



CONNECT

# Arlington

SUSTAINABLE  
TRANSPORTATION PLAN



# Factbook



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## APPENDIX A: PUBLIC INPUT

Despite the many challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, public engagement continues to be a critical component of successfully developing and implementing a community wide transportation plan. The goals for public engagement for the Arlington Sustainable Transportation Plan are as follows:

- **Build awareness of and excitement for the plan:** acknowledge community concerns; share plan goals, progress, timeline, and next steps; and communicate why feedback is important and how it is being used
- **Reach a variety of constituents and community interests to create recommendations that are comprehensive and equitable:** target traditionally underrepresented stakeholders in the public process; learn about perceived issues and whether those vary by user group; provide varied types of activities and venues through which to provide feedback; and leverage existing stakeholder networks to engage the wider community
- **Inform plan priorities and actions:** Identify where the public experiences issues and what scenarios need to be addressed; generate solutions for future projects and maintenance that are sensitive to sustainability concerns; identify programming opportunities; and communicate next steps and foster ongoing community support

### ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Town communicated information to the public throughout the Sustainable Transportation Plan process using a combination of press releases, a project website, social media, and fliers and postcards. This public engagement effort included multiple opportunities for public input, including:

- **Online survey:** to obtain initial thoughts and opinions about transportation priorities, as well as how people travel in Arlington, how they choose travel mode, and what they would like to see change about transportation in Arlington
- **Doorhangers and survey hotline:** to promote the project safely door-to-door and allow people to give feedback through voicemail
- **Online input mapping:** to gather input about specific locations and needed transportation amenities geographically on a wikimap
- **Online public forums:** adapted from a traditional in-person public forum, to present project information to the community via video call and phone and allow time for feedback during and after the meeting
- **Focus groups:** to learn about and discuss topics and issues in which many stakeholders are directly liked, with a goal of engaging voices less heard in Arlington's planning processes

## SURVEY SUMMARY

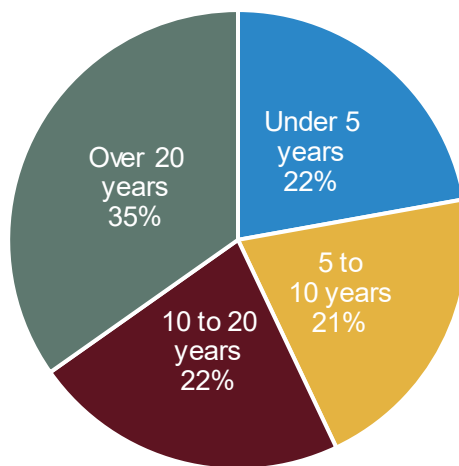
To gather information about transportation goals and travel patterns, as well as COVID-19 impacts, the Town conducted an online survey for residents of Arlington. This survey was created with SurveyMonkey and publicized through a variety of communication platforms.

### Survey Respondents

1,087 Arlington residents answered the Sustainable Transportation Plan survey. As shown in Figure A-1, survey respondents encompass both newer residents and those who have lived in Arlington for over 20 years. 82% of survey respondents own their home (Figure A-2), which is a rate greater than those who answered the town survey (78%) and U.S. Census 2017 American Community Survey (ACS, 61%).

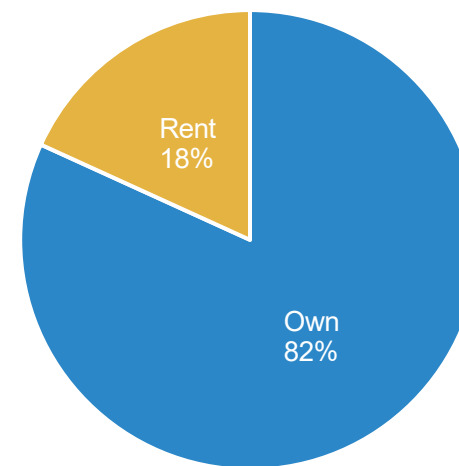
**Figure A-1 Years in Arlington**

How long have you lived in Arlington?



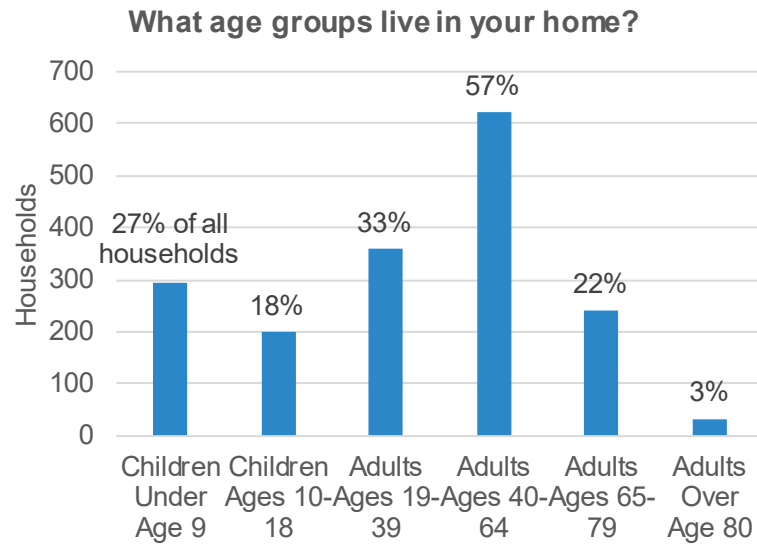
**Figure A-2 Home Ownership**

Do you rent or own your home?

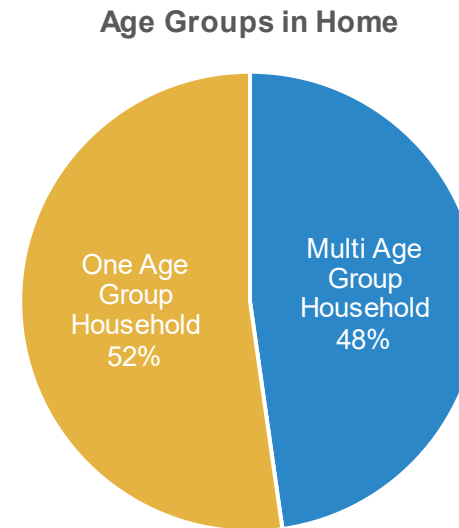


Households with members of all ages participated in the survey. The largest age group for respondents is adults ages 40 to 64 years (Figure A-3). As shown in Figure A-4, about half of households have members of multiple age groups. Additionally, out of adults ages 80 or older, about half live with other age groups. Other forms of public engagement will also be conducted to target the transportation needs of older adults.

