b>Alewife Brook and Mystic River Reservation</b>	32.1	Alewife Brook and Mystic Valley Parkways	Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) / Comm. Of Mass.	Passive Recreation/ Conservation State reservations along waterways with some walking/biking trails, boardwalks, open space and landscaped areas, benches	Fair to Good in different areas	Some walking and biking trails along the brook and river; Parking at various locations	N/A (State-owned)
<b>Arlington High School</b>	20.8	Mass. Ave.	School Dept./ Town of Arlington	Education/ Recreation A newly-renovated turf field, new six-lane track, one baseball field, one softball/little league field, one multi-purpose practice field, and two basketball courts	Good	Parking	Peirce Field See Appendix E
<b>Arlington Reservoir</b>	21.3 in Arlington (66 total; 44.7 in Lexington)	Lowell St.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Dept. of Public Works/ Town of Arlington	Conservation/ Flood Control/ Recreation Year-round use of trail; seasonal use of swimming area	Good - sanded beach, parking area, walking trail	Accessible tot lot; learn to swim programs; parking; site access; pathways; entrance, stairs, doors, restrooms	Reservoir Beach See Appendix E
<b>Arlington's Great Meadows</b>	183.3	Mass. Ave. and Maple St. in Lexington	Board of Selectmen/ Dept. of Public Works/ Town of Arlington	Conservation/ Passive Recreation Undeveloped wetlands and natural open space; Walking and biking trails on uplands and boardwalks	Good	Adjacent to Minuteman Bikeway; walking entrances from several streets in Lexington	See Appendix F
<b>Bishop School Playground / Field</b>	5.7	Stowecroft Rd.	Park and Recreation Comm. / Town of Arlington	Recreation/ Education Softball/little league field, open field area used for soccer, hardtop basketball area, and a playground.	Good	Parking, site access, pathways	See Appendix E
<b>Brackett School</b>	3.1	Eastern Ave.	School Dept./ Town of Arlington	Recreation/ Education Playground and hardtop basketball area.	Good	Parking	See Appendix F
<b>Brattle Street</b>	0.54	Brattle St.	Conservation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Conservation Undeveloped wooded area	Good	Very limited	See Appendix F
<b>Buzzell Fields</b>	3.6	Summer St.	Park and Recreation Comm. / Town of Arlington	Recreation Two little league/softball fields, a playground, picnic tables, basketball court and access to bike path.	Good	Drop-off, on-street parking; adjacent to Minuteman Bikeway	See Appendix E
<b>Cooke's Hollow</b>	0.75	Mystic St.	Conservation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Passive Recreation Historic park adjacent to Mill Brook and waterfall; benches	Fair-small natural open area, steep slopes	Street parking; flat unpaved footpath	See Appendix F
<b>Crosby School and Playground</b>	3.8	Oxford St.	Park and Recreation Comm./ ARB/ Town of Arlington	Recreation/ Education Green space used for soccer, playground, and four tennis courts.	Good	Parking, site access, path	See Appendix E

Property Name (Public)	Zoning	Protection Status/ Grants/ Deed Restriction	Structures	Water Resources	Environmental Challenges	Comments/ Proposed Renovations/ Recreational Potential
<b>Alewife Brook and Mystic River Reservation</b>	OS	Art. 97		Alewife Brook Mystic Lakes Mystic River	Water quality impaired; CSO overflows; Invasive aquatic plants	See Chapter 5 text, site A DCR Alewife Reservation and Mystic River Master Plans are in place
<b>Arlington High School</b>	R1		School buildings, service shed, bleachers, press box, concession stand, scoreboard	Mill Brook culverted under the school grounds and football field	Invasive plants	Major renovations or rebuilding of High School will be needed over the next five years.
<b>Arlington Reservoir</b>	OS	Land and Water Conservation Fund	Maintenance building, snack bar, restrooms	Freshwater reservoir; Mill Brook	Water quality not swimmable; Invasive aquatic plants; Invasive terrestrial plants along shoreline	See Chapter 5 text, site 2 Vision 2020 Reservoir Committee; Aquatic weed harvesting done almost annually
<b>Arlington's Great Meadows</b>	RM, RO, WPD	Urban Self-Help; Art. 97		Over half the area is wetland and flood plains; source of Reservoir/Mill Brook	Invasive plants: Japanese Knotweed, garlic mustard, phragmites	See Chapter 5 text, site 1 Protected wetlands per Town of Lexington Zoning Bylaws; Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows
<b>Bishop School Playground / Field</b>	R1 / OS	Land and Water	School			
<b>Brackett School</b>	R1		School			
<b>Brattle Street</b>	OS	Art. 97			Invasive plants	
<b>Buzzell Fields</b>	OS	CDBG; Land and Water; Art. 97		Mill Brook culverted below ground	Flooding	See Chapter 5 text, site 9
<b>Cooke's Hollow</b>	OS	Art. 97		Mill Brook open	Erosion and invasive plants	See Chapter 5 text, site 10
<b>Crosby School and Playground</b>	R1	Land and Water	School (now privately owned); Tennis Courts			



Property Name (Public)	Acres	Location	Manager/ Owner	Current Use	Condition	Public Access	ADA Self-Evaluation
<b>Crusher Lot and Ottoson Field</b>	6	Gray St.	Park and Recreation Comm., School Dept. / Town of Arlington	Passive and Active Recreation Unimproved wooded lot with rough footpaths; softball/little league field and practice areas	Fair	Parking, site access, paths	See Appendix E
<b>Cutter School / Reinhart Playground</b>	0.5	School and Robbins Sts.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation Playground and sitting area	Good	Parking, site access, pathway	See Appendix E
<b>Dallin School Playground / Florence Field</b>	5.3	Florence Ave.	Park and Recreation Comm./ School Dept./ Town of Arlington	Recreation/ Education Little league/softball field, a large open green space for soccer/lacrosse, a playground, small spray park, a small basketball area	Good	Parking, site access, paths	See Appendix E
<b>Ed Burns Arena</b>	2.4	Summer St.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington/ DCR/ Comm. of Mass.	Recreation An indoor ice facility, regulation size rink, spectator seating for 1,085 people, complete snack bar and vending machines, skate rentals and sharpening. Also used in summer for day camp activities.	Poor	Parking, ramps, site access, path, stairs; adjacent to Minuteman Bikeway	See Appendix E
<b>Forest St. Conservation</b>	1	Forest St.	Conservation Commission/ Town of Arlington	Conservation Wetland covered with vegetation	Good	Very limited access	See Appendix F
<b>Gibbs Jr. High School</b>	2.7	Foster and Tufts Sts.	ARB / Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation Two playgrounds available to the public (after 6pm and on weekdays) and an indoor basketball court/multi-use area.	Good	Parking, site access, path of travel; entrances, stairs, doors, restroom, floors, fountains, switches	See Appendix F
<b>Hardy School</b>	2.5	Lake St.	School Dept./ Town of Arlington	Recreation/ Education Playground and sitting areas	Good	Parking	See Appendix F
<b>Hibbert St. Playground</b>	0.5	Hibbert St.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation Playground	Fair	Parking, site access, paths	See Appendix E
<b>Hurd / Reservoir Fields</b>	6.1	Drake Rd.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation Two softball/little league fields, large open field used for soccer, access to bike path and the Reservoir.	Fair	Pervious parking, site access, paths; adjacent to Minuteman Bikeway	See Appendix E
<b>Jefferson Cutter House and Whittemore Park</b>	0.3	Whittemore Park, Mass. Ave.	ARB/Town of Arlington	Recreation/ Cultural/ Historic House Shaded park with benches; brick sidewalks; site of art exhibits and festivals	Excellent	Parking nearby; adjacent to Minuteman Bikeway	See Appendix F
<b>Locke School Playground</b>	0.2	Davis Rd.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation Playground and sitting area	Excellent	Parking, site access	See Appendix E

Property Name (Public)	Zoning	Protection Status/ Grants/ Deed Restriction	Structures	Water Resources	Environmental Challenges	Comments/ Proposed Renovations/ Recreational Potential
Crusher Lot and Ottoson Field	R1/OS	Crusher Lot-Art. 97	Ottoson Middle School		Invasive plants	Potential to clean up the woods and improve walking paths
Cutter School / Reinhart Playground	OS	Art. 97	Former school, now condos			Adjoining condominiums in former school
Dallin School Playground / Florence Field	R1/OS	CDBG for Tot Lot; Land and Water	School			
Ed Burns Arena	R1	Art. 97	Indoor skating rink (owned by state)			See Chapter 5 text, site 6 Adjacent to Summer Street Sports Complex
Forest St. Conservation	OS	Art. 97			Invasive plants	
Gibbs Jr. High School	R1		Former school, now leased to: Arlington Center for the Arts, Kelliher Center, Lesley-Ellis School			Arts, education, and recreational uses
Hardy School	R1	CDBG	School			
Hibbert St. Playground	OS	Land and Water Conservation Fund; Art. 97; CDBG			Invasive plants	Renovations completed in 2014-2015
Hurd / Reservoir Fields	OS	Art. 97		Mill Brook borders the fields	Bank erosion; Flooding; Invasive plants	See Chapter 5 text, site 2 Bordering Mill Brook and Arlington Reservoir
Jefferson Cutter House and Whittemore Park	B3	CDBG; Art. 97	Jefferson Cutter House (historic protection)			Dallin Museum; Chamber of Commerce office
Locke School Playground	OS	CDBG				Adjoining condominiums in former school

Property Name (Public)	Acres	Location	Manager/ Owner	Current Use	Condition	Public Access	ADA Self-Evaluation
<b>Magnolia Park and Field</b>	3.3	Magnolia St. and Herbert St	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation Playground, basketball court, large open field used for soccer and lacrosse, community gardens area, and access to the bike path.	Good	Parking and ramps; adjacent to Minuteman Bikeway	See Appendix E
<b>Mass. DPW site (Route 2)</b>	1.1	Sylvia St.	DPW/ Comm. of Mass.	Infrastructure	Good	N/A	N/A (State-owned)
<b>McClennen Park</b>	20.3	Summer St.	Park and Recreation Comm. / Town of Arlington	Recreation/ Conservation/ Flood Control Playground, skate boarding ramps, walking trail, two soccer fields, one little league field. Retention pond, wetlands and brook.	Good	Parking, ramps, pathways	See Appendix E
<b>Meadowbrook Park</b>	3.3	Mystic St.	Conservation Commission/ Town of Arlington	Conservation Wetlands area with limited rough walking trails.	Fair-Good natural open space	Accessible from Mt. Pleasant Cemetery	See Appendix F
<b>Medford Boat Club</b>	1	Robinhood Rd.	DCR /Comm. of Mass.	Recreation Waterfront on Mystic Lakes around private boat club.	Good	Street parking, grassy area along lake shore	N/A (State-owned)
<b>Menotomy Rocks Park</b>	35.1	Jason St.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation/ Conservation Two open green spaces, a picnic area, playground, walking trails and seasonal pond fishing or ice skating.	Good	Street parking, pathways, benches and tables; some rough, hilly trails	See Appendix E
<b>Minuteman Bikeway</b>	30.1		Towns of Arlington, Lexington, Bedford/ MBTA	Recreation/ Transportation Well-established commuter and recreational bicycle and multi-use path	Very Good	Parking on adjacent streets or in town lots; flat, paved surface with many ramps	See Appendix F
<b>Monument Park</b>	0.4	Mass. Ave./ Broadway	Town of Arlington	Historic war memorial with landscaping	Very Good	Street parking	See Appendix F
<b>Mt. Gilboa</b>	10.7	Crescent Hill Ave.	Conservation Commission / Town of Arlington	Conservation/ Passive Recreation Steep, rocky forested area	Good	Street parking	See Appendix F
<b>Mt. Pleasant Cemetery</b>	58.9	Medford St.	Cemetery Comm./ DPW/ Town of Arlington	Cemetery Historic cemetery in a landscaped, park-like setting	Good	Street parking	See Appendix F
<b>MWRA Pump Station</b>	4.1	Brattle St.	MWRA/ Comm. of Mass.	Infrastructure	Good	N/A	N/A (State-owned)
<b>North Union Park/ Lussiano Field</b>	5	North Union St.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation Playground, basketball court, three picnic tables, one softball/little league field, one baseball field, and a big open field used for soccer. Seasonal spray pool.	Good	Street or school lot parking; drop-off, site access, paths	See Appendix E

