

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

The Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB) is a five member Board; it has three powers:

1. It is the Planning Board, under MGL Chapter 41 Section 81 A; it is the special permit granting authority for projects, which require an Environmental Design Review (EDR);

2. It is the urban renewal authority for the Town under MGL Chapter 121 where it may, with Town Meeting approval, hold land or buildings to improve and rehabilitate them to meet community development goals;

3. It is the Board of Survey with authority to approve the design of roads for the purposes of ensuring that new building lots can meet zoning frontage and access requirements. (In 2015 there were no applications for Board of Survey consideration.)

The ARB met 25 times during this year. It held hearings on four EDR projects; two of these were approved, and two are pending approvals by other boards. The Arlington Master Plan, following a 2-year development process, was adopted by the Board and was endorsed by the Annual Town Meeting. An Implementation Committee will now guide actions to support this Plan. The ARB oversaw and adopted Design Standards for commercial and mixed-use properties in the Town's commercial corridors –Broadway, Mass. Ave., the Mill Brook and the Minuteman Bikeway. The ARB works with other Town boards as well, and has appointed volunteers to serve on a number of committees and groups working in support of the Master Plan. These groups include the Implementation Committee, the Community Preservation Committee, the Housing Plan Advisory Committee, the Preservation Fund, the Open Space Committee, and Vision 2020.

The ARB manages three properties; the Planning Department is responsible for day-to-day management of these and three additional buildings owned and

leased by the Town for the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen. The buildings are occupied by various tenants, which include state and local groups that provide services to residents and to the community as a whole. The Jefferson Cutter House and the 23 Maple St. locations have received preservation grants to rehabilitate these historic structures. The Jefferson Cutter House and the Central School (Senior Center) provide space in the evenings for use by Town Boards and Committees - a resource for the many volunteer groups in Arlington. These sites also lease space for special events in the evenings and on weekends.

## PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) works with the public and with the private sector to realize community goals for land use and physical development. It gathers and presents data and analyzes trends in Arlington's land use, transportation, economic development, and housing; and it monitors the use of public facilities such as open space and recreational areas, as well as natural and historic and cultural properties.

The Department is staffed with 4.5 planners, a grant administrator, and one support staff person. They support and participate on numerous Town committees, commissions and boards, and work with other departments to support Town initiatives. They oversee the day-to-day activities of Redevelopment Board properties, as well as some Town owned buildings. The Department also administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) - a Federal program which supports services and projects responsive to the needs of lower income residents.

2015 Planning & Community Development Groups/Projects	
Arlington Redevelopment Board	Warrants; Env. Design Review - 4 cases
Master Plan Advisory Committee and Implementation Committee	Arlington Master Plan
Vision 2020 and its Task Groups	Annual Census Insert Survey
Open Space Committee	Open Space and Recreation Plan - 2015-2022
EcoFest Committee	EcoFest 2015 - Energy-Wise - Local Solutions
Bicycle Advisory Committee	
Transportation Advisory Committee	
Housing Plan Advisory Committee	
Arlington Tourism and Econ. Development (ATED)	Tourist information center
Battle Road Scenic Byway Committee	Regional program
Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture	Support for arts and cultural programming
Parking Implementation and Governance Comm.	Arlington Center parking management

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## Master Plan

A highlight of 2015 was the adoption of the Arlington Master Plan by the Redevelopment Board (acting as Planning Board) and the Annual Town Meeting. This was the culmination of a two-year public process. In support of the Master Plan, the DPCD will be active with two new committees: the Master Plan Implementation Committee and the Housing Plan Advisory Committee. Some early accomplishments supporting the Plan include Design Guidelines for commercial development areas such as the Mill Brook Study Area, Mass. Ave. Corridor, and Broadway; proposed warrant articles for 2016 Annual Town Meeting to advance mixed use development; new parking management in Arlington Center; and development of a Complete Streets policy which will promote a transportation network which improves access and safety for all users - pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, transit riders, and freight carriers. In the new year the Department will seek to maintain the momentum of the Master Plan process by looking at other topics - including mixed use development, parking requirements and transportation needs, residential and neighborhood protection, and ways to support historic preservation.

## Economic Development

Arlington's Economic Development Planner managed the Department's Storefront Enhancement Program (SEP) in its second year, doubling output by providing grants to restore the façade of the Regent Theatre and to help renovate a former factory for conversion into office space. Up to four additional grants are being planned with local business and property owners. In May the Department presented a commercial vacancy and employment report to the Board of Selectmen, including econometric models and data from business retention surveys. In September the Department released a groundbreaking report on Arlington's home-based workforce and followed in October by hosting a panel for residents interested in working in collaborative workspaces. At this event the Department was delighted to welcome Workbar, a premier chain of co-working spaces in the Boston area, to Arlington Heights, where the company's fourth co-working space will open in January of 2016. Over the year the Department assisted twenty-three businesses interested in locating in Arlington, and assisted six restaurants with sidewalk dining permits.

## Affordable Housing

Arlington continued its strong support of affordable housing during this past year with the following activities:

- The Master Plan recommended that the Town update its Housing Plan, last completed in 2004. The Planning Department applied for a state grant called Planning

Assistance Toward Housing (PATH) and received \$15,000 to hire a consultant to develop a Housing Production Plan. In August, a Housing Plan Advisory Committee was appointed by the Redevelopment Board. Soon thereafter, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) was chosen to conduct the study. The process began in October, and is scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2016. The consultants have begun looking at the changing demographics of the Town, housing needs and opportunities, and will make recommendations for meeting the Town's housing needs.

- Kimball-Farmer House. The Housing Corporation of Arlington began renovation of this historic structure, which will soon house three low or moderate-income households.
- 20 Westminster Avenue. The Housing Corporation of Arlington began design and permitting for conversion of this church into nine units of affordable housing.
- The Department oversaw a lottery for resale of a one-bedroom affordable condominium to a moderate-income first time homebuyer.

## CDBG program

The CDBG program, a federal program under the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), received and distributed \$1,273,348 for 2014-2015. These funds are used to support non-profit programs and services, public facility projects, and housing and planning activities that benefit income-eligible residents and neighborhoods. Funds are used to support the development of affordable housing and to support local businesses with a revitalized facade improvement program. Annually a portion of the funds are used to support compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements - specifically, more than 60 sidewalk ramps completed each year. The Weatherization and Rehabilitation loan program continues to make low interest loans available for low-income homeowners to make energy improvements and other code improvements; 220 households benefitted from this program. These programs are also supported by Eversource and National Grid.

The Department reviewed nineteen sign permit requests; reviewed and reported on twenty-two ZBA cases (five variance requests, and seventeen special permit requests); and reviewed and commented on seventeen license applications, including three completed sidewalk cafe permits. Four Environmental Design Reviews were completed for the ARB. Additionally, the Department is overseeing the preservation activities at these Town-owned locations: Central School, the Jefferson Cutter House, and at 23 Maple St.

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## PERMANENT TOWN BUILDING COMMITTEE

The Permanent Town Building Committee (PTBC) was established by Town Meeting to oversee the design and construction of new buildings and major renovations for Town of Arlington properties. The Committee is comprised of five citizen members, appointed jointly by the chairs of the Selectmen, Finance Committee, and School Committee, a representative of the School Committee and in addition the Town Manager, Superintendent of Schools, and Director of Public Works or their designees.

Fire Chief Robert Jefferson and Director of Facilities Ruthy Bennett joined the Committee this year as full-time members. They replaced Michael Boujoulian and Mark Miano who served the committee well for many years. Brett Lambert was named an alternate designee of the Superintendent of Schools for non-school projects.

### Activities in 2015

**Thompson School:** The project was officially closed out with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) in March. Final project cost of \$18,977,528 was \$1,618,482 under budget. MSBA reimbursement to Town of Arlington was \$9,008,059.

**Community Safety Building Phase 2 (envelope repair):** Project closed out fall 2015. Latent conditions and construction quality control issues delayed the project and caused cost overruns. Project budget \$2,472,000; final cost \$3,242,637.

**Community Safety Building Phase 3 (interior renovation):** Scope of work includes functional improvements to police department operations and systems upgrades to achieve LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver. Construction began in July and completion is expected in summer 2016. Latent conditions (i.e. conditions that could only be seen once demolition of existing construction was underway) have added cost to the project, but to date have been covered by the budget contingency. Project budget \$8,130,500.

**Central Fire Station Phase 2 (interior renovation):** Construction started in July 2014 and was completed fall 2015. Scope of work included all new systems, renovation of living quarters, and re-location of Fire Headquarters from the Community Safety Building. Project completed on budget at \$6,500,000 and is certified LEED Gold.

**Stratton School (partial renovation):** Scope of work includes new roof, windows and HVAC on east side of the building to match prior work on west side; a new Media Center and expanded Food Service and Administration areas; technology, fire protection, lighting and accessibility upgrades throughout. Design work started fall 2015 and will go out to bid early spring 2016.