**Figure A-3 Age Groups**



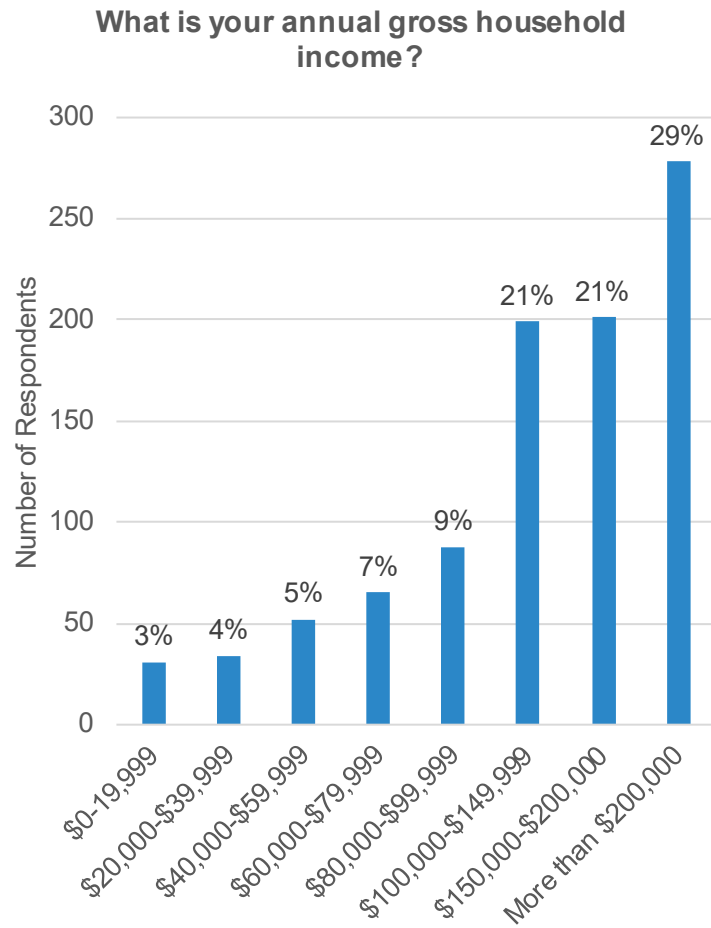
**Figure A-4 Number of Age Groups**



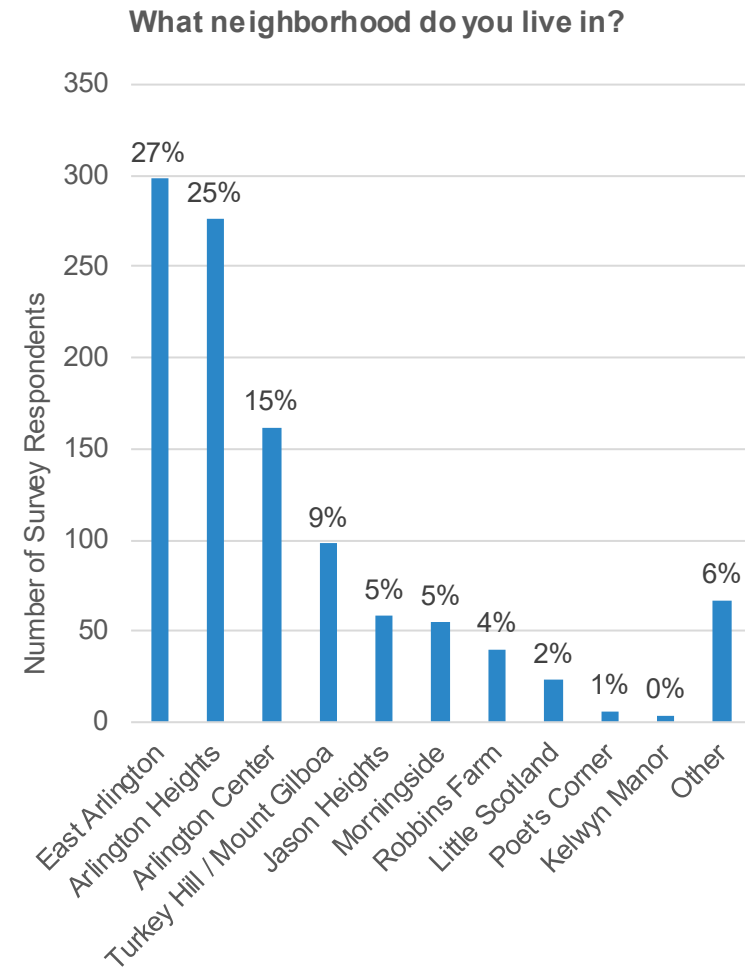
There were high levels of participation from Arlington’s higher income households, with about half of survey respondents with an annual household income of over \$150,000 (Figure A-5). Though Arlington is a relatively high-income town, survey respondents tend to have a greater income than the general population (based on 2017 ACS).

Additionally, many neighborhoods were represented in survey responses, as shown in Figure A-6. Over half of respondents live in East Arlington or Arlington Heights, with a sizeable proportion living in Arlington Center or Turkey Hill/Mount Gilboa.

**Figure A-5 Household Income**



**Figure A-6 Neighborhood of Survey Respondents**

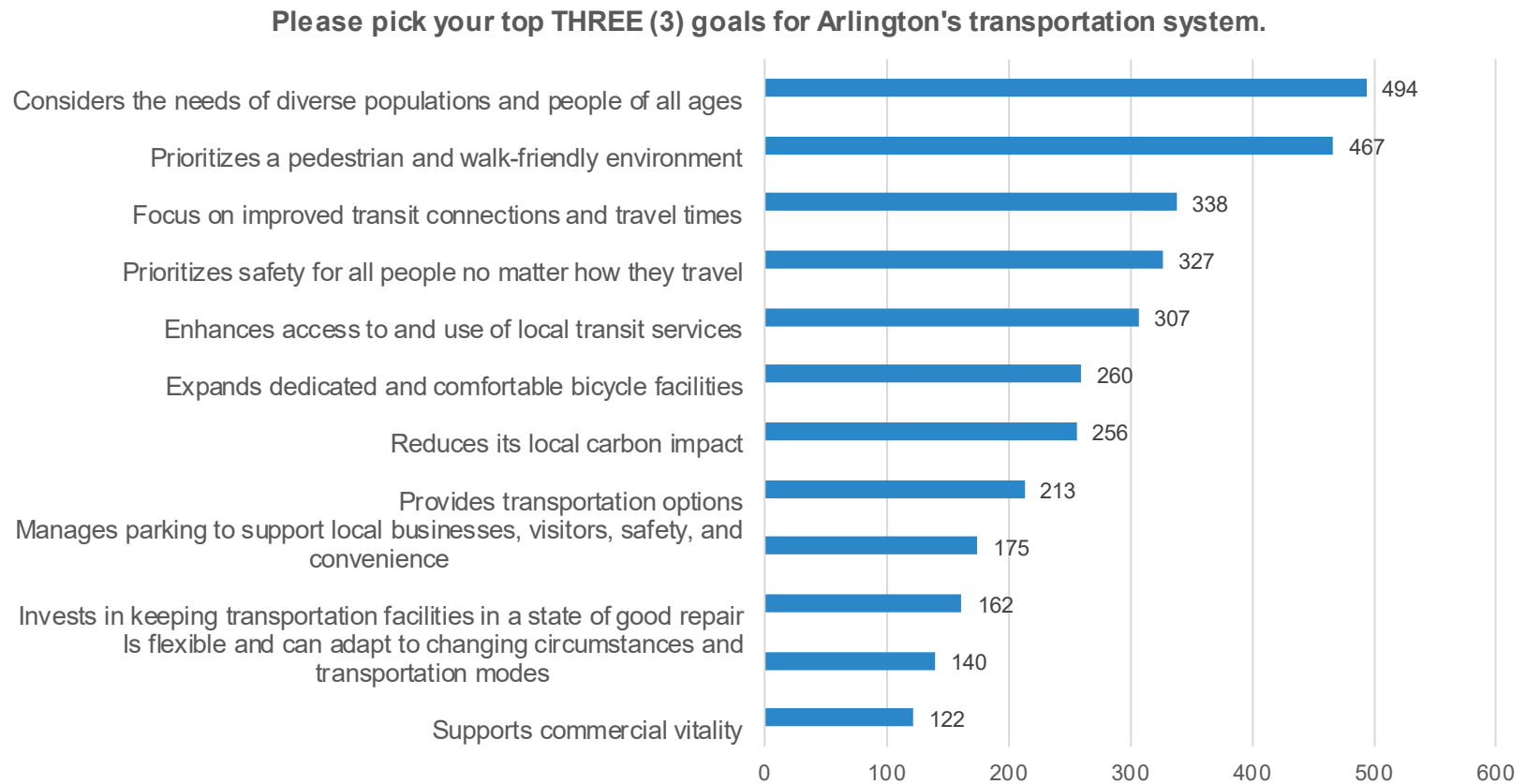




## Transportation Goals

The survey asked respondents to prioritize goals for Arlington’s transportation system. Results are shown in Figure A-7, with “Consider the needs of diverse populations and people of all ages” and “Prioritizes a pedestrian and walk-friendly environment” as the top goals.

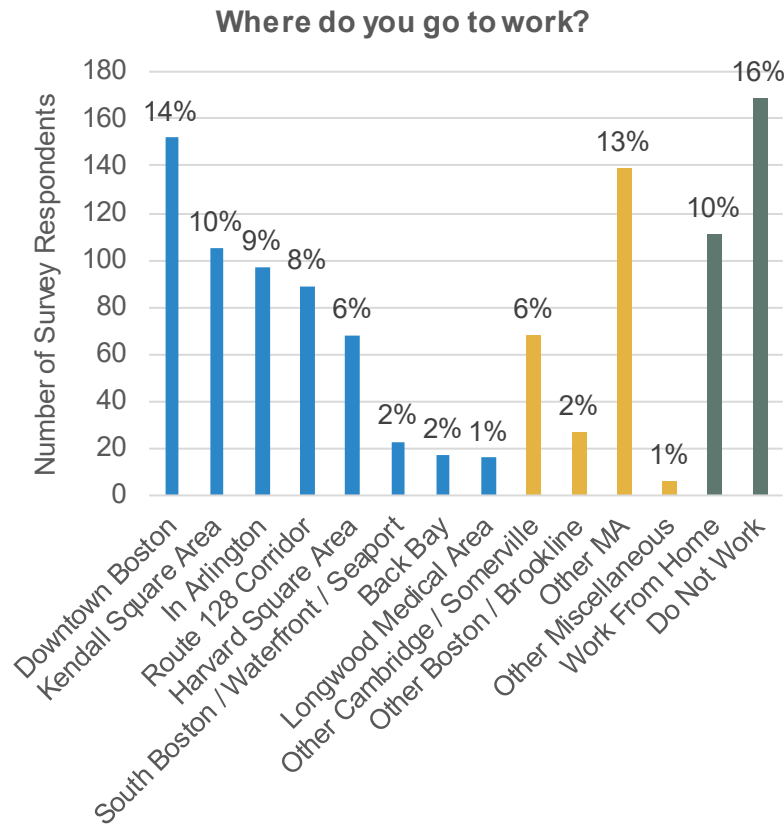
**Figure A-7 Transportation Goals Prioritization**



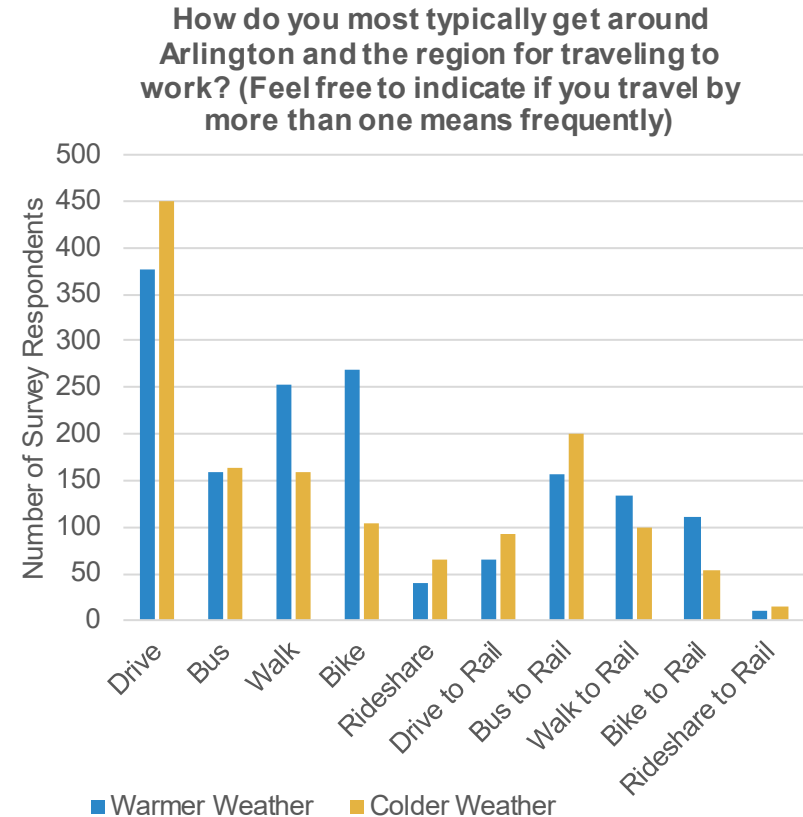
## Commute and Travel Patterns

The survey asked respondents a series of questions pertaining to their typical commute patterns before the COVID-19 pandemic. As shown in Figure A-8, the biggest job centers for Arlington residents are Downtown Boston, Kendall Square, within Arlington, and the Route 128 Corridor. Over 20% of survey respondents primarily work from home or do not work.