Property Name (Public)	Zoning	Protection Status/ Grants/ Deed Restriction	Structures	Water Resources	Environmental Challenges	Comments/ Proposed Renovations/ Recreational Potential
<b>Magnolia Park and Field</b>	OS	CDBG; Land and Water; Art. 97		Alewife Brook floodplain	Flooding	See Chapter 5 text, site 14
<b>Mass. DPW site (Route 2)</b>	R1		Maintenance Bldg.			
<b>McClennen Park</b>	OS	Art. 97	Skateboard Park	Detention pond for Reeds Brook	Invasive plants	See Chapter 5 text, site 4
<b>Meadowbrook Park</b>	OS	CDBG; Art. 97		Mouth of Mill Brook; Floodplain	Invasive plants, flooding	See Chapter 5 text, site 11 Adjacent to Mt. Pleasant Cemetery
<b>Medford Boat Club</b>	R0	Art. 97	Boathouse (private)	Mystic Lakes are swimmable	Aquatic invasive plants	
<b>Menotomy Rocks Park</b>	OS	Land and Water; Hill's Pond-Clean Lakes and Ponds; CDBG; Art. 97		Hills Pond	Invasive aquatic plants and land plants	See Chapter 5 text, site 18
<b>Minuteman Bikeway</b>	OS	Self-Help; Urban Self-Help; Land and Water		Portions adjacent to Mill Brook and Bow Run (No-name Brook)	Invasive plants along many parts of the path	See Chapter 5 text, site B Former Bedford Branch RR; runs full length of the town from Cambridge to Lexington; Arlington section resurfaced 2002; Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee
<b>Monument Park</b>	R1		War Monument			Adjoining Central Fire Station
<b>Mt. Gilboa</b>	OS	Land and Water; Art. 97; Historic District	Single-family house (rented)		Trail erosion; Some invasive plants	See Chapter 5 text, site 3
<b>Mt. Pleasant Cemetery</b>	R1		Maintenance buildings, Chapel	Mill Brook runs through center of area	Invasive plants	See Chapter 5 text, site 11 Limited burial space remaining; columbarium and green burial areas planned
<b>MWRA Pump Station</b>	I		Pump Station	Adjacent to Mill Brook		
<b>North Union Park/ Lussiano Field</b>	R1/OS	CDBG; Land and Water; Art. 97 - North Union Playground	Thompson School (rebuilt in 2012-2013) Spray park	Manmade water park		See Chapter 5 text, site 13

Property Name (Public)	Acres	Location	Manager/ Owner	Current Use	Condition	Public Access	ADA Self-Evaluation
Parallel Park	1.2	Medford St.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation Playground, basketball court and open space; benches	Good	Street parking; drop-off and site access	See Appendix E
Park Circle Water Tower	1.8	Park Circle	MWRA/ Comm. of Mass.	Passive Recreation Grassy area surrounding water tower	Good	Street parking, pathways	N/A (State-owned)
Parmenter School	1.2	Irving St.	Park and Recreation Comm. / ARB/ Town of Arlington	Recreation/ Education Playground and basketball court; benches.	Good	Street parking, site access, pathways	See Appendix E
Peirce School	2.3	Park Ave. Ext.	School Dept. / Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation/ Education Playground, basketball court, and green space with benches.	Good	Street parking	See Appendix E
Poets Corner	3.8	Wollaston Ave.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation Playground, softball/little league field, basketball courts, and unimproved tennis courts.	Fair	Parking, site access, paths	See Appendix E
Ridge St. Conservation	0.6	Ridge St.	Conservation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Conservation Undeveloped open space	Good	Limited access	See Appendix F
Robbins Farm Park	11.1	Eastern Ave.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation Baseball diamond, large green space area used for soccer, a playground, summertime movies in the park, a 4th of July celebration and other activities	Good-Excellent	Parking, site access	See Appendix E
Spy Pond Park, Spy Pond and Scannell Fields	15.0; Spy Pond water surface (100)	Pond Lane, Wellington St., Linwood St.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Dept. Public Works/ Town of Arlington	Recreation/ Conservation Park: playground, boat ramp and access to the bike path Spy Pond Field: baseball diamond, little league field, stands to watch athletic activities, a large open field used for soccer, and five tennis courts. Scannell Field: softball/little league field, and stands to watch athletic activities.	Park- excellent; Playing fields-good; Playground-good	Parking, site access, slopes, paths, viewing stands; adjacent to Minuteman Bikeway	See Appendix E
Stratton School / Greeley Playground/ Pheasant Ave. Park	4.1	Pheasant Ave.	Park and Recreation Comm./ School Dept./ Town of Arlington	Recreation/ Education Playground, hard surface for basketball, open green space	Fair	Parking, site access, paths	See Appendix E

Property Name (Public)	Zoning	Protection Status/ Grants/ Deed Restriction	Structures	Water Resources	Environmental Challenges	Comments/ Proposed Renovations/ Recreational Potential
Parallel Park	OS	CDBG; Land and Water; Art. 97				
Park Circle Water Tower	R1		Water Tower			
Parmenter School	R1		School (leased)			
Peirce School	R1		School			
Poets Corner	OS	CDBG; Land and Water; Art. 97	Tennis Courts (unusable)	Adjacent wetland area	Invasive plants	See Chapter 5 text, site 20
Ridge St. Conservation	OS	Art. 97			Invasive plants	
Robbins Farm Park	OS	Land and Water; Art. 97				See Chapter 5 text, site 19 Friends of Robbins Farm Park; Cooperative community garden
Spy Pond Park, Spy Pond and Scannell Fields	OS	CDBG; Land and Water; DEM Lakes and Ponds Restoration; Art. 97	Tennis Courts; seat walls; playground equipment; bleachers at Spy Pond (Hornblower) Field and Scannell (Santini) Field	Spy Pond	Water quality; Invasive aquatic and shoreline plants; endangered sedge	See Chapter 5 text, site 16 Friends of Spy Pond Park; Vision 2020 Spy Pond Committee; Tennis court renovations in 2015
Stratton School / Greeley Playground/ Pheasant Ave. Park	R1/OS	Land and Water; Greeley Field-Art. 97	School			Friends of Greeley Park at Stratton

Property Name (Public)	Acres	Location	Manager/ Owner	Current Use	Condition	Public Access	ADA Self-Evaluation
<b>Summer Street Sports Complex</b>	12.7 (playing fields and play grounds)	Summer St.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington (land)/ DCR/Comm. of Mass (building)	Recreation Hill's Hill: hilly wooded area with walking trails; open field for various youth sports or activities, and ADA accessible playground; Buck Field: softball/little league field with bleachers; Summer St. Park/Field: playground; multigenerational area with benches, tables, and bocce courts; basketball court; baseball diamond; and a large open field used for field hockey, Frisbee, etc.	Good – fields and playgrounds	Parking, slopes, ramps, site access, paths; adjacent to Minuteman Bikeway and Ed Burns Arena	Hill's Hill, Buck Field, Summer St. Park See Appendix E
<b>Thorndike Field</b>	10	Thorndike St.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation Large fields for soccer and lacrosse; off-leash dog park; access to bike path	Good	Parking, ramps, site access; adjacent to Minuteman Bikeway	See Appendix E
<b>Thorndike St. Wetlands</b>	1.7	Thorndike St.	DCR/ Comm. of Mass.	Conservation Natural open space and wetlands	Fair	Limited access, though adjacent to Minuteman Bikeway	N/A (State-owned)
<b>Town Hall Civic Block</b>	2.7	Mass. Ave./ Academy St.	Town of Arlington	Multiple historic and civic buildings; formal landscaped gardens with water fountain, pool, benches; playground; grassy open spaces	Good		See Appendix F
<b>Turkey Hill</b>	10.7	Brand St.	Park and Recreation and Conservation Comm./ MWRA	Passive recreation/ Conservation Rough trails on rocky, hilly terrain	Fair	Street parking; paved road for walking only	See Appendix F
<b>Uncle Sam Park &amp; Monument</b>	0.2	Mass. Ave./ Mystic St.	Board of Selectmen/ Town of Arlington	Monument to Uncle Sam (born in Arlington) and small park near Town center	Good		See Appendix F
<b>Waldo Park / Playground</b>	1	Teel St.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation Playground, basketball court and open space. Public art/sculpture.	Excellent	Street parking; drop-off and site access	See Appendix E
<b>Wellington Park</b>	3	Grove St.	Park and Recreation Comm./ Town of Arlington	Recreation Five lighted tennis courts, adventure course, and open space with benches abutting Mill Brook.	Good	Street parking, site access, pathway along the brook	See Appendix E
<b>Window on the Mystic</b>	3	Mystic St.	Conservation Commission / Town of Arlington	Conservation Steep terrain with pathways and some built-in steps leading down to Upper Mystic Lake; bench on the shorefront	Good - natural open space	Limited access, steep steps	See Appendix F
<b>Woodside Lane Conservation Land</b>	0.6	Woodside Lane	Conservation Comm / Town of Arlington	Conservation Undeveloped woods on steep, rocky parcel	Good	Very limited access	See Appendix F

Property Name (Public)	Zoning	Protection Status/ Grants/ Deed Restriction	Structures	Water Resources	Environmental Challenges	Comments/ Proposed Renovations/ Recreational Potential
Summer Street Sports Complex	OS	Land and Water; Art. 97	Indoor skating rink (owned by state)		Invasive plants	See Chapter 5 text, site 6
Thorndike Field	OS	Art. 97		Alewife area floodplain	Invasive plants, flooding	See Chapter 5 text, site 14
Thorndike St. Wetlands	OS	Art. 97		Wetlands	Invasive plants, flooding	
Town Hall Civic Block	R1	Mass. Preservation Projects Fund	Town Hall, Central School, Whittemore-Robbins House, Memorial Gardens, Robbins Library, Old Burying Ground			See Chapter 5 text, site 17 Friends of Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden
Turkey Hill	OS	Art. 97	Water Tower- MWRA		Invasive plants	See Chapter 5 text, site 5 Turkey Hill Land Stewards
Uncle Sam Park & Monument	B5		Monument and Visitor Center			Renovations to Mass Ave/Pleasant Street intersection with Minuteman Bikeway planned in 2015-2016
Waldo Park / Playground	OS	CDBG; Land and Water; Art. 97				Friends of Waldo Park
Wellington Park	OS	Land and Water Conservation Fund; CDBG; Art. 97; Carol White PEP grant	Tennis Courts (lighted). Project Adventure challenge course	Adjacent to Mill Brook	Invasive plants	See Chapter 5 text, site 7 New playground planned, 2015-2016
Window on the Mystic	OS	CDBG; Self-Help; Art. 97		Upper Mystic Lake	Invasive plants	See Chapter 5 text, site 12
Woodside Lane Conservation	OS	Art. 97			Invasive plants	



