



# ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN: Making Choices for Housing Equity



November 9, 2021

# Zoom Meeting Guidelines



Everyone is muted by default. You will have the opportunity to virtually raise your hand and unmute during the Q&A.



If you're comfortable, activate your camera to better connect with other attendees. Feel free to use a digital background if you want.



We have three Q&A sessions planned for tonight. During Q&A, please use the raised hand feature to be called on before asking your question.



This meeting is being recorded and will be posted to the Town's website.

## Zoom 101

- Mute and unmute buttons are in the lower left corner of the Zoom screen
- Raise hand feature: Click on Reactions at the bottom of your screen and choose "Raise Hand". Don't forget to "Lower Hand" once you've been called on.
- If you are calling in by phone, \*9 controls mute/unmute and \*6 is to raise your hand.

# Agenda

- Project Background
- Overview: Arlington Housing Plan, 2022-2027
  - Identification of Problems
  - Response to Problems (Goals)
  - Strategies & Implementation
- Intermittent Q&A Periods
- Next Steps



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# Project Background

ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN 2022-2027

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# PLAN COMPONENTS

## Housing Needs Assessment

- Demographics
- Housing stock
- Development constraints & plans to mitigate
- Infrastructure capacity

## Housing Goals

- Mix of housing types
- Housing production goals

## Implementation Strategies

- Proposed zoning or policy changes
- Site identification for housing
- Desired characteristics of development
- Regional partnerships

# PLAN COMPONENTS

The Town has asked us to prepare a housing plan that:

Qualifies for approval by the Mass. Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD)

Is realistic in Arlington's market area

Helps to address needs for affordable housing

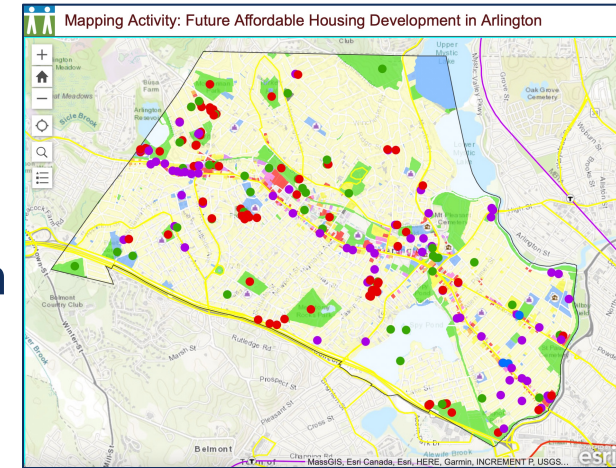
Is equitable across all income levels

Discourages concentrations of affordable housing in any one area



# Process Snapshot


- **Project Kick-Off**
  - Community Engagement Plan
  - Town Tour: June 1
  - Google Form Questionnaires
- **Interviews & Focus Groups**
  - May 24-26
  - August 18
- **Meetings-in-a-Box**
  - Two rounds; 8 completed
- **Other Community Engagement**
  - DPCD Farmers' Market Outreach
  - Mapping Exercise
- **Community Forums**
  - June 9, 2021
  - September 14, 2021
- **Needs Assessment**
  - Demographic & Housing Data
  - Market Trends & Affordability
  - Barriers to Affordable Housing
- **Goals & Strategies**



Information for Meeting Host  
ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN

**Welcome to the Arlington Housing Plan Meeting-in-a Box, Round 2!**

Thank you for agreeing to host a community conversation for your friends and neighbors! This kit has prepared kit includes the basic materials you need to conduct your meeting and provide feedback to the Town. You should find the following items in the packet. If something is missing, please contact Kelly Lynema, Senior Planner, Department of Planning and Community Development, at [KLynema@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:KLynema@town.arlington.ma.us).