**Figure A-8 Work Location**

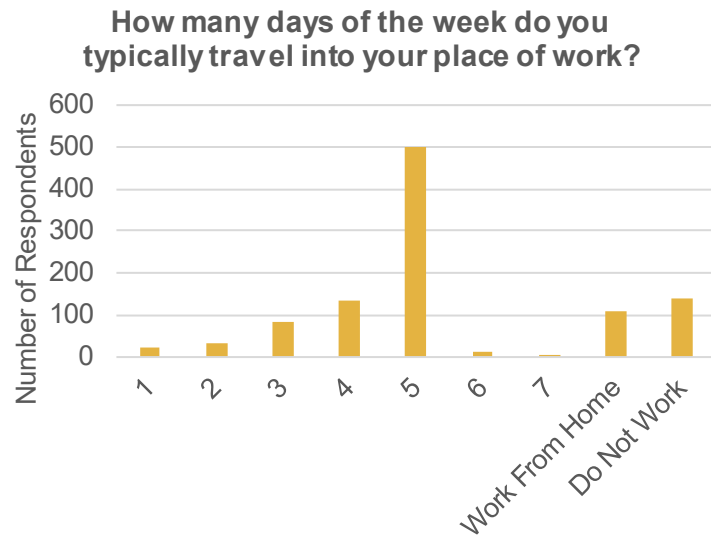


**Figure A-9 Work Mode**

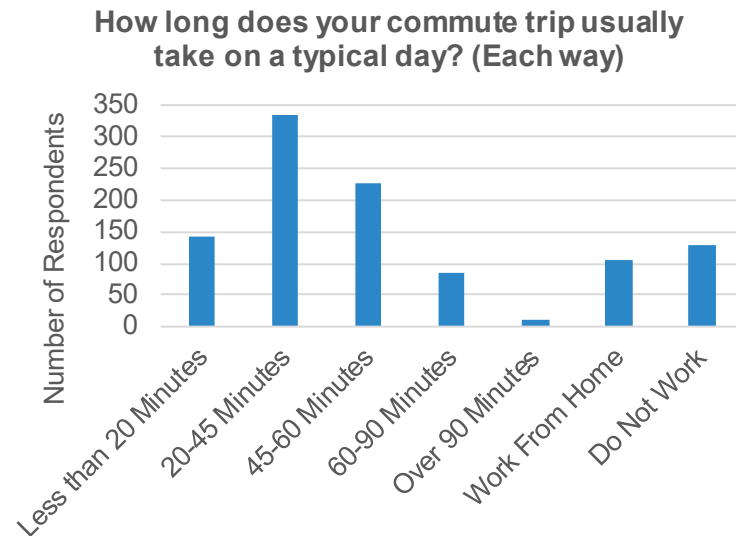


As shown in Figure A-9, driving is the most typical commute mode, with about half of respondents driving frequently. Arlington residents walk and bike to work more in warmer weather than colder weather. People get to rail transit through a large variety of modes, with bus as the most common. Commute patterns also vary by day and time. About half of survey respondents travel to work five days a week (Figure A-10). As shown in Figure A-11, most commutes are between 20 and 45 minutes, but many are also between 45 and 60 minutes.

**Figure A-10 Days Commuting Per Week**

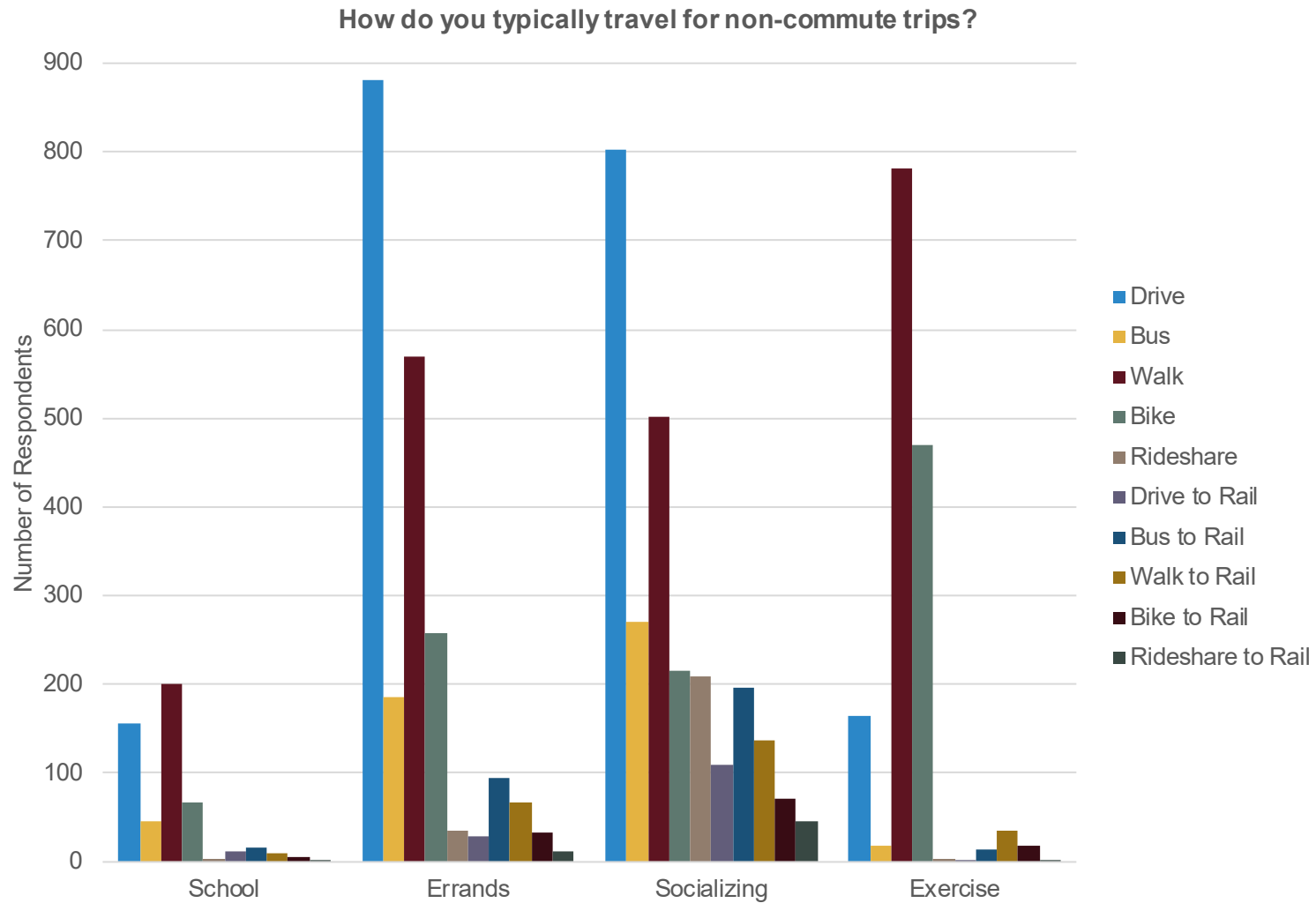


**Figure A-11 Commute Time**



When looking at non-work travel, Arlington residents also use a variety of transportation modes, as shown in Figure A-12. Driving is the most common mode for non-commute trips. Most people currently drive or walk to get to school, run errands, or socialize. Socializing trips also have the largest share of rideshare trips. For exercise, people overwhelmingly walk or bike.