**Table 5-2b. Inventory of Open Space in Arlington, Privately Held Property (updated Fall 2014-Spring 2015)**

Property Name (private)	Acres	Location	Manager / Owner	Current Use	Condition	Public Access	ADA Self Evaluation	Zoning	Protection Status/Grants/Deed Restriction	Structures	Water Resources	Environmental Challenges	Comments
<b>Arlington 360 LLC and BrightView Assisted Living</b>	8.7	Symmes Rd.	Arlington 360 LLC	Residential/ Assisted Living/ Conservation	N/A			MU	Conservation restriction held by Arlington Land Trust and Arlington Conservation Commission	Residential development and assisted living facility		Invasive plants; Erosion	Open space acres are accessible to the public under CR. Site has 18 acres total
<b>Arlington Catholic High School Field</b>	2.3	Summer St.	Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston	Recreation	N/A			R1			Mill Brook in culvert under the field.	Invasive plants	Fencing prevents access between adjacent public open space
<b>Armenian Cultural Institute</b>	1.9	441 Mystic St.	Armenian Cultural Institute	Private/ Cultural	N/A			RO		Meeting Center	Lower Mystic Lake	Invasive plants	
<b>Belmont Country Club</b>	11.2	Kent Lane off Brewster Rd.	Belmont Country Club, Inc.	Recreation	N/A			R1					
<b>Boston Gas Co.</b>	2.3	307 Washington St.	Boston Gas Co.	Private Utility	N/A			R1					
<b>Elizabeth Island</b>	2	Spy Pond	Arlington Land Trust	Conservation	N/A	Small boats - access from Spy Pond Park		R1	Conservation Restriction held by Mass Audubon and Arlington Conservation Commission		Spy Pond	Invasive plants Erosion	
<b>Jason Russell House</b>	0.6	Mass. Ave./ Jason St.	Arlington Historical Society	Historical house and gardens	N/A			R2	Located in Jason-Gray Historic District	House and Museum			

Property Name (private)	Acres	Location	Manager / Owner	Current Use	Condition	Public Access	ADA Self Evaluation	Zoning	Protection Status/Grants/Deed Restriction	Structures	Water Resources	Environmental Challenges	Comments
<b>Kelwyn Manor Park</b>	1.8	Spy Pond Pkwy.	Kelwyn Manor Association	Recreation	N/A			R1		Playground	Spy Pond	Invasive plants	
<b>Mugar Land</b>	17.4	Concord Turnpike (Route 2)	Y & M Trust	Private-Undeveloped	N/A			PUD			Alewife floodplain	Flooding Invasive plants	40B Housing proposed in 2015; unresolved
<b>Poets Corner</b>	6.5	Wollaston Ave. and Kipling Road	Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston	Parking/Wetland area	N/A			R1			Wetland	Invasive plants	
<b>Prince Hall Cemetery</b>	0.2	Gardner St.	Masonic Grand Lodge, Corp.	Cemetery/Historical	N/A			R1					
<b>St. Paul's Cemetery</b>	14.9	Broadway at Route 16	Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston	Cemetery	N/A			R1		Chapel, Maintenance	Alewife Brook		
<b>Winchester Country Club</b>	48	468 Mystic St.	Winchester Country Club	Recreation	N/A			R0		Clubhouse, Maintenance	Upper Mystic Lake		

# 6

## Community Goals

### A. Description of Process

Arlington's open space and recreational goals for the community are derived from the open space and recreational needs and desires of the Town's many constituencies. For this Plan, the Open Space Committee reviewed all previous goals and actions and prepared an extensive list of accomplishments, incorporating feedback and reports from many individuals and organizations. The progress made by the Town over the past seven years demonstrates and reinforces its commitment to these goals.

The 1996, 2002, and 2007 Plans, as well as this current Plan for 2015-2022 accept and support two overarching community goals (Environment and Culture and Recreation) of Arlington's Vision 2020, which Town Meeting has adopted and which Town decision-making bodies must consider in their policymaking. Furthermore, because Arlington's Vision 2020 has won numerous awards for its community planning and is composed of elected and appointed Town officials and community members, the committee believes Vision 2020 goals continue to represent Arlington's community and its commitment to open space and recreation issues.

These goals are also encompassed in the Town's Master Plan, which was adopted by the Arlington Redevelopment Board in February 2015.

### B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Community Goals

Adopted from Arlington's Vision 2020 and the Town's bylaws, the following two statements now also serve as Arlington's open space and recreation community goals:

**1. Environment:** 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 infrastructure 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.

**2. 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 Town life. We will be known for the breadth and richness of our resources and activities available to Arlington citizens.

The fulfillment of the above community goals will make Arlington a more desirable and pleasant Town to live in 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.

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# 7

## Analysis of Needs

The Open Space Committee generated this Analysis of Needs by reviewing the 2014 survey conducted by Vision 2020, assessing input from a series of public forums held in 2012 through 2014 in association with the Town's Master Plan process (particularly its sections on Open Space, Natural Resources, and Public Facilities), and other research and documentation on Arlington's resource, community, and management needs. This analysis summarizes the major open space issues and concerns facing the Town in 2015 and beyond.

### A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

The Open Space Committee continues to address the following five general areas of concern as outlined in the 2007-2012 Plan:

- Regional resource protection needs
- Historical resource protection needs
- Water bodies resource protection needs
- Fisheries and wildlife protection needs
- Vegetation protection needs

It is understood that these areas of need have broad overlap; however, the OSC presents each specific resource protection need under the area of concern in which it best fits. Many of the issues addressed here are also described in the Arlington Master Plan, which was adopted by the

Arlington Redevelopment Board in February 2015 (available on the Town website or in the Planning Department).

### *Regional Resource Protection Needs*

Successful implementation of a good open space plan for Arlington requires cooperation with nearby communities and resource-oriented organizations in the region. A regional natural resources review would help to protect virtually all of Arlington's natural open spaces. Examination of their total ecological requirements and effects on the health of regional resources must be ongoing.

Recent and proposed developments in the vicinity of Alewife Brook and Reservation in East Arlington exemplify why regional coordination is so important. The impending development of the Belmont Uplands (40B residential development on a former silver maple forest surrounded by wetlands) and the recent construction of several large residential and commercial properties in adjacent Cambridge on the former Arthur D. Little property and on nearby streets have seriously impacted the fragile ecology and flooding problems, as well as traffic congestion and pollution, in that tri-community region near the Alewife T Station and Route 2. The 17-acre Mugar property in Arlington is the last large undeveloped area in the former Great Swamp area, and will need concerted efforts to ensure its protection for both wildlife habitat and flood control.

Additional networking and regional planning are needed to maximize the design, use, and maintenance of regional recreational resources, such as bicycle and pedestrian paths and aquatic and terrestrial wildlife corridors. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Master Plan for the Alewife Reservation included construction of the Alewife Brook Greenway trail that links the existing Minuteman Bikeway to the Mystic River Reservation in Medford. Further cooperation among state and local groups will enhance the area with additional pathways and amenities.

The annual spring migrations of the Alewife and Blueback Herring (via the Mystic River and Alewife Brook) that spawn in Little Pond and the Mystic

Lakes have decreased significantly since colonial times. The DCR's restoration of the dam and installation of a fish ladder between the Upper and Lower Mystic Lakes on the Arlington-Medford border has led to a recovery of the fishery since 2012. However, public access to the lakes in Arlington is limited, and further planning is needed to enhance such opportunities.

Many of the historical landscapes in Arlington reveal their full significance only when presented in the context of their relationship to other communities. For example, Mill Brook flows for nearly three miles through Arlington, but it originates in Arlington's Great Meadows in East Lexington. This 183-acre site is owned by the Town of Arlington, but renewed negotiations between the towns are needed to ensure its permanent protection as conservation land.

### *Historical Resource Protection Needs*

Arlington residents have shown a continuing respect and reverence for the Town's historical facilities and spaces. The most prominent area is the Civic Block, which includes the Town Hall, Robbins Library, Whittemore-Robbins House, Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden, and the Old Burying Ground. Recent work has included renovations to the interior of Town Hall, restoration of the Cyrus E. Dallin Flag Pole and sculpture next to Town Hall, restoration of the Dallin "Menotomy Indian Hunter" sculpture, renovation and expansion of the Robbins Library, and renovation of the Whittemore Robbins House. Additional repairs and constant maintenance by the Town in collaboration with local volunteers are needed to ensure that these historic resources are preserved.

The open space around the historic Jason Russell House in Arlington Center derives much of its significance from the regional battle fought there during the Revolutionary War. The Battle Road Scenic Byway links four towns – Arlington, Lexington, Lincoln, and Concord – through which the British regulars passed on April 19, 1775. These towns, with Minute Man National Historical Park, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, need to continue their

collaborations to highlight the historic, cultural, recreational, scenic, and natural resources along this route.

In order to protect its historic and cultural resource areas, the Town needs to first identify what resources are present. Over the past three decades, the Arlington Historical Commission (AHC) has documented many of Arlington's historic resources on inventory forms. However, while these forms include extensive historical and architectural narratives, the majority of them and their associated photographs are now more than 15 years old. Furthermore, the Town still has significant locations, resources, and typologies that remain undocumented. Arlington also needs to strengthen its relationship with Massachusetts Historic Commission and Historic Massachusetts, two state agencies that focus on historic sites and properties, and to avail itself of grants and other funding for preservation projects, especially for much-needed work on Town-owned buildings, sculptures, and other structures.

Ideas to redevelop areas within the Mill Brook corridor from the Arlington Reservoir to Meadowbrook Park and the Lower Mystic Lake are currently under active discussion. In the mid-1630s, Captain Cooke's gristmill was built on the brook near Mystic Street at the location that is now Cooke's Hollow conservation land. This was the first water-powered gristmill in the United States. Many other mills and mill ponds were built along the brook during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The only mill that survives is the Old Schwamb Mill in Arlington Heights, which continues as a museum with demonstrations of the historic manufacture of oval wood frames. Many other buildings of historical and architectural significance exist in the Mill Brook Valley, and some are on the National Historic Register. The enhancement of this corridor would reinvigorate understanding of its heritage and access to this unique natural and historic resource in the middle of town.



Historic Old Schwamb Mill next to Mill Brook in Arlington Heights. Credit: Ann LeRoyer



Volunteers harvest water chestnuts at Arlinaton Reservoir. Credit: David White

## Water Resource Protection Needs

All of the water bodies in Arlington face the threat of nonpoint pollution within their contributing watersheds due to runoff from roadways, houses, and businesses, accelerating the process of eutrophication. In particular, the following water bodies face specific problems.

Spy Pond receives runoff from Route 2 and the surrounding densely developed area via more than 40 storm drains that bring in excess nutrients and large amounts of road salt and sand. A sandbar which threatens to choke off a corner of the pond has built up from the drain from Route 2. Efforts to get Mass Highway to remove it have so far been unsuccessful and must be continued.

Arlington Reservoir faces nonpoint pollution problems from pesticides and fertilizers from a nearby farm and surrounding homes and roadways. Two storm drains in Lexington discharge directly into the Reservoir. There are several aquatic invasive plants growing in the Reservoir, but the species with the biggest impact is the water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) which forms thick barriers on the water surface. It is partially controlled by manual and mechanical harvesting during the summer. However, Reservoir management is sometimes difficult because the Reservoir is located in both Arlington and Lexington. A collaborative management plan overseen by both towns would allow for more effective monitoring and maintenance of the Reservoir.

The Mystic Lakes have suffered from the nonpoint runoff from the Mystic Valley Parkway and lawn and yard maintenance. Aquatic weeds such as milfoil have proven both a hazard to human safety and a contribution to the eutrophication of the water body, which borders Arlington, Medford and Winchester. The Mystic River Watershed Association conducts regular monitoring and cleanups of invasive plants, but additional efforts are needed.

Mill Brook runs from the northwestern border with Lexington near the Arlington Reservoir through the center of town and into the Lower Mystic

Lake. It faces pollution assaults all along its route via nonpoint sources and storm drains. Culverting and physical barriers make Mill Brook, especially upstream of Cooke's Hollow, an untenable habitat for fish and native aquatic mammals. A concerted commitment to revitalize this natural resource and designate a Mill Brook corridor path is needed.

Alewife Brook is one of the most polluted water bodies in Town, with combined sewer overflows that are activated in heavy rains along its banks from Cambridge, Somerville, and the MWRA system. An official Tri-Community committee has been studying this problem for years, and construction is now underway to separate some of these combined drains in Cambridge, although this has not solved the problem.

Hill's Pond, originally created to feed Farmer Hill's cows, is a scenic pond in Menotomy Rocks Park that supports fish and other pond life. The Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park and the Town's DPW work to treat the pond, but additional funding is needed to repair and maintain it properly.

