

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

The Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB) is the Town's Planning Board, under G.L. c. 41, § 81. There are five members of the board: four are appointed by the Town Manager and the fifth is a gubernatorial designee appointed by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

The Board serves as the Town's special permit granting authority for projects, which require an Environmental Design Review per the Town's Zoning Bylaw; ten applications were approved by the Board in 2020. The Board completed two reviews that began in 2019, including for a new mixed-use building containing a 50-room hotel and restaurant on Mass Ave and a co-located medical and recreational marijuana dispensary on Mass Ave. Two of the 2020 reviews were for mixed-use buildings on Mass Ave. The ARB also reviewed a second recreational marijuana dispensary on Broadway, the expansion of Learn To Grow on Broadway, and facade improvements for a long-time vacant storefront on Mass Ave. Three signage reviews were completed: at TD Bank, at Taipei-Tokyo, and at Acitron, all on Mass Ave. The Board began reviewing another Mass Ave mixed-use building and River Street signage at the end of 2020. Many of these public hearings were completed virtually as required by social distancing guidelines resulting from the pandemic.

The ARB is also the Town's Urban Renewal Authority under G.L. c. 121; with Town Meeting approval, the Board may hold land or buildings to improve and rehabilitate them to meet community development goals. The ARB currently manages three properties: the Central School at 20 Academy Street, 23 Maple Street, and the Jefferson Cutter House at 611 Massachusetts Avenue, which includes Whittemore Park. Building tenants include the Senior Center, Mystic River Watershed Association, Arlington Chamber of Commerce, Arlington Center for the Arts, Dallin Museum, and Town departments.

Lastly, the ARB serves as 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. There were no Board of Survey applications for consideration in 2020.

Construction began on the Senior Center in spring 2020 and is progressing even with the limitations of the pandemic. When completed in late spring 2021, the modern, expanded space on the ground and first floors will be dedicated to the Council on Aging, Arlington Senior Association, and community events and activities; the major building systems will be improved, including HVAC, electrical, restrooms, and the building exterior; and Health and Human Services Department, including Veterans' Services from Town Hall, will be relocated to renovated space on the 2nd floor. The building will also

become fully accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Two projects were completed in 2020 that took cues from the Master Plan. These two projects include the development of Residential Design Guidelines and the completion of the Economic Analysis of Industrial Zoning Districts. The preparation of the Residential Design Guidelines resulted in a highly usable document for residents, architects, and builders and informed a design review process for single- and two-family homes. The Economic Analysis of Industrial Zoning Districts resulted in proposed zoning amendments to modernize the industrial zoning district and create opportunities for redevelopment in these areas that include modern uses and sustainability measures. These amendments will be submitted for consideration by the 2021 Annual Town Meeting.

The Board has a range of goals for the upcoming year, including:

- Making capital improvements to properties in the Arlington Redevelopment Board portfolio, including significant renovations to the Central School and Jefferson Cutter House and adjacent improvements to Whittemore Park;
- Updating the Housing Production Plan;
- Continuing to work with the Select Board on community outreach and dialogue on the need to address housing issues, including creating and preserving housing;
- Advancing Zoning Bylaw amendments to future Town Meeting to encourage development and redevelopment opportunities to generate a full range of housing options for all incomes and housing types and also encourage mixed-use development, and new commercial development;
- Reviewing progress on implementation of the Master Plan, including developing a process to amend Master Plan goals and objectives; and
- Working with the Select Board, Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, Historic Districts Commission, Board of Health, Zoning Board of Appeals, Engineering, Inspectional Services, and Health and Human Services to ensure transparent, welcoming, and efficient permit review and delivery system.

In 2020 longstanding member Andrew Bunnell vacated his seat. Mr. Bunnell served the Board from 2013 through 2020. The Board is grateful for his service, particularly his leadership overseeing the development of the community's first Master Plan since 1966 and its implementation. The ARB also welcomed Katherine Levine-Einstein to the Board.

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) oversees planning and community development activities within the town and is committed to improving the quality of life in Arlington by improving housing opportunities, transportation access, and economic development to enhance the vitality of our business districts, and preserving and promoting our community's natural, historic, and cultural resources.

The Department oversees many key town-wide initiatives including Master Plan implementation, the development of Connect Arlington, the Town's long-range transportation plan, net zero planning initiatives, and a range of efforts in our business districts. The Department administers the Town's federal Community Development Block Grant Program and has done so since the program's inception in 1974. The Department also provides staff support to many Town boards, commissions, and committees, including the Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB), the Town's Planning Board and redevelopment authority. The ARB manages three Town buildings: Jefferson Cutter House with Whittemore Park, Central School, and 23 Maple Street.

Department staff also represent the Town on a number of regional bodies: the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); the Massachusetts Municipal Association Policy Committee on Municipal and Regional Administration; the North Suburban HOME Consortium; the Balance of State Continuum of Care; the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Council, Executive Committee, Inner Core Committee, and MetroCommon 2050 External Advisory Committee, Metropolitan Mayors Coalition's Climate Preparedness Taskforce and Regional Housing Partnership); Mystic River Watershed Association Resilient Mystic Collaborative; and the Charles River Watershed Association Climate Compact.

The Department administers the Town's participation in the Commonwealth's Green Communities Act Program, which includes grants for energy efficiency totaling more than \$1.7 million since 2010.

DPCD has nine full-time and one per-diem staff. Staff support and participate in a range of Town committees, commissions and boards, and work with other departments in support of Town initiatives. The groups and projects with DPCD involvement include: Arlington Redevelopment Board; Conservation Commission, Master Plan Implementation Committee and working groups (Mill Brook Study Group, Historic and Cultural Resources Working Group, and Zoning Bylaw Working Group); Envision Arlington and its Task Groups; Open Space Committee; Bicycle Advisory Committee; Trans-

portation Advisory Committee; Housing Plan Implementation Committee; Arlington Tourism and Economic Development; Parking Advisory Committee; Clean Energy Future Committee; Energy Working Group; Arlington Center Merchants Association; Arlington Heights Merchants Association; Heights Neighborhood Action Plan Committee; Arlington Economic Development Recovery Task Force; Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture; Arlington Cultural District; the Arlington Chamber of Commerce; the Design Review Working Group; and the Complete Count Working Group.

The Department also represents the Town locally serving on the boards of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce and the Arlington Preservation Fund and regionally serving on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Metropolitan Area Planning Council Executive Committee, Inner Core Committee, and MetroCommon External Advisory Committee, the Battle Road Scenic Byway Committee, the North Suburban HOME Consortium, and the Balance of State Continuum of Care.

The Department reviewed and approved 21 sign permits; reviewed and provided memos to the Zoning Board of Appeals on 16 dockets; and reviewed and provided memos to the Select Board on 6 license applications and 10 Small Cell Wireless facilities. The Economic Development Coordinator worked with the Select Board and the Arlington Economic Development Recovery Task Force to create two new COVID-responsive permitting and licensing processes to accommodate greater outdoor business activities during the pandemic. These programs shifted much of the permitting and licensing review away from Select Board approval to the staff level in order to expedite application processing. The Temporary Outdoor Fitness and Arts program served 24 businesses and the Town issued 17 Temporary Outdoor Dining licenses in 2020. Overall the Economic Development Coordinator assisted hundreds of businesses through email, phone calls, virtual forums and meetings, and one-on-one assistance throughout the pandemic.

During 2020 the Menotomy Weatherization Assistance Program was suspended. The Menotomy Weatherization Program had been part of the Department since 2007 and served eligible homeowners and renters in Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge, Lexington, Somerville, Waltham, and Watertown to make their homes more energy efficient. Working with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and our utility partners, all of the clients served by the Menotomy Weatherization Assistance Program were transitioned to CAPIC, an agency that provides the same services for another territory in the Greater Boston area. The Department thanks the following staff for their service Carl Forgo, Brian Nichols, Gail Waitkunas, and Peter Walden.

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We welcomed Mallory Sullivan in fall of 2020. Ms. Sullivan is the new Community Development Block Grant Administrator.

During 2020, DPCD staff worked with students at Northeastern University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Staff served as local experts for graduate students in Northeastern's Big Data for Cities course. The Department also welcomed a Professional Affiliate from the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning through the SPURS Humphrey Fellow Program who provided additional support in the preparation for the 2020 Annual Town Meeting prior to the pandemic outbreak in March.

2020 Highlights

Economic Development

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic not only caused a public health crisis, but also triggered a global economic downturn. Public health requirements for social distancing placed unprecedented challenges on the business community to provide more physical space between customers and staff and to pivot their business models to meet the exigencies of the pandemic. Economic development staff in DPCD has worked with residents, business owners, Town departments, Boards, Commissions, nonprofits and other entities to provide resources for business owners and consumers in Arlington and beyond to ensure that Arlington's local businesses survive the pandemic and find ways to be more resilient and thriving in the future.

In the spring of 2020, once the shutdown began in March, the immediate responses to the pandemic were to disseminate regulatory communications to the business community via email and by creating a page on the Town's Economic Development webpage, COVID-19 Resources for Businesses and Nonprofits, a virtual one-stop-shop for information on regulations, grant programs, and other information for business owners and nonprofit administrators in town. The team then created an Arlington Open Business list, listing which businesses in certain sectors were open, their hours, contact information, and other pertinent details. In collaboration with the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, an online small business bingo contest was created as a fun way to encourage residents to support local businesses while so many were closed or operating on a very limited basis. The Town also issued two surveys to business owners early on to measure the impact of the pandemic on Arlington's businesses.

To guide the Town's economic development efforts in a collaborative manner, the Select Board authorized the creation of the Arlington Economic Development Recovery Task Force (Task Force). Comprised of senior Town officials and members of the business community representing a variety of sectors, the Task

Force's charge is to help inform Town leadership about authentic and pressing needs of the business community to create a recovery program that is responsive to actual needs on the ground. Part of the Task Force's efforts also happens in Working Groups representing key industries and initiatives: restaurants, retail, fitness, personal care, arts and culture, and marketing. These groups have been critical in creating and implementing the Task Force's most impactful programs in response to the pandemic for businesses.



One of the first efforts of the Task Force involved relaxing signage, parking, and vacant storefront bylaw regulations. These provided regulatory relief that made it easier for business owners to communicate with their customers without them entering the stores, provided easier access to the business districts for consumers who were doing more curbside business, and relaxed vacancy regulations on landlords with the intention of incentivizing them to work with their tenants during this period of economic disruption. With feedback from business owners, 15-minute parking zones were designated in areas with a concentration of businesses doing lots of curbside, take-out, and delivery business to provide lots of turnover in front of their locations.



Regionally, Arlington was one of five communities to work with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) on their Municipal Small Business Response Working Group, which led to the creation of their "Small Business Support Plan." The Town is also working to

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craft a local response for the arts and culture sector in collaboration with MAPC in their Arts and Culture Indicators Project, which seeks to measure the economic impact of local arts organizations to guide their recovery from the pandemic and to underscore the enduring and positive impact the arts and arts organizations have on our local economy.