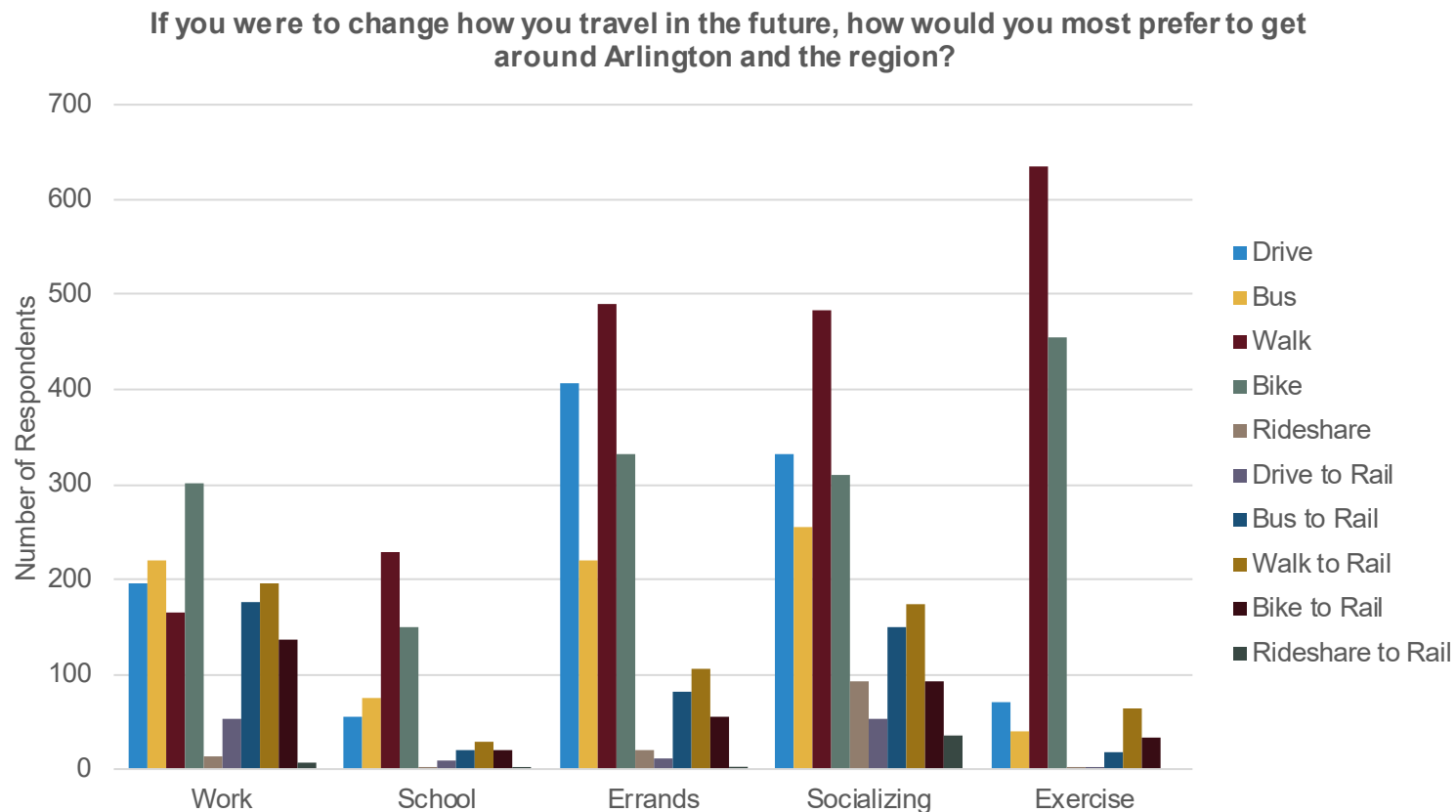
**Figure A-12 Non-Commute Travel Mode**



## Transportation Preferences

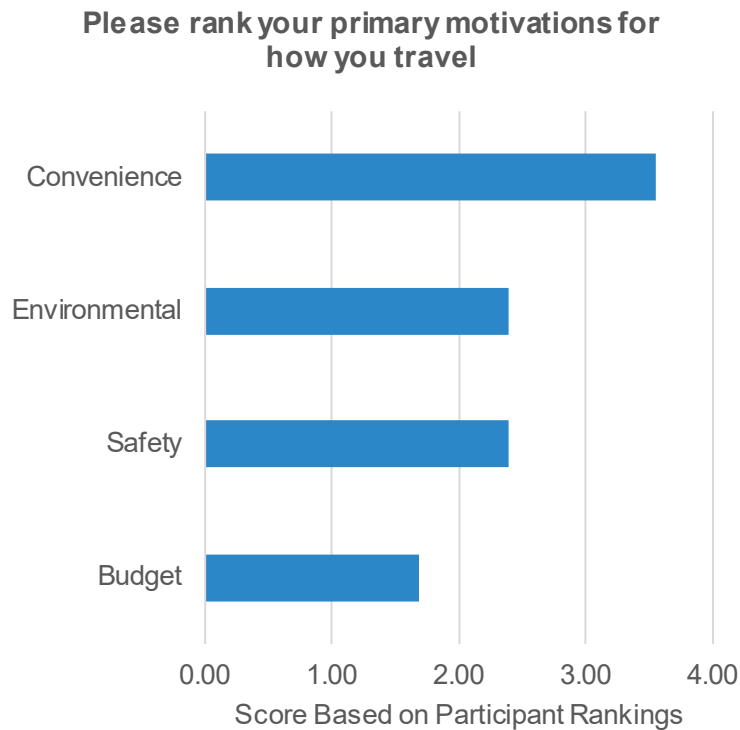
In addition to asking respondents about their current travel patterns, the survey also asked about transportation preferences and motivations. When asked how they would prefer to get around Arlington and the region in the future, respondents said that they would prefer to walk or bike more (Figure A-13). Biking is the preferred method of getting to work. However, people would like to maintain driving trips for errands or socializing.

**Figure A-13 Travel Preference in the Future**

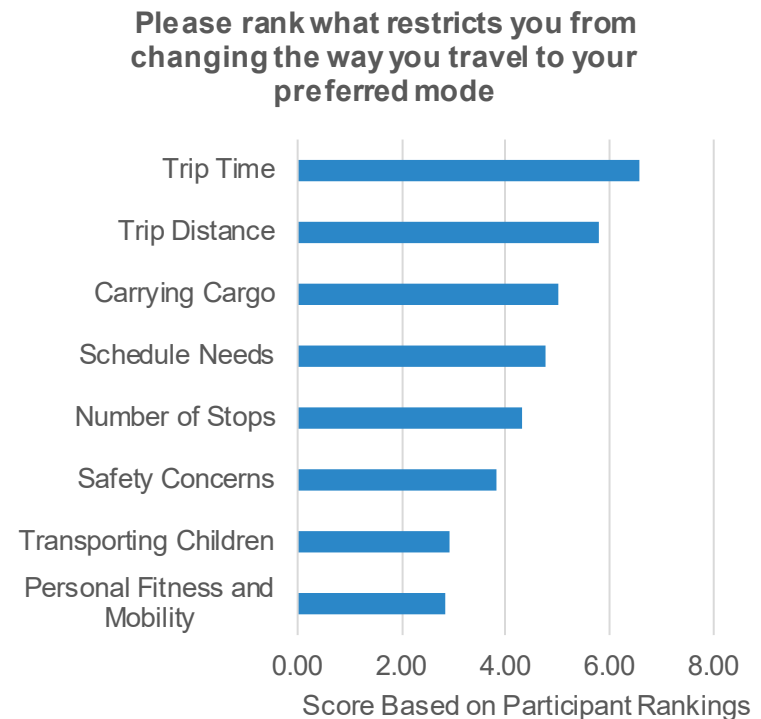


Participants were asked to rank their primary motivations for travel mode choice and the factors that restrict them from travelling their preferred modes. These rankings were then converted into scores (with the factors ranking first getting the highest score) for comparison across the whole pool of survey respondents. For primary motivations for travel mode choice, people ranked convenience the highest, followed by environment and safety (Figure A-14). As shown in Figure A-15, trip time and trip distance are the primary restrictions for people from changing to their preferred travel mode.