### *Fisheries and Wildlife Protection Needs*

Arlington has breeding, migrating, or wintering populations of invertebrates, fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals that require open space. To sustain these populations in the natural resource areas described earlier, the Town should, among other things, consider the following:

- Effect of commercial or residential development adjacent to open space
- Effect of an increase in active recreational uses in open space
- Effect of new or increased level of pollution in the Town's waters
- Effect of increased grass areas and the spread of invasive plants on the food sources and habitats for wildlife
- Effect of climate change on waterways and other wildlife habitats\

### *Vegetation Protection Needs*

Wetlands perform important environmental functions and are essential habitats for birds and many other creatures. Arlington at present has very few wetlands, since many were filled in as the town was developed. Construction of new buildings and streets has affected the hydrology of all wetland areas, and the vegetation in the remaining wetlands is in need of protection. The expansion of invasive species, notably Phragmites in wetland areas and Japanese Knotweed elsewhere, affects other vegetation throughout the watershed, and better controls are needed to manage these problems.

Although use of native trees and other beneficial plants generally has increased, invasive and exotic species continue to spread in both wetlands (e.g., Phragmites and Lythrum Salicaria) and uplands (e.g., Polygonum cuspidatum, Celastrus orbiculatus). Some invasive species such as Oriental Bittersweet directly damage existing trees and other plants, while other invasives just displace them. As mentioned above, most invasive plants reduce the food available for wildlife. Environmentally safe and appropriate control efforts are needed on a Town-wide basis.

Although the Environmental Design Review zoning bylaw of Arlington includes requirements for landscaping of new commercial developments (discussed in chapter 4), no provision exists for protecting wildlife habitat, except through the Wetlands Protection Act. In most commercial, public, and private landscaping projects, vegetation is usually selected on the basis of cost, appearance, and durability; there is less awareness of the effect on birds and other wildlife native to the area.

## **B. Summary of Community Needs**

The Open Space Committee generated the following community needs analysis from:

- Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) reports and capital plans (2010-2014)



- PRC-commissioned ADA Study (2014) prepared by the Institute for Human-Centered Design
- Review of community feedback on the 2014 survey by Vision 2020
- Input from several public forums sponsored by the Town as part of the Master Plan process, and through ongoing meetings and reports
- Analysis of accomplishments since publication of the previous 2007-2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan (Chapter 2)
- Analysis of Chapters 3 through 6 of this 2015 Plan

### *Natural Open Space Needs*

Several surveys conducted by the Open Space Committee over recent years and by Vision 2020 in 2014 indicate strong interest in natural open space areas for passive recreation, including walking, bird watching, and quiet contemplation (See Appendix B—Vision 2020, 2014 report). These needs for peaceful public places to walk and relax are currently met at wooded and meadow areas such as Menotomy Rocks Park, Arlington Reservoir, Arlington’s Great Meadows in Lexington, Symmes Woods and two new parks at the Arlington360 complex, McClennen Park, Hill’s Hill, Turkey Hill, Mt. Gilboa, Spy Pond Park, the Minuteman Bikeway and the Alewife Brook Greenway.

Access to water bodies is especially valued. Trails around Spy Pond are limited to a few unconnected areas, and many residents would like to see a walking trail around the entire pond. The recent acquisition of Elizabeth Island in Spy Pond offers an additional space for conservation and passive recreation, though it is accessible only by small boat. State DCR properties in the Alewife Reservation and the Mystic River Reservation include water bodies and natural habitats in Arlington, with recently improved access and trails along Alewife Brook and the Mystic River, but limited access to the Mystic Lakes.

### *Park and Recreation Needs*

The same surveys noted above indicate important needs and concerns about active outdoor recreational facilities. According to the Park and

Recreation Commission (PRC), many of Arlington's playing fields are designated for multi-sport use. During the busy spring, summer, and fall sports seasons, most of these fields are in constant use by high school teams, organized youth sports leagues, and the public. Sports participation has increased in recent years, which creates further field availability and maintenance problems. For example, Arlington's Soccer Club program serves over 1,800 children. The addition of youth lacrosse has also increased demand for the soccer/utility fields, and the addition of a Little League softball program and summer leagues has increased demand for baseball fields. See Appendix C for the most recent PRC multi-year capital plan.

In 2014, the PRC commissioned an assessment of the accessibility of all its properties, which was conducted by the Institute for Human Centered Design (Appendix E). Much work needs to be done to bring Arlington’s parks, playgrounds and playing fields in compliance with ADA requirements. This work will be accomplished through capital renovations and targeted projects.

### *Specific Needs for Playing Fields*

As a result of Arlington's limited field space and continuing high youth and adult participation in recreational sports, most playing fields are heavily used throughout the year. The Park and Recreation Commission regularly documents the number of Arlington's playing fields and the number of sports teams that play on those fields. A field policy is in place to help ensure equitable access and assist in protection of the Town’s limited and valuable field assets.

The Park and Recreation Commission indicates the need for field upgrading and much better and more consistent field maintenance so that fields stay in the proper condition for use, thereby saving the time and money otherwise needed for serious field renovation. Proper maintenance will also provide better compliance with ADA requirements. Continuing to encourage appropriate use and enforcement of Town bylaws is also essential to helping maintain playing fields. The addition of two multi-use fields and one youth baseball field at McClennen Park and the completion

of the Arlington High School W.A. Peirce Field complex renovation will allow the PRC to periodically rest some fields and reduce overall wear and tear, as recommended in a plan prepared by the Field Maintenance and User Fee Study Committee in 2005. It is also recommended that the PRC continue to upgrade facilities for swimming, basketball, and children's playgrounds.



*McClennen Park now has two multi-use fields Credit: Courtesy of Arlington Open Space Committee*

### ***Ideal Number of Playing Fields***

The Park and Recreation Commission has evaluated the number of playing fields needed and recommends a total of 28 fields. The following narrations, prepared by the Park and Recreation Commission, explain the status and need for additional playing fields:

#### **Baseball Fields**

Arlington has a sufficient number of major league baseball fields. All five major league diamonds are situated in different areas of the Town, and afford maximum formal and informal use. Each field accommodates another sport during the non-baseball season. Three of the baseball fields

(North Union, Robbins Farm and W.A. Peirce) are limited to use by younger players because of their short outfields. PRC recommends that one of these shorter fields be expanded to accommodate older players who need a full-size field.

#### **Youth Baseball/Softball**

Fifteen fields with 60-foot base paths are scattered throughout Arlington. Softball and youth baseball fields have somewhat different configurations, as youth baseball fields have a pitcher's mound and softball fields do not. While a new youth baseball field was added at McClennen Park and the addition of lights and renovation at Buck Field has increased its available playing time, the PRC continues to recommend adding one field dedicated to softball, which is growing in popularity.

#### **Soccer (100 yards plus) and Soccer (40 X 60 yards)**

Of the fourteen soccer fields, five are located in one area (the Magnolia/Thorndike complex in East Arlington) and cannot be used simultaneously. Soccer continues to be the largest youth sport in Arlington. Two multi-use fields have been created at McClennen Park and a multi-sport practice field was added during the renovation of the W.A. Peirce Field complex at Arlington High School. The main playing field at that complex is a multi-sport field that was renovated to state-of-the-art condition with field turf. This surface allows for consistent playability with minimal maintenance. The High School has priority of use of this field; however it is strongly recommended that this community asset continue to be accessible to community soccer, football, lacrosse, and field hockey programs.

#### **Football**

The only football field in Arlington is located at Arlington High School (W.A. Peirce Field). Nine teams (including Arlington High School, Arlington Catholic High School, and Pop Warner teams) use this field. A multi-sport practice field at W.A. Peirce Field and a multi-use field with goal posts at McClennen Park have increased the available inventory of football practice fields. Arlington Catholic High School has also renovated its practice

playing field on Summer St. with field turf and does allow other community uses of this field, when not in use by the school.



*The only dedicated football field in Arlington is at the W. A. Peirce Field at Arlington High School. Courtesy of Arlington Open Space Committee*

### Field Hockey

The Park and Recreation Commission manages one field hockey field, which is located in the outfield of the Summer Street baseball field. Since the renovation at W.A. Peirce Field, many games have been relocated to that turf field, which should continue to be the case.

### Lacrosse

Arlington has witnessed a surge in participation in the sport of lacrosse. Several boys and girls teams have formed at the high school and youth levels. The fields needed for play are shared with soccer, but both sports cannot be played simultaneously on adjoining fields. This continues to

place additional scheduling and maintenance demands on the existing fields.

### *Field Development Solutions*

As a built-out community, Arlington has severe restrictions on its ability to acquire land and add to or reallocate playing fields. The PRC continues to renovate existing fields, with an eye toward possible expansion in the Poets Corner area.

### *Special Population Needs*

As described in chapter 3 under Community Needs and Population Characteristics, Arlington's population is shifting gradually, with increases in the youngest and oldest age groups, both of which will have needs for more and different types of open space and recreational facilities. The Park and Recreation Commission has an ongoing program of capital improvements to upgrade playground equipment and recreational facilities for pre-schoolers and for school-aged children, including playing fields and the ice skating rink. Other improvements to parks in general include the addition of benches, port-a-potties, and shelters from the sun. A new multi-generational park and an accessible playground were installed at the Summer Street Sports Complex a few years ago to offer activities for all ages and abilities, including bocce courts, board-game tables, a basketball court, exercise equipment, and shaded sitting areas.

Special efforts to meet the recreational needs of handicapped residents are being addressed as part of implementing the ADA Self-Evaluation (see Appendix E), as well as through regular maintenance and capital funding. The Town's Master Plan, completed in 2015, also addresses the need for a thorough ADA Self-Evaluation of all Town properties, to complement the one conducted for the parks and recreational facilities, including an updated ADA Transition Plan.

The needs of Arlington's environmental justice populations are not significantly different from those noted above for all residents, but recent improvements in the designated EJ parts of town have brought new

resources to them. For example, with the rebuilding of the Thompson School in East Arlington, in the heart of the minority/income block group, a new playground and a refurbished spray pool and picnic area are now accessible to all residents. The adjacent baseball fields were also regraded. The new Alewife Brook Greenway within DCR's Alewife Brook Reservation also borders this neighborhood.

A frequently mentioned need that would address many groups simultaneously but has not yet been met is a multi-purpose community center for all ages and income levels. Seniors and teenagers are two age groups that would be most well-served by such a facility. Currently the primary indoor recreational facility used by teens is the Ed Burns Arena. Some residents are eager for an indoor swimming pool, and others want more safe spaces for indoor activities such as game nights. The Arlington Master Plan addresses this long-standing need for a community center, and it is hoped that future CPA funding could help make it happen.

### *Department of Public Works' Needs*

Arlington's Department of Public Works (DPW) needs work-yard space for collecting, storing, and distributing certain kinds of materials, such as tree parts and other organic refuse collected after major storms, and for seasonal snow storage. Former sites next to Meadowbrook Park in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery and at the Arlington Reservoir are no longer available. Over the past few years, excess vegetation and snow has been placed temporarily on the parking lot next to the Arlington Reservoir, but that is not a practical solution for the long term. Out of town locations probably need to be found since there are no other large spaces in Arlington that would be appropriate for such uses.

### *SCORP*

In 2012, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs completed the Massachusetts' Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) to help guide the distribution of federal funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to state agencies and municipalities for the acquisition of open space, renovation of parks, and

development of new parks. The SCORP is a planning document that discusses the available recreational resources in a state, as well as its needs, and identifies the gaps between the two.

Goals and action steps were developed after distilling all of the information gathered through the public participation process. These four goals include:

1. Increase the availability of all types of trails for recreation.
2. Increase the availability of water-based recreation.
3. Invest in recreation and conservation areas that are close to home for short visits.
4. Invest in racially, economically, and age diverse neighborhoods given their projected increase in participation in outdoor recreation.

These goals will meet the needs of Massachusetts residents, but also the goals of America's Great Outdoors (AGO) for investments in urban parks and community green spaces. Multiple SCORP goals also coalesce with the Commonwealth's desire to increase the share of bicycling and walking among Massachusetts transportation choices.