Throughout the course of the pandemic in 2020 the Town issued three different surveys to the business community to measure the impact of the pandemic on them. And in June of 2020 the Town issued an Arlington Consumer Survey to measure the concerns of people who patronize Arlington businesses. The survey proved an invaluable resource for business owners and Town staff alike, helping to guide the amenities the Town chose to provide support to the economic ecosystem in town. Based on data collected in the Arlington Consumer Survey, economic development staff created the Temporary Outdoor Dining License program to allow expedited approval for outdoor seating for restaurants. 17 restaurants participated in this program in addition to the existing 10 sidewalk cafe licenses that are renewed on an annual basis. The Temporary Outdoor Fitness and Arts permit program, which allowed fitness- and arts-related businesses in town to safely conduct classes outdoors in local parks, served 24 businesses and many more residents who accessed safe outdoor fitness and arts programs through it.

The Marketing Working Group of the Task Force launched the Shop Arlington First campaign in September to support the small business community through the fall and the holiday season. This campaign involved direct mail to every household in Arlington, yard signs for residents, the creation of the ShopArlingtonFirst.com website, opt-in text marketing with special offers from participating businesses, banners on Mass Ave in the Center and East Arlington, and via email. This campaign relied on strong partnership between the Town and the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, and it will carry on throughout the pandemic and into the future.

In the late summer of 2020 the Town applied for a MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces grant to create public parklet seating areas for outdoor dining and passive use. The grant was awarded and in the fall parklets went up on Alton Street, Medford Street and Park Terrace, and on Mass Ave in Arlington Heights. There was also a fourth installation of bicycle racks and lighting along Old Mystic Street near Whittemore Park. Parklets included some combination of seating, lighting, and public art and were successfully used through the end of November. The Town now owns the equipment purchased through this grant program and will continue to use it to accommodate outdoor dining and social distancing weather permitting.

Later on in the year, efforts to support businesses through the pandemic continued when the Select Board,

at the recommendation of Economic Development staff, voted to reduce alcohol licensing fees by 50% for restaurants and clubs and to waive them entirely for the Capitol and Regent theaters. The Department of Planning and Community Development began collaborating with the Information Technology department to kickstart an Application Modernization project, which is intended to convert many applications that businesses and others use for acquiring licenses and permits from the Town into digital formats and streamlined, online processes. Arlington collaborated on a grant application with Lexington and Bedford through the Commonwealth's Massachusetts Downtown Initiative for a COVID-19 Local Rapid Recovery Planning program to create a COVID-19 economic development plan based on the shared resource of the Minuteman Bikeway. Over the course of 2020 the Town gave presentations on its COVID-19 response for the AARP Livable Community program on accessibility in parklets, for the Southern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association (SNEA-PA), and an APA webinar about safe and slow streets.

Aside from COVID-19-related work, the Department advanced Phase I of the Whittemore Park project toward implementation in the spring of 2021, gaining key approvals from the Arlington Historical Commission and the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The Department managed communications between the Public Works Department and business owners in the Center about the Arlington Center Sidewalk Improvement project, which took place over the course of the summer of 2020. The Department submitted an application to the Federal Highway Administration to attain Federal Scenic Byway Status for the Battle Road Scenic Byway, applying for the agency's highest designation as an All-American Road.

Transportation Initiatives

DPCD continued to work on many critical transportation initiatives in 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. These include managing the expansion of the Bluebikes regional bike share system to Arlington; responding to mobility issues brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic; overseeing the development of Connect Arlington, the Town's Sustainable Transportation Plan; and supporting the work of Town committees and Town transportation projects. DPCD has been involved in major transportation projects that took place in Arlington this year, including the Arlington Center Sidewalk Project and the Lake Street/Minuteman Bikeway signal project, and in planning for new projects, such as the state-funded Safe Routes to School project for the Stratton Elementary School neighborhood. DPCD works closely with the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), Bicycle Advisory Committee (ABAC), Parking Advisory Committee (PAC), and the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

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Shared Streets and COVID-19 Mobility Response

The pandemic created changes and shifts in traffic patterns that could not be foreseen. Traffic volume was down significantly in the region, especially in the early months of the pandemic. Unfortunately, as traffic volumes in the state decreased, traffic speed increased and the rate of traffic crashes doubled in April 2020. At the same time social distancing guidelines to limit the spread of the virus required pedestrians to walk in the street to avoid other pedestrians on narrow sidewalks. The Town began testing the “shared streets” model in May 2020 to both slow down traffic and allow for greater mobility of people biking and walking to make social distancing easier. The shared streets pilot on Brooks Avenue in East Arlington was successful in limiting traffic volumes and speeds on Brooks Ave while encouraging residents to use their streets for walking and biking. The Town received a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program in fall 2020 to perform a follow-up shared streets project on Mary Street, also in East Arlington. The Mary Street project included testing additional traffic calming strategies to slow traffic at intersections. DPCD is in the process of analyzing data from the Mary Street pilot project, but preliminary results indicate that it was successful in slowing traffic and reducing traffic volumes on Mary Street.

The pandemic also required using sidewalks and street parking differently to accommodate a need for greater outdoor seating to support economic recovery, especially for restaurants. DPCD assessed the transportation impacts and accessibility of these proposed changes to ensure the safety of the traveling public while supporting innovative uses of public space.



Temporary roundabout piloted at intersection of Mary Street and Burch Street - photo Phil Goff

Permanent Bus Lane on Mass Ave

Town staff continue to monitor the Mass Ave bus priority lane that operates in the parking lane on the eastbound section of Mass Ave between Varnum Street and Alewife Brook Parkway that was installed in fall 2019. This bus lane serves MBTA routes #77, #79, and #350 and operates Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. The Town continues to learn how to

manage, operate, and maintain the many elements of the dedicated lane, which will be instructive for future bus priority improvements around the town.

Although COVID-19 resulted in substantial changes to traffic and public transportation in 2020, Arlington continues to be committed to bus priority improvements for travel time, reliability, and ease of access.

Bike Share

The Town became part of the Bluebikes regional bike share program in the fall with the first four stations open in September 2020. Even before the announcement from LimeBike in early 2020 that the regional dockless bike share program was being suspended, DPCD had been working with staff in the Cities of Newton, Chelsea, and Watertown to apply for regional and state grant funding to cover the cost of a Bluebikes expansion. In spring 2020 Arlington learned that it had received \$80,000 in state funding from the Workforce Transportation Grant to expand Bluebikes bike share. This, combined with \$20,000 approved by the 2020 Annual Town Meeting, was used to fund the Town’s share of start-up costs for the expansion. The company Lyft, the owner of the Bluebikes operator Motivate, subsidized the expansion at a cost of more than \$100,000. Over the summer the Town finalized a two-year contract with Motivate and selected locations for six Bluebikes stations in East Arlington and Arlington Center. Five were installed, with the sixth to be installed near Broadway Plaza in spring 2021.

Arlington has so far been one of the most successful expansion communities based on trips taken. As of the beginning of January, almost 1,900 Bluebikes trips have been taken in Arlington, with the stations at the Railroad Lot and the Minuteman Bikeway and Linwood Street at the Minuteman Bikeway being the most popular.



Bluebikes Station at Linwood Street and the Minuteman Bikeway

More Bluebikes stations are planned for installation over the course of 2021. The Town has received \$80,000 in Community Connections Grant

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funding from the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization that is available in October. The Town is also considering additional grant opportunities and long-term local funding for the program. New stations are expected to expand the program further west towards Arlington Heights, as this was a frequent comment of residents during the public engagement for selecting stations in summer 2020.

Sustainable Transportation Plan (Connect Arlington)

One of the most important initiatives DPCD worked on in 2020 was the development of the Town's Sustainable Transportation Plan, known as Connect Arlington. Connect Arlington will be a town-wide transportation plan with a 20-year vision that addresses and balances the needs of all transportation modes. It will emphasize transitioning everyday travel to environmentally-sustainable modes such as walking, bicycling, public transportation, rideshare, micro-mobility, and emerging low-carbon technologies, including electric vehicles. Funding for this project was approved at the 2019 Annual Town Meeting. Despite the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Town hired Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates to assist with the development of Connect Arlington including reviewing data on existing conditions and conducting surveys and focus groups with residents; compiling a Transportation Factbook as well as a Public Engagement summary; developing a vision for the future transportation system; recommending strategies for meeting the goals of the plan; and incorporating metrics to track progress on plan implementation and success.

Public engagement has been a critical element of developing Connect Arlington. The COVID-19 pandemic required the Town and Nelson/Nygaard to adapt to new methods of public engagement and adjust our plans for reaching out to residents. A key partner in the development of the plan has been the Sustainable Transportation Plan Advisory Committee (STPAC), which is made up of citizen representatives from existing transportation-related Town committees, business owners and residents, local advocacy groups, and several key Town Departments. Public engagement has included seven meetings of the STPAC, two online surveys, several virtual focus groups on specific transportation topics, direct outreach to residents of the Arlington Housing Authority, and two online forums, one in the summer and one in the fall.

Safe Routes to School

The Town supports safe walking and bicycling for children to reach their schools to increase their daily physical activity; reduce traffic congestion around schools during drop-off and pick-up times; reduce environmental pollution from vehicle emissions; and promote traffic safety for all street users. DPCD works with

the Transportation Advisory Committee, the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program, and other Town departments to ensure that all schools have safe and accessible routes for children to walk and bicycle to school year-round.

In March 2019 Arlington was awarded grant funding for a SRTS infrastructure project along with 14 communities in the state. The proposed project will provide a fully accessible walking route with safe roadway crossings for children and others walking to Stratton Elementary School along Hemlock Street between Brattle Street and Dickson Avenue and Dickson Avenue between Hemlock Street and Pheasant Avenue. This will include new curb ramps, new sidewalks, sidewalk repairs, and pedestrian crossing improvements. The estimated project cost, of which the design and construction are fully funded through MassDOT, is \$993,289. Funding for this project is programmed in Federal Fiscal Year 2024, which begins October 1, 2023. MassDOT, which is overseeing the project design and construction, will begin project development work in early 2021.

The Town engaged with the Massachusetts SRTS program in 2020. The program has several regional coordinators around the state to assist municipalities with a variety of issues around school travel. A travel survey was sent to all the public elementary and middle schools in Arlington in early 2020 to gather information from parents on how their children travel to school. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic substantially affected the travel to school pattern and the survey received a low number of responses. Although many children are learning remotely or in a hybrid fashion, the Massachusetts SRTS program continues to assist communities and has conducted an arrival/dismissal review for Dallin Elementary and expects to do the same for Thompson Elementary in 2021.