**Figure A-14 Travel Mode Choice Motivations**

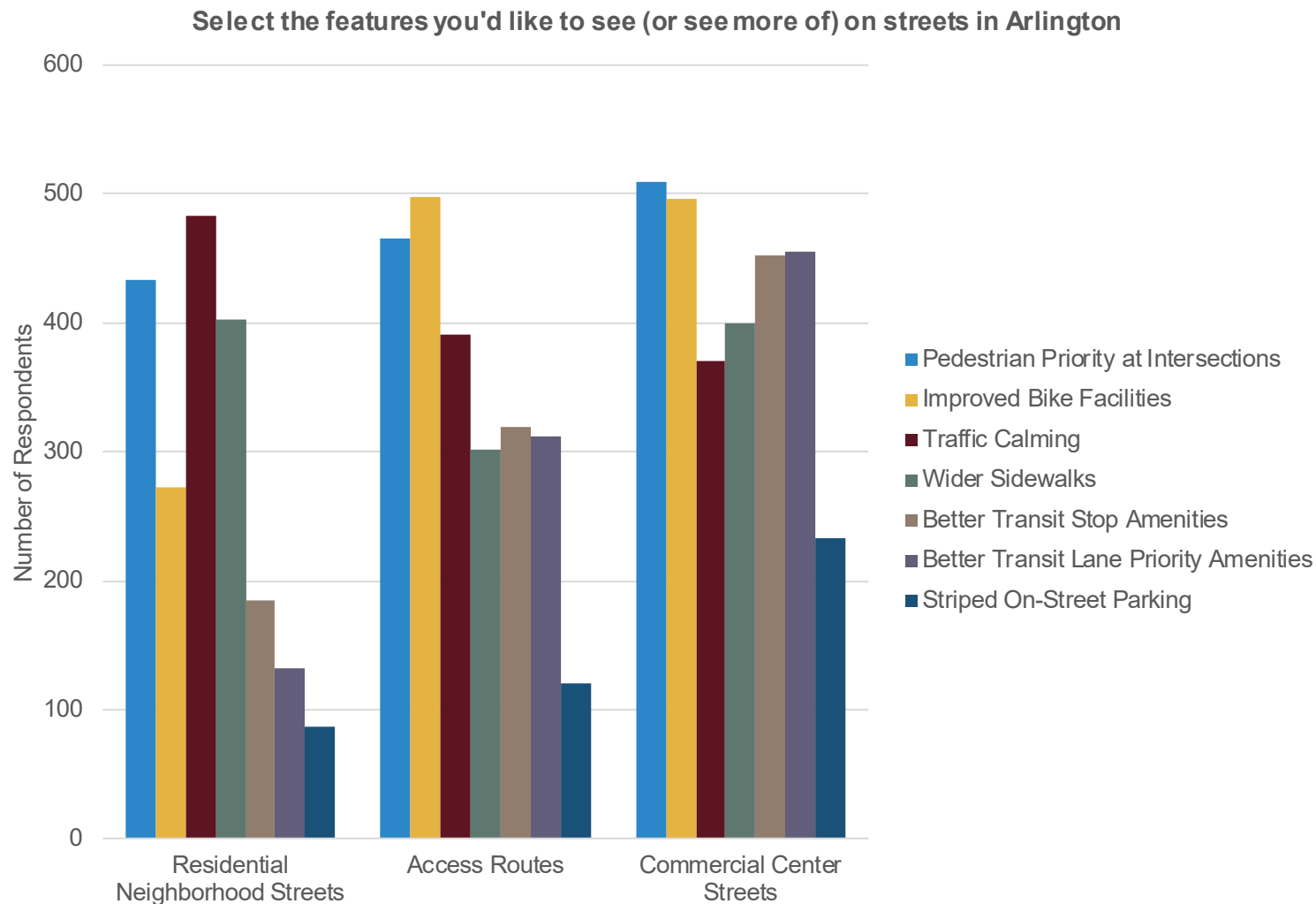


**Figure A-15 Travel Mode Choice Restrictions**



The survey also asked respondents what street features they would like to see more of on the streets of Arlington (Figure A-16). On residential streets, people would like to see more traffic calming and pedestrian facilities. On access routes, pedestrian priority and improved bike facilities are most requested. Lastly on commercial streets, transit amenities in addition to pedestrian and bike amenities are requested.

**Figure A-16 Street Features**



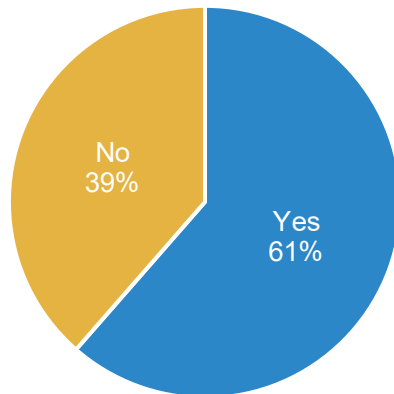
## COVID-19 and Stay-At-Home

The survey questions discussed prior asked respondents to answer based on their pre-COVID-19 travel patterns. The last two questions of the survey asked how transportation choices have changed given COVID-19. As shown in Figure A-17, 61% of residents have changed how they use neighborhood streets. In the comment box attached to this question, respondents cited reasons such as walking around the neighborhood more, leaving the house less, and avoiding major streets more. 39% of residents have not changed how they use neighborhood streets, citing reasons such as being essential workers and staying inside the house and not using the streets.

As shown in Figure A-18, most residents anticipate changing their travel habits after the stay-at-home advisory is lifted. 56% of residents think their travel will change citing reasons such as working from home more often, travelling less often and using transit less when they do travel, and only returning to travel and transit once they feel safe from the virus to do so. 44% of residents who do not think their travel will change cited reasons such as the fact that there is the same infrastructure on the street, continued reliance on transit, and that they were already working from home pre-COVID.

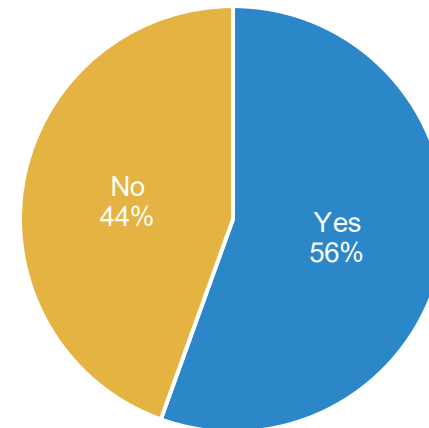
**Figure A-17 During Stay-At-Home**

Has the way you use neighborhood streets changed during the stay-at-home advisory?



**Figure A-18 After Stay-At-Home**

Do you think your travel habits will change after the stay-at-home advisory is lifted?





## DOORHANGERS PROMOTION

In order to gather feedback from older adults on this plan, the Council on Aging distributed doorhangers to housing units for older adults and older adults with low incomes. The doorhangers informed people of a phone number they can call to leave public comments via voicemail, as well as take the online survey (Figure A-19). The comments received via voicemail were incorporated into other survey responses above.

Figure A-19 Doorhangers

**How do you get around Arlington?**

The Town is developing a townwide transportation plan called **Connect Arlington** that will set a vision and goals for transportation in the town. It will focus on all aspects of transportation and mobility in Arlington.

We want to hear from you! Call 781-316-3401 and leave a message or go take the full survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/ArlingtonSTP](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ArlingtonSTP) by July 10. Please tell us about:

- Yourself, where you live, if you work
- Where you usually travel and how you travel (walking, driving, public transportation etc.)
- Your goals and values when it comes to transportation and what you want to see more of in your streets (such as better bus stops, better sidewalks, more bike lanes)
- Any questions you have for us

**CALL 781-316-3401**

**CONNECT**  
**Arlington**  
SUSTAINABLE  
TRANSPORTATION PLAN

**您如何在阿灵顿镇上移动？**  
**¿Cómo te desplazas por Arlington?**

镇上正在制定一项名为**Connect Arlington**的全镇运输计划，计划将为镇上的运输设定愿景和目标。我们将以阿灵顿交通和运输的各个方面为重点。

我们希望收到你的来信！请致电781-316-3401，并在7月10日前留言。请告知我们：

- 您的资讯，包括您住的地方，您的工作
- 您常去的地点以及交通方式（步行，驾车，公共交通工具等）
- 您对交通运输的目的和观点，以及您希望能在街上看到的服务（例如，更好的公交车站，更好的人行道，更多的自行车道）
- 如有任何疑问

La ciudad está desarrollando un plan de transporte en toda la ciudad llamado **Connect Arlington** que establecerá una visión y objetivos para el transporte en la ciudad. Se centrará en todos los aspectos del transporte y la movilidad en Arlington.

¡Queremos escuchar de ti! Llame al 781-316-3401 y deje un mensaje antes del 10 de julio. Cuéntanos sobre:

- Tú mismo, dónde vives, si trabajas
- Dónde viaja y cómo viaja (caminar, conducir, transporte público, etc.)
- Sus objetivos y valores en lo que respecta al transporte y lo que desea ver más en sus calles (como mejores paradas de autobús, mejores aceras, más carriles para bicicletas)
- Cualquier pregunta que tenga para nosotros

请致电 / LLAMA 781-316-3401

## WIKIMAP RESULTS

In order to gather location-specific feedback, the Town used a Wikimap where public participants could go online and pinpoint areas on a web map that they wanted to comment on. The Wikimap was publicized via press release and social media, as well as the Committee page and town website.

Interested Arlington residents placed 220 pins on the Wikimap, pertaining to the following topics: walking, biking, driving, transit, and parking. Figure A-20 shows a map of the concentration of responses within the town. Pins are concentrated along major corridors in Arlington Center and Arlington Heights.

### Pedestrian Community Suggestions

As shown in Figure A-21, participants placed pins on the Wikimap in order to improve the town's walking conditions in three topic areas: enhanced crosswalks, narrow sidewalks, and safety concerns. Pins for "Enhanced Crosswalk/Pedestrian Crossing Needed" are spread throughout Arlington, including along Massachusetts Avenue, Park Avenue, Pleasant Street, Broadway, and many residential streets.

Comments associated with these pins include the following:

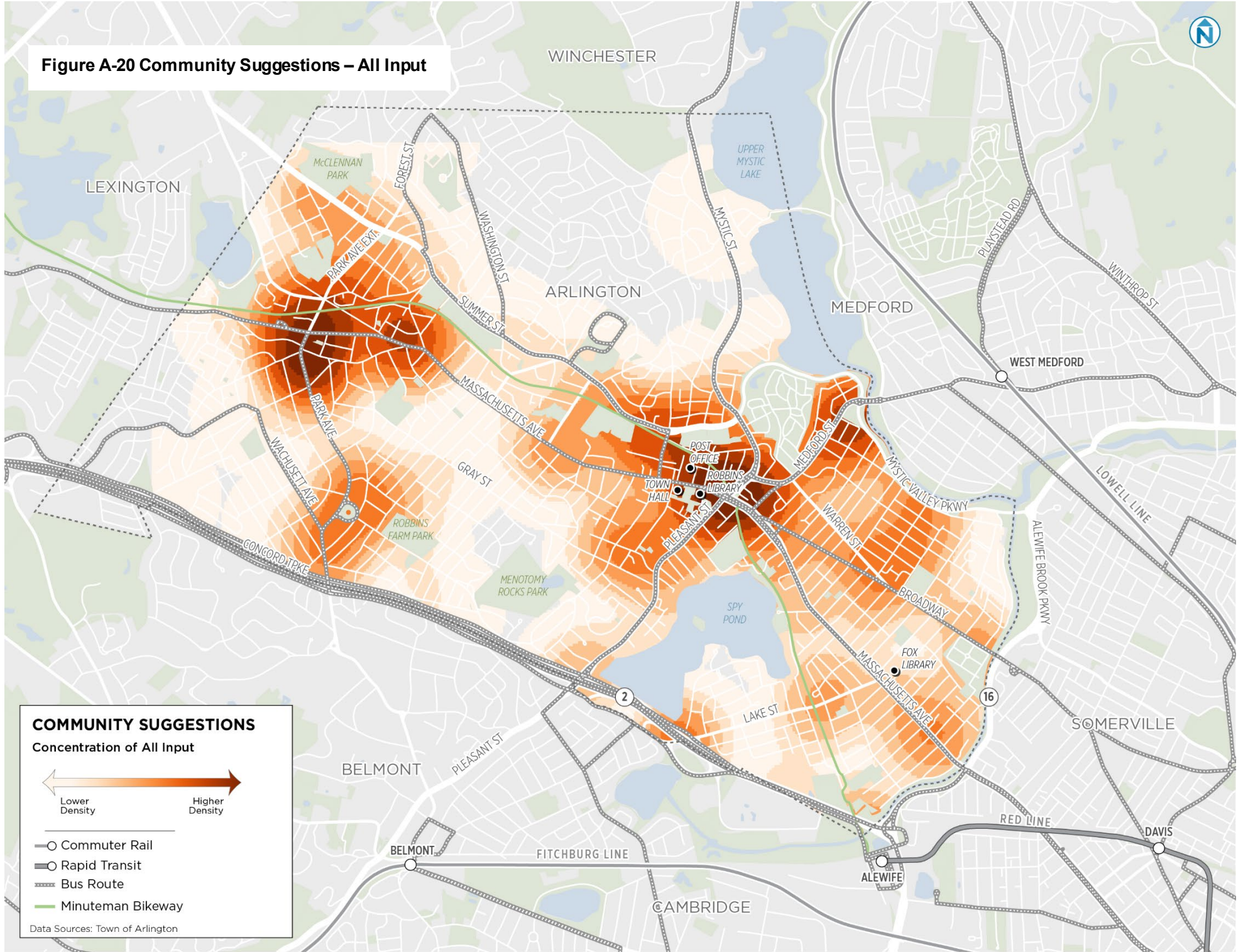
- Ramps needed at multiple crosswalks for wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers
- Signal timings for walking are too short and/or waiting to walk are too long
- Greater pedestrian visibility needed on roads with high speeds
- Traffic calming needed on roads with high speeds

Participants placed pins for "Narrow Sidewalk" are in the areas surrounding Arlington Center, as well as a couple pins in East Arlington. Most of the comments are about the condition of the sidewalks, as well as the sidewalks being too narrow for an enjoyable walk. The last pedestrian-related category for pins is "Safety Concern or Point of Conflict," which are concentrated along major avenues such as Massachusetts Avenue, Park Avenue, Pleasant Street, Medford Street, Broadway, and Mystic Street. Comments include:

- Dangerous walking conditions due to sidewalk condition, lighting, and other factors
- Cars travelling at high speeds without safe places for pedestrians to cross
- Traffic calming needed near schools and other areas with high pedestrian density

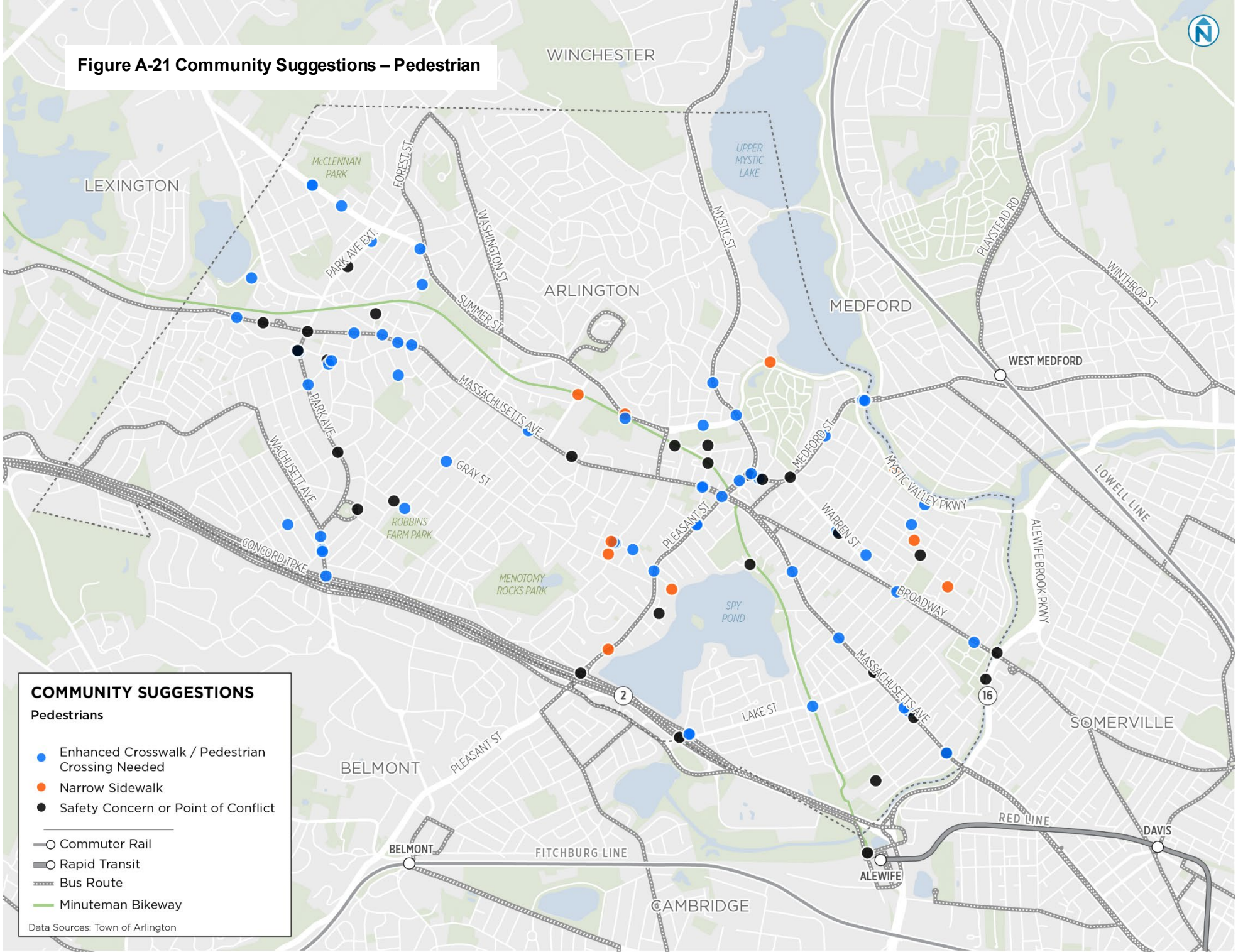


Figure A-20 Community Suggestions – All Input





**Figure A-21 Community Suggestions – Pedestrian**



## Bicycling Community Suggestions

As shown in Figure A-22, Arlington residents placed pins to show where bicycle improvements are needed. Pins were concentrated along major corridors, such as Massachusetts Avenue and the Minuteman Bikeway. Comments pertaining to “More Buffer/Protection for Cycling Needed” include:

- More buffered and separated bike lanes needed around town
- Improve connections to major activity centers and bordering cities and towns

Comments pertaining to “Safety Concern or “Point of Conflict” include:

- Dangerous and/or confusing intersections
- Poor paving conditions on bike lanes
- Poor visibility between people cycling and people driving

## Driving Community Suggestions

Driving-related pins are shown in Figure A-23. Pins concerning “Road Maintenance” are in Turkey Hill and north of Arlington Centers, with multiple commenters suggesting that private streets that are badly maintained be taken over by the Town and publicly maintained. Pins denoting “Traffic Signal Issue” are spread throughout the town, mostly at major intersections, and included the following comments:

- Improve traffic signal phasing to streamline traffic flow
- Removing or adding No Turn on Red signs
- Removing or adding left turn signals and left turn lanes

Safety concerns are concentrated along Park Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue, and the northeastern area of Arlington Heights. Comments include the following:

- Residential streets used as shortcuts with too much fast driving
- Blind corners and intersections unsafe for kids biking and walking
- More stop signs and traffic calming measures needed



**Figure A-22 Community Suggestion – Bicycling**



**COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS**  
**Bicycling**

- More Buffer / Protection for Cycling Needed
- Bicycle Parking
- Safety Concern or Point of Conflict