In addition temporary modular classrooms will be erected on site to house students during the construction period. Project budget \$15,793,000.

## ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

In 2015 the Zoning Board of Appeals as prescribed in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, The Zoning Act, and, also, as further clarified by the Town's Zoning Bylaw, heard and rendered decisions on twenty-two petitions. Since its inception in 1946 the Zoning Board of Appeals has heard and rendered decisions on over 3,300 appeals. Petitions heard by the Board include Variances, Special Permits, Appeals from the Decision of the Building Inspector, and comprehensive permits (Chapter 40B).

The Zoning Board of Appeals is comprised of five regular members: the Chair and four appointees and two associate members. For any decision to be granted, the vote of the five-member board must carry a super majority. All hearings are open to the public and are generally held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, as needed. The meetings are usually held in the conference room located on the second floor of the Town Hall annex. All hearings are advertised in The Arlington Advocate for two consecutive weeks and posted on the Town Clerk's Bulletin Board at least three weeks prior to the hearing date. Hearings are also posted on the Town website. Abutters to the property are notified by mail. To receive ZBA Agendas by email, subscribe online at [arlingtonma.gov/subscribe](http://arlingtonma.gov/subscribe). The Rules and Regulations of the Zoning Board of Appeals are on file in the Office of the Town Clerk and in the Zoning Board of Appeals' Office at 51 Grove Street.

### 2015 Petitions Heard By ZBA

Petitions for Variance	5
Applications for Special Permits	18
Appeal of Decision of Inspector of Buildings	0
Amendments to SP/Variances	0
Comprehensive Permits	1
<b>Total</b>	
Total Petitions filed with Town Clerk	24
Total Hearing Continued by the board	7
Total Petitions withdrawn	1
Total Petitions sent to ARB	2

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Arlington Conservation Commission (ACC) is required by state and local laws to protect and preserve wetlands and waterways and their surrounding areas. The ACC is comprised of seven (7) volunteer Members

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and one (1) or more volunteer Associate Members, who are appointed by the Town Manager with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, and a part-time, paid administrator. At meetings twice a month and through on-site visits, ACC members work to ensure that all construction and development projects, residential and commercial, that may alter any wetlands, floodplains, rivers, streams, ponds, and/or lakes are in compliance with state and local regulations. The ACC also protects and manages the Town's Conservation Lands and natural resources.

## Regulatory Activities

The ACC is mandated to protect wetlands, waterways, water supplies, fisheries, wildlife and wildlife habitat as well as regulate activities in a floodplain through its administration of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Arlington General Bylaw for Wetlands Protection. ACC members regularly seek continuing education to keep abreast of frequently changing regulations and to assist applicants through the regulatory process.

In 2015 the ACC held twenty-three (23) public meetings, and provided coordination, monitoring, permit review, and consultation on numerous residential and municipal developments around Town. The ACC issued fourteen (14) Permits/Orders of Conditions, three (3) Certificates of Compliance, and three (3) Determinations of Applicability. The ACC initiated three (3) Enforcement actions and conducted over twenty site visits.

## Conservation Activities

Waterbodies survey report - In 2015 the Conservation Commission set up a working group to evaluate fourteen water bodies in the Town of Arlington, which include five lakes and ponds and nine streams. Water quality and the environmental health of the surrounding landscape was the main focus along with developing a list of needed improvements and ranking each water body based on water quality, public access, and use. To this end, action items were identified to help facilitate the understanding and involvement in the management of all fourteen sites by various Town departments and local waterbody associations. The Conservation Commission found that a majority of the sites are negatively impacted by polluted runoff and stormwater discharges due to the highly urban nature of Arlington and surrounding towns. Most of these water bodies have excessive aquatic invasive plants that degrade water quality, impede recreational use, and degrade aesthetics. Based on this initial assessment, the Commission identified five priority locations for attention in the coming year: Arlington Reservoir, Hills Pond, Mill Brook, Reeds Brook Retention Ponds at McClennen Park, and Spy Pond. The Conservation Commission is committed to working with local stakeholders, keeping abreast of

the latest technologies and approaches and strives to encourage environmental stewardship for active participation at all 14 sites.

*Mystic Riverfront Restoration* -The ACC took the lead on developing the Mystic Riverfront Restoration Project proposal for the Town in response to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Natural Resource Damages Assessment and Restoration Program Grant (Doc. No. BWSC- NRD-2015-02 COMMBUYS Bid#: BD-15-1045-BWSC0-BWSC1-0000005835). The proposed Restoration project will create a native riverbank (riparian) habitat and improve stormwater quality. It will be located along the Mystic River at the end of Park Street in the area that was directly impacted by oil released from a tanker truck that overturned nearby on Route 60 in May 2013. The proposed Restoration project will provide slope stabilization along the riverbank, enhance the natural ecosystem, and help to improve water quality of the river. The Restoration project will include direct involvement from the surrounding environmental justice (EJ) community during creation of additional riparian habitat and will include the placement of educational signage along the existing adjacent footpath.

In addition to the restoration and enhancement of the riverbank habitat and the drain pipe outfall improvements, the Town has agreed to fully fund the installation and maintenance of a new pretreatment system for the storm drain pipe. This related project will capture oils, sediment, and litter to reduce contamination and sedimentation in the Mystic River. The combination of these two projects will provide for the sustainable restoration of the Upper Mystic River Bank and the improvement of local water quality. DEP is expected to select grant recipients in the first half of 2016.

*Proposed 40B project at Mugar land* - In May 2015 a developer initiated the permitting process under General Laws Chapter 40B for a proposed mixed-income 219 rental unit development at the 17-acre property in East Arlington known as the Mugar Property. The developer filed a "Site Approval" application with MassHousing. The ACC attended a July site visit and provided information to the Arlington Board of Selectmen to assist with the Board's comments on the application.

*Land Stewards* - The ACC's volunteer citizen organization, Arlington Land Stewards (ALS) has assisted in managing twenty-four (24) Town-owned conservation lands comprising approximately thirty (30) acres. Land stewards monitor, coordinate, and maintain (with permission from the ACC) conservation land of their choice, often in their immediate neighborhood or sometimes elsewhere in Town. Each land steward is provided with a stewardship handbook listing the location of conservation lands, conservation land regulations as well as problem/solution management information. The



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handbook is available online at [arlingtonma.gov/conservation](http://arlingtonma.gov/conservation).

This was also a busy year for volunteer projects with some new trails including steps for easier access down to the shore at the Windows on the Mystic conservation land on the Upper Mystic Lake. Many of these projects were conducted by Eagle Scouts. More information about the Town's conservation land and other open spaces may be viewed on the Town's new "Open Space and Recreation Areas" application, which can be accessed at [arlingtonma.gov/openspace](http://arlingtonma.gov/openspace).

After having managed a number of volunteer projects on conservation lands, the ACC this year developed a set of Volunteer Guidelines to aid those interested in undertaking such projects. This document can be found on the Commission's website on the Conservation Land Stewards page.

*Arlington's Great Meadows (AGM)* – In 2015 the ACROSS Lexington program extended into East Lexington and included parts of AGM in its path system. There are two loop trails C & D which are well marked and extend to the Whipple Hill Conservation land and the Arlington Reservoir. More about ACROSS Lexington can be found on [lexingtonma.gov](http://lexingtonma.gov). Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows (FoAGM) sponsored two nature walks, one in the spring led by Meg Muckenaupt and one in the fall led by Don Miller. In addition, they had a "Walk All Around AGM" event in the late fall led by David White. FoAGM also continued with regular maintenance including replacing broken and rotting boardwalk treads.

Four years ago, FoAGM undertook a project to restore the upland "entry meadow" at the northwest corner of AGM, which had been rapidly reverting to woodland, to its historical open condition. In the fall of 2010, with the assistance of a large group of volunteers, they cleared the area of trees and dense shrubbery. In the spring of 2011, they planted a mix of native wildflowers in the southwestern corner of the meadow. Since that time, with the help of volunteers, they have worked to control invasive plants and the re-growth of woody vegetation by hand trimming. To maintain this lovely meadow, they continued this year with the mowing program. The work was done in the early fall to avoid interference with nesting birds and to minimize the impact on wildflowers.

FoAGM continue the efforts to clear and maintain an approximately 100-yard stretch of AGM along the Minutemen Bikeway that had become densely overgrown with the invasive plant Japanese Knotweed. Permanent eradication of this invasive is extremely difficult, particularly without the use of herbicides. However, over the last ten years, with volunteer labor and purely mechanical means, they have succeeded in keeping this area mostly knotweed-free, preserving a stunning view of the Meadows from the bikeway.

Meadowbrook Park - In May 2015 land stewards, ACC members, and other volunteers carried out a springtime cleanup of this approximately 3-acre wetland area at the mouth of Mill Brook. This park collects many items that wash down Mill Brook each year.