Complete Streets

The Lake Street/Minuteman Bikeway signal project, a key priority in Arlington's Complete Streets Action Plan, is now substantially complete. Construction began in summer 2020 and was almost complete by late fall. The improvements to the intersection of Lake Street and the Minuteman Bikeway included the installation of a new vehicle/pedestrian/bicycle signal at the intersection that is coordinated with the signal at Brooks Avenue and Lake Street, which was also upgraded. The project also created a separated crossing for bicyclists and pedestrians on the Bikeway, created new gathering and sitting areas along the Bikeway near the intersection, improved sight lines for drivers and Bikeway users, new signage and pavement markings, handicap access improvements, and vegetation maintenance. Bikeway users and drivers on Lake Street should now expect to obey the new traffic signal at this intersection when crossing. This project was made possible by \$750,000

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in funding approved by the 2019 Annual Town Meeting. Landscaping and additional lighting were designed during the project development but were not funded in the Town Meeting appropriation. However, leftover grant funding from the Mary Street Shared Street project is being utilized to purchase bike racks and benches included in the landscaping plan and will be installed in spring 2021.

Bike lanes on Lake Street between Colonial Drive and the Minuteman Bikeway were striped as well. Bike symbols and signage will be installed in spring 2021.



Intersection of Minuteman Bikeway and Lake Street, December 2020

Future Complete Streets projects include traffic calming and pedestrian accessibility improvements on Lowell Street near Reservoir Beach; improvements to the Medford Street Rotary; and pedestrian improvements on Park Avenue.

Boston MPO

Arlington continues to be an active participant in the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). DPCD staff attends MPO meetings representing the Chair of the Select Board, John Hurd. The Boston MPO is responsible for conducting the federally required metropolitan transportation planning process for the Boston metropolitan area. The planning process is necessary to develop a vision for transportation in the region and to decide how to allocate federal and state transportation funds to transportation programs and projects that improve roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure. In 2020 the MPO approved a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is updated annually; made substantial revisions to selection criteria for projects that are reviewed for inclusion in the TIP; endorsed a new Disparate Impact/Disproportionate Burden Policy; and approved work on new studies related to vehicle trip generation from new developments, curbside management, travel demand management strategies, and corridor analyses for local and regional roadways. These studies are conducted

by the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), which provides staff support to the MPO.

Arlington continues to be involved with the development of the plans and studies in the region, including the TIP, the Unified Planning Work Program, and other projects.

Arlington Center Sidewalk Project

The Arlington Center Sidewalk Project is now complete. The limits of the project were Mass Ave between Pleasant/Mystic Street and Franklin Street; Franklin Street from Mass Ave to just north of Broadway; and Broadway from Broadway Plaza to just beyond Franklin Street. The project began in mid-summer 2020 and was completed in late fall. Improvements included removing the brick sidewalks and replacing them with concrete sidewalks, upgrading curb ramps and improving ADA accessibility, and removing and replacing street trees. The new sidewalks also have a decorative stamped concrete border that looks like brick. The Department of Public Works is replacing light poles and light fixtures through the limits of the project, which is currently ongoing. The reconstruction of Broadway Plaza was not part of this work because an upcoming Massachusetts Water Resources Authority project will replace a major water pipe directly under the Plaza. This MWRA project was scheduled to begin in 2021, but has been delayed until the winter of 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Broadway Plaza will be reconstructed after the MWRA completes their work in spring 2021.



New sidewalks framed with faux brick improve accessibility while giving a nod to historical elements are a feature of the Arlington Center Sidewalk Project

Arlington Residential Design Guidelines



Prepared For:
Town of Arlington
Department of Planning and
Community Development

Prepared By:
Harriman

Revision: 000

Design Review Working Group

In December of 2019, the Design Review Working Group began working with the Department of Planning and Community Development and project consultant, Harriman, to assist the community in identifying design preferences residential construction and additions in Arlington's low density residential zoning districts (R0, R1, and R2). A town-wide survey receiving more than 1200 responses was administered in May to understand the community's visual preferences, followed by a number of engagement opportunities for understanding community preferences, exploring key design issues in residential construction, and establishing the guidelines. The project culminated in December, 2020, with the completion of the final draft of the Residential Design Guidelines. These guidelines set expectations for the community, provide guidance through text and visuals how to meet the standards established by the guidelines, and articulate a process by which design proposals can be reviewed and evaluated. Funding for this project was appropriated by the 2019 Annual Town Meeting.

Complete Count Working Group

In 2019 DPCD worked to establish the Complete Count Working Group (CCWG) to promote and encourage residents to respond to the 2020 Census. In 2020, the CCWG implemented its Census awareness campaign by meeting with community leaders, conducting outreach to residents, businesses, the faith community, schools, and daycares, holding an educational forum with Census experts on the historical and present-day challenges to the the Census at the Robbins Library, and hosting a poster design challenge with Arlington High School Students.



Student posters were displayed in the front of Town Hall and throughout the High School.

Thanks to a highly engaged and supportive community, and to the leadership of the CCWG, Arlington's self-responses rate for the 2020 Census was 82.6%, a full five points higher than its response to the 2010 Census. Census canvassers completed the remainder of the count, with the Census Bureau reporting that more than 99.9% of all addresses in the Area Census Office region have been accounted for. Thank you to Noah Sweder, Patricia Lieberman, Lauren Ledger, Ellen Lawton, Brucie Moulton, Kristine Shah, Adam Kurowski, Christine Bongiorno, Jillian Harvey, Anna Litten, Karen Foley, Julie Dunn, Joan Roman, Erin Zwirko, and Kelly Lynema for their work to ensure all Arlington residents were counted.



Amazing Arlington

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, DPCD and the Town's GIS Administrator issued a town-wide call for volunteers to help keep the Arlington community safe, informed, and socially connected. More than 80 community members in precincts across town responded, forming the group Amazing Arlington. Amazing Arlington served as a Town sponsored initiative with the mission of developing community-wide programs and activities that offer safe community connection while mitigating the negative feelings of social distancing and isolation, beginning with 6 Feet at 6 PM. Volunteers worked to connect residents in need with organizations, information, tutorials, and Town departmental services that provide additional assistance. Volunteers also served as a key point of contact for distributing information from the Town on opportunities to engage, new public health information, and sharing information about financial support programs to businesses and individuals in need.

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Energy Conservation and Climate Change Mitigation

Energy Conservation

In 2010, Arlington was named a Green Community by the state Department of Energy Resources. This designation was in recognition of the work that Arlington has done in the past to reduce energy usage, and the plans it had to further reduce energy use in the future. Arlington has substantially benefited from competitive Green Communities grants from the Green Communities Division, having received seven grant awards over the past eight years with a cumulative total of \$1,773,761, among the highest grant totals in the state. The most recent grant award of \$100,000 was received in 2020 and was used to replace inefficient lighting fixtures with high efficiency LEDs at the Hardy and Peirce Elementary Schools. These two projects are projected to save \$18,844 cumulatively in electricity costs and reduce energy use by 89,734 kWh annually. The project at Hardy Elementary completed a multi-year effort to convert all school lighting to LED.

HeatSmart

In January of 2020 Arlington concluded the HeatSmart campaign which had begun in March 2019. The HeatSmart campaign promoted clean heating and cooling technologies to Arlington residents and businesses, including heat pumps, solar hot water, and modern wood heating systems. This campaign was planned and executed in partnership with the Town of Winchester, the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, and the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources. HeatSmart was a bulk purchasing and educational campaign to encourage residents to install highly efficient, all-electric heating and cooling technologies, as well as central wood pellet boilers. The Arlington-Winchester HeatSmart campaign was highly successful, resulting in the installation of more clean heating and cooling systems, especially air source heat pumps, than any other HeatSmart campaign anywhere in the state. Extensive information about clean heating and cooling technologies continues to be available on the Arlington-Winchester HeatSmart website at www.heatsmartaw.com.



Local artist Maria Lobo (left) with DPCD Economic Development Coordinator Ali Carter (right). Ms. Lobo painted this mural as a gift to the Clean Energy Future Committee.

Clean Energy Future Committee

The Clean Energy Future Committee (CEFC) was created by the Select Board on July 16, 2018. The mission of the CEFC is to guide the Town of Arlington to a future where, by 2050, net emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases attributable to all sources in Town are net zero.

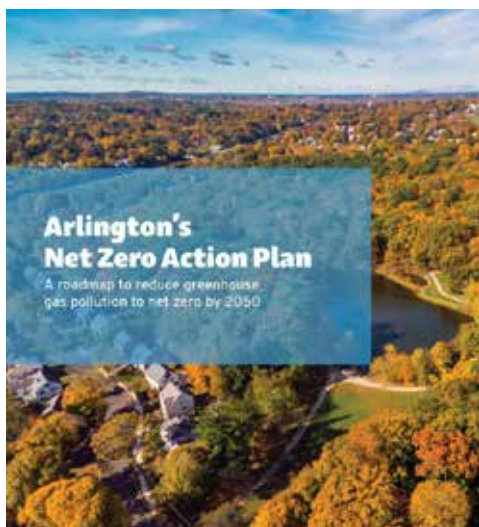
The Committee is charged with identifying short and long-term energy goals; facilitating research studies, projects and collaborations; enlisting the support of residents and businesses; recommending changes to laws and regulations; seeking state and local funding; and taking any other actions necessary for Arlington to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The Committee includes three members of the Department of Planning and Community Development: the Energy and Project Manager, Environmental Planner and Conservation Agent, and Senior Transportation Planner. There are currently 10 other members. The Committee met 12 times in 2020.

Net Zero Planning

In 2018, the Select Board voted to commit Arlington to becoming carbon neutral by 2050 (net zero emissions of greenhouse gases from all sources). Following this vote, Arlington and three municipalities began working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) after receiving a Planning Assistance Grant from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to develop greenhouse gas inventories and net zero plans for each community. It is anticipated that the Net Zero Plan for Arlington will be completed during the first quarter of 2021. The following progress was made on the Net Zero Plan during 2020:





The Net Zero Action Plan is scheduled for completion in 2021.

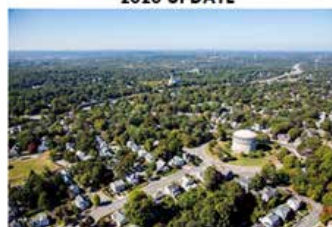
- The Town, working with MAPC, completed a comprehensive greenhouse gas inventory based on data from calendar year 2017. This inventory revealed that a total of 284,078 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent were released from all sources in Arlington in 2017, primarily from the buildings and transportation sectors;
- The Committee completed several drafts of the Net Zero Roadmap chapter of the Net Zero Action Plan. The Roadmap contains 31 greenhouse gas mitigation measures in the areas of Net Zero Buildings, Zero Emissions Mobility, and Clean Energy Supply; and
- The Committee conducted public outreach on the Net Zero Action Plan, and incorporated numerous suggestions from a wide range of stakeholders to improve the Plan. Outreach included:
 - A digital Town-wide Net Zero survey in June and July with 667 participants;
 - An online Virtual Open House conducted during November that allowed participants to explore each section of the Net Zero Plan at their own pace, with 355 participants; and
 - Presentations to numerous stakeholder groups in Town, including several Town boards and committees, several Town departments, local climate action groups, builders and developers, affordable housing organizations, and automobile dealerships. Stakeholder outreach will continue through early 2021.