The SCORP goals are consistent with the goals and objectives of Arlington's OSRP. For example, the Plan has defined several major corridors (Minuteman Bikeway, Mill Brook, and the Alewife Brook Greenway) from which connections to various parks and other open space resources will be enhanced. Additionally, the Town is working with adjacent communities, such as Lexington's ACROSS Lexington program and bike trails in Cambridge, Somerville, and Belmont that emanate from the Minuteman Bikeway to build better regional trail networks and connections within and outside the Town's boundaries.

The Town has invested in outdoor water-based recreation in areas including Spy Pond and the Reservoir. The Town's open space and recreation facilities are well-distributed around the community so that they are relatively convenient to most residents. Finally, the Town has a robust and diverse recreation program that serves all its residents, as well as private programs through organizations such as the Arlington Boys and

Girls Club (Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs 2012).



*Alewife Brook Greenway on DCR land in East Arlington. Credit: Ann LeRoyer*

## C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use

The primary management needs Arlington faces today relate to how the Town maintains its existing open spaces and recreational facilities. In particular, the Town needs to:

- Increase funding and staffing for management, maintenance, and upgrading of open spaces and outdoor recreational facilities;
- Formalize implementation of the playing field rotation and maintenance recommendations documented in 2005 by the Field User

Maintenance and Fee Study Committee and create sustainable DPW playing field maintenance schedules; and

- Empower the Open Space Committee to work more closely with Town departments and committees to facilitate, help implement, update, and advance the goals of this Open Space and Recreation Plan.

### *Town Open Space Management*

Most communities in Massachusetts have struggled with inadequate revenues to maintain current levels of service since the passage of Proposition 2½, a statewide referendum voted more than 35 years ago that limits the amount of revenue a community can collect through the property tax. Arlington is no exception. All public services suffer as communities prioritize their allocation of revenues. Parks, playgrounds, and other open spaces must compete with other local needs as maintenance dollars are cut and personnel are reduced.

Until 1992-1993 park and recreation facilities were the responsibility of the Town's Department of Properties and Natural Resources, which was headed by one of seven department heads reporting to the Town Manager. Normal attrition, a hiring freeze, an early retirement program, and a reorganization of management structure resulted in a consolidation of Public Works, Properties and Natural Resources, and Engineering into one Department of Public Works with several divisions. This consolidation marked an important change in the way the Town managed its open spaces and recreation facilities.

While this new arrangement may have increased efficiency, it fails to recognize the importance of public properties and open spaces as a separate management entity. The Town does not have one professional staff member whose sole duty is to oversee the maintenance of open spaces and recreational facilities; rather this responsibility is shared among three departments: Recreation (recreational programming and limited facilities management for the Ed Burns Arena, Gibbs Gym, and Reservoir Beach); Public Works (maintenance); and Town Manager (management). Furthermore, the Town's public open spaces are overseen by many different boards and commissions with differing and sometimes conflicting missions (including Park and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Finance Committee, Capital Planning Committee), as well as many independent Friends groups, sports organizations, and land stewards.

Because the DPW oversees the maintenance of most of Arlington's open spaces, as well as its major responsibilities for water, sewer, highways, and public building maintenance, open space budget needs are often weighed internally against other departmental needs and do not emerge in public debate as a separate interest. A dedicated natural resources manager with a trained staff and an established budget is needed to oversee and coordinate capital planning and maintenance for the Town's natural open spaces and recreational facilities.

A high level of open space interest and commitment exists on behalf of the residents who serve on the Open Space Committee, Park and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, and many other neighborhood and Friends groups. This interest indicates the potential for expanded citizen support for park, playground, and other open space revitalization, although legal and liability issues prevent volunteers from participating in key maintenance projects.

The Town's adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in November 2014 offers a new source of funds for certain open space and recreation projects, to supplement funding designated through the Capital Planning Committee and the regular Town budget process.



## COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT

*A good deal for Arlington*

*Arlington CPA campaign logo. Courtesy of Community Preservation Arlington.*

### *Need for Overall Open Space Management Plan*

Arlington needs an overall open space management plan that will make use of existing Town planning documents, management structures, and resources. This management plan would provide a roadmap for all of those involved in particular open spaces. It would make clear the lines of responsibilities and it would provide a way to implement many of the goals of this Open Space and Recreation Plan, as well as the Town's Master Plan. It would also be a tool for increased public support in making our parks and open spaces the best that they can be, and insuring that every part of the Town, and every major segment of the population, gets the most up-to-date and suitable facilities possible.

As part of reviewing the existing Town management and structure, a new overall open space management plan may make recommendations for change. For example, there is a need for open space and recreation interests to be a stronger part of the existing budget process. One way to do this is to have members with open space and recreation knowledge on the Capital Planning Committee to advocate for a long-range capital planning budget for open space and recreation facilities.

The Park and Recreation Commission maintains an ongoing multi-year capital plan. However, a stronger commitment is needed by the Town to fund the project requirements at appropriate levels and in a timely way. It is the hope of the PRC that additional funding sources, such as CPA, will be used to enhance capital funds provided by the Town to accomplish proposed improvements to parks, playgrounds, and playing fields under PRC jurisdiction. It is also the desire of the Commission to see improvements made to the funding mechanisms dedicated to ordinary maintenance, which are not provided by CPA.

# 8

## Goals and Objectives

### A. Introduction

The Open Space Committee decided to accept and reinforce its commitment to previous Open Space and Recreation Plans by using the Vision 2020 goal statements on environmental and cultural and recreational concerns, cited in chapter 6, to serve as the overall community goals for this 2015-2022 Plan as well. The Committee believes these two Vision 2020 goals, which Town Meeting has adopted and which Town decision-making bodies must consider in their policy making, represent the entire Arlington community and its commitment to open space and recreation issues.

The Town has also been engaged in developing a Master Plan, which includes many recommendations and implementation actions covering open space, natural resources, historic landscapes, and public facilities including recreation. The OSC has contributed to this broader planning process to ensure that the goals and objectives in both plans are compatible and will reinforce each other. The Arlington Master Plan was adopted by the Arlington Redevelopment Board in February 2015.

### B. Goals for 2015–2022

The following five goals and associated objectives guide the 2015-2022 Plan and are based on a review of the Town’s accomplishments in meeting the goals and objectives outlined in the 2007-2014 Plan.

These new goals build on and go beyond the previous set of goals to provide a continuing mandate for the Town to pursue a coordinated and focused plan for protecting and managing open space and recreation facilities, working collaboratively within the Town and throughout the region to ensure continued protection of our fragile environment, and enhancing public awareness, accessibility, and stewardship of the existing open space resources in Arlington. The fulfillment of these goals will make Arlington a more desirable and pleasant community to live in and to visit.

Further, by accomplishing the specific actions associated with these goals, the entire community will acquire a greater sense of awareness of and appreciation for Arlington’s valuable open space and recreational resources. The detailed actions to achieve these goals and objectives are listed in chapter 9, Action Plan.

- Goal 1. Acquire ecologically valuable undeveloped lands or ensure their protection through conservation restrictions or other means.**
- Goal 2. Preserve, maintain, and enhance existing open spaces, including watersheds, water bodies, and natural areas; parks, playgrounds, and outdoor recreational facilities; and historic sites and cultural landscapes.**
  - 2-a.** Preserve, maintain, and enhance the Town’s natural heritage, including watersheds, water bodies, native flora and fauna, and all existing natural areas.
  - 2-b.** Preserve, maintain, and enhance Arlington’s parks, playgrounds, playing fields, and other outdoor recreational facilities.
  - 2-c.** Preserve, maintain, and enhance Arlington’s historic open space sites and cultural landscapes.



**Goal 3. Coordinate and strengthen local and regional planning and management of open spaces in conjunction with various Town departments, commissions and volunteer groups; and work closely with nearby towns and regional entities and with state and federal officials and agencies.**

- 3-a. Work within the Town of Arlington to better coordinate, fund, and manage open space goals and objectives, especially ongoing maintenance of all resources and facilities.
- 3-b. Work at the regional level to coordinate planning and development initiatives that protect and enhance open spaces and historic landscapes across jurisdictions.
- 3-c. Engage state officials and state and federal agencies in efforts by the Town to acquire, maintain, and manage the Town's open space and outdoor recreation resources.

**Goal 4. Increase public awareness, accessibility, and community stewardship of the Town's open spaces and recreational facilities.**

- 4-a. Support volunteer groups for major open spaces and recreational facilities.
- 4-b. Increase public awareness and educate Town residents about open space and recreational resources.
- 4-c. Provide greater use of and improved access to key water bodies, natural areas, and recreational facilities.

**Goal 5. Use environmentally sustainable planning and engineering approaches for climate change and natural resources management.**

- 5-a. Promote adaptation to climate change and mitigation of its effects
- 5-b. Improve water resources management, control flooding, and maintain ecological diversity (flora and fauna) in water bodies and wetlands
- 5-c. Support Arlington's efforts to create a more environmentally sound Town and region.



*Volunteers create a rain garden at Spy Pond Park using native plants.  
Courtesy of Friends of Spy Pond Park.*

# 9

## Action Plan, 2015-2022

### A. Introduction

This Action Plan for the Town of Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan seeks to translate its goals and objectives into concrete actions for the period 2015–2022. It seeks to deliver on the goals and objectives expressed throughout this process with a program of tangible steps for the Town to take over the next seven years.

These actions are targeted to address the physical and organizational issues confronting the Town, as described and analyzed in previous sections of this Plan, especially in chapter 7. This Action Plan strives to examine various needs and visions realistically in light of current economic conditions, while maintaining a focus on the substantive issues of open space and recreation preservation, acquisition, enhancement, management, and maintenance.

Table 9-1 lists more than 75 action items, and Map 9-1 indicates the locations of 20 selected major projects (numbered from left to right). Some of these actions are already in the planning process; others are ongoing but need additional support. While all of the actions listed are recognized as important, two issues rise to the top as being absolutely essential for any future progress toward meeting the goals of this Plan:

- Advocate for continued support from Town staff, commissions, and boards for the principle that open space and recreation are central

and lasting priorities for Arlington residents. While it is understood that there are competing needs for both financial and staffing resources in the Town, all groups must abide by the central tenet that these issues are extremely important to the residents of Arlington. Where open space and recreational resources are concerned, the goals and policies of this Plan must be followed, and the committee members and Town staff must be consulted. The Arlington Master Plan, completed in 2015, also reinforces these priorities and should be used in conjunction with this Open Space and Recreation Plan.

- Secure additional funding sources for staffing and other support to better maintain and enhance all parks, playgrounds, playing fields, and natural open spaces. Additionally, there is strong interest among community residents in obtaining additional open space resources such as the Mugar parcel and additional recreational facilities. Funds to achieve these goals are scarce and the Town must be creative in how funds are raised. Private groups such as the Arlington Land Trust and many Friends groups are actively engaged in efforts to raise funds and to obtain grants for acquisition and maintenance goals. The adoption of the Community Preservation Act in 2014 is a new opportunity for funding some open space and recreation needs.

### B. Open Space and Recreation Priorities

The five priorities listed below reflect the specific goals and attainable objectives that are embedded in the overall Plan. They hold equal importance and represent the concerns shared by Town residents for acquiring, maintaining, raising funds for, and working collaboratively to preserve, protect, and enhance open space resources and recreational facilities in our densely developed Town.

#### 1. Land Protection

Actively pursue long-standing goals to acquire or protect through other means ecologically valuable land parcels such as the Mugar property and Arlington's Great Meadows, as well as other wetlands or undeveloped land that could be lost as open space. Another focus is to pursue opportunities

for protecting and enhancing the natural resources associated with the Mill Brook corridor and improving public access to the area.

## 2. Maintenance and Capital Improvements

Explore multiple public and private avenues for raising additional funds for capital improvements and maintenance of all of the Town's parks, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities. Some projects already in line for capital improvements through 2022 are Magnolia and Bishop School playgrounds, Robbins Farm and Hurd/Reservoir playing fields, Wellington Park and the Reservoir Beach; ADA compliance upgrades; and a master plan for Poets Corner.