*Mystic Lakes-Mid-Lakes Fishway* – Herring and eel were counted by volunteers in the spring of 2015. Mystic River Watershed Association reported that 57,617 fish were observed through the dam's ladder, an increase in the count of the previous year.

## 2016 Goals and Beyond

The ACC will continue to encourage, support, and assist the various volunteer and environmental advocacy groups that are dedicated to preserving the Town's precious conservation lands and other open spaces within its immediate borders as well as those directly adjacent to it. These groups include, among others: Arlington Land Stewards, Arlington Land Trust, Open Space Committee, Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows, Mystic River Watershed Association, and the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions.

The ACC has formed two new working groups to organize effort and analysis: the Waterbodies Fund and the Summer Street Conservation Land.

## Acknowledgments

The ACC sincerely thanks all individuals and organizations that contributed directly or indirectly to the activities of its fifty-first (51st) year. Many special thanks go to the scores of volunteers who came out for cleanup projects, assisted as land stewards, or participated in the many Friends groups that work to preserve the Town's natural resources and conservation lands.

## Open Space Committee

Arlington's Open Space Committee (OSC) was established by Town Meeting in 1996. Members are appointed by the Town Manager and include concerned citizens and representatives of key Town departments and commissions. The Committee meets monthly to exchange ideas and discuss ways to protect, maintain, and promote the Town's open space and recreation resources. The Committee serves an oversight function but does not have direct management responsibility for Town properties. It seeks to enhance communication and coordination among those entities that do have ownership and management authority. In addition, the OSC works to raise broad-based community concerns and to advocate for the protection, stewardship, and appropriate uses of the Town's open spaces.

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### Open Space and Recreation Plan

The Committee's primary responsibility is to prepare and monitor the Town's official Open Space and Recreation Plan, review its provisions and goals, and document accomplishments. During most of 2014 and 2015, the committee members worked on updating the prior Plan to cover the period 2015–2022, with the assistance of CDGB funding to hire a consultant, Ralph Willmer of the planning and design firm VHB, to help prepare the final document. A key source of new information was the Town's 2015 Master Plan, which also addresses open space, recreation, and natural resources concerns. Adam Kurowski, the Town's director of GIS and systems analyst, prepared many new Town-wide maps and specific maps of key open spaces based on the updated GIS database.

A nearly complete draft Plan was presented to the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting in the spring, and it was adopted by both the Arlington Redevelopment Board and the Open Space Committee in March. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) Division of Conservation Services (DCS) gave its final approval of the 2015-2022 Plan in September. Printed copies of the complete Plan and Appendices are available in the Robbins and Fox libraries, Planning Department, Selectmen's and Manager's offices, and certain other Town departments. The entire Plan is posted on the Committee's website at [arlingtonma.gov/openspace](http://arlingtonma.gov/openspace).

### Other Activities

Following completion of the Plan, the committee announced its online availability to local media and relevant Town departments and organizations. Work also began on making the maps and descriptions of key parks and conservation sites more accessible to residents. The GIS technical staff in the Planning Department helped the committee develop "Experiencing Ar-

lington's Open Spaces," a web-based application that makes much of the Plan's site information available for viewing on a computer, smart phone or tablet. For each open space site featured there are multiple photographs and a brief description of the property, as well as a map showing access points and internal walking trails. It may be viewed at [arlingtonma.gov/openspace](http://arlingtonma.gov/openspace).

A second outreach effort, Connecting Arlington, was initiated by volunteer Kelsey Cowen to map out safe and interesting walking routes that connect significant cultural, economic, historic, recreational, and natural places across Arlington. Starting with routes in East Arlington, this project will include annotated maps so that everyone can enjoy walking to the best places in town.

A third project developed by OSC member John Pickle encourages residents with digital cameras and smart phones to take photos at designated locations at Menotomy Rocks Park and the Reservoir, with other sites to be added later. This Picture Post initiative is linked to a national database that archives photos documenting the same locations over time so the visual data can be analyzed for future scientific, maintenance and planning purposes.

The Committee also continued to monitor and contribute to a wide range of open space projects and activities that affect the Town and its residents' quality of life, including continued support for and involvement with: the Community Preservation Act, which was adopted in late 2014 and will offer a new source of funds for open space and recreation resources; the Water Bodies Fund, which funds control of invasive plants and water quality issues at Spy Pond, the Reservoir, and other sites; and expansion of the ACROSS Lexington trail system into Arlington's Great Meadows and the Reservoir, in coordination with the Conservation Commission. As part of its community education goals, OSC participated in EcoFest in March and Town Day in September, as it does each year.

Ongoing open space concerns include the proposed development of the Mugar property in East Arlington under the state's Chapter 40B. OSC joined many other Town entities, the Arlington Land Trust, and other environmental organizations to try to prevent development of the Mugar land due to its potential flooding and traffic problems. The Committee's previous work on researching and raising awareness about Mill Brook and the possibility of enhancing that natural resource corridor has been adopted as a priority by the Arlington Redevelopment Board and is featured as a recommendation in the Master Plan.

During 2015 several long-time members of the Open Space Committee resigned: Patsy Kraemer, Lisa Decker, and Michele Hassler. Elena Bartholomew replaced Leslie Mayer as the representative from the Park and Recreation Commission. John Pickle, a scientist

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and teacher, was appointed to the committee, and several other new members are expected to be appointed in early 2016.

## Goals for 2016

The committee will concentrate on implementing various goals and objectives outlined in the 2015-2022 Open Space and Recreation Plan. It will continue work on the Connecting Arlington and Picture Post projects and the expanded use of the Town website to disseminate maps and other information about local open spaces and recreational facilities. Members will continue their collaborations with other Town entities and community groups to advocate for the proper maintenance and management of the Town's valuable open space and recreation resources. In particular, members will work with the Master Plan Implementation Committee, Community Preservation Committee, Vision 2020, and Town departments of Planning and Public Works to ensure that open space and recreation recommendations are fully incorporated into all future Town planning.

## TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

The goal of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is to improve the quality of life in Arlington by improving safety, mobility, and access for people using all modes of transportation, and contribute to improving the environment and public health. In this effort the TAC works closely with the Arlington Police Department's Traffic Division, Public Works Department, and Planning Department, along with Arlington Schools and the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee (ABAC).

The Traffic Authority for Arlington is the Board of Selectmen. The TAC was established by the Board of Selectmen in 2001 to advise them on transportation matters.

## Major Activities

*Lake Street Corridor Recommendations:* TAC completed a comprehensive analysis of the Lake Street Corridor in late 2014 and presented their findings to the Board of Selectmen (BoS) on February 5, 2015. The TAC report recommended the installation of a new traffic/pedestrian/bicycle signal at the intersection of Lake Street and the Minuteman Bikeway to improve operations and safety, signal improvements at Brooks Avenue; signage and pavement marking changes; handicap access improvements; and vegetation maintenance. The BoS was cautiously supportive of the TAC recommendation for a signal and requested that TAC conduct a field test simulating a traffic signal using police officer control at the Lake Street/Bikeway intersection. The test was conducted in June 2015. Transportation data was col-

lected in the study area for approximately two weeks between Thursday, June 4 and Friday, June 19, both with and without police officer control at the intersection. The data collection effort for this study was the largest ever conducted by the TAC. It was a collaborative effort between TAC, BoS, Town Manager, the Arlington Police Department and volunteers consisting of current and former TAC members, ABAC and EALS members and other Town residents (too many to name). TAC thanks all who participated in this study.

A draft report summarizing the results of the study was prepared in late 2015 for review by the TAC at its January 2016 meeting. Based on the data collected, the draft report concluded the proposed traffic signal would provide a modest improvement in traffic delay and vehicle travel time during weekday peak hours without any significant adverse effect on pedestrians and bicyclists. It recommended the BoS consider pursuing installation of a new signal at Lake Street and the Bikeway crossing. Due to the complexity and issues involved in constructing a new signal at this location, the TAC recommended forming a design review committee, which would evaluate issues and identify constraints, design details, types and hours of operations, and costs. The committee would include members from the TAC, DPW, APD, ABAC, EALS, and Walk Arlington.

*Parking Implementation and Governance Committee:* This committee was formed to implement improvements to parking in Arlington Center approved by the BoS. TAC conducted the initial study that eventually led to a consultant study that produced the recommendations adopted by the BoS. Several members of TAC also serve on the parking committee: Howard Muise (TAC Chair) is TAC representative to the parking committee; Laura Wiener (TAC Secretary) is the Planning Department representative; Corey Rateau is Police Department representative; John Hurd (TAC Chamber of Commerce representative) is Arlington Center business representative; Mike Gordon is citizen representative.

*Safe Pedestrian Access at Bus Stops:* TAC initiated a study to evaluate pedestrian access at stops on all bus routes in Arlington. A working group was formed to consider crosswalks, traffic signals, sidewalks, bus shelters, and any other factors affecting pedestrian access to bus service.