Environmental Planning

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

Arlington's Hazard Mitigation Plan was initially adopted in 2012. Per Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements, hazard mitigation plans need to be updated every five years in order to remain eligible for federal disaster mitigation and recovery funding. In 2018 Arlington received funding from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to update the Town plan. Over 2019 Arlington updated the plan through public engagement and technical analysis, with technical assistance from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. The goals established through Arlington's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness planning process, Open Space & Recreation Plan, Master Plan, and the regional resilience collaborations Arlington participates in were integrated into the updated plan. The Select Board adopted the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan on May 17, 2020.

TOWN OF ARLINGTON HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN 2020 UPDATE



Wellington Park & Mill Brook

In 2018, Arlington received an Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness MVP action grant in the amount of almost \$400,000 to increase flood storage capacity in Wellington Park, along Mill Brook. This increased flood storage capacity is approximately 70 cubic yards. Project construction included building the flood storage channel, removing invasive plant species, building a boardwalk, installing a porous asphalt pathway, and installing educational signage. In 2020, Arlington and the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) led the design effort for the last phase of this project, to improve the recreational amenities of the park. The final design includes extending the porous asphalt pathway through the park to the existing bridge over Mill Brook, the construction

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of an exploration play area, the installation of a biobasin, and replanting of native riverine plants along Mill Brook. The final phase of this project will begin construction in 2021. The final design for this project was funded through a Community Development Block Grant (\$100,000) and the final construction will be funded through a Community Preservation Act grant (\$325,000) and Judy Record Fund grant (\$20,000).

Stormwater Management

In close coordination with the Engineering Division, DPCD works to improve stormwater compliance throughout town. Massachusetts recently revised its stormwater permitting, creating more stringent regulations for nonpoint-source pollution transported through municipal stormwater systems. In 2020, DPCD worked with the Engineering Division to update the Town's Stormwater Management Bylaw.

In 2020, Arlington received a Coastal Pollutant Remediation Grant from the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) to install stormwater infrastructure in East Arlington. This grant was awarded with the partnership of the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) and the Town of Lexington. The grant will fund the construction of more than 20 infiltration trenches in East Arlington. The trenches will reduce the amount of pollutants entering Alewife Brook and the Mystic River, improving compliance with the state stormwater permit. The infiltration trenches will be constructed in 2021. This grant expands on another CZM grant awarded to Arlington and MyRWA in 2019, through which two rain gardens and twenty trenches were constructed in East Arlington in 2020.



Infiltration trenches constructed in East Arlington connect to existing catch basins. Infiltration trenches collect stormwater runoff and remove pollutants before the stormwater enters the municipal stormwater system and travels to a water body, like Alewife Brook.

Regional Resilience and Adaptation

Arlington is a member of three regional resilience collaborations: the Metropolitan Area Planning Council Metro Mayors Coalition (MAPC MMC); Resilient Mystic Collaborative (RMC) facilitated by MyRWA; and the Charles River Climate Compact (CRCC) facilitated by the Charles River Watershed Association. As a member of these three collaborations, Arlington has committed to climate adaptation and resilience building actions and goals. These actions and goals focus on building capacity for stormwater management, renewable energy, urban heat island mitigation, floodwater retention, public engagement around resilience building, and inter-municipal project and policy alignment. Many of the climate change vulnerabilities that Arlington suffers from are impacting our neighboring communities as well. These regional collaborations strengthen Arlington's resilience through knowledge-sharing and regional projects that more efficiently leverage funding and technical opportunities.

Arlington is the chair community for the RMC's Upper Mystic Stormwater Working Group. Through its participation in this working group, Arlington and other Mystic Watershed communities have received two regional Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grants to identify locations for and design large-scale green infrastructure in the watershed. Total MVP funding thus far amounts to \$1,020,000.

Additionally, the Town of Arlington, on behalf of the RMC, was awarded \$186,200 from the MVP Program for Fiscal Year 2021 for the Wicked Hot Mystic Project. The Town will lead this project with RMC communities and the Museum of Science to mitigate extreme heat throughout the Mystic River Watershed. The Wicked Hot Mystic Project consists of three parts. Citizen science efforts will measure and map ground-level heat and humidity data through community data collection. Using this data, public education materials will be created and public engagement events will be held to inform the communities within the watershed of the most vulnerable areas. Finally, participating communities will work with local artists to create public art, such as poetry, stories, photos, and other visual representations to engage more residents impacted by extreme heat events.

Housing Initiatives

The Town of Arlington continued its strong support of affordable housing during 2020. The Housing Plan Implementation Committee (HPIC) continues its work to implement the goals of the Housing Production Plan (HPP) and will be participating in the update of the HPP in 2021.

The HPIC was successful in bringing the establishment of a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund MGL c.44 s.55C to the Special Town Meeting. The Spe-

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cial Town Meeting adopted the legislation and created a new Town Bylaw to establish the Trust Fund and Board of Trustees. The HPIC continues to help advance initiatives to create and preserve affordable housing.



The RMC meeting in the Arlington Senior Center to identify locations for large-scale green infrastructure, such as constructed wetlands.

DPCD worked on a Fair Housing Action Plan with assistance from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). The Fair Housing Action Plan will include an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI), as currently required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It will also incorporate some elements of an Assessment of Fair Housing, as previously required under the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Final Rule, to more deeply understand the Town's fair housing issues and to proactively identify strategies to address them. The plan will identify and prioritize contributing factors to fair housing barriers and will set fair housing goals and priorities to address these contributing factors. The plan will be completed in early 2021.

DPCD, in coordination with the North Suburban HOME Consortium and the seven other communities that are a part of the consortium, completed the Consolidated Plan. The Consolidated Plan creates a 5-year strategic plan for spending CDBG and HOME funds on affordable housing and community development activities. HUD approved the Consolidated Plan in June 2020. It is in effect for five years, expiring in June 2025.

Lastly, DPCD participated in the completion of the merger of the Somerville/ Arlington Continuum of Care (CoC) and the Balance of State CoC through active participation in this committee. A CoC promotes a commitment to the goal of ending homelessness, provides funding for these efforts by nonprofit providers and local governments to rehouse homeless individuals and families, promotes access to mainstream programs, and promotes self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Merging with the Balance of State CoC enables providers in these two communities to access resources in a larger region and refer clients to a wider range of services in Massachusetts.

Additionally, multiple developments that include affordable housing units, moved forward:

- 20 Westminster Avenue. HCA completed the renovation of this former church into nine units of affordable housing, and tenanted the building in mid-2020, including two units for formerly homeless households.
- Downing Square. HCA began construction of 34 units of affordable housing at 19R Park Ave, and is anticipated to be completed in mid-2021.
- 117 Broadway. Simultaneously, HCA began construction of 14 units of affordable housing at this property, including the ground floor dedicated to Arlington Eats market. It is also anticipated to be completed in mid-2021.
- 483 Summer Street. The mixed-use building at 483 Summer Street was completed. The one unit of affordable housing was offered through a lottery for which nearly 200 applicants applied. The unit was tenanted in mid-2021.
- Thorndike Place. This Chapter 40B development was returned for permitting by the Zoning Board of Appeals in 2020. The 176-unit project includes 44 affordable units.
- 1165R Mass Avenue. This 130-unit project, including 33 affordable units, received a Chapter 40B Project Eligibility Letter from MassHousing in November. The Comprehensive Permit was submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals in late 2020.

Finally, the Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development worked with owners, eligible purchasers, and the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development to shepherd three affordable homeownership units through the affordable resale process. Two units closed in 2020 and the third will close in early 2021.

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This year, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program supported numerous public facilities and parks projects intended to create safer, more accessible, and more inclusive spaces. CDBG enabled progress on the Wellington Park ADA-compliant trails and access project, the Town Hall Plaza ADA-compliance project, the Department of Public Works ADA-compliant ramps project, and the Lussiano Playground reconstruction project. Two nonprofit organizations addressing food insecurity, Food Link, Inc. and Arlington EATS, also received funding for their respective site work. The Housing Corporation

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of Arlington made capital improvements to existing properties in its portfolio.

In 2020, CDBG funded eight public service agencies to assist low-to moderate-income individuals and families with daily transportation, access to jobs, food security, scholarships to athletic and summer camp programs, tutoring services, and access to mental health and adult day health services. CDBG funds enabled these social service agencies to support 1457 Arlington residents.

Supplemental to the initial CDBG annual entitlement allocation, special funds designated through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided additional funds for tenant assistance, business assistance, and public services totaling \$980,388. This funding, CDBG-CV, enabled public service agencies supporting those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to assist an additional 18,360 residents. With this funding, Food Link, Inc. and Arlington EATS helped families confronting food insecurity and the Arlington Boys and Girls Club provided additional childcare services.

CDBG-CV also supported residents and small business owners during the pandemic. The Emergency Tenant Rental Assistance program helped 88 individuals and the Housing Corporation of Arlington aided 21 people in maintaining stable housing. The Arlington Microenterprise program supported the small business community with grants of \$10,000 to 25 businesses.



Menotomy Weatherization Assistance Program

During 2020, the Menotomy Weatherization Assistance Program was suspended. The Menotomy Weatherization Program had been part of the Department since 2007 and served eligible homeowners and renters in Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge, Lexington, Somerville, Waltham, and Watertown to make their homes more energy efficient. In 2020, prior to the suspension, the program replaced 9 heating systems and weatherized 5 homes. The appliance management program subsequently installed 29 refrigerators, 17 air conditioners and seven washing machines. The program received public utility, state, and federal funds and continues to be recognized by the state as providing high quality energy conservation services for eligible households. Following the suspension of the program,

all of the Menotomy clients were transitioned to CAPIC, another community action agency in the greater Boston area, to provide assistance related to weatherization, heating system repairs or replacements, or appliance management assessments.

Master Plan Implementation Committee

The Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) was formed by the Arlington Redevelopment Board in September, 2015, to implement the recommendations of the Arlington Master Plan, *Your Town Your Future*, adopted by the Redevelopment Board on February 4, 2015, and endorsed by Town Meeting on May 11, 2015. The Master Plan Implementation Committee typically meets quarterly to review its subcommittees' activities and the implementation table. The active subcommittees of the MPIC include the Zoning Bylaw Working Group and the Historical and Cultural Resources Working Group. Previous subcommittees included the Mill Brook Study Committee, the Residential Study Group, and the Zoning Recodification Working Group.

Zoning Bylaw Working Group

The Zoning Bylaw Working Group (ZBWG) is reviewing and proposing zoning amendments as identified through the Master Plan and the recodification processes. During 2020, the Zoning Bylaw Working Group worked with DPCD staff and consultants, RKG and Hariman, on the Economic Analysis of the Industrial Zoning Districts, a project contemplated in the Master Plan to modernize the industrial zoning districts. The project goals include positioning Arlington to attract new businesses and jobs in emerging growth industries to the Industrial District; and creating opportunities through which Arlington can realize greater revenue with strategic amendments to the Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map. Tasks completed in 2020 include reviewing the existing conditions in the Industrial Zoning Districts, completing a market analysis and fiscal impact study, preparing zoning recommendations and amendments, and a pro forma analysis of the zoning amendments. The ARB will advance the zoning amendments to the 2021 Annual Town Meeting.