## 3. Management of Town Open Spaces

Continue to encourage Town departments, Town and regional commissions, and volunteer Friends groups to work collaboratively to better coordinate, manage, and raise funds to implement all of the open space goals and objectives. Special efforts are needed to hire additional DPW staff to advocate for and implement planning, management, and maintenance of Arlington's open spaces, natural resources, and recreational facilities.

## 4. Public Participation and Stewardship

Increase public awareness, education, accessibility, and community stewardship of the Town's open spaces through a variety of participatory education programs and volunteer activities to better monitor and improve open space and recreational facilities. A related goal is to make better use of the Town website, e-mail lists, community access TV, and other resources to enhance channels of communication and levels of participation.

## 5. Sustainable Approaches for Natural Resources Management

Take actions to improve water resources management, control flooding, maintain ecological diversity (flora and fauna), promote mitigation and adaptation to climate changes, and ensure that Arlington's residential

areas, commercial centers, and infrastructure are developed in harmony with natural resource concerns.

**Table 9.1 – Acronyms for Action Plan Responsible Parties and Funding Sources**

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Full Name</b>
ABAC	Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee
ACC	Arlington Conservation Commission
AHA	Arlington Housing Authority
ALT	Arlington Land Trust
ARB	Arlington Redevelopment Board
A-TED	Arlington Tourism and Economic Development
BOS	Board of Selectmen
CC	Cemetery Commission
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CPA	Community Preservation Act
CPC	Capital Planning Committee
DCR	Department of Conservation and Recreation (state)
DPW	Department of Public Works
FoAGM	Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows
HC	Historic Commission
HCA	Housing Corporation of Arlington
HDC	Historic Districts Commission
HS	Historical Society
LAND	Land Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (state)
MAPC	Metropolitan Area Planning Council (regional)
MyRWA	Mystic River Watershed Association
OSC	Open Space Committee
PARC	Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (state)
PRC	Park and Recreation Commission
SA	Sustainable Arlington
TAC	Transportation Advisory Commission
TM	Town Meeting
ZBA	Zoning Board of Appeals

Table 9-1. Action Plan for 2015-2022 Goals & Objectives	Actions	Responsible Parties	Short-term 2015-2016	Mid-term 2017-2020	Long-term 2021-2022	Potential Funding Sources
<b>Goal 1: Acquire ecologically valuable undeveloped lands or ensure their protection through conservation restrictions or other means.</b>						
	1-1. Conduct an inventory of Town-owned open spaces of conservation and recreation value that are not permanently protected, and develop strategies to ensure their protection, especially sites adjacent to existing open spaces, parks, wetlands, and waterways, such as along Mill Brook, Spy Pond, Mystic Lakes, Arlington's Great Meadows, and Poets Corner.	OSC, ALT, ARB, Friends groups	X			Private funding, Town budget and capital funds
	1-2. Work with the Arlington Land Trust, other groups, Town officials, and landowners to negotiate acquisitions, conservation restrictions, transfers of development rights, or other means to protect undeveloped privately owned property of conservation and recreation value that could be developed under current zoning regulations, especially the Mugar land.	OSC, ALT, ARB, private landowners, developers	X	X	X	LAND, private funding, grants, Town budget and capital funds, CPA funds
	1-3. Support the Arlington Land Trust and Conservation Commission as co-holders of a conservation restriction on the open space at the Symmes site, and support a new Friends group to help oversee the designated parks and woodlands on that property.	OSC, ALT, ACC, Friends of Symmes Conservation Area	X	X	X	Private funding
<b>Goal 2: Preserve, maintain, and enhance existing open spaces, including watersheds, water bodies, and natural areas; parks, playgrounds and outdoor recreational facilities; and historic sites and cultural landscapes.</b>						
<b>2-a. Preserve, maintain, and enhance the Town's natural heritage, including watersheds, water bodies, native flora and fauna, and existing natural areas.</b>	2-a-1. Encourage and support Town efforts to manage major water bodies and natural areas to preserve and protect biodiverse habitats for native flora and fauna (including Arlington Reservoir, Arlington's Great Meadows, McClennen Park, Spy Pond, Meadowbrook Park, and Menotomy Rocks).	OSC, PRC, ACC, DPW	X	X	X	Water Bodies Fund

Table 9-1. Action Plan for 2015-2022 Goals & Objectives	Actions	Responsible Parties	Short-term 2015-2016	Mid-term 2017-2020	Long-term 2021-2022	Potential Funding Sources
	2-a-2. 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.	TM, Vision 2020, Friends groups	X	X	X	Water Bodies Fund
	2-a-3. Encourage and support efforts by Friends groups and other volunteers to help maintain natural resources and landscapes, such as the Wildlife Habitat Garden at the Reservoir and rain gardens at various sites around Town.	OSC, Vision 2020, Friends groups, other volunteers	X	X	X	Private funding
	2-a-4. Support FoAGM's efforts to remove invasive plants and restore upland meadows and other habitats at Arlington's Great Meadows to protect and support diverse wildlife and plant species.	OSC, FoAGM, Mass Audubon	X	X	X	Private funding
	2-a-5. Continue to enforce the Massachusetts Rivers Protection Act and Wetlands Protection Act and the Town's Wetlands Protection Bylaw to prevent further culverting of Mill Brook, enhance its open sections, and promote daylighting.	ACC, ARB	X	X	X	Town budget and capital funds, CPA funds
	2-a-6. Protect and enhance the water quality and ecological integrity of Mill Brook as it meanders through Town from the Reservoir, through many neighborhoods and Meadowbrook Park, and into the Lower Mystic Lake.	OSC, ACC, DPW, Friends groups, private landowners	X	X	X	Town budget and capital funds, CPA funds
	2-a-7. Work with the Redevelopment Board and others on future development in the Mill Brook Study Area and pursue opportunities to expand and enhance public access to Mill Brook by linking existing and new open spaces.	OSC, ARB, ACC, PRC, private landowners	X	X	X	Town budget and capital funds, CPA funds

<b>Table 9-1. Action Plan for 2015-2022 Goals &amp; Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Short-term 2015-2016</b>	<b>Mid-term 2017-2020</b>	<b>Long-term 2021-2022</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	2-a-8. Enhance maintenance along Arlington’s stretch of the Minuteman Bikeway, and support the addition of public amenities and site improvements for users.	ABAC, DPW	X	X	X	Town budget and capital funds, CPA funds
	2-a-9. Use native vegetation appropriate for an urban environment in Town-sponsored and private landscaping projects along the Mass. Ave. corridor and other commercial streets, and along the Bikeway.	DPW, Tree Comm., ACC, ABAC, ARB	X	X	X	Town budget and capital funds, CPA funds
	2-a-10. Support volunteer efforts to enhance neighborhood streetscapes and street island gardens through maintenance and plantings of native trees, shrubs, and flowering plants.	Friends groups, DPW, ACC, Garden Club	X	X	X	Private funding
	2-a-11. Encourage Town-managed tree planting to a level of one new tree for every one removed on public streets, parks, and playgrounds, and work to make this official town policy.	OSC, BOS, Tree Comm., PRC, DPW	X	X	X	Town budget and capital funds, CPA funds
	2-a-12. Work to protect endangered species, such as Englemann's Umbrella Sedge, and to eliminate invasive plants, such as Phragmites, Japanese Knotweed, Garlic Mustard, Black Swallowwort, and Oriental Bittersweet.	OSC, DPW, ACC, Friends groups	X	X	X	Town budget and capital funds, CPA funds
	2-a-13. Develop policies to prevent the use of identified invasive species of trees, shrubs, and other plants and to enrich all natural environments with native plants.	ARB, DPW, ACC, Tree Committee	X	X	X	N/A
<b>2-b. Preserve, maintain, and enhance Arlington’s parks, playgrounds, playing fields, and other outdoor recreational facilities.</b>	2-b-1. Continue to upgrade the physical condition of playing fields and other recreational facilities per the Capital Plan of the Park and Recreation Commission (see Appendix C).	PRC, CPC, Recreation Dept., School Dept., sports user groups	X	X	X	PARC, Town capital funds, private user groups

<b>Table 9-1. Action Plan for 2015-2022 Goals &amp; Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Short-term 2015-2016</b>	<b>Mid-term 2017-2020</b>	<b>Long-term 2021-2022</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	2-b-2. Support public/private partnerships and other funding initiatives necessary to meet heavy demands on playing fields throughout the Town.	PRC, School Dept., sports user groups	X	X	X	Private user groups
	2-b-3. Encourage the involvement and coordination of youth groups, sports teams, and other users in maintaining playing fields.	PRC, DPW, Recreation Dept., teams, youth groups	X	X	X	N/A
	2-b-4. Increase efforts towards park maintenance, with a focus on long-term fundraising strategies	Friends groups, PRC	X	X	X	Town budget and capital funds
	2-b-5. Introduce educational signage and other amenities at parks (such as benches, bulletin boards, recycling receptacles, bike racks).	PRC, DPW	X	X	X	PARC, Town capital funds
	2-b-6. Pursue new recreational opportunities based on community preference, such as for more swimming and ice skating facilities.	PRC, Recreation Dept.	X	X	X	PARC, Town capital funds, CDBG
	2-b-7. Prioritize and upgrade facilities to meet ADA compliance requirements, as specified in the ADA Study of Town recreation properties, completed in 2014	PRC, Recreation Dept., DPW	X	X	X	PARC, Town capital funds, CDBG
<b>2-c. Preserve, maintain, and enhance Arlington's historic open space sites and cultural landscapes.</b>	2-c-1. Conduct an inventory of significant Town-owned and private historic properties in conjunction with the Historic Commission and other groups to consider conservation and historic preservation restrictions or other actions to properly preserve and maintain these sites.	OSC, ALT, HC, HS, HDC	X	X	X	MAPC Battle Road Scenic Byways Program
	2-c-2. Work with the Town to preserve and maintain historic cultural and recreational properties in need of attention, such as the Play Fair stadium at Spy Pond Field, Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden in the Civic Block, and Cyrus Dallin sculptures on Town property.	DPW, PRC, HC, Friends groups, School Dept.	X	X	X	CPA funds

Table 9-1. Action Plan for 2015-2022 Goals & Objectives	Actions	Responsible Parties	Short-term 2015-2016	Mid-term 2017-2020	Long-term 2021-2022	Potential Funding Sources
	2-c-3. Continue to upgrade and expand interpretive programs, signage, and other materials that integrate the historical, environmental, geographical, and ecological resources of the Town and region with tourism and economic development goals.	OSC, HC, HS, HDC, ARB, A-TED	X	X	X	MAPC Battle Road Scenic Byways Program
	2-c-4. Develop and implement interpretive programs encompassing the historic Mill Brook corridor, including Arlington's Great Meadows, Arlington Reservoir, the former mill ponds, Spy Pond, and the entire Alewife/Mystic Watershed.	Volunteer groups, HC, HS, FoAGM, DCR, A-TED	X	X	X	MAPC Battle Road Scenic Byways Program
	2-c-5. Support restoration work on landscapes and monuments at the Old Burying Ground and Mt. Pleasant Cemetery.	HC, CC, DPW	X	X	X	CPA funds
<b>Goal 3: Coordinate and strengthen local and regional planning and management of open spaces in conjunction with various Town departments, commissions, and volunteer groups, and work closely with nearby towns and regional entities and with state and federal officials and agencies.</b>						
<b>3-a. Work within the Town of Arlington to better coordinate, fund, and manage open space goals and objectives, especially ongoing maintenance of all resources and facilities.</b>	3-a-1. Maintain and strengthen the Open Space Committee to oversee the Open Space and Recreation Plan and to advocate actively for its goals, objectives, and priorities, in conjunction with the Master Plan's recommended Planned Preventive Maintenance program.	OSC, BOS, ARB, DPW, ACC, PRC	X	X	X	N/A
	3-a-2. Support all efforts to provide sufficient funding for staffing and maintenance of all resources and facilities through multiple sources and programs.	OSC, DPW, PRC, ACC, TM	X	X	X	Town budget and capital funds, public/private sources



