

DESIGN STANDARDS

TOWN OF ARLINGTON

A POCKET GUIDE TO DEVELOPMENT ALONG ARLINGTON'S PRIMARY CORRIDORS

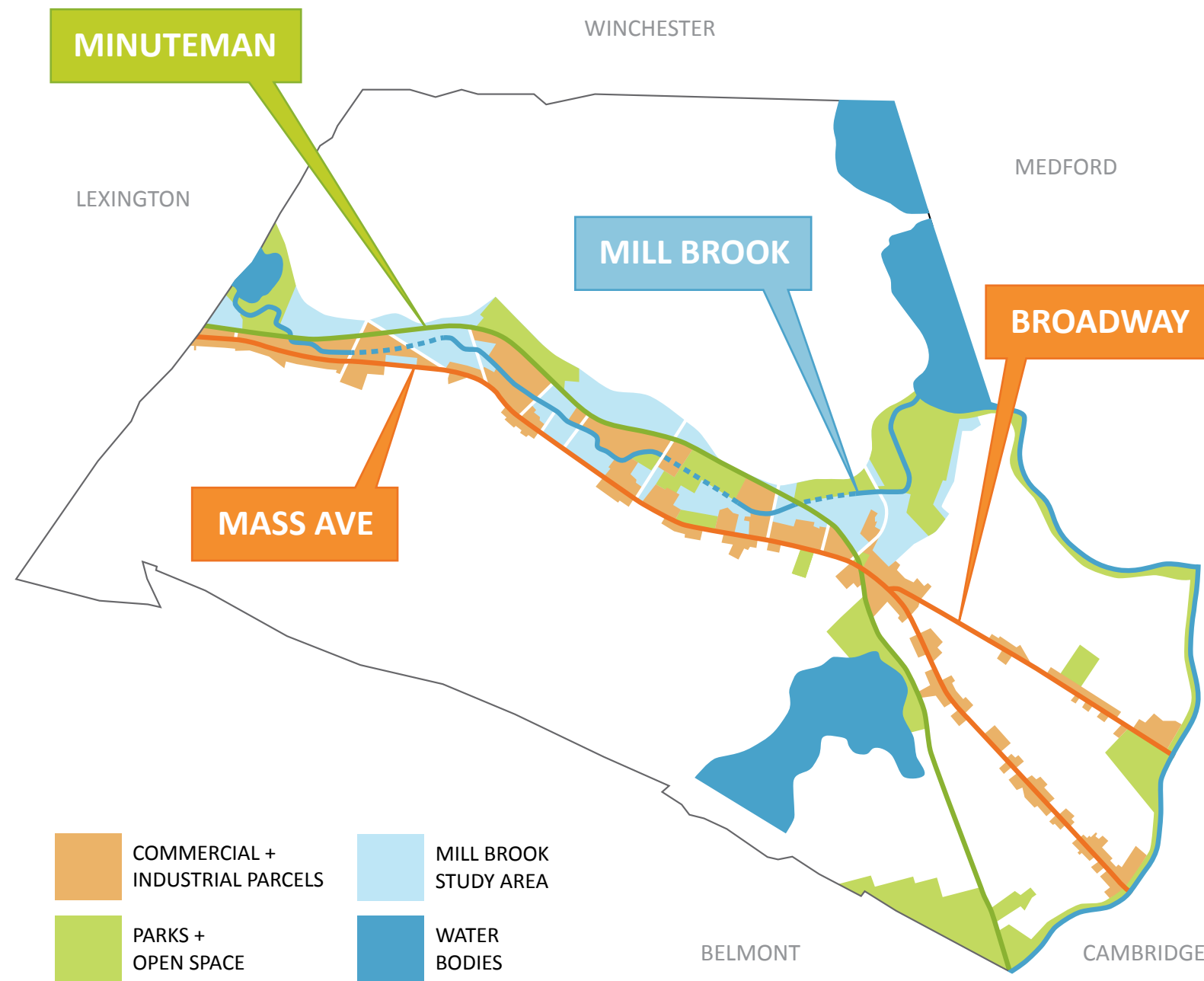


architecture
urban design
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Prepared for the Town of Arlington, MA
Dept. of Planning and Community Development

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PRIMARY CORRIDORS OF ARLINGTON



 **COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS**

Mass Ave and Broadway connect the town from east to west, defining the town's three primary commercial centers: Arlington Heights, Arlington Center, and East Arlington.