The ZBWG includes representatives from the Redevelopment Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals,

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the Conservation Commission, the Master Plan Implementation Committee, a Town Meeting member, the Town Manager and a Town Manager appointee, Inspectional Services staff, and DPCD staff.

Historic and Cultural Resources Working Group

Following the completion of the Community-Wide Historic Preservation Survey Master Plan in 2019, the Historic and Cultural Resources Working Group (HCRWG) looked to act on the recommendations of the plan. During 2020, the HCRWG had intended to pursue two projects: documentation of historic municipal resources and an archaeological reconnaissance study. The historical municipal resources project includes completing specialized and detailed documentation in order to inventory the older Town-owned structures, cemeteries, and landscapes. Completion of this documentation will allow the Town to pursue grant funds for preservation. The Archaeological Reconnaissance Study will produce a comprehensive inventory of known archaeological resources in Arlington and identify areas of high potential for further planning and preservation. Due to the pandemic, these two projects were put on hold, and will begin in 2021 with generous funding from the Community Preservation Act Committee.

The HCRWG includes representatives from the Town's Historic Districts Commission and Historical Commission, the Arlington Historical Society, and DPCD.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The goal of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is to enhance 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 (APD) Traffic Division, the Department of Public Works (DPW), and the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD), along with Arlington Schools and the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee.

The TAC was established in 2001 by the Select Board, which serves as the Traffic Authority for Arlington, to advise the Board on transportation matters. Resident members include: Ray Jones, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis (Vice Chair), Howard Muise (Chair), Scott Smith and Shoji Takahashi (Secretary). Town staff members include Officer Corey Rateau (APD), Wayne Chouinard (DPW), and Daniel Amstutz, (DPCD). Other committee members are Lenard Diggins, representing the Chamber of Commerce, and Laura Swan, representing the School Committee. Tycho Nightingale and Michael Barry serve as associate members. Howard

Muise represents TAC on the Arlington Parking Advisory Committee, Jeff Maxtutis will represent TAC on the Mass Ave/Appleton St Design Review Committee, and Lenard Diggins represents TAC on the Sustainable Transportation Plan Advisory Committee.

2020 Major Activities

The reduction in travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic had significant effects on traffic, transit, bicycle and pedestrian volumes, both statewide and in Arlington. In April 2020, traffic volumes were some 60 percent lower than the corresponding period in 2019.[1] Locally, rush hour congestion has all but disappeared on some (but not all) corridors in or near Arlington. These reduced volumes have in some cases delayed TAC assessment of existing conditions for some of its projects.

Wellesley Rd/Thompson School Traffic Calming.

Residents of Wellesley Rd. requested TAC to review making it one-way away from the Thompson School. In the mornings, cars use Wellesley Road to get to the school and there is a high volume of pedestrian activity but there are no sidewalks. At the same time concerns were raised about safe access to the rebuilt playground. The two efforts were combined in a single project to consider traffic calming around the school. TAC conducted observations near Wellesley Road in late 2019, and the school asked the MassDOT Safe Routes to School program to conduct arrival and dismissal observations at the school in 2020.

Chestnut Street at Chestnut Terrace

In response to a fatal pedestrian crash at the crosswalk at this location, the Select Board asked TAC to consider traffic calming measures for Chestnut St. between Mystic St. and Medford St. As a result of public input at TAC meetings and consideration by TAC, a list of potential short- and long-term measures was developed. The TAC plans a public outreach effort to refine the list and develop a program of immediate and longer-term actions to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety at this location.

Parking and Traffic Direction on Bartlett Avenue

A TAC working group had developed potential parking restrictions and/or one-way operation on Bartlett Avenue to provide more room for passing vehicles. The working group shared the options with Bartlett St. residents to obtain feedback for TAC recommendations. It was found that in some locations there was no signing in place where parking restrictions were in effect. Signing was installed to reflect existing parking restrictions, and this appears to have addressed the traffic flow issues raised by residents. There has been good compliance on southbound Bartlett with the newly marked areas.

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Arlington High School (AHS).

TAC continued its coordination with the AHS Building Committee regarding transportation at the new high school. Early in the year, TAC sent a letter to the Building Committee expressing TAC's concerns about the removal from the new AHS design of the connection to the Minuteman Bikeway and the proposed traffic signal at Mill St. and Millbrook Dr. during the value engineering phase of the project. These two items were restored when the final cost of construction was set.

A revised Traffic Impact and Analysis Study (TIAS) for AHS was reviewed by TAC. The TAC review recommended that installation of three traffic signals at Grove St. and Mass Ave., Grove St. and Summer St., and Millbrook Rd. at Mill St. be delayed until after the new school is open and fully operational. TAC was concerned that the traffic projections in the report might not accurately reflect post school opening operations because of the change in traffic patterns, a new major building entrance at the back of the school, and the proposed access to the school from the Minuteman Bikeway.

Crosswalk Flag Program: Based on previously adopted Pedestrian Flag Program Guidelines, TAC placed pedestrian flags at the Chestnut St. crosswalk at Chestnut Terr. Late in the year TAC authorized the purchase of 400 new flags for the program

Transportation Reviews for ARB: At the request of the Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB) TAC reviewed transportation impact analyses for two proposed projects. The TAC Executive Committee reviewed the TIA for the proposed Eskar Marijuana Dispensary at the corner of Broadway and Sunnyside Ave. The Executive Committee concurred with the overall recommendations of the TIA and also recommended that the developer provide signage and pavement marking designating the exit driveway on Sunnyside Avenue as right-turn only.

A TAC working group reviewed the Traffic Impact and Access Study (TIAS), and hotel site plans for the proposed Mass Ave Hotel in the Heights. The TIAS concluded that vehicle traffic can be accommodated, although the impact is not negligible. Because of this, the working group recommended that the ARB ask the applicant to provide technical assistance in identifying potential improvements at the Mass Ave/Appleton St. intersection.

Mass Ave Crosswalks: The TAC Executive Committee proposed setting up a new working group to evaluate the Mass Ave. crosswalks at Water Street, Town Hall, and Academy Street. These locations were originally going to be addressed by Mass Ave Phase 2, but that project is on hold indefinitely. The committee agreed that visibility and safety at these locations should be improved.

Lake Street/Bikeway Traffic Signal: A new traffic signal at the intersection of the Minuteman Bikeway with Lake St. was installed and became operational in the late fall. Part of the project included coordination of the new signal with an upgraded signal at Brooks Ave. and Lake St. The project was based on a TAC recommendation to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, and traffic operations at the Bikeway crossing.

PARKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Parking Advisory Committee, formerly known as the Parking Implementation/Governance Committee, works with appropriate Town staff to make parking policy recommendations for the business and commercial areas within the town, particularly but not exclusively in Arlington Heights, Arlington Center, and East Arlington. The Committee makes recommendations to the Select Board regarding public on-street and off-street parking, freight loading and unloading in the public way, on-street public transit stops, public bicycle and low-speed vehicle parking, and drop-off/pick-up areas for taxis and rideshare services.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, much of the committee's work was put on hold for most of the year. In the early months of the state of emergency of the pandemic, parking meters were shut off and fees were not collected at on- and off-street public lots. Parking enforcement was also suspended. Parking meter collections and enforcement resumed in early November.

However, Town staff were able to advance some projects during the year. PaybyPhone was selected as the Town's mobile parking payment vendor. Working with PaybyPhone over the summer, mobile parking payment was made available at the same time as parking collections resumed in November. The Arlington Center Sidewalk Project continued this year as scheduled, which was partially funded with \$185,000 in Parking Benefits District (PBD) funds. As part of that project, parking meters were installed on Broadway between Franklin Street and Webster Street.

BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee (ABAC) has continued to work on making Arlington a better place to bicycle within and through. The following describes ongoing and annual activities.

2020 Highlights

The year 2020 did not turn out quite the way we all expected. The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic altered a lot of things. ABAC had to cancel its winter social which was planned for the end of March, as well as the annual Tour of Arlington. ABAC meetings had to go

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online, as did all other Town committees. Priorities also shifted, as the committee became involved in assisting the Town in creating social distancing messages for users of the Minuteman Bikeway via social media and sandwich boards on the Bikeway. However, the committee continued its work on bicycling issues throughout the year and adapted to changing conditions.

The COVID-19 pandemic and state of emergency led to a large increase in the use of the Bikeway as a recreation facility as opposed to a commuting facility, and also led to an increase in the number of cyclists using Mass Ave as the Bikeway became crowded with many users. Unfortunately, a fatal bike crash occurred at the intersection of Mass Ave. and Appleton Street in May 2020 which killed Charlie Proctor, a resident of Somerville. A second similar incident occurred at this location soon after that fortunately was not fatal. This topic occupied much of the committee's time over the



The site of the ghost bike set up in honor of Charlie Proctor.

summer and fall and included a lot of discussion with Proctor's family. Working with the Town and Proctor's family, MassBike set up a "ghost bike" near the site of the crash at the end of 2020. In addition, one of the committee members will be a member of the soon to meet Design Review Committee.

The committee has traditionally assisted in collecting data for users of the Minuteman Bikeway at Swan Place. However, since the installation of an automated bicycle/pedestrian counter on the Bikeway near Swan Place in summer 2019, the committee has discussed doing hand counts at other locations on the Bikeway and around Arlington. In June 2020 ABAC and the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) coordinated a count in front of Town Hall on Mass Ave. This data was collected in part to understand biking/walking travel changes in town during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the

automated counter malfunctioned for part of the year, it was still able to collect accurate bicycling data on the Bikeway for most of the year and its issues were resolved by the beginning of the fall. The automated counter continues to give a more detailed picture of the Bikeways usage 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Early in the year, members of the committee worked with the Arlington Police Department (APD) on a proposal to amend the operating hours of the Minuteman Bikeway. Since its creation, the Bikeway has had operating hours of 5 AM to 9 PM written into Town By-law, under Title III, Article 1, Section 10. The committee had long felt that these hours, which are the same as hours for parks in town, made no sense given the timing of the late night trains arriving at Alewife and that the other two towns along the Bikeway (as well as the City of Cambridge) do not have operating hours – they are effectively "open" all the time, like a public street. This was an issue that the committee worked on almost 10 years ago and was not able to advance with the Town Meeting at the time. This time the committee worked with the APD devise hours for a warrant article, which would allow the operating hours to be extended to 11 PM during daylight savings time. This article, which was postponed from the Annual Town Meeting in spring due to COVID-19, was resubmitted to Special Town Meeting in the fall. A substitute motion was submitted by a Town Meeting Member proposed to remove all hours of usage from the Bikeway and overwhelmingly passed. The Bikeway will now officially be open 24/7.

ABAC continues to work on strategic planning for the future. Just before the State of Emergency set up in response to COVID-19, ABAC conducted a retreat to identify areas that the committee is interested in to concentrate on in the future. A few main topics that were identified were connectivity with other towns and trails, more bike infrastructure and enforcement of road regulations for all users.