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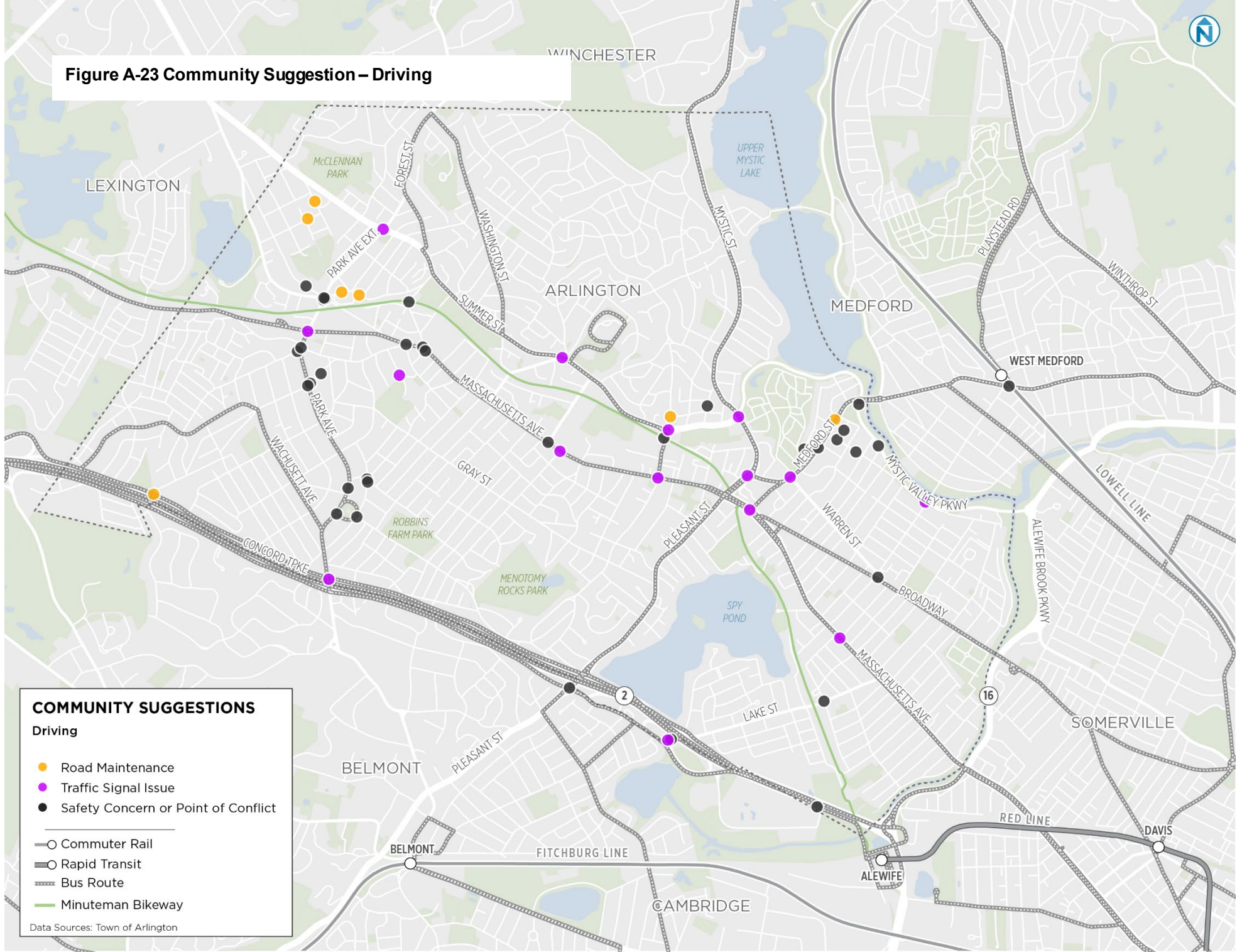
- Commuter Rail
- Rapid Transit
- Bus Route
- Minuteman Bikeway

Data Sources: Town of Arlington





**Figure A-23 Community Suggestion – Driving**



## Transit Community Suggestions

As shown in Figure A-24, relatively fewer pins were placed for transit-related improvements than walking, biking, or driving improvements. Residents commented on how bus priority improvements are especially needed near Alewife Station. Bus stops that need better walking access are located along Massachusetts Avenue and can use a variety of improvements including better crosswalks and trash cans that do not block bus doors. Better bus stop amenities, especially shelters, are needed along Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant Street.

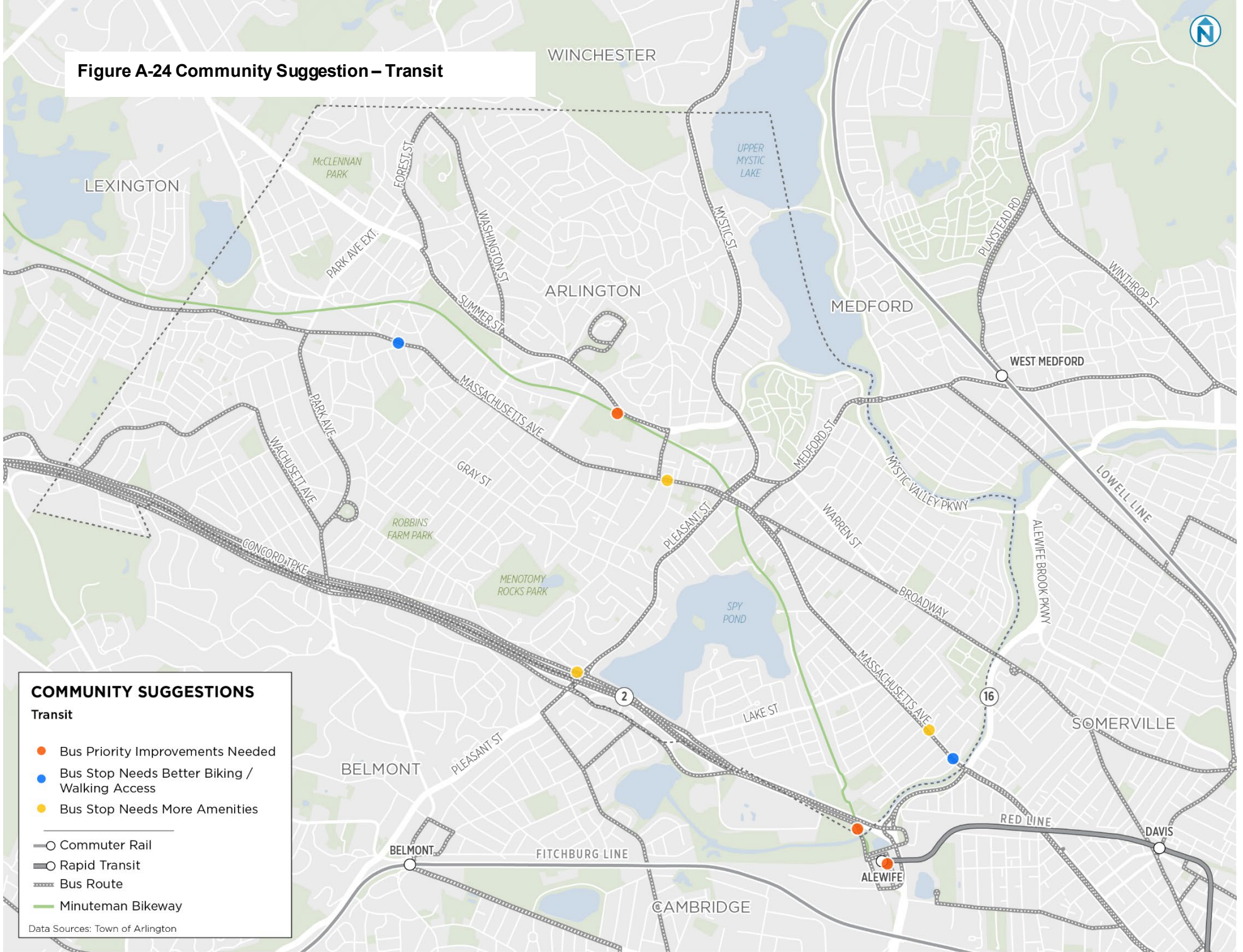
## Parking Community Suggestions

Lastly, participants gave comments on the state of parking around Arlington, as shown in Figure A-25. Comments revolved around:

- Restricting parking during rush hour to allow for more lanes of car and bike traffic
- Cars parked on both sides of narrow road, which leads to essentially one-lane traffic through a two-lane road and increased congestion



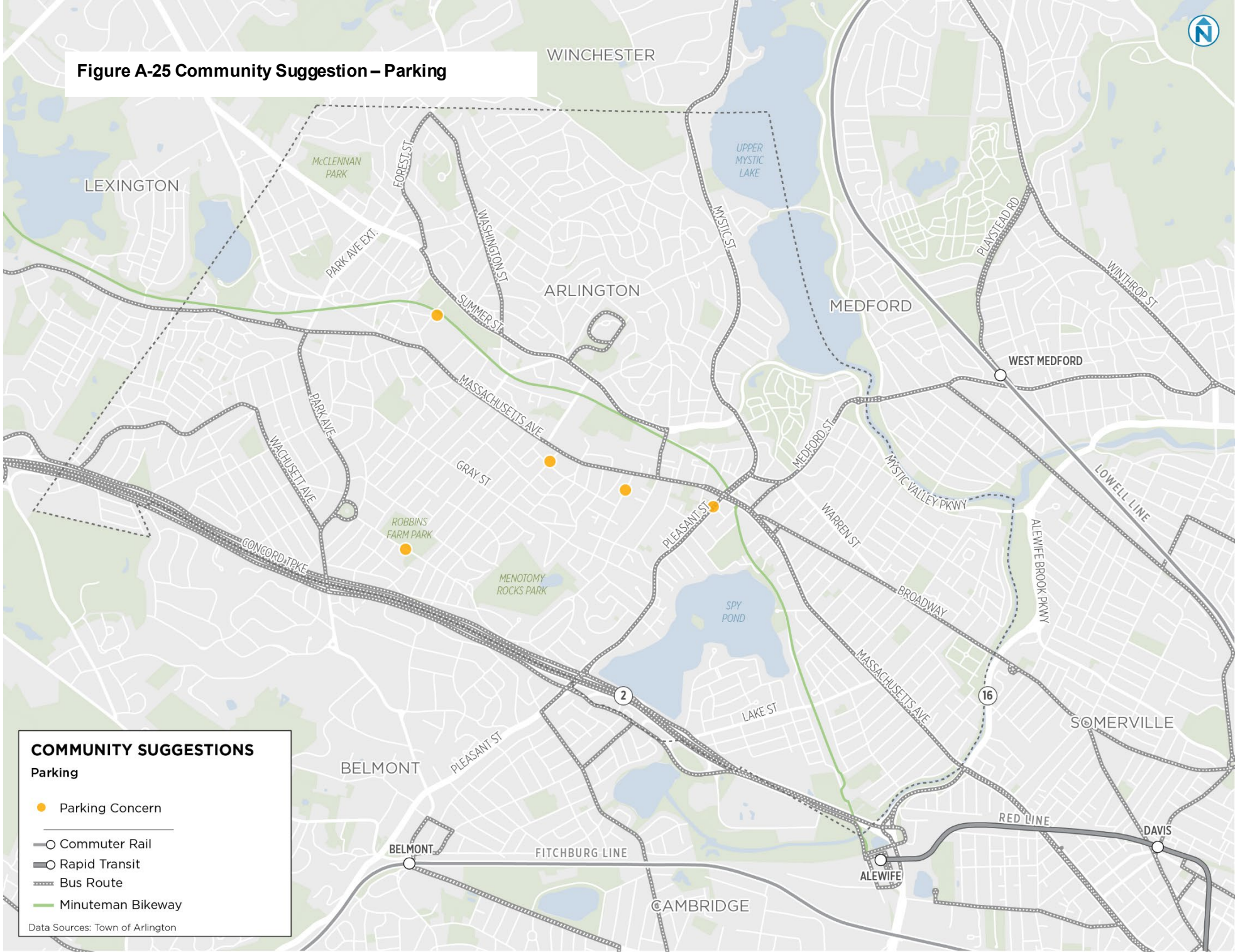
**Figure A-24 Community Suggestion – Transit**