*Crosswalk Flag Program:* TAC continued to maintain the pedestrian crossing flag program near elementary schools to provide more visibility for students crossing busy streets on the way to school. The program has expanded to a total of eight locations around town. The program is now being funded by the Arlington Schools. TAC previously adopted Flag Program Guidelines, which it uses for evaluating potential new locations requested by residents. TAC is currently reviewing a request for flags at the crosswalk on Park Ave. at Appleton St.



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*Jason Street Cut – Through Traffic, Phase 2:* TAC conducted a study of cut-through traffic on Jason Street in 2014. The recommendations for additional signage for parking, crosswalk, and intersections, and crosswalk pavement markings were adopted by the BoS and implemented by the Department of Public Works (DPW). In 2015, TAC continued the study to consider infrastructure changes on Jason Street to improve pedestrian safety, especially at the entrance to Menotomy Rocks Park. Several concepts for changes have been developed and will be reviewed by TAC in early 2016 for possible recommendation to the BoS.

*Lowell Street Improvements:* Following implementation additional safety improvements on Lowell Street adjacent to the Town Reservoir, the TAC continued working with the neighborhood to evaluate additional measures to reduce traffic speed and improve safety in this area. In late 2015, a concept plan for possible infrastructure changes was developed by the Town Engineer. It will be reviewed by TAC at its February 2016 meeting. The initial Lowell Street improvements included new pedestrian crosswalk signs, traffic warning signs, reflectorized sign posts, and pedestrian flags.

*Complete Streets Policy:* A Complete Street is one that serves all users—pedestrians, drivers, bicycle riders, transit riders and freight carriers. TAC and its partners developed a policy this year for the Town's road construction projects, to encourage healthy transportation and reduce car travel. During the coming year, this policy will go to the Selectmen for their input and adoption. When adopted, the policy will allow the Town to access state funding for design and construction of Complete Streets projects.

*Intersection of Massachusetts Avenue, Mill Street and Jason Street:* This year the Town implemented a series of improvements at this intersection recommended by TAC and funded by mitigation money provided by the CVS on Mass Ave. The improvements included narrowing the traffic island on Jason Street to provide a short right-turn lane, lane use changes on Mill Street and traffic signal changes. The traffic signal changes included optimized timing and concurrent pedestrian phasing to allow for running Mill Street and Jason Street in separate phases. These separate phases were designed to eliminate the difficult left-turn conflicts that result from the streets being offset. Residents' concerns about the concurrent phasing and conflicts with vehicles turning left off of Mass Ave led the Board of Selectmen to restore the original signal-phasing plan with an exclusive pedestrian phase. An earlier improvement funded by CVS mitigation funds included installation of a system to provide signal pre-emption for emergency vehicles.

## Reports

TAC studied and adopted recommendations to the Board of Selectmen on the following:

- Crosswalk at Highland St and High Haith Rd.
- Spy Pond Tennis Courts Reconstruction
- Context Sensitive Bike Facility Design Guide Matrix

## BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee (ABAC) has continued to work on making Arlington a better place to cycle in and through. It has maintained its annual events:

Our Winter Social, which this year was a little different. We hosted a round table discussion on the topic of bike, pedestrian, and car interactions and what we can do to improve things. We had an invited panel of guest speakers from the various constituencies: Walk Boston, Mass Bike, Arlington Police Department (APD), and the Livable Streets Alliance. The Town Manager moderated. The panel was asked various questions and there was a lively discussion of the issues that continued after the formal session ended. The take home message is that we all have to be aware of one another and all of us should follow the rules.

Our annual tour of Arlington was again blessed with no rain, and this year it highlighted the Reservoir, McClennan Park, and The Old Schwamb Mill. We had about 40 people for the tour and an escort from APD. All who participated enjoyed the tour.

We again manned the ABAC both at Town Day and gave out more than 50 youth helmets that were generously supplied by the law firm of Breakstone, White & Gluck PC. We also sold rear bike lights as a fundraiser, which was supported by Quad Bikes in Arlington. The helmets and lights were part of ABAC's commitment to safety. As always our commitment to safety comes with an emphasis that all road users should follow all rules.

We continued to meet with the Bicycle Advisory groups in Lexington and Bedford to discuss such matters as unified wayfinding signage, bikeway counts, and ways of effectively communicating bikeway issues for users in all three towns.

Bikeway counts were conducted at Swan Place on two days to again show just what a popular facility the Bikeway has become.

Arlington's COBWEB (Cops on Bicycles With Education for Bicyclists) officers have regularly attended ABAC's meetings and this has led to some useful exchanges of ideas.

Other areas that the Committee has worked in include the redrafting of a proposed set of guidelines for events on the Bikeway and applications for such events.

Members of the Committee, together with Trans-



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

portation Advisory Committee (TAC), produced a flyer that was included in the tax mailings and was sponsored by the Planning Department. The flyer highlighted nighttime visibility distances and placed an emphasis on the importance of visibility.

Several members of the committee scouted the Bikeway for locations for trash bins that could be installed and serviced, cutting down on the trash that accumulates on the Bikeway.

The Committee helped to finalize the Roadway Marking Guidelines that were produced though TAC and presented to the Selectmen.

The Committee was consulted on the location of the Bobby Mac Memorial on the Bikeway.

The intersection of the Bikeway and Lake Street was discussed on several occasions and input was given to TAC.

The Bikeway signage policy was reviewed and passed on to the Town Manager.

The Committee began the process of reapplying to the League of American Cyclists to renew our status as a Bike Friendly Community.

Committee members scouted the Bikeway for possible locations for a new historic marker to be supplied by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. The locations were presented to the Board of Selectmen who made a final selection as to sighting of the sign.

Committee member Stephan Miller has redesigned the Bikeway website using different, more widely used software that is more accessible, cheaper, and easier to maintain.



## HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Arlington Housing Authority is proud of its distinction of being the largest single provider of affordable housing in the community.

Our mission is to provide adequate, affordable and safe housing to low, very-low and extremely low-income families, the elderly and the disabled from the Town of Arlington and surrounding communities through collaborative partnerships with community agencies and to manage Housing Authority finances in a fiscally responsible manner. This year marks the Housing Authority's sixty-eighth year offering housing to low and moderate income persons either through direct housing in government owned developments or subsidized housing in privately owned dwellings.

The Arlington Housing Authority manages 1,156 housing units: 520 units for elderly and disabled, 179 units designated for family housing include 10 wheel

chair accessible family units, a group home for 13 developmentally disabled residents, and 422 vouchers that help participants live in privately-owned dwellings throughout the community.

The Authority is a quasi-governmental agency that administers these programs sponsored by the State or Federal government. Properties owned by the Authority are exempt from local property taxes, yet the Authority annually pays the maximum "in lieu of" taxes as allowed by state statute.

### Board of Commissioners

The Board of Commissioners of the Authority is the policy making body of the agency. The five members of the Arlington Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners are: *Chairman*, Nicholas Mitropoulos, *Vice-Chairman*, Gaar Talanian, *Treasurer*, Richard B. Murray and *Members* Daniel Brosnan and Joseph Daly.

The Executive Director, John J. Griffin, is appointed by the Board of Commissioners and manages the day-to-day operations of the Authority.



Daniel F. Brosnan



Nick C. Mitropoulos



Joseph S. Daley



Richard B. Murray



Gaar C. Talanian



John J. Griffin,  
Executive Director

### Year in Review

In 2015 the AHA continued modernization work to all buildings, as well as the continued expansion of its tenant services support programs, and worked on creative partnerships with many housing groups and service providers in the community. In partnership with the tenant associations, in May, the Arlington Housing Authority implemented a policy of smoke free housing. Below are a few highlights of successful projects at each building.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## *Cusack Terrace 67 Units 8 Summer Street*

Modernization projects that were completed during 2015 include the installation of a new energy efficient generator, adding state of the art mailboxes and upgrading the laundry room with energy efficient washer and dryers. Current projects include replacing solar corridor windows with new energy efficient windows and replacing the existing community room door with an electric ADA compliant door to improve accessibility for the tenants.

## *Winslow Towers - 132 Units 4 Winslow Street*

Winslow Tower projects completed include replacing the failed generator, replacing all roof exhaust fans, adding new mailboxes and upgrading the laundry room with energy efficient washer and dryers. Upcoming projects include replacing the roof, replacement of both elevators and installing a new ADA compliant electric sliding door at the main entrance.

## *Chestnut Manor - 100 Units 54 Medford Street*

Modernization projects that were completed in 2015 include the replacement of all heat detectors throughout the building, upgrading the laundry room with energy efficient washer and dryers and replacing mailboxes. Upcoming projects include replacing the sewerage ejector pump and building a handicap access ramp at the front of the building. This ramp will also include a new patio and landscaping for the tenants.

5 kitchens were completely replaced.