 **MINUTEMAN BIKEWAY**

The Minuteman Bikeway is a regional open space amenity. It is used for commuting as well as linking many of Arlington's cherished parks and recreational spaces

 **MILL BROOK CORRIDOR**

The Mill Brook is a largely hidden and untapped natural resource with great potential for place-making. The abutting neighborhoods have a legacy of "working and making" things

PURPOSE

Arlington's Design Standards were created to enhance the economic vitality of the Town through attractive and consistent design. They have been created as an outgrowth of the goals identified in the **Arlington Master Plan** (adopted February, 2015) under economic development, historical and cultural resource areas, and public facilities and services. These Design Standards are envisioned as a first step in updating the Zoning ByLaw, and they are tailored specifically to Arlington by **focusing on the primary geographies** unique to Arlington: Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway, The Mill Brook, and the Minuteman Bikeway.

By increasing the build-out potential of commercial and industrial properties along these corridors, the Town can leverage economic development to enhance its tax base and preserve and maintain Arlington's historic structures and cultural heritage. In this way, Arlington is directing its resources to areas with the greatest need and potential. Collectively, these corridors function as **"priority development areas"** within Arlington, helping to focus growth in already developed areas with good access to public transit, and diminish development pressures elsewhere in town.

These Standards articulate fundamental principles that influence the character of buildings and their spaces. These Standards are to anticipate projects that accommodate a **variety of uses**. They address building placement and orientation, height and setbacks, parking strategies and signage, among others. They are tools to help regulate form and clarify expectations for both developers and the public at large. By following these Standards, projects will complement one another, resulting in a cohesive public experience.

For more information, please contact:
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7 CATEGORIES



COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS



MINUTEMAN BIKEWAY



MILL BROOK CORRIDOR

1 BUILDING SETBACKS

Each of these three geographies necessitates a different building setback

Establish an appropriate relationship close to the street based on the street and sidewalk width
Encourage upper-level step-backs to diminish the effects of height

Establish an appropriate setback from the trail, with a landscaped buffer between the trail and buildings
Enliven the trail with pocket parks and amenities

Address relationship of building elevations to flood plain and wetland areas
Anticipate a publicly accessible linear park adjacent to the waterway

2 BUILDING HEIGHT

Height constitutes just one aspect of a building's massing but is the most noticeable

Allow maximum building height of five (5) stories in the existing business centers
Consider transitions to residential areas

Vary building height between three (3) and five (5) stories.
Taller buildings should be stepped back to minimize shadow encroachment on to the bikeway
Address adjacent residential areas by tapering heights

Vary building height between two (2) and four (4) stories
Consider transitions to residential areas

3 PUBLIC INTERFACE

The relationship of the building to the sidewalk is essential to the public's experience

Incorporate active ground floor uses with frequent entry points, windows, street furniture, and landscaping
Include accessible public spaces where appropriate

Anticipate access points onto the trail from new development that fronts it
Encourage private uses that include public spaces

Elevate building entrances above the flood plain
Integrate historic buildings into new development plans
Encourage uses that provide public access to the Brook

4 PARKING + ACCESS

Development should consider all transportation modes - walking, biking, driving, and transit use

Maximize below grade parking and include bike parking
Facilitate shared parking to reduce the area of parking lots
Visible presence of parking should be minimized

Foster incorporation of bike and pedestrian amenities
Facilitate shared parking between cyclists and abutting uses
Shield parking from the Bikeway

In areas prone to flooding take advantage of topography to park cars below buildings
Improve pedestrian and bicycle conditions and access

5 LINKAGES + CONNECTIONS

The inter-relationships among the three areas are essential

Maximize integration with adjoining residential areas
Anticipate connections with adjoining sites
Foster connections with the Bikeway and Mill Brook

Foster connections with Mass Ave., the Mill Brook, and new development

Foster connections with Mass Ave. and Bikeway
Create a vibrant pedestrian corridor linking Arlington Center to the Arlington Reservoir

6 FACADE + MATERIALS

Projects should be built with natural, sustainable, durable, easily maintainable materials

Increase ground floor transparency and interaction with street
Lighting should be pedestrian scale and shielded

Encourage ground-floor transparency and variation in buildings
Specify high-quality, durable materials

Acknowledge Arlington's cultural & industrial past
Create variety in building facades by adding bays, balconies and terraces

7 SIGNAGE + WAYFINDING

Signs must balance the needs of individual businesses with those of the town

Integrate signage into architecture of the building

Enhance branding of the Bikeway
Capitalize on ways to interpret history & enhance wayfinding
Minimize commercial signage facing the Bikeway

Encourage branding of the Mill Brook and linkages to adjoining community assets
Integrate the signage with the architecture

These are fundamental design concepts that mitigate the effects of increased height or greater lot coverage on development parcels. The alignment, form, and massing of a project makes the difference between a development that ignores its context and one that enhances the character of the Town.