Arlington's COBWEB (Cops on Bicycles with Education for Bicyclists) continues to attend ABAC meetings and make timely and pertinent contributions to the meetings. The committee has been monitoring the Arlington High School rebuilding project and was cheered to hear that the connection with the Bikeway to the High School is able to move forward with construction after it was initially taken out for budgetary reasons. Members of the committee have participated in a number of different projects over the course of the year, including: the development of Connect Arlington, the Town's Sustainable Transportation Plan, attending forums and representing ABAC on the Sustainable Transportation Plan Advisory Committee; the shared streets pilots for Brooks Ave and Mary Street; working with the Town to advance new bike lanes on Lake Street between Route 2 and the Bikeway; and advising on locations for new Bluebikes bike share stations in the fall expansion

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and for continuing expansion west towards Arlington Heights.

The committee has several planned projects for 2021. In early 2021 the committee plans to work with ACMi to produce an informational video about the new signal-controlled crossing of the Bikeway at Lake Street. The committee is planning a replacement event for the Tour of Arlington that will be self-guided. The Tri-Town Minuteman Bikeway meetings are planned to start up again in February in a virtual format.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Arlington Conservation Commission (“ACC”) is required by state and town laws to protect and preserve wetlands, waterways, and their surrounding areas under ACC jurisdiction. The ACC is composed of seven volunteer Commissioners and two volunteer Associate Commissioners, who are appointed by the Town Manager with the approval of the Select Board, and supported by the Environmental Planner & Conservation Agent at bimonthly meetings and onsite visits. The ACC is mandated to protect wetlands, waterways, water supplies, fisheries, wildlife, and wildlife habitat as well as regulate floodplain activities through its administration of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Arlington Bylaw for Wetlands Protection.

In 2020, the ACC held twenty-four public meetings, and provided coordination, monitoring, permit review, and consultation on numerous residential, commercial, and municipal projects throughout the town. The ACC reviewed twenty-one applications. Of the 21 applications, the Commission issued 10 Permits/Orders of Conditions, five Determinations of Applicability, and six Certificates of Compliance. The ACC and its Agent conducted over sixty site visits/inspections.

The ACC also protects and manages the Town’s Conservation Lands and natural resources through collaboration with other entities and grants from various sources, as described below.

Spy Pond Shoreline Protection Project Completion

The goals of this project included to preserve, stabilize, and strengthen the pond’s banks to control erosion; protect and enhance wildlife habitat; prevent unauthorized paths; broaden and strengthen constituency groups; improve water quality and recreational opportunities; and improve stormwater infiltration. Construction elements of this project included a new porous pathway through the park, a new timber overlook, a rain garden/vegetated biobasin, and native plantings along the pond banks. The project was successfully completed in Fall 2020. Various funding sources funded this project, including a Community Preservation Act grant (\$552,900), a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and

Environmental Affairs (\$40,040), a Community Development Block grant (\$94,000), a Mass Audubon’s Judy Record Fund grant (\$10,000), and a donation from the Friends of Spy Pond Park (\$5,000).



The Spy Pond Project included constructing a biobasin next to Scannell Field to improve stormwater quality before entering Spy Pond.

Water Bodies Oversight

The ACC, through its Water Bodies Working Group, continued monitoring important water bodies in town, including Spy Pond, the Arlington Reservoir, and Hill’s Pond in Menotomy Rocks Park.

Land Stewards

The ACC’s volunteer arm, Arlington Land Stewards (ALS), assists in managing 28 Town-owned lands comprising approximately 53 acres. Land Stewards monitor, coordinate, and maintain open space of their choice, with guidance from the ACC. The Land Stewards’ management goals were challenging to achieve during 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Arlington’s Great Meadows

Arlington’s Great Meadows (AGM) are comprised of 193 acres, making it Arlington’s largest open space parcel, although located in East Lexington. AGM is mostly wetlands but contains many upland trails that make connections to the Arlington Reservoir and the Whipple Hill conservation area through the ACROSS



Although located in Lexington, AGM is owned and managed by the Town of Arlington.

Trail System. The Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows (FoAGM) are active in increasing Arlington's awareness of this wonderful area. In 2020, because of COVID-19 public events were curtailed although many individuals still walked there. FoAGM also organized a pandemic-style boardwalk repair project for small groups such as families. FoAGM volunteers maintain the trails and boardwalks at the Meadows. This includes removing invasive plants, consisting primarily of Japanese Knotweed, along the Minuteman Bikeway. More information, including further details on 2020 activities, can be found at: www.FoAGM.org.

Currently underway is the redevelopment of the former nursing site at the end of Emerson Gardens Road that has been a major access point to AGM. When that work is completed in 2021 there will be new public parking and an access path to AGM thanks to the efforts of the public and officials in Arlington and Lexington.

Supporting ZBA for Thorndike Place 40B Comprehensive Permit

The ACC provided five sets of formal comments to the ZBA in support of its hearings to consider the wetlands and stormwater components of the Thorndike Place Comprehensive Permit Application. The ACC provided extensive and detailed comments to assist the ZBA which is administering the Town of Arlington Wetlands Protection Bylaw as part of the review. The ACC also hosted two Working Sessions with the ZBA, the applicant, and the Town's peer review consultant to facilitate the free exchange of ideas and to further develop recommendations by the ACC on the project design to limit its impact to resource areas, flooding, stormwater, and wildlife habitat.

This significant effort in reviewing project information from the Applicant and the Town's peer reviewer towards protection of the floodplain and wetland resource areas at Thorndike Place is ongoing.

Climate Change Initiatives

Members of the ACC and the Agent developed workshops and presentations, given virtually at regional and national conferences, on local climate change resilience regulations, urban forests, and successful resilience-building project implementation.

Regulation Update

The ACC had drafted several goals and actions for 2020 towards strengthening and updating regulations for performance standards, permitting efficiency, and process clarity. The following goals were achieved in 2020:

- Major revision of the Arlington Regulations for Wetlands Protection, which will be finalized for approval in 2021. This revision included adding an administrative review pro-

cess to create an expedited review of certain small projects.

- Review of special conditions and permits prior to permit issuance by the entire Commission.
- Develop and continually update a master permit tracking list for all permits ever issued by the Commission.

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 valued conservation lands and other open spaces. These groups include, among others: Arlington Land Stewards, Arlington Land Trust, Open Space Committee, Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows, Friends of Spy Pond Park, Friends of Menotomy Rock Park, and the Mystic River Watershed Association. Additional specific goals include the following:

- Continue to strengthen and update regulations for permitting efficiency and process clarity with the specific goal to update the local Wetlands Regulations in early 2021.
- Improve the stewardship of conservation lands through better coordinated land management.
- Improve communication and educational outreach to residents in resource areas.
- Continue to look for opportunities to work collaboratively with neighboring towns and allied organizations towards protection of wetland resources.

Acknowledgments

ACC sincerely thanks all individuals and organizations that contributed directly or indirectly to the activities of its 55th year. Many special thanks go to the active citizenry that attended hearings and informed the Commission's discussions and the scores of volunteers who dedicate some of their time to be land stewards or members of 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, appointed by the Town Manager and approved by the Select Board, 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 spaces and recreational resources. The Committee serves an oversight function but does not have direct management responsibility for Town properties.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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.

The Committee's primary responsibility is to prepare the Town's official Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), monitor its provisions and goals, and document accomplishments. The OSRP is a foundational document for all town planning and programs relating to parks, playgrounds, playing fields, natural resources, conservation land, sustainable development, climate resiliency, and other open space issues. The current Plan covering the years 2015 to 2022 was prepared and approved as required by the state and adopted as Town policy in the fall of 2015. This plan is set to expire in May 2022, and the next plan will be in effect for seven years until the spring of 2029.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

In 2020 the Open Space Committee requested and received a Community Preservation Act grant for Fiscal Year 2021 to update the Town of Arlington's current OSRP in accordance with guidelines from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), Division of Conservation Services. The CPA grant enabled the OSC to hire a consultant, Horsely Whitten, who will help update the Plan and engage the public in the process, beginning in January 2021.

Communities with an approved OSRP are eligible to apply for funding from the Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Program, Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Program, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program, and other grant programs administered by the State. The Town has leveraged its OSRP to receive more than \$728,000 in LWCF funds for the Town's parks and open spaces, as well as grants from other state programs.

OSC Projects

The OSC section of the Town's website hosts current and former OSRP documents, as well as several other ongoing initiatives. "Take A Walk" is a digital map-based project to encourage residents to get outside and walk to Arlington's diverse parks and recreational facilities. The website has links to a town-wide map showing all interconnecting routes and seven neighborhood maps for East Arlington/North and South, Arlington Center/North, South and Central, and Arlington Heights/North and South.

The Take A Walk maps can be used with Experiencing Arlington's Open Spaces, an interactive application highlighting nineteen major open space sites that are featured in the OSRP. For each site there are mul-

iple photographs and a brief description of the property, as well as a map showing access points and internal walking trails.

A third project, Picture Post, was developed by OSC member John Pickle to encourage residents with digital cameras and smart phones to take documentary photos at designated locations at Menotomy Rocks Park and the Arlington Reservoir, with other sites to be added in 2021. 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.

Committee members continue to monitor and contribute to a wide range of open space projects and activities that affect the Town and its residents' quality of life. Ongoing projects include working with the Park and Recreation Commission on the feasibility of a mountain bike trail, and collaborating on new plans and amenities at the Arlington Reservoir and Wellington Park.

A major open space concern is the proposed development of the Mugar property in East Arlington under the state's Chapter 40B law for affordable housing development. Protection of this sensitive wetland has been a goal of the Town's OSRP since the 1990s. OSC has joined many Town officials, the Arlington Land Trust, and other local groups to advocate for conservation of the Mugar land rather than development due to potential flooding and related ecological impacts on the neighborhood.

2021 Goals

The Committee's work in 2021 will focus on coordination with the consultant to engage the community in updating the OSRP. Members are continuing to enhance use of the Town website and social media to disseminate Take A Walk maps and other information about local open spaces and recreational facilities. Members also continue their collaborations with Town departments and community organizations to ensure that open space and recreation recommendations are fully incorporated into all future town-wide planning.

ENVISION ARLINGTON

About Envision Arlington

Envision Arlington, established by Town Meeting in June 1992, is a collection of committees and task groups that brings together residents, Town employees and Town leaders to foster an engaged, culturally diverse, and civically active community. The Standing Committee is charged to "create, implement, monitor, and review methods for town-wide participation in the Envision Arlington process."

Envision Arlington's focus is on the Town Goals, enacted by Town Meeting in 1993, as statements of Ar-

lington's values and aspirations. Task groups and committees are organized around specific goals. A modest budget from the Town allows Envision Arlington to sponsor public events and develop community programs. Descriptions of Envision Arlington's task groups and committees can be found at arlingtonma.gov/envision.