## *Drake Village - 72 Units and the Hauser Building 144 Units, 37 Drake Road*

Modernization projects that were completed in 2015 include replacing mailboxes, adding new carpeting and upgrading the laundry room with energy efficient washer and dryers. Current projects include installing a new ADA compliant electric sliding door and replacing the old fob system for better security. Energy efficient windows and fire alarm system upgrades are currently in design.

## *Menotomy Manor – 179 Units Freemont Court*

Projects that were completed in 2015 include the installation of over 200K of insulation throughout all the property and the completion of all new sidewalks with our development. Current projects include replacing outdated hot water heaters, parking lot replacements and a new life and skills center is currently in design. This exciting new project will create a larger space for programs currently operating in Menotomy Manor including Operation Success, Fidelity House, Arlington

Food Pantry and will provide for many new programs to provide life and skills support to our families.

## *24 Summer Street – Single family Resident*

Modernization projects that were completed in 2015 include upgrading the old oil furnace with a new energy efficient gas furnace all new plumbing and replacing the existing deck with a new sustainable trex deck.

## Community Partnerships



*Executive Director, John J. Griffin and State Appointee, Gaar Talanian, thanking Middlesex Sheriff, Peter Koutoujian and his Community Work Program crew for their work on the Arlington Housing Authority's properties*

We greatly appreciate the efforts from the Town of Arlington in awarding us CDGB funds and support for many of our services and programs for our residents.

2015 was a great year in expanding our partnerships with a number of community service program providers. The Authority continued to take advantage of the Community Work Program (CWP) sponsored by Middlesex Sheriff, Peter Koutoujian. Under the supervision of correctional personnel, inmates assisted the AHA maintenance staff in its spring and fall cleanup efforts, painting of community rooms and hallways and many other projects that the housing authority would not have been able to accomplish due to funding.

Minuteman Senior Services has been very successful at our Drake Village location by providing services to our seniors and a meals program. The expansion of the program to our other facilities has proven quite beneficial. The quality of life for our residents has improved with the helpful resources that Minuteman Senior Services provides.

In 2015 Fidelity House continued afternoon programs in our Menotomy Manor Development to children, free memberships and financial assistance to make summer programs more attainable for families and their children. This program has been extremely successful, with a large number of residents participating.

The award winning evening program, Operation

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Success, continues to be a major factor in improving grades by providing homework help and guidance for the residents of Menotomy Manor. Janet Maguire and Peggy Regan run this program with a large group of young volunteers.

The continued partnership between the AHA and the Arlington Police Department has had a positive effect on the residents and neighbors of Menotomy Manor. The AHA continues to see a large decrease in crime and expanded services to the area. The AHA and the Arlington Police participated in National Night Out by giving drugs and crime a going away party during the summer, which continues to draw great crowds and support from residents and neighbors in the Menotomy Manor area.

The Authority has also partnered with the Town of Arlington on other projects that included the installation of 28 cameras in all three fire houses as well as linked and installed card access systems. The Authority has provided a trailer for the Arlington Police Animal Control Unit located in our family housing development. During the renovation of the Arlington Police Station the police department temporarily relocated many of its administrative staff and policeman to the Cusack Terrace Community Room.

The annual cookouts for the elderly and disabled residents were held in each of our four elderly/handicapped developments. The patriotic theme of "Red, White and Blue" was a complete success. Residents continue to enjoy the good food, music and great company.

The Arlington Housing Authority Board would like to thank all our partners, residents, and tenant associations for their hard work and we look forward to many new and exciting ideas being put into action in the coming year.

## Challenges Ahead

The Authority has been successful in maintaining our buildings and operation and look forward to the coming years in expanding our programs and modernizing our buildings. While the AHA applies for all funding opportunities available, and utilizes 100% of the funds received, there is still a great deficit in the funding needed to ensure optimal quality of life for our residents. Escalating utility cost, and regulatory changes will continue to have a negative impact on the operation and services that the housing authority provides. We continue to seek innovative ways to provide services to our residents and seek creative ways to develop opportunities for additional housing and programs within the community.

Because the AHA serves the lowest of income residents, 95% of them would not be able to afford the rent in the new affordable housing units being constructed in town. On our current waitlist, over 80% of the ap-

plicants have income below \$10,000 and many receive only temporary assistance in the amount of \$3,000 per year.

## Administrative Services

The Authority continues to be a member of the MassNAHRO Centralized Section 8 Wait List program. The list is to all daily. Arlington residents receive a preference on the waitlist.

The AHA's website, [www.arlingtonhousing.org](http://www.arlingtonhousing.org), provides valuable information to those wishing to learn more about the AHA and its programs. Applications for housing can be downloaded from our website.

## Wait Lists

### Stated-Aided Elderly/Handicap One Bedroom Units

Arlington Applicants:	63
Non-Arlington Applicants:	366
Total	429

### State-Aided Family 2-Bedroom Units

Arlington Applicants:	30
Non-Arlington Applicants:	327
Total	357

### State-Aided Family 3-Bedroom Units

Arlington Applicants:	4
Non-Arlington Applicants:	141
Total	137

### Section 8 Wait List

Arlington Applicants:	*593
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*\*Because Arlington is on a centralized wait list, the Section 8 wait list is extremely long; therefore, only Arlington residents are listed for this program.*

## State Program Rents

Average Elderly/Handicap Monthly Rent:  
\$418/month (includes all utilities)

Average Family Monthly Rent:  
\$623/month (tenant pays utilities)

## Acknowledgments

The Arlington Housing Authority would like to thank all its employees for their dedication and hard work throughout the year.



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## VISION 2020

### About Vision 2020

Vision 2020, established by Town Meeting in June 1992, is a collection of committees that brings together residents, Town employees and Town leaders to study ideas for creating the community envisioned in the Town Goals enacted by Town Meeting in 1993. The Standing Committee is charged to “create, implement, monitor, and review methods for town-wide participation in the Vision 2020 process.”

Vision 2020’s Task Groups support goals related to: Business, Communication, Community and Citizen Service, Culture and Recreation, Diversity, Education, Environment, Fiscal Resources, and Governance. Task Groups may include multiple committees focused on specific missions. Task Group information can be found at [arlingtonma.gov/vision2020](http://arlingtonma.gov/vision2020).

A modest budget from the Town allows Vision 2020 to print materials for meetings and events, pay fees for Town Hall use, reimburse Task Groups leaders for out-of-pocket expenses, replace aging equipment, and enable Task Groups to explore new programming ideas in response to events in the community.

### Notable Activities

The Standing Committee recommended changes to its structure, which Town Meeting approved. The goal was to reduce the size of the Standing Committee to nine members, serving rotating three-year terms so that it was similar to other committees.

Vision 2020 is among the Arlington committees and commissions participating in a project partially funded by the National Endowment for the Arts [NEA]. The NEA grant was awarded to Arlington-based True Story Theater. The grant helps fund the Arlington’s Living Brochure project that began in October, 2015 and will conclude in September, 2017. The goal is to use the arts to increase civic engagement and any committee, board or commission is eligible to participate.

### Annual Vision 2020 Survey

Vision 2020 volunteers work with Town departments and organizations to create an annual survey to obtain data Town entities can use for planning. Results of the survey are provided to Town Meeting and to the groups who helped compose the survey; results are also posted on the Town website.

The 2015 Vision 2020 Survey, “Help Shape the Future: Energy, Mobility, Business, Schools, and the Arts” was mailed to every household as an insert to the Town’s Annual Census mailing in January. Thirty-two percent of households responded, which meant processing 6028 surveys. As the response rate has increased, Vision 2020 volunteers have focused on procedures to make question development a collabora-

tive, interactive process with the Town organizations involved to ensure well-defined goals and efficient reporting of the results.

Household responses received by March 17, 2015, were summarized and reported to Town Meeting, Town officials, and the groups that created questions for the survey. The summary report of the 2015 Survey follows this section of the Annual Report; the full analysis of the 2015 Survey can be found at [arlingtonma.gov/vision2020](http://arlingtonma.gov/vision2020).

### Additional Activities

- With the Arlington League of Women Voters, co-sponsored the annual Candidates’ Night program.
- Sponsored Warrant Article 34 (Water Bodies Fund) for the 2015 Annual Town Meeting to appropriate \$40,000 to the Town’s Water Body Fund for the maintenance, treatment, and oversight of the Town’s water bodies.
- At Town Day, used demonstrations, art and craft projects, and interactive activities to inform and educate the public about Arlington matters, and to attract new Task Group members. Diversity, Fiscal Resources, Governance, Public Art, and all Environmental Task Groups were represented.
- Completed a review of requirements for new survey software in collaboration with the IT Department. The current volume of survey responses and aging software have increased the amount of work necessary to scan and analyze the Annual Survey.