Table 9-1. Action Plan for 2015-2022 Goals & Objectives	Actions	Responsible Parties	Short-term 2015-2016	Mid-term 2017-2020	Long-term 2021-2022	Potential Funding Sources
	3-a-3. Advocate for hiring a natural resources professional to oversee the planning, management, and maintenance of Arlington’s open spaces, and additional DPW staff to implement work projects.	DPW, PRC, Town Manager, TM	X	X	X	Town budget
	3-a-4. Support the Cemetery Commission in efforts to create additional burial options, including columbariums and green burials.	OSC, CC, BOS, DPW, ACC	X	X	X	Town budget
	3-a-5. Work with Town departments, boards, and commissions to clarify and enforce Town policies on proper uses of public open spaces and treatment of those who violate regulations.	OSC, BOS, ARB, ZBA, ACC, PRC, DPW, School Comm., Police Dept.	X	X	X	Town budget
	3-a-6. Work with the Capital Planning Committee to fund planning and renovation and projects at Town parks and playing fields, including Poets Corner, Robbins Farm Field, Hurd/Reservoir Fields, Turkey Hill, and Reservoir Beach.	PRC, CPC, Recreation Dept.		X	X	Town capital funds
	3-a-7. Consider ecological impacts of climate change on open space and outdoor recreation sites.	OSC, BOS, ACC, PRC, DPW	X	X	X	N/A
	3-a-8. Develop open space and recreation capital improvements plans in conjunction with tourism and economic development projects.	PRC, A-TED, DPW, ARB, CPC	X	X	X	PARC, CPA, public/private sources
	3-a-9. Expand electronic communications and update GIS and related tools regularly in order to monitor potential real estate transactions that could impact Town goals to preserve and enhance open spaces, including small lots.	OSC, ALT, Planning Dept., DPW	X	X	X	N/A

<b>Table 9-1. Action Plan for 2015-2022 Goals &amp; Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Short-term 2015-2016</b>	<b>Mid-term 2017-2020</b>	<b>Long-term 2021-2022</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	3-a-10. Collaborate with Planning Department and Redevelopment Board on appropriate actions related to planning, development, and open space uses around Town, as part of the Master Plan implementation.	OSC, Planning Dept., ARB	X	X	X	N/A
	3-a-11. Work with Town departments and private groups on collaborative planning to increase access to affordable housing in conjunction with open space.	OSC, ALT, PRC, BOS, DPW, HCA, AHA	X	X	X	CPA funds
	3-a-12. Support efforts to find new options for the temporary storage of snow, damaged trees, and other debris from natural emergencies.	DPW, PRC, ACC	X	X	X	Town budget
3-b. Work at the regional level to coordinate planning and development initiatives that protect and enhance open spaces and historic landscapes across jurisdictions.	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 state Department of Conservation and Recreation.	OSC, BOS, ACC, MAPC, DCR, MyRWA	X	X	X	N/A
	3-b-2. Continue to work closely with nearby towns on shared open space and recreational resources, such as the Alewife Reservation region (Belmont, Somerville, and Cambridge); Mystic Lakes/River region (Medford and Winchester); and Arlington's Great Meadows, Reservoir, Lex Farm, and McClennen Park areas (Lexington).	OSC, BOS, ACC, PRC, and other Towns' officials	X	X	X	N/A
	3-b-3. Establish better connections with Minuteman National Historic Park, Heritage Way communities, and other entities so that the Town can enhance tourism and maximize the visibility of its historic role in the region.	OSC, HC, BOS, ARB, Planning Dept., A-TED	X	X	X	MAPC Battle Road Scenic Byways Program

<b>Table 9-1. Action Plan for 2015-2022 Goals &amp; Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Short-term 2015-2016</b>	<b>Mid-term 2017-2020</b>	<b>Long-term 2021-2022</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	3-b-4. Work with the Tri-Community Bikeway Group (Arlington, Lexington, Bedford) to improve maintenance, safety, and amenities on the Minuteman Bikeway.	ABAC, BOS, DPW	X	X	X	N/A
3-c. Engage state officials and state and federal agencies in efforts to acquire, maintain, and manage the Town's open space and recreation resources.	3-c-1. Continue to work with state legislators to support and promote state policies that favor protection of and funding for open space and recreation resources.	OSC, BOS, PRC, DPW, ACC, ALT	X	X	X	N/A
	3-c-2. Support efforts to address CSO pollution and flooding problems and to improve public access to areas bordering Alewife Brook and other state-owned water bodies along Arlington's borders with Cambridge, Somerville, Medford, and Belmont.	OSC, BOS, ACC, DCR	X	X	X	State DCR funding
	3-c-3. Advocate for more state funding for the Community Preservation Act to match funds raised locally, and for more dollars for local aid and grants for conservation and recreation.	OSC, BOS, PRC, ALT, ACC, HC, Planning Dept., Town Meeting	X	X	X	State budget
	3-c-4 Advocate with the state DCR for additional financial assistance and/or ownership stake in the state-owned/town-managed ice skating facility at Ed Burns Arena.	Recreation Dept., DCR, PRC, BOS, Town Mgr.	X	X	X	Public/private partnerships
<b>Goal 4: Increase public awareness, accessibility, and community stewardship of the Town's open spaces and recreational facilities</b>						
4-a. Support volunteer groups for major open spaces and recreational facilities.	4-a-1. Support existing Friends and volunteer groups, and encourage the formation of new groups for major open spaces, parks, playgrounds, and natural areas.	OSC, PRC, ACC, DPW, ALT, Friends groups	X	X	X	Private funding

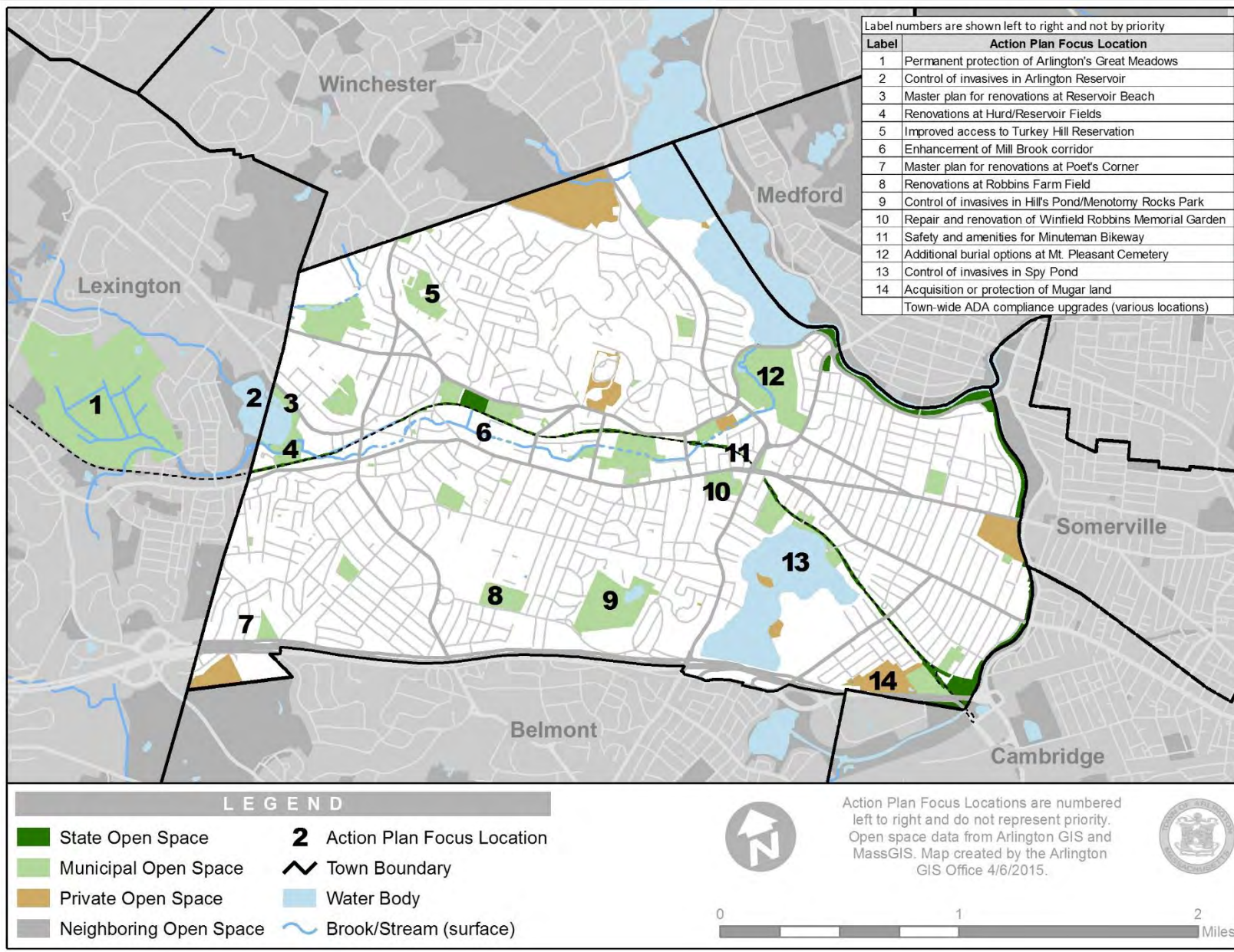
<b>Table 9-1. Action Plan for 2015-2022 Goals &amp; Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Short-term 2015-2016</b>	<b>Mid-term 2017-2020</b>	<b>Long-term 2021-2022</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	4-a-2. Support the efforts of the Arlington Parks Alliance and the Conservation Land Stewards Program to collaborate with residents, users, and volunteers on both fundraising and maintenance projects.	OSC, ACC, PRC	X	X	X	Private user groups
	4-a-3. Support all Town and independent recreational and sports organizations in the funding and maintenance of playing fields, Ed Burns Arena, and other active recreational facilities.	PRC, Recreation Dept.	X	X	X	Town budget and capital funding, CPA funds
4-b. Increase public awareness and educate Town residents about open space and recreational resources.	4-b-1. Encourage residents to participate actively in various Town committees and Friends groups, to be well informed about local resources, and to participate in opportunities for open space and recreation advocacy and maintenance.	OSC, BOS, PRC, ACC, ALT, volunteer groups	X	X	X	N/A
	4-b-2. Prepare handouts, educational materials, and online resources to encourage greater citizen awareness and participation, especially for those who have recently moved to Arlington.	OSC, ALT, ACC, PRC, ABAC	X	X	X	N/A
	4-b-3. Draw attention to some of the smaller and lesser-known open spaces and natural resources, to increase activity in all parts of Town.	OSC, PRC, ACC	X	X	X	N/A
	4-b-4. Encourage participation in regular nature walks and environmental education programs for all ages (such as birding, canoeing/kayaking, and cleanup campaigns) sponsored by non-Town groups such as Menotomy Bird Club, Boys and Girls Club, and Mystic River Watershed Association.	OSC, PRC, ACC, School Dept., PTOs, Recreation Dept.	X	X	X	N/A
	4-b-5. Work with local youth groups, churches, schools, scout groups, and other organizations to promote awareness about the Town's open spaces and participation in open space and recreational activities.	OSC and others as listed above	X	X	X	N/A

<b>Table 9-1. Action Plan for 2015-2022 Goals &amp; Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Short-term 2015-2016</b>	<b>Mid-term 2017-2020</b>	<b>Long-term 2021-2022</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	4-b-6. Educate landowners of small and large lots about the benefits of conservation restrictions or other means of protection for their land and the community at large.	OSC, ALT, ACC	X	X	X	Private funding
	4-b-7. Continue to support the “adopt an island” garden program and other activities to enhance streetscapes throughout the Town.	DPW, Garden Club	X	X	X	N/A
	4-b-8. Continue to sponsor an annual Town Day booth and participate in EcoFest for information sharing, education, and advocacy about open space issues.	OSC	X	X	X	N/A
	4-b-9. Continue to use the local and regional media to promote and inform residents about open space and recreational activities and special events i.e., Arlington Cable Access, <i>Arlington Advocate</i> , Town Email list, Town website, GIS maps, etc.	OSC, PRC, ACC, volunteer groups	X	X	X	N/A
	4-b-10. Promote open space and recreational resources in conjunction with other tourism and economic development activities and with improved signage and directions.	OSC, A-TED, ARB, PRC, ACC	X	X	X	Town budget
	4-b-11. Work with the Tree Committee, DPW, and others to promote opportunities for residents to plant and care for trees on their property and on public property.	DPW, Tree Comm.	X	X	X	N/A
	4-b-12. Expand public education for homeowners about common invasive plants and native choices for more natural landscaping.	OSC, DPW, ACC, Garden Club	X	X	X	N/A
4-c. Provide greater use of and improved access to key water bodies, natural areas, and recreational facilities.	4-c-1 Implement the recommendations contained in the ADA Study of recreation facilities conducted for the Town in 2014 by the Institute for Human Centered Design	PRC, DPW, Disability Comm.	X	X	X	PARC, Town capital funds, CDBG, CPA