Envision Arlington presented one article at the 2020 Special Town Meeting. Article 7 amends Title I, Article 15 to change the name of "Vision 2020" to comport with the committee's current name "Envision Arlington." The Article also revises the Bylaw's articulation of "Goals" as a "Statement of Community Values" and updates the language of the goals to be more inclusive.

The Standing Committee is grateful to outgoing chair, Juli Brazille, for her five years of leadership. Scott Lever and Greg Christiana assumed interim leadership in March, 2020.

Annual Town Survey

Envision Arlington volunteers work with Town departments and organizations to create an annual survey of the priorities and opinions of people in Arlington. 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 2020 Town Survey was administered between January and March. The survey was primarily available online, with paper surveys available to those who needed them. A survey notice was mailed to 18,500 households as an insert to the Town's Annual Census mailing in January. A total of 4,582 responses were received, providing feedback on resilience to climate change, housing, improving town elections, net zero emissions, open space and recreation, and reducing plastic waste. Results can be found at arlingtonma.gov/envision.

Task Group Highlights

Diversity Task Group: The Diversity Task Group (DTG) meets monthly to engage residents on issues that affect the voice and experience of the traditionally marginalized within Arlington. The Diversity Task Group seeks to create a space to welcome and include marginalized voices and offer support between residents and Town leadership. DTG endeavors to build the broadest meaning of the words "community involvement" by taking action on issues that affect our community and offering support and education through projects.

Throughout the year, DTG invites organizations and residents that run town-wide operations with educational, social, cultural, and economic impact to share their stories with our members. Special guests in 2020 included: Assistant Superintendent Rod MacNeal, Jennifer Litowski of the Arlington Democratic Party, and Anna Litten, Assistant Director of Libraries.

DTG participated in several events including Arlington Reads, for which DTG is the founder and lead

contributor; the Activate Arlington rally and march organized by the Black Alums of the high school; and members often attended the weekly vigils in support of Black Lives Matter held along Mass. Ave.

Members of the Diversity Task Group engaged in several targeted projects throughout the year.

- Supported and signed petition created by the Black Alums and Black Student Union of Arlington High School to demand attention to racial equity in schools.
- Advocating for a community engagement officer, a clear APD policy on behaviors and discipline related to public statements; and an independent citizen review board.
- Participated in stakeholder roundtables held prior to 09/22/20 session with Lt Pedrini.
- Participated in interviews for Arlington Police Chief.
- Presented Article 25 at Special Town Meeting support the display of a "Black Lives Matter" banner on Arlington Town Hall until such time that Town Meeting recommends its removal, which passed 166 to 34 with 38 abstentions.
- Discussions related to housing included consideration of DTG sponsoring a community-wide conversation on affordable housing and discussion of a Fair Housing Action Plan.
- Completed work with DTG student intern Maren Larkin, who focused on the unmarked grave of enslaved people in the old burial ground behind First Parish church.
- Administered a DTG goal-setting survey to understand members priorities and set goals for 2021

Fiscal Resources: The Fiscal Resources Task Group (FRTG) researches and discusses topics related to the Town's finances and reports findings and recommendations to the appropriate Town departments, officials and the public at large. In 2020, the following (COVID-abbreviated) activities were undertaken:

- Citizens Corner: FRTG published an article on Property Taxes in the Arlington Advocate.
- Governmental Primer: FRTG updated the Arlington Governmental Primer, a compilation of a series of articles it has published in the Arlington Advocate, summarizing how the Town functions.
- Long Range Financial Projections: FRTG continued its work on long-range financial planning to help town residents and officials better understand the Town's long-term financial situation and how best to seek additional revenues that will foster long-term financial sustainability. Results are shared regularly with members of the Finance Department.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- New Growth Process: FRTG met with Deputy Town Manager, Sandy Pooler; Assessor Paul Tierney, and Assessor Data Collector, Dana Mann to continue our discussion of the new growth recognition process (Building Permit to Tax Bill).

Governance: The Governance Task Group (GTG) organized virtual precinct meetings in advance of Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting this year. Six of 21 precincts held meetings in June and July, while 20 precincts organized precinct meetings regarding Special Town Meeting. Planning for similar meetings for Annual Town Meeting in 2021 is underway.

Sustainable Arlington: Sustainable Arlington is one of three committees of Envision Arlington's Environment Task Group and also a chapter of the Massachusetts Climate Action Network. It promotes environmental awareness and climate resilience, while engaging residents and Town government in protecting our local environment. More information about Sustainable Arlington may be found at the task group's website: www.sustainablearlington.org.

In 2020 the leadership of two major projects included a Sustainable Arlington member: a campaign to have the Town Meeting adopt a bylaw to prohibit fossil fuels in new construction, and establishing the Mystic Charles Pollinator Pathways Group, a multi-town initiative to coordinate protection of native pollinators and restore their habitat.

2020 saw the close of the Clean Heat for Arlington campaign, a successful collaboration between Sustainable Arlington, Mothers Out Front, and Equitable Arlington. Under the campaign, two public information sessions and many smaller precinct meeting presentations and conversations were organized. These conversations led to the development of a Home Rule Petition asking the state legislature to allow the Town to adopt a bylaw prohibiting fossil fuels in new construction and gut renovations, on which Town Meeting voted 228 to 18 in favor of adopting.

The new Mystic Charles Pollinator Pathways Group grew out of a Sustainable Belmont meeting in June that was attended by residents of nearby communities including Arlington, Lexington, and Medford. The group formed over the summer to share information and resources to support native pollinators and address degradation and fragmentation of necessary habitat. Their first project was developing a pollinator garden survey linked to an interactive map. In late 2020, representatives joined planning sessions for the new, statewide Massachusetts Pollinator Network hosted by the Northeast Organic Farming Association, Massachusetts (NOFA MASS).

Additional accomplishments by Sustainable Arlington in 2020 include:

- Collaboration with Sustainable Middlesex to present a multi-town Feb. 29 event, "Carbon Countdown," on Massachusetts energy legislation, with Sen. Michael Barrett and Rep. Christina Minicucci.
- Drafting an Arlington Declaration of Climate Emergency with members of Emergency Arlington.
- Participation in the Arlington Net Zero Action plan.
- Collaboration with True Story Theater on two productions: "Stories of personal and community resilience during the pandemic," and "Protecting pollinators."
- Hosting a presentation by Northeastern University Prof. Thomas Starr about the Future Climate Change Historic Markers project.

Spy Pond Committee: The Spy Pond Committee monitors the health of Spy Pond, and assists the Conservation Commission and Dept. of Public Works with its care. The committee is part of the Environment Task Group of Envision Arlington. See <http://arlingtonma.gov/spypond> for details.

Spy Pond had a good year despite the restrictions due to Covid-19. Many kayaks, sailboats, rowing shells, and standup boards explored Spy Pond. On hot days, flotillas passed between Kelwyn Manor and Elizabeth Island.

The path between Spy Pond and Route 2 was busy with walkers, birders, fisherman, and an occasional coyote. A fox was spotted regularly in Kelwyn Manor and the northwest shore. A rare river otter made an appearance. A 5.5 lbs. bass was caught twice. Eagles and osprey were regular visitors. We identified the large shell of Easter Floater mussels. Multiple mallard families and eagles were seen. The pair of swans lost their cygnets. The geese had no goslings. There was no skating or ice fishing for the first time in memory.

In May, Solitude Lake Management started a Sonar (*fluridone*) treatment with booster treatments in June and July. Sonar is a slow-acting, systemic herbicide that is effective in very low concentrations (parts per billion). In low concentrations, Sonar is considered safe for animals, fish, and humans. In mid June, curly-leaf pondweed stopped growing, and snail-seed pondweed, spiny naiad and Eurasian milfoil never started growing. After a burst of algae, Spy Pond remained clear of excessive vegetation.

Spy Pond was lower than normal this summer due to a drought. The sandbar in the southwestern corner of Spy Pond was dry. We had several games of horseshoe on the sandbar, and a spotting of the elusive Sora, a small rail that usually hides deep in a marsh. MassDOT has a contract to dredge the sandbar this spring, ending a 25 year effort by the Committee.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Along the Rt. 2 path, most of the 45 dogwoods planted last year survived a dry summer. Ivy is a new invasive plant near the Pleasant Street end of the path. To help control oriental bittersweet, Adrienne Landry demonstrated her method of attaching bottles of vinegar to the bittersweet vines. After a few days, the vines take up the vinegar, and with some luck, will not appear again. Spy Pond Trails Day, fertilizer flyer, Ecofest, barbeque, and Town Day were cancelled.

We started the year with a new Facebook page of Spy Pond activities. A survey of the 2002 storm drain markers found one marker in good condition. We attended a NALMS webinar on internal phosphorus loading. The Committee and Conservation Commission continue to look for scientific oversight. Spy Pond's primary problem may be deep, organic muck in shallow areas.

Reservoir Committee: With the COVID-19 pandemic 2020 was a very different kind of year for the Arlington Reservoir Committee. The Wildlife Habitat Garden was in its tenth growing season and we had a few small-scale workdays and encouraged individual work but did not have any larger public events as we have in the past.

Water chestnut mechanical harvesting continued in the summer under the management of the Arlington Conservation Commission and the Department of Public Works. The Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) did not sponsor hand harvesting events this year because of the pandemic.

The Reservoir Master Plan moved into Phase 2. This project is being led by the Park and Recreation Commission. This will renovate the both the Beach and the perimeter areas starting in 2021. Public documents related to the Master Plan can be found at the Reservoir Committee website: arlingtonreservoir.org/reservoir-master-plan/.

More information about the committee's activities, along with photos, can be found at the Reservoir Committee website: arlingtonreservoir.org, where you can also join the Reservoir email list.

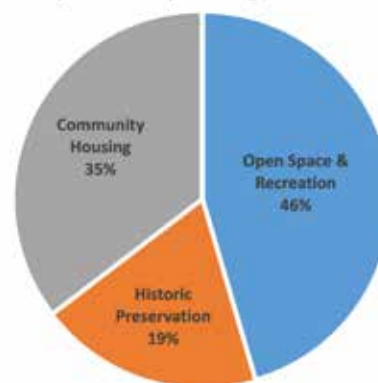
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT COMMITTEE

Arlington began implementing the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in 2015. The CPA allows cities and towns to reserve dedicated funds to preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable community housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. CPA projects are financed by local revenues collected from a property tax surcharge (in Arlington, 1.5% of the net tax levy minus exemptions), plus annual distribu-

tions from the state CPA trust fund.

The Community Preservation Act Committee studies local community preservation needs, recommends CPA appropriations to Town Meeting, and oversees projects funded by CPA. In 2020 the Committee reviewed project applications for CPA funding in fiscal

Expenditures by CPA Program Area



year 2021, hosted public applicant presentations, and successfully recommended ten projects and a housing reserve fund to Town Meeting. The Committee consulted with the Select Board, Finance Committee, Capital Planning Committee, and other Town leaders in reaching our recommendations.