### Task Group Highlights

*Diversity:* The Diversity Task Group (DTG) meets regularly during the year to engage residents on a wide range of issues and provides ongoing leadership to the Superintendent’s Diversity Advisory Committee, advocating for recruiting, employing and retaining staff of color in the Arlington Public Schools.

In February, as follow-on to its December Black Lives Matter vigil, DTG presented a Town Hall panel discussion and community conversation “Unequal Justice: Consequences of Race and Class in Our Justice System.” The event, co-sponsored by 24 organizations – including Town committees, houses of worship, businesses, and rights groups – drew 300 people including Town leaders and State Representatives. Arlington’s Chief Ryan served on the panel. ACMi Cable TV recorded and broadcasted the event.

In response to the devastating earthquakes in Nepal, the group reached out to Nepali residents to see if they would like to hold a vigil acknowledging the impact of the event on them and on their relatives and friends in Nepal. DTG arranged for use of Town Hall Plaza,



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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provided publicity, and encouraged the Nepali community to plan and present the program for the vigil and to display aspects of their culture. About 150 people attended this moving event. ACMi recorded the program and aired clips from it.

These events brought greater visibility to the DTG and increased communications with partners and co-sponsors. A website was chosen as the best way to engage the community, publicize diversity-related events and activities happening within Arlington and neighboring communities, and invite conversations about diverse topics. In July [arlingtonmadtg.org](http://arlingtonmadtg.org) went live. It has become a linking site for diversity-related committees and groups, offering information and resources, blog space for idea exchange, and publicity and posting of events.

During the year, the DTG engaged in more frequent collaborations with Arlington Human Rights Commission and Arlington Disabilities Commission, sharing ideas about Town issues and co-sponsoring events. A plan to rework Task Group responsibilities and structure was implemented to make the work more sustainable for members.

Partnering with Robbins Library, DTG participated in the selection of the Arlington Reads Together book, *My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece* and cosponsored a panel discussion related to the book, "World Peace through Books."

At the end of 2015, the DTG began publicizing their January, 2016 True Story Theater show on "Stigmas," planning a Town Hall event on Unconscious Bias for April, and working to bring the photography show "Stereotypes" to Arlington.

Several DTG members deserve special recognition for their work during this past year. Co-Chair Bonie Williamson managed the conceptualization and delivery of the panel presentation and the vigil. Her sensitivity and leadership were crucial to the success of these events. Brooks Harrelson and Yawa Degboe developed and have managed the group's website which is now a significant outreach and gathering tool for the group. Their website design and management abilities and consultation to the group on technologies are outstanding. Additionally, as an ACMi News Producer, Yawa filmed Diversity's major events and provided publicity on ACMi TV.

**Governance:** Presented an Orientation for New Town Meeting Members, led by Town Moderator John Leone.

**Fiscal Resources:** The Fiscal Resources Task Group (FRTG) researches topics and reports results and recommendations to the appropriate department or officials. In 2015 the following topics were addressed:

**Financial Sustainability** – FRTG analyzed land value assessments as provided by the Director of Assessments for parcels on Mass Ave. The group was unable to understand some of the results. The results and

related questions were documented in a letter to the Director. The group met with the Director and the Board Chair to discuss the questions. Some were answered satisfactorily.

**Financial Transparency** – Reviewed the FY16 Financial Plan and compared it to the FY14 Financial Plan. Last year, after a review of the FY14 Plan, FRTG made numerous suggestions for improvements and a few corrections and provided them to the Town Manager. This year, a review of the FY16 Plan noted that all the errors had been corrected and a few of the suggestions had been acted on. The group met with the Deputy Town Manager and his assistant to review this material.

**Financial Transparency** – Suggested, in a letter to the Contributory Retirement Board (CRB), that the Board report to Town Meeting on the status and outlook of the Town's retirement fund. Currently the CRB provides no information directly to Town Meeting. The group has received no answer from the CRB.

**Warrant Article Presentation Order** – After making recommendations intended to improve Town Meeting, FRTG was glad to observe during the 2015 Town Meeting that, though zoning articles were still first, the Master Plan resolution, another Redevelopment Board article was last. By the time the Town Meeting reached this important matter, the meeting had settled down and members were able to carry out a meaningful debate.

**Financial Organization** – FRTG met with the Town Manager to discuss whether to reconsider options for reorganizing the Town's financial departments and shifting to appointed rather than elected officials in some cases. During an open and congenial discussion, the Manager noted that though some procedural changes had been made, more would be desirable. However he convinced the group that it was too soon to raise this matter again.

**Arlington Public Art (APA):** APA is a committee under Vision 2020's Culture and Recreation Goal. Major projects of 2015 included collaboration with Arlington Recreation to hold Art Rocks Spy Pond, an exhibit of public art placed at Spy Pond Park during the month of May. APA also sponsored artists who painted seven transformer boxes along Mass. Ave. from the center to the Heights. Chairful Where You Sit made its fourth annual appearance as APA's fundraiser and art installation featuring the work of many community members. A new committee, including several previous chair artists, was formed to help Adria Arch plan the fifth annual event. APA is now in the process of working with a professional art advisor to commission art along the renovated Mass Ave Corridor project in East Arlington.

**Reservoir Committee:** The Reservoir Committee is one of three committees of the Environment Task Group of Arlington Vision 2020. The Committee works with Town departments to maintain and improve the area around the Reservoir. Information about projects,

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a photo album, and the option to join a Committee email list can be found at [arlington2020.org/reservoir](http://arlington2020.org/reservoir).

The Wildlife Habitat Garden had its fifth growing season. The grasses did very well and needed thinning, while a few bare spots needed some more plantings. A number of workdays and help from many volunteers on their own makes the garden a true community project. Schools, recreational groups, and others are invited to participate in its growth.

Work continued to improve the “island” in the parking lot, which was cleared of invasive plants last year, and volunteers planted, or transplanted, a number of new plants this year. Japanese Knotweed along the path from the parking lot to the habitat garden was cut back so the area is much more open and inviting.

Water chestnut harvesting resumed this summer under the management of the Arlington DPW. In addition the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) had some corporate harvesting events in the Fall. The Committee hopes to increase these volunteer efforts in the future.

In September “The Res” was Arlington’s Park of the Month and hosted a variety of artistic activities to engage people. The Committee produced a tri-fold brochure this fall that describes the various activities that go on at the Reservoir and contains a new map.

*Sustainable Arlington:* Sustainable Arlington is one of three committees of the Environment Task Group of Arlington Vision 2020. The Committee encourages environmental awareness and steps to protect the local environment on the part of residents and Town government. Two members serve on the Town Manager’s Energy Working Group. Three different members have been chosen to serve on the Town Manager’s new working group to address climate change preparedness. Monthly meetings and other events are listed at [sustainablearlington.org](http://sustainablearlington.org). Special projects this year:

- Collaborated with Mothers Out Front and the Energy Working Group to begin the process of implementing Community Choice Aggregation.
- Collaboration with the Energy Working Group resulted in Arlington receiving its fourth Green Communities Program grant (\$240,000) for implementing energy efficiency projects in Town facilities installing solar power systems on six schools.
- Participated in Sustainable Middlesex, a regional group of community sustainability organizations exchanging information and resources related to mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- Coordinated planning for EcoFest 2015, “Energy-wise: Sparking Local Solutions,” to

support continuing energy efficiency gains and the shift to renewable energy.

- Began planning for EcoFest 2016, “Are You Ready for Climate Change?” March 19, 2016.
- Worked with the Vision 2020 Standing Committee to help Arlington’s True Story Theater obtain a 2-year, \$25,000 NEA “Our Town” grant. Our Town grants strengthen communities by fostering collaboration between nonprofit arts organizations and local government. True Story Theater will work with six Town committees, including Sustainable Arlington, to create “Arlington’s Living Brochure.” This project uses improvisational, playback performances to inform residents about and invite them to participate in volunteer groups that work with the Town to improve quality of life.
- Co-sponsored a public forum on carbon pricing.
- Co-sponsored Spring and Fall Arlington Community Education classes on soil health, environmentally supportive gardening methods, and growing your own food (edible gardens).

*Spy Pond Committee:* The Spy Pond Committee is one of three committees of the Environment Task Group of Arlington Vision 2020. The Committee monitors Spy Pond water quality, restores and improves the trail between Rt 2 and Spy Pond, conducts educational activities about the pond, and works with the DPW and the Arlington Conservation Commission to manage invasive plants and excessive vegetation. Meetings are the first Tuesday at 7:30pm, Sept-May, in the Town Hall Annex. Website: [arlingtonma.gov/spypond](http://arlingtonma.gov/spypond).

Spy Pond Fun Day May 30, 2015 was a resounding success. Planning started in 2014 with the Spy Pond Committee, Friends of Spy Pond Park, Arlington Land Trust, Arlington Recreation, Arlington-Belmont Crew, Arlington DPW, Arlington Center for the Arts, Mass. Audubon Habitat, and Mystic River Watershed Association. There was a wide range of activities: music on the lawn, kayaks and canoes for exploring Spy Pond, birch bark boats, tours of Elizabeth Island, easels for painting, scavenger hunts, crafts and games for children, a watershed model, water quality testing, nature activities, face painting, public art, martial arts, and rowing machines.