**Figure A-25 Community Suggestion – Parking**



## ONLINE TOWN FORUM FEEDBACK

On July 30, 2020, the Town hosted a virtual community forum to present work done to date on the Sustainable Transportation Plan. Community members, both those who attended the forum and who could not, were invited to contribute their feedback using an online form, which also included a recording of the forum.

On this online feedback form, participants were shown the responses to the Connect Arlington survey conducted in June, in which respondents were asked to indicate their top three goals for Arlington's transportation system (see prior section on survey and Figure A-7). The form asked participants the degree in which they agreed with the following five top-ranked goals from 1 (agree) to 5 (disagree):

- Considers the needs of diverse populations and people of all ages
- Prioritizes a pedestrian and walk-friendly environment
- Focuses on improved transit connections and travel times
- Prioritizes safety for all people no matter how they travel
- Enhances access to and use of local transit services

The form received feedback from 71 people, and they overwhelmingly agreed with these five goals. The average score for all five goals was 1.7, on the 1 (agree) to 5 (disagree) scale. Respondents were also asked, if they thought a different goal should be prioritized, which one was a higher priority. The two goals that the greatest number of respondents deemed a higher priority were:

- Expands dedicated and comfortable bicycle facilities
- Reduce its local carbon impact

The last two questions on the feedback form were open-ended. The first asked: "If you could wave a magic wand and change something about transportation in Arlington, what would you change?" Responses include:

- Extend the MBTA Red Line into Arlington as originally planned last century
- Increase bus service and bus frequencies
- Serve neighborhoods with smaller buses, circulators, and/or shuttles
- Better bike lanes and for people who bike to follow traffic laws
- Electrification of cars and buses
- Reduce congestion

The last question asked: “What is standing in the way of making changes about transportation and what are some ways to make them happen?” Most of the responses cited money as the major obstacle to transportation change. Other responses include:

- Opposition to walking, biking, and transit projects from car users
- Lack of vision and urgency at the government level
- Ingrained reliance on cars
- Perception of transit, including during COVID-19 pandemic

## FOCUS GROUP NOTES

Between April and August of 2020, the Town held a series of focus groups on Zoom for the Sustainable Transportation Plan. The purpose of these focus group was to gather feedback on issues relevant to specific subsets of the Arlington population or for specific topic areas. The seven groups were:

- Getting Around with Disabilities, plus separate one-off calls with blind members of the public for whom Zoom is not a suitable platform
- Business and Culture
- Walking and Biking
- All Ages and Abilities
- Environment and Sustainability
- Neighborhood Transportation
- Public Transit

### Getting Around with Disabilities

The Getting Around with Disabilities focus group discussed the following topics:

- **Sidewalk obstacles:** A variety of factors were cited as making sidewalks difficult or impossible to navigate, including snow, bicyclists, poles and other vertical obstructions, cars overhanging from driveways, and overgrown bushes, shrubs, and trees.
- **Age-friendliness:** Arlington has a lot of older adults, and there is a feeling that funding and resources have been focused on kids and youth (schools, cycling, etc) rather than older adults.

- **Bus Stop Amenities:** Many bus stops lack basic amenities such as seating and shelters, and many people with disabilities cannot stand and wait at a bus stop for a long time. Electric wheelchairs also need a shelter if it is raining or snowing.
- **The RIDE:** The focus group cited the RIDE as a lifesaver, but also the cost, time commitment, and unreliability are barriers to people using it.
- **Overemphasis on Bicycling:** Members of the focus group felt that there is often an overemphasis on bicycling, when there are many who cannot bike (or take transit) to get to jobs and other services.

The project team also had two one-on-one conversations with blind members of the public. In addition to similar comments as the above focus group, these conversations gave the following insights:

- **Sidewalk quality:** The quality of pavement makes navigating while walking difficult, as does brick sidewalks.
- **Walk signals:** Many audio signals at intersections are broken or nonexistent, which leads to risky crossings.
- **Reporting:** DPW does not reply when calling to report an issue with sidewalks or streets.
- **Riding the Bus:** Sometimes it is difficult to get the bus driver's attention to stop at a bus stop, and buses are hard to board if it's not close to the sidewalk.

## Business and Culture

The Business and Culture focus group discussed the following topics:

- **Art:** The Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture has done great programming along bike path and sidewalks. Would like to see more art in store windows to make pedestrian environment more comfortable, but landlords are slow to embrace this.
- **Parking:** Parking needs to be better managed, especially when two or more properties share the same parking lot or street parking. Crowding cycles overlap, and there are competing uses. Signage should also be improved.
- **Walking and Biking:** There is excitement for Blue Bikes coming into Arlington. The group mentioned how sidewalks should be better and more accessible.
- **Transit:** There is often bus overcrowding, specifically near the Gibbs School during the school year. The buses along Mass Ave are full of students, so people trying to get to work starts their long commute with chaos. Proposed solutions include a school bus program or shifting students to bikes. People would also like to see more bus routes in general.

## Walking and Biking

The Walking and Biking focus group discussed the following:

- **Inclusive Transportation System:** The group would like to see an inclusive transportation system, where having a car-free lifestyle is possible, but also ensuring the needs of aging and disabled populations are met. Connections to other towns through all modes also need to be improved.
- **Minuteman Bikeway Improvements:** The group discussed a variety of issues with the Bikeway, including how it gets icy in the winter and the lighting is not enough for people (especially women) to feel safe.
- **Inconsistency of Transportation Infrastructure:** There is a large divide between the hilly areas and the flatter areas of Arlington when it comes to transportation infrastructure, in that the hilly areas have much less bus service and bike facilities. The quality of sidewalks, bike lanes, and the Bikeway can also vary a lot throughout its route.

## All Ages and Abilities

The All Ages and Abilities focus group discussed the following topics for making Arlington livable for all:

- **Sidewalk Conditions:** Many sidewalks are in bad condition, especially brick sidewalks which cause people to trip.
- **Snow Removal:** Walking conditions are dangerous when sidewalks are not shoveled, but many older adults cannot remove snow by themselves.
- **Crosswalks:** Crosswalk timings are sometimes too short for older adults and people with disabilities.
- **Transit:** The group would like to see benches at bus stops, new bus stops near housing complexes with older adults, and improved transit for those who are temporarily disabled and may not qualify for the RIDE.

## Environment and Sustainability

The focus group on environment and sustainability discussed the following topics:

- **Bike Facilities:** Bike lanes need more protection and buffer from car traffic, in a way that also does not compete with buses. Lighting can also be improved along the Bikeway to make it safer.
- **Sidewalk Coverage:** Sidewalk coverage and quality is poor in areas that need it, such as around schools and public housing complexes.



- **Trees:** Street trees are crucial but not currently done well, with tree pits too narrow and roots breaking into roads and sidewalks. Tree planting standards may be needed and improved upon.
- **Electric Vehicles:** Members of the group would like to see more public electric vehicle charging, as well as more fast chargers.

## Neighborhood Transportation

The Neighborhood Transportation focus group discussed the following:

- **Process:** The group expressed a desire for a more transparent mechanism to bring up concerns and learn about town actions.
- **Pedestrian and Bike Safety:** The Town has been historically designed for cars, and the group would like to see pedestrian friendly zones expanded around commercial centers, as well as safety for children playing on the street. The bike portion of the plan should consider all ages and abilities, but there are currently bike-to-bike conflicts between fast commuters and recreational bikers.
- **Crash Clusters:** The group discussed two specific areas with many crashes and near-crashes, Downing Square at Park Ave/Park Ave Ext/Lowell Street and Appleton Street near both Park Ave and Mass Ave.
- **Safe Routes to School:** A change in culture is needed, since people are currently dependent on driving their kids to school. The group would like to see a Safe Routes to School program revived.

## Public Transit

Lastly, the focus group on Public Transit discussed the following:

- **Bus Service:** It takes a long time to reach Downtown Boston, especially compared to those on commuter rail lines who live farther away. The group would like to see increased frequencies and reduced bunching, as well as turning the 77 bus into a trolley.
- **Bus Routing:** Shorter bus routes may make buses more reliable. Additionally, the focus group would like to see better connections to Alewife, but also the Orange Line, Green Line, and West Medford commuter rail station.
- **Bus Stops:** There is a desire for more crosswalks at bus stops, shelters for people waiting, and lighting enhancements.
- **Sidewalk Maintenances:** Sidewalks must be maintained and cleared of snow faster so that people can get to transit.