<b>Table 9-1. Action Plan for 2015-2022 Goals &amp; Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Short-term 2015-2016</b>	<b>Mid-term 2017-2020</b>	<b>Long-term 2021-2022</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
	4-c-2. Increase the diversity of recreational options to reflect Arlington's changing demographics.	OSC, PRC, Recreation Dept., School Dept., Council on Aging	X	X	X	Town budget
	4-c-3. Investigate ways to improve public access to state-owned pathways along Alewife Brook, Lower Mystic Lake, and the Mystic Valley Parkway.	OSC, DCR	X	X	X	State DCR
	4-c-4. Pursue initiatives to improve public access and create new pathways along Mill Brook and around Spy Pond.	OSC, ALT, PRC, ACC,ARB	X	X	X	PARC, CPA funds
	4-c-5. Investigate opportunities for additional indoor and outdoor swimming and ice skating facilities.	PRC, Recreation Dept.	X	X	X	PARC, CPA funds
<b>Goal 5. Use environmentally sustainable planning and engineering approaches for climate change and natural resources management.</b>						
5-a. Promote mitigation and adaptation to climate change	5-a-1. Identify environmental vulnerabilities due to climate change and population and development pressures.	Town Mgr., DPW, SA	X	X	X	N/A
	5-a-2. Develop a Hazard Mitigation Plan to protect natural resources following natural and human-caused disasters and the ongoing effects of climate change.	Town Mgr., DPW	X	X	X	Town budget
	5-a-3. Work with Town entities to develop plans and disseminate information about local climate change impacts and steps residents can take to prepare.	SA, DPW, Friends groups	X	X	X	Town budget
	5-a-4. Encourage zoning and other bylaws to ensure that Arlington's residential areas, commercial centers, and infrastructure are developed in harmony with future natural resource needs, in concert with recommendations in the Master Plan.	ARB, DPW	X	X	X	N/A

<b>Table 9-1. Action Plan for 2015-2022 Goals &amp; Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Short-term 2015-2016</b>	<b>Mid-term 2017-2020</b>	<b>Long-term 2021-2022</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
5-b. Improve water resources management, control flooding, and maintain ecological diversity (flora and fauna) in water bodies and wetlands	5-b-1. Achieve better water resources management in all Town water bodies through control of nonpoint pollution and storm water runoff, use of low-impact development and groundwater recharge practices, and control of invasive plants.	DPW, ARB, ACC	X	X	X	Water Bodies Fund
	5-b-2. Promote information about water conservation, ecological lawn and landscape treatments, and pollution control measures on both Town properties and private residences and businesses.	SA, DPW, ACC, Friends groups, Garden Club	X	X	X	N/A
	5-b-3. Share information in updated FEMA maps regarding floodplain boundaries and implications for property owners in those areas	ARB, DPW, ACC	X	X	X	N/A
5-c. Support Arlington's efforts to create a more environmentally sound Town and region.	5-c-1. Link Town concerns about open space with larger global concerns about air quality, energy efficiency, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and sustainability issues in general.	OSC, BOS, DPW, SA	X	X	X	N/A
	5-c-2. Encourage public transportation, shared cars (i.e., ZipCar), carpooling, walking, and bicycle commuting as alternatives to automobile use and as ways to improve public health through more exercise.	OSC, BOS, ABAC, SA, TAC, Walking in Arlington	X	X	X	N/A
	5-c-3. Establish more rain gardens and community gardens, and encourage composting, container gardening, farmers markets, and other sustainable food resource practices.	PRC, Recreation Dept., DPW, Garden Club	X	X	X	N/A
	5-c-4. Maintain the Town's status as both a Green Communities and a Tree City community.	Town Mgr, DPW, SA	X	X	X	Town budget

Map 9-1. Action Plan Focus Locations, 2015-2022



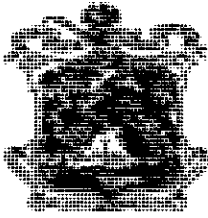
Town of Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2015-2022  
9-Action Plan, 2015-2022



# 10

## Public Comments

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**ARLINGTON REDEVELOPMENT BOARD**

TOWN HALL ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02476  
TELEPHONE 781-316-3090

Ann LeRoy, Chairperson  
Open Space Committee  
c/o Department of Planning and Community Development  
Town Hall Annex  
730 Massachusetts Avenue  
Arlington, MA 02474

RE: 2015-2022 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ann,

The Redevelopment Board supports the 2015-2022 Town of Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan as voted at its meeting of March 30, 2015. The Board also voted at that meeting to adopt the updated Open Space and Recreation Plan as a Town policy document. The Board also finds that the Open Space and Recreation Plan is consistent with the Arlington Master Plan.

The Board is pleased that the Open Space Plan communicates how highly valued the open space and recreation assets are in our densely developed community. The action steps for maintaining, conserving and expanding open space and recreation resources will contribute to the stability and attractiveness of all Arlington neighborhoods.

The Board appreciates the work of the Open Space Committee, and we look forward to working towards realizing the goals of the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Yours truly,

  
Andrew Bunnell  
Chairman



SMART GROWTH AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
15 APR 17 PM 7:28

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
15 MAY 17 PM 7:29

April 29, 2015

Joey Glushko, Planner  
Planning and Community Development Department  
730 Massachusetts Avenue Annex  
Arlington, MA 02476

Dear Ms. Glushko:

Thank you for submitting the "Town of Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan 2015-2022" to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for review.

The Division of Conservation Services (DCS) requires that all open space plans must be submitted to the regional planning agency for review. This review is advisory and only DCS has the power to approve a municipal open space plan. While DCS reviews open space plans for compliance with their guidelines, MAPC reviews these plans for their attention to regional issues generally and more specifically for consistency with *MetroFuture*, the regional policy plan for the Boston metropolitan area.

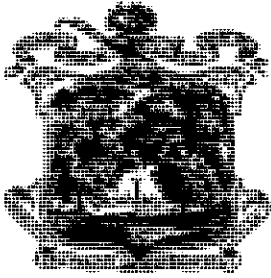
The plan is very comprehensive and represents a high level of detail. The plan is highly consistent with *MetroFuture* and it should serve the town well as it continues its efforts to preserve open space and provide for the recreational needs of its residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this plan.

Sincerely,

Marc D. Draisen  
Executive Director

Cc: Laura Wiener, MAPC Representative, Town of Arlington  
Melissa Cryan, Division of Conservation Resources



TOWN OF ARLINGTON

MASSACHUSETTS

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

April 6, 2015

Carol Kowalski, Director  
Department of Planning and Community Development  
Town Hall  
730 Massachusetts Avenue  
Arlington, MA 02476

RE: Open Space and Recreation Plan Update: 2015-2022


Dear Ms. Kowalski:

The Conservation Commission expresses its strong support of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update of 2015-2022. David White of the Commission has been working extensively on this update as the Commission's representative to the Open Space Committee. David has kept the Conservation Commission apprised of the Update's development.

The Conservation Commission voted, unanimously, at its April 2, 2015 meeting to support the plan update.

The Commission looks forward to actively working with the Open Space Committee and you and your staff to implement the goals of the Update.

Sincerely,

  
for Nathaniel Stevens, Chair

Cb/cc  
Cc:file

**TOWN OF ARLINGTON**  
Joseph Connelly  
Director of Recreation



**PARK COMMISSIONERS**  
Leslie Mayer, Chairperson  
Jen Rothenberg, Vice Chair  
Shirley Canniff  
Donald Vitters  
Jim Robillard  
Elena Bartholomew,  
Associate  
Peter Hedlund, Associate

## **Park and Recreation Commission**

April 20, 2015

Ann LeRoy, Chairperson  
Open Space Committee  
c/o Department of Planning and Community Development  
Town Hall Annex  
730 Massachusetts Avenue  
Arlington, MA 02474

Re: 2015-2022 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ann,

The Arlington Park and Recreation Commission would like to express its support of the Town of Arlington's Open Space and Recreation Plan for 2015-2022. The Commission has reviewed the goals, objectives and action plan. All members have had the opportunity to review and provide input and updates to the plan, through the Commission's representative to the Open Space Committee. At its most recent meeting on April 14, 2015, the Park and Recreation Commission voted unanimously to support the plan.

The Commission, once again, remains particularly concerned with the need for improved maintenance of Arlington's parks, playgrounds and playing fields. As a densely populated community with limited land resources, Arlington's passive and active recreational resources continue to be valued and in high demand. The need to secure additional sources of funding, staffing and support for the Town's open space and recreational resources continues to be essential for meeting the goals of the plan and retaining high quality public recreation facilities and programs.

The Commission feels that the 2015-2022 Open Space and Recreation Plan does reflect the needs of the community and looks forward to helping make the plan a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leslie Mayer".

Leslie Mayer, Chairperson  
Arlington Park and Recreation Commission

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

KEVIN F. GREELEY, CHAIR  
DIANE M. MAHON, VICE CHAIR  
STEVEN M. BYRNE  
JOSEPH A. CURRO, JR.  
DANIEL J. DUNN



730 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE  
TELEPHONE  
781-316-3020  
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TOWN OF ARLINGTON  
MASSACHUSETTS 02476-4908

March 31, 2015

Carol Kowalski  
Director of Planning and  
Community Development  
Town of Arlington  
730 Massachusetts Avenue  
Arlington, MA 02476

Dear Ms. Kowalski:

The Board of Selectmen would like to offer its enthusiastic support for the "Town of Arlington Open Space and Recreation Plan update 2015-2022." We would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of the members of the Open Space Committee since the adoption of the Town's first open space plan in 1996. Their continued dedication has brought respect and attention to the open space matters in the Town. The Board would like to especially thank member Ann LeRoyer for her hard work and contribution to the updated plan.

We look forward to a continue relationship of working to improve our open space system, our natural areas and parks and playgrounds. We believe that a commitment to the improvement of our open space will keep Arlington an attractive town with a high quality of life for its residents.

We continue to be committed in implementing the practical steps as outlined in the Open Space Plan.

Very truly yours,  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

*Kevin F. Greeley*  
Kevin F. Greeley  
Chairman

PLANNING & COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
15 APR 19 2:11:17

# 11

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## Selected Websites

Town of Arlington – <http://www.town.arlington.ma.us/home>

Town of Arlington Open Space Committee - <http://www.arlingtonma.gov/town-governance/all-boards-and-committees/open-space-committee>

Town of Arlington Master Plan Summary - <http://arlingtonma.gov/home/showdocument?id=24168>

Town of Arlington Master Plan - <http://arlingtonma.gov/home/showdocument?id=24289>  
<http://arlingtonma.gov/Home/Components/News/News/2475/16>

Arlington Vision 2020 - <http://www.town.arlington.ma.us/town-governance/all-boards-and-committees/vision-2020>

Arlington Reservoir – <http://www.arlington2020.org/reservoir>

Birds in Arlington – <http://www.mrines.com/menotomy/>

Metropolitan Area Planning Council – <http://www.mapc.org>

Old Schwamb Mill. Arlington, MA.  
[www.oldschwambmill.org/research/research.html](http://www.oldschwambmill.org/research/research.html)

Pre-Colonial History of Arlington (Menotomy) – <http://www.tolatsga.org/aben.html>