The annual Spy Pond Trails Day event improved the path between Rt. 2 and Spy Pond. Volunteers from the Committee and the Appalachian Mountain Club removed invasive plants, finished the stone bench overlooking Spy Pond, and picked up bags of trash. Volunteers distributed a fertilizer flyer to 3000 households in

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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the watershed, participated in Town Day, and worked with the Conservation Commission, DPW, and Finance Committee on the Town's Water Bodies Fund.

A wide range of birds visited the pond including hooded mergansers, American coots, bald eagles, green herons, ruddy ducks, ospreys, doubled-crested cormorants, blue herons, a belted kingfisher, and a cooper's hawk. Spy Pond had good ice fishing with 18" of ice. Mass DOT repaired the fence along Rt. 2 after the winter storms. Unfortunately the invasive Asian clam has entered the pond.

The Town was not able to treat Spy Pond this year due to the presence of Englemann's Umbrella Sedge (a Massachusetts threatened plant). As a result, excessive vegetation was present in the pond. The Committee worked with the Natural Heritage program of Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife, the Conservation Commission, the DPW, Oxbow Associates, and Aquatic Control Technology to resolve this issue for 2016.

## **Special Recognition and Leadership Changes**

Vision 2020 thanks all the volunteers who help support and achieve the Town Goals. The Standing Committee is especially grateful to Josh Lobel and Joey Glushko for their significant and outstanding contributions of time and talents to the production and analysis of the Town Census Insert Survey over many years. Their many hours of work have been vital to the survey effort.



*Arlington Reservoir Park of the Month Celebration. Courtesy Photo by Rachel James.*

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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To: Town Meeting Members and Town Officials

From: Vision 2020 Standing Committee and Task Group Chairs

Chair: Juli Brazile

Adria Arch, Brad Barber, Kathleen Bodie, Steven Byrne, Claire Carswell, Adam Chapdelaine, Joe Connelly, Andrew Fischer, Bruce Fitzsimmons, David Garbarino, Joey Glushko, Mary Harrison, Jane Howard, Gordon Jamieson, Elizabeth Karpati, John Leone, Josh Lobel, Gail McCormick, Cheryl Miller, Angela Olszewski, Stephen Ricci, Paul Schlichtman, Michael Stern, David White, Bonie Williamson

Date: May 6, 2015

Subject: Vision 2020 Report to the 2015 Annual Town Meeting

The Vision 2020 Standing Committee and Task Groups are pleased to present this report on their activities during 2014, Warrant Articles 12 and 34, and the 2015 Annual Survey "Help Shape the Future: Energy, Mobility, Business, Schools, and the Arts."

Details about the work Vision 2020 volunteers performed in 2014 appear in the Town's Annual Report 2014, pages 95-112, which briefly reviews Vision 2020's history, describes specific accomplishments, and presents a summary of the results of the 2014 Annual Survey.

We have two articles in the warrant:

- Article 12 (Vision 2020 Standing Committee). Following the approval of Town Meeting, we will begin advertising the open positions and meeting with residents who are interested in joining the committee. We hope to have a description of the Standing Committee available soon with information about who to contact for information and how to apply.
- Article 34 (Water Bodies Fund). The Finance Committee supports funding again this year and Appendix E of their report details treatment and testing projects covering FY14 to FY18.

The 2015 Annual Survey was mailed to 18,910 households. By the cut-off date of March 17, we received 6058 completed surveys and we are pleased that the difficult winter did not deter Arlington residents. The 32% response rate is just lower than last year's. Given this volume of response, we are exploring updated tools for survey scanning. It is labor-intensive work and any simplification would be welcome. Although we have not completed our analysis, we can report that, for the first time since we started asking how long people had lived in Arlington, the highest number was 0-5 years. Complete survey results will be available on the Town website this summer. Initial data tables follow this introduction.

Updating the composition of the Standing Committee begins a new phase in our re-visioning process. We will develop more written procedures internally to manage communication across the entire organization and seek to engage residents with new initiatives. And, now that Town Meeting has approved the new Standing Committee structure, we will begin advertising the openings and seeking residents who are interested in joining the Standing Committee.



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## Vision 2020 Annual Survey Results for 2015

### Demographics

Total Responses:  
6,058

#### Precinct

	#	%
Pct 1	221	3.8%
Pct 2	281	4.8%
Pct 3	273	4.7%
Pct 4	291	5.0%
Pct 5	247	4.2%
Pct 6	308	5.3%
Pct 7	290	5.0%
Pct 8	320	5.5%
Pct 9	284	4.9%
Pct 10	302	5.2%
Pct 11	270	4.6%
Pct 12	333	5.7%
Pct 13	253	4.3%
Pct 14	261	4.5%
Pct 15	258	4.4%
Pct 16	271	4.6%
Pct 17	291	5.0%
Pct 18	273	4.7%
Pct 19	283	4.8%
Pct 20	271	4.6%
Pct 21	274	4.7%

#### Household includes ages:

	#	%
under 18 yrs	1,531	16.8%
18-29 yrs	910	10.0%
30-44 yrs	1,942	21.3%
45-54 yrs	1,440	15.8%
55-64 yrs	1,351	14.8%
65-74 yrs	1,073	11.8%
75+ yrs	864	9.5%

#### Years in Arlington

	#	%
0-5 yrs	2,057	34.9%
6-15 yrs	1,428	24.2%
16-25 yrs	922	15.7%
26-40 yrs	550	9.3%
41+ yrs	934	15.9%

#### Housing Type

	#	%
Single Family	3,170	52.3%
2-family	1,639	27.1%
3-8 unit bldg	341	5.6%
9+ unit bldg	709	11.7%

#### Own/Rent

	#	%
Rent	1,595	27.0%
Own	4,317	73.0%

#### How many people are in your household?

	#	%
1-2 people	3,527	59.4%
3-4 people	2,080	35.0%
5 or more people	330	5.6%

#### Household includes children in Arlington Public Schools

	#	%
Yes	1,168	19.7%
No	4,764	80.3%

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



## Vision 2020 Annual Survey Results for 2015

### Energy Working Group

The Energy Working Group (EWG) studies energy efficiency options for Town-owned buildings. Your feedback on new opportunities can help prioritize projects or establish broader energy goals. Responses indicate that residents are engaged with energy issues for their households and at the municipal level and there is support for changes that move Arlington away from fossil fuels.

The %'s shown on this page represent the % of total responses for each question.

With the rapid evolution of Electric Vehicle (EV) technology, an increasing number of consumers are investing in EVs. EV refers to a car that must be plugged in to charge. Does your household own an EV or are you considering buying one?

	#			% EV Ownership		
	Yes	No	No Response	Yes	No	No Response
Electric Vehicle Ownership	61	5,481	516	1%	90%	9%

	#		% EV Purchase	
	Purchase during 2015	No Response	Purchase during 2015	No Response
Considering Purchase in 2015	247	5,811	4%	96%

	#		% EV Purchase 1-3 Years	
	Yes	No Response	Yes	No Response
Considering Purchase in 1-3 Years	1,218	4,840	20%	80%

In order to establish the infrastructure necessary to own and operate an EV, would you support the development of public EV charging stations, even if it meant dedicating a few (2-3) parking spaces in each of Arlington's three business districts?

	#			% EV Charging Stations		
	Yes	No	No Response	Yes	No	No Response
Support EV Charging Stations	4,334	1,286	438	72%	21%	7%

The Town buys electricity under a multi-year contract for all Town and School buildings. When the current contract expires, would you support the Town including a requirement for some renewable energy in the new contract, even if the price were up to 2% higher than the market's otherwise best available price?

	#			% Renewable Energy Contract		
	Yes	No	No Response	Yes	No	No Response
Support Renewable Energy Contract	3,939	1,616	503	65%	27%	8%

The Town's stabilization fund currently invests in fossil fuel energy companies. Would you support the Town pursuing a planned program to divest from the fossil fuel industry?

	#			% Divest Fossil Fuels		
	Yes	No	No Response	Yes	No	No Response
Divest Fossil Fuel Industry	3,570	1,746	742	59%	29%	12%

Community solar projects allow electricity consumers to derive some of the benefits of solar energy, without having to install solar panels themselves. The energy company typically installs a solar array at an off-site location (likely not in Arlington), and electricity consumers purchase electricity from the company. Would your household consider purchasing electricity from such a regional project?