CPA Projects Funded for FY2021

Following the recommendation of the Committee, Town Meeting appropriated or reserved a total of \$2,313,942 in CPA funds for FY2021 to support local community housing, historic preservation, open space, and recreation:

- \$587,000 for continued Arlington Reservoir recreational improvements.
- \$325,000 for continued Mill Brook and Wellington Park revitalization.
- \$35,000 to update the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- \$80,000 for a Minuteman Bikeway Planning study.
- \$60,000 for a Communitywide Archaeological Reconnaissance survey.
- \$35,200 for Documentation of Historic Municipal Resources.
- \$193,773 for continued restoration of the Old Burying Ground.
- \$78,023 for continued historic preservation of the Jason Russell House.
- \$65,625 to for historic landscape restoration at the Robbins Memorial Garden.
- \$300,000 to contribute to the Arlington Emergency Tenant Assistance Program.
-

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- \$500,000 to a Community Housing Reserve Account for future affordable housing appropriation.

For more information, please visit arlingtonma.gov/communitypreservation.

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 Select Board, Finance Committee, and School Committee, a representative of the School Committee and in addition the Town Manager, Superintendent of Schools, and Facilities Director or their designees.

Activities in 2020

Despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 the two main projects overseen by the PTBC in 2020 continued moving forward with only minor interruptions due to the public health emergency.

Public Works Town Yard project (renovation and new construction): Early in 2020 Commodore Builders was chosen as the construction manager for the Town Yard project, and was engaged under a construction manager at risk (CM@R) contract. This form of contract enables much closer collaboration and integration of design and construction services, and was determined to be a better method for this complex and multi-phase project. The original Owner Project Manager, KVA, resigned from the project early in 2020 and was replaced by Sydney Associates.

As the design of the project moved from the schematic phase to the design development phase, and new cost estimates were developed, it became apparent that the original funding for the project would be insufficient. A number of factors caused this increase: a market spike in construction costs in the overheated Boston market, the use of the CM@R construction management method with its associated contingencies, changes in scope related to the Arlington High School project, and delays due to coordination with the AHS project.

After a thorough review of these cost increases and changes, the PTBC determined that the best path forward for the Town was to proceed with the full scope of the project. The alternative was to implement changes that would leave serious deficiencies at the Town Yard site, and result in the need for future projects within a short amount of time. After briefings from the project

team, the Capital Planning Committee and the Finance Committee voted to support the full scope of the project. At the November 30, 2020 Special Town Meeting, the Capital Planning Committee recommended a vote in favor of providing an additional \$8.9m in funding for this project. The article was approved by a vote of 237-9.

By the end of 2020 and into early 2021, the final construction documents were being produced by the design team at Weston & Sampson, and construction is anticipated to start by April 2021.



Town of Arlington
New / Upgraded Public Works Facility
Architectural - Building E



Public Works Town Yard project; existing building top followed by upgraded building rendering, site plan, and overview of current site.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Central School (renovation): Early in 2020 a contract was signed with Kronenberger & Sons Restoration, the low bidder for construction services for the extension renovation project in the lower floors of the historic Central School. The project started in May 2020 after a short delay due to the pandemic.

Many unforeseen latent conditions were discovered during the early phases of this project, and these resulted in a number of expansions to the scope of the project and the tapping of the design and construction contingencies. Despite these changes that project remained on schedule through 2020. By late 2020 all sections of the building to be renovated had been explored by the construction team, providing some assurance that the remaining contingency funds would be sufficient to complete the project.

By the end of this project many parts of this historic building will have seen attention – from the chimneys, roof and vents at the top and exterior of the building to the boilers and switchgear in the basement. The PTBC’s expectation is that these upgrades will enable this building to serve the Town well for some time to come.

In 2018 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 eleven 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 and abutters to the property are notified by mail. To receive ZBA Agendas by email, subscribe online atarlingtonma.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.



Central School / Arlington Community Center project. top left: west entrance, rigging in beam for first floor, and ductwork and ceiling installation on first floor.

2020 Petitions Heard by ZBA	
Petitions for Variance	2
Applications for Special Permits	17
Appeal of Building Inspector’s Decision	3
Amendments to Special Permits/ Variance	0
Comprehensive Permits	1 (1165R Mass Ave)
Total Petitions Filed with Clerk	28
Total Continued Hearings	4
Total Petitions Withdrawn	1
Total Petitions sent to ARB	6



4 Winslow Street, Arlington, MA 02474 p: 781-646-3400 f: 781-646-0496

ARLINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Arlington Housing Authority (AHA) is proud of its distinction as the single largest 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 from the Town of Arlington and surrounding communities through collaborative partnerships with community agencies while managing Housing Authority finances in a fiscally responsible manner. This year marks the Arlington Housing Authority's seventieth year offering housing to low and moderate income households through housing in government owned housing developments or through subsidized housing in privately owned dwellings.

The Arlington Housing Authority manages 1,156 housing units: 520 units for the elderly and disabled at Drake Village, Chestnut Manor, Cusack Terrace, Hauser Building, Mystic Gardens, and Winslow Towers; 179 units of family housing at Menotomy Manor, ten of which are handicapped accessible wheel chair units; the Donnelly House for 13 developmentally challenged residents; and 422 Housing Choice Vouchers that help participants live in privately-owned dwellings throughout the community.

The Authority is a quasi-governmental agency created by Arlington's Town Meeting in 1948 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 payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) 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*, Brian Connor, *Treasurer*, Gaar Talanian and *Members*, Jo Anne Preston and Fiorella Badilla. The Executive Director, John J. Griffin, is appointed by the Board of Commissioners and manages the day-to-day operations of the Authority.

Year in Review

During the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Arlington Housing Authority has continued to work tirelessly at addressing the needs of our applicants, residents, and staff. While continuing to do our regular duties, Arlington Housing Authority staff have been on the front lines addressing exposures within our developments and office, locating necessary PPE, and securing vaccines for our most vulnerable. Our maintenance staff continues to sanitize all buildings daily and also on weekends while also maintaining various aspects of the buildings, grounds, and individual units.

During these difficult times, the AHA has continued to move forward with planning and executing modernization work at all of its buildings, continuing to seek out additional opportunities that benefit our residents like tenant services support programs, and pursuing creative partnerships with the many housing groups and service providers in the greater Arlington community. Below are a few highlights of successful projects at each building.

Cusack Terrace, 67 Units

8 Summer Street

All walls in the hallways, common areas, community room and kitchen have been repainted. Electric door openers were installed in both the women's and men's common area bathrooms as well as to the entrance to the library. Upcoming planned projects include the replacement of the buildings ballasted membrane roof and renovations to the common area bathrooms in order to make them Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant.

Winslow Towers, 132 Units

4 Winslow Street

In addition to the main entrance awning being replaced, the main entrance ramp was also resurfaced through a Health & Safety grant from DHCD. Current planned projects that are planned include repairs to the building façade and the replacement of all outer windows, the upgrade of the fire pump sprinkler, as well as updating common area bathrooms to meet ADA compliance.

Chestnut Manor, 100 Units

54 Medford Street

AHA installed two new ejection pumps for sewerage. Current planned projects include the resurfacing of balconies and the repaving of the parking lot and walkways.

Drake Village, 72 Units and the Hauser Building, 144 Units

37 Drake Road

AHA repainted and installed a new floor in the

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

community room. Current planned projects include exterior renovations to the cottages. Additionally, the AHA has been awarded a \$500,000 creative placemaking grant from DHCD in order to improve the exterior grounds and provide additional active spaces for our residents. AHA has and will continue to work with the Town, community members, and residents on this exciting project. Future projects include a major upgrade of the fire alarm systems and updating common area bathroom to meet ADA compliance.

Monotomy Manor, 179 Units Freemont Court

Future projects include parking lot and walkway resurfacing.

998 Mass. Ave. Special Needs Housing

Future projects include interior renovations to include new bathrooms and kitchen, and the installation of a new egress door.

Community Partnerships

AHA continues to seek out and build upon our partnerships with community service program providers.

Minuteman Senior Services has been very successful at our Drake Village location by providing services to our seniors on site and at our other developments as well as administering the meals on wheels program out of the Hauser Building kitchen. Through the continued efforts made by Minuteman Senior Services and its vendors, the quality of life for our residents has improved.

The partnership between the AHA and the Arlington Police Department has continued to have a positive effect on the residents and neighbors of Menotomy Manor. The AHA has seen significant decreases in crime and expanded services to the area.

The Board of Health and Council on Aging provide essential supports to our residents in a normal year. Throughout COVID-19, they have been critical in ensuring our residents have sufficient resources, access to the flu vaccine and other medical resources. We are grateful to them both for their partnership in the COVID-19 vaccine planning and roll out at our developments. Their support was vital in this extremely important effort.

Although some programs were put on hold during this difficult year, we plan to continue the success of the following partnerships.

The Community Work Program (CWP) sponsored by the Middlesex Sheriff's Office. Under the supervision of correctional personnel, inmates assisted the AHA maintenance staff in its spring and fall cleanup efforts as in other projects that benefit residents and im-

prove building aesthetics.

The Fidelity House includes afternoon programs in our Menotomy Manor Development that provides transportation for children, as well as free memberships and financial assistance to make summer programs more attainable for families and their children. This program has been extremely successful, with many residents participating.

The award-winning evening program, Operation Success, has been a major factor in improving student 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 Arlington Housing Authority Board would like to thank all our partners 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 average rent in our 520 units of elderly/disabled housing is \$444 per month and includes heat, hot water, and electricity. The average rent in our family units at Menotomy Manor is \$727 per month with the resident paying their own utilities. Over 95% of the residents living in the Arlington Housing Authority's public housing units would not be able to afford the new affordable housing units being built in Arlington. A continuing challenge for the AHA and state-aided public housing industry is the demand and need of funding for capital improvements. 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.

Administrative Services

The Authority continues to be a member of the MassNAHRO Centralized Section 8 Wait List program. The list is now open to all daily. Arlington residents are given a preference.

The AHA's website, www.arlingtonhousing.org, provides valuable information to those wishing to learn more about the AHA and its programs. Applications for housing can be completed through online links or downloaded from our website.

Wait Lists

DHCD has rolled out the new state-aided public housing waiting list, Common Housing Application for Massachusetts Public-Housing also known as CHAMP. Applicants can submit and self-manage their applications and upload other necessary documents through the CHAMP on-line portal from a computer, smartphone, or tablet and apply for available public housing across the Commonwealth.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The current number of applicants on each of our program waitlists are as follows.

Stated-Aided Elderly/Handicap One Bedroom Units

Total: 3,410 applicants (of those, 131 claim to live or work in Arlington)

State-Aided Family 2-Bedroom Units

Total: 4,707 applicants (of those, 102 claim to live or work in Arlington)

State-Aided Family 3-Bedroom Units

Total: 1,717 applicants (of those, 23 claim to live or work in Arlington)

Section 8 Wait List

Arlington Applicants: *413

**Because Arlington is on a centralized wait list, the Section 8 wait list is extremely long; therefore, only Arlington residents and those employed in Arlington are listed for this program.*

Acknowledgments

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