	#			% Regional Solar Project		
	Yes	No	No Response	Yes	No	No Response
Regional Solar Energy Project	4,172	1,210	676	69%	20%	11%

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



## Vision 2020 Annual Survey Results for 2015

### Disability Commission

We want to understand the needs of our residents so we can seek more targeted solutions. Questions about disabilities were last asked in the 2005 Annual Survey. Capturing information on the types of disabilities our residents manage provides a baseline for future surveys. Comparing 2005 to 2015, we see a slight increase in households that report having members with a disability – from 15% to 21%.

The %'s shown on this page represent the % of total responses for each question.

If no members of your household have disabilities, please fill the bubble on this line and go to Question 4.

	#		% No Disabilities	
	No disabilities	No Response	No disabilities	No Response
No Disabilities	4,786	1,272	79%	21%

If you or members of your household have disabilities, please indicate which categories best describe the disabilities:  
(Fill all bubbles that apply)

	#	%		#	%
Visual Impairment	146	7%	Mental Health/Behavioral Challenge	206	10%
Hearing Impairment	252	12%	Cognitive Impairment	124	6%
Sensory Impairment	34	2%	Physical Impairment/Disability	494	23%

If any members of your household used handicapped accessible parking in Arlington in the past year, please indicate how often accessible parking could be found in the following locations.

	#					% No Disabilities				
	Always	Often	Usually	Never	No Opinion	Always	Often	Usually	Never	No Opinion
Town Administration Buildings	54	80	133	254	339	6%	9%	15%	30%	39%
School Buildings	39	42	72	238	450	5%	5%	9%	28%	54%
Street or Parking Lot - Center	61	66	182	244	318	7%	8%	21%	28%	37%
Street or Parking Lot - East Arlington	43	52	122	259	370	5%	6%	14%	31%	44%
Street or Parking Lot - Heights	49	64	162	232	351	6%	7%	19%	27%	41%
Recreational facilities or parks	38	56	105	219	420	5%	7%	13%	26%	50%

### We would like to know if outdoor seating at restaurants in Arlington is creating challenges for residents with disabilities.

Has sidewalk seating at an Arlington restaurant obstructed you or any member of your household from easily navigating past a restaurant?

	#		% Navigating Sidewalk Seating	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Navigating Sidewalk Seating	105	1,353	7%	93%

Have you or household members had issues with accessibility when trying to utilize outdoor seating at an Arlington restaurant?

	#		% Navigating Seating	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Accessibility Issues Sidewalk Seating	44	1,366	3%	97%

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



## Vision 2020 Annual Survey Results for 2015

### Economic Development

The Economic Development Office seeks to learn more about people in Arlington who work from their home. Of the roughly 2000 respondents who work from home, almost one quarter expressed interest in shared work space if it could be developed in Arlington.

The %'s shown on this page represent the % of total responses for each question.

How many members of your household over 16 years of age earn their livelihood by working from home some part of the week?

	#				% Work from Home			
	None	One	Two	More than 2	None	One	Two	More than 2
Number members work from home	3,835	1,524	467	20	66%	26%	8%	0%

Which category(ies) best describe the work members of your household do from home? (Fill all bubbles that apply)

	#	%		#	%
Agriculture / Horticulture	21	1%	Other Work/Services not specified above	332	14%
Transportation / Warehousing / Util	19	1%	Media Creation/Production	113	5%
Food Service/Accommodation	35	2%	Education/Health/Social Services	493	22%
Professional Science & Management	572	25%	Finance / Insurance / Real Estate	192	8%
Information/Technology Production	520	23%	Health / Biological Life Sciences	264	12%
Arts Entertainment and Recreation	196	9%	Retail / Wholesale Trade	62	3%
Public Administration	27	1%	Manufacturing - Durable/NonDurable	19	1%
Writing/Editing	303	13%	Construction/Property Management	70	3%

If you or members of your household work from home some of the week, please provide the following information.

#		%		#			%		
self employed	work for employer	self employed	work for employer	<15 hrs /week	15-34 hrs/week	35+ hrs/week	<15 hrs /week	15-34 hrs/week	35+ hrs/week
787	1,484	35%	65%	1,128	567	538	51%	25%	24%

If you or members of your household who work from home leave during the day to patronize Arlington businesses, which best describes those trips?

	#			%		
	Food and Dining	Goods and Services	Rarely Leave During Work	Food and Dining	Goods and Services	Rarely Leave During Work
Business Patronized	1,059	835	674	41%	33%	26%

If a shared work space with flexible lease options existed in Arlington, would you or members of your household be interested in renting space there? (left column indicates how many people work from home in the household)

	#		% Shared Workspace	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
None	42	379	10%	90%
One	281	1,188	19%	81%
Two	115	334	26%	74%
More than 2	5	13	28%	72%
No Response	7	43	14%	86%
<b>Total</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>1,914</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>81%</b>



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



## Vision 2020 Annual Survey Results for 2015

### Arlington Public Schools

We want to learn if existing methods of communicating important information about Arlington Public Schools (APS) are reaching residents who do not have children in the schools. A slight majority of households indicate they were very or somewhat aware of the details we provided. There is some interest in expanding communication into more channels such as Facebook or Twitter, although town and school email and websites are still the most reliable channels.

The %'s shown on this page represent the % of total responses for each question.

Household includes children in Arlington Public Schools

	#	%
Yes	1,168	19.7%
No	4,764	80.3%

As Arlington continues to attract families with school-aged children, enrollment has increased significantly putting pressure on budgets and causing crowding to be a concern in many buildings. Our total school enrollment has increased by 450 students in the past three years alone, which is a nearly 10% increase. Additionally, enrollment will likely increase by more than 125 students next school year.

Are members of your household aware of the increased enrollment in Arlington Public Schools?

	#				%			
	Aware	somewhat aware	Not aware	No Response	Aware	somewhat aware	Not aware	No Response
Aware of Increased Enrollment	1,434	1,797	2,624	203	24%	30%	43%	3%

Arlington High School is evaluated by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges every 10 years. The most recent review identified problems with the physical plant that impact education. A failure to address these issues could jeopardize reaccreditation in 2022. School Administration and Town Officials submitted a formal Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) in 2014 regarding improvements at the high school.

Are members of your household aware of the condition of the high school facilities?

	#				%			
	Very Aware	Somewhat aware	Not Aware	No Response	Very Aware	Somewhat aware	Not Aware	No Response
Aware of AHS Condition	1,452	1,606	2,769	231	24%	27%	46%	4%

As the planning process to address the physical plant at the High School continues, the School Administration will want to keep residents up-to-date on important milestones. Additionally, APS is interested in better informing residents about other school-related opportunities such as Adult Education, Community Service programs, and Concerts/Performances. Please indicate your preferred methods to receive information from APS. (Fill in the first bubble or all that apply)

Yes and No below indicates whether household has children enrolled in Arlington Public Schools.

	Yes		No		No Response	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
All options	283	7%	771	6%	13	5%
Arlington Advocate	287	7%	1,601	12%	35	14%
Fliers Library & Senior Center	74	2%	739	6%	15	6%
Public Forums	132	3%	471	4%	11	4%
School Parent Email List	754	18%	278	2%	11	4%

  

	Yes		No		No Response	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Town email notices	568	13%	2,134	16%	27	11%
School district website	429	10%	446	3%	7	3%
Town website	414	10%	1,766	13%	29	12%
Facebook	113	3%	464	4%	7	3%
Twitter	37	1%	164	1%	4	2%



## Vision 2020 Annual Survey Results for 2015

### Arts & Culture

Arlington has a growing number of arts and culture offerings that are available to the public. The following list highlights just a few of the many opportunities and resources spanning the length of the town from the East to the Heights. These results indicate that information about some newer offerings has not reached all residents. We plan to look deeper at the data to determine if some events have neighborhood support, but not town wide awareness, so we can target publicity and outreach better.

The %'s shown on this page represent the % of total responses for each question.

Leave both bubbles blank if your household is not familiar with an item.

	Know About		Notice/Attend	
	#	%	#	%
Dallin Art Museum	2,201	43%	852	21%
Arlington Center for the Arts	2,425	47%	1,144	28%
Spy Pond Mural	872	17%	639	16%
Arlington Book Festival	871	17%	279	7%
Chairful Where You Sit	1,167	23%	716	17%
Transformer Box Paintings	981	19%	915	22%
Art Rocks Menotomy	719	14%	474	12%
Jason Russell House	2,592	50%	1,100	27%
Old Schwamb Mill	2,349	46%	1,011	25%
Arlington Cultural Heights Walk	417	8%	125	3%
Arlington Friends of the Drama	1,643	32%	615	15%
Shakespeare in the Park	1,509	29%	477	12%
True Story Theater	336	7%	118	3%
Arlington Children's Theater	1,618	31%	385	9%
Arlington International Film Festival	2,281	44%	298	7%
Capitol Theater	2,967	58%	3,170	77%
Philharmonic Society of Arlington	793	15%	198	5%
Menotomy Music Series	373	7%	125	3%
Regent Theater	3,080	60%	1,835	45%
Arlington Alive	332	6%	107	3%