**Instructions for you, the host:**

- Process Overview
- Sample Meeting Agenda
- Sample Invitation

**Materials for you to distribute at the meeting:**

Sheet	Title	Page Numbers
Sheet A	Sign-in Sheet for Facilitators/Note Takers	p.7
Sheet B	Sign-in Sheet for Participants	p.9
Sheet C	Meeting Agenda	p.11
Sheet D	Arlington Housing Plan Overview	p.13-14
Sheet E	Discussion Worksheets	p.15-23



*Focus of tonight's presentation*

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# Overview: The Plan

ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN 2022-2027

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# Questions every plan seeks to answer ...

What is the problem?

What caused it?  
What has contributed to it?

What are the options for addressing the problem?

What potential solutions would be most effective?

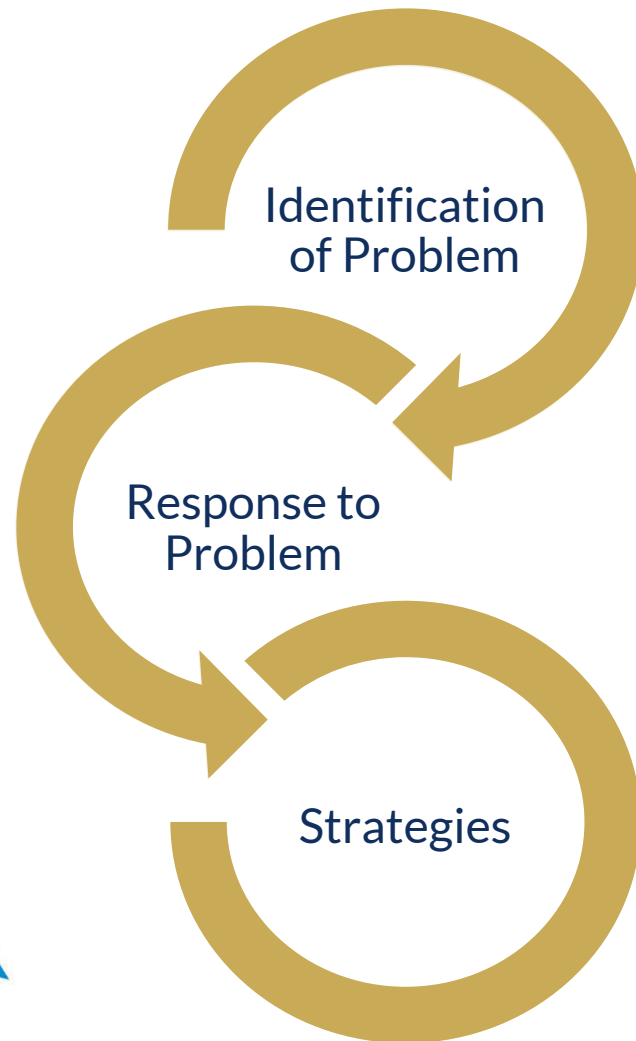
What resources will be needed to carry out those solutions?

What barriers stand in the way?

What can be done to overcome them?



# Organization of Goals & Strategies Overview



- As determined through Needs Assessment
  - Shortage of Affordable Homes
  - Impediments to Housing Choice
  - Limited Capacity

- Plan goals
- Response to identified problems
- In alignment with DHCD criteria

- Developed to address goals
- In alignment with DHCD criteria





# The Problem: Shortage of Affordable Homes

Slide 1 of 1

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Arlington has a significant shortage of safe, decent, affordable homes, especially for extremely low- and very low-income renters.

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Arlington has few or no viable options for first-time homebuyers to find a home they can afford to buy.

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Many older adult households in Arlington are housing cost burdened.

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Arlington does not have the regulatory or financial tools needed to reverse these conditions.



# Response: Affordability Goals

Slide 1 of 1

Increase	Increase rental and homeownership housing options in Arlington for extremely-low to middle-income households.
Create, maintain, and preserve	Create, maintain, and preserve permanent supportive housing that is affordable, accessible, and available to people with disabilities.
Preserve and maintain	Preserve and improve Arlington's existing supply of affordable homes to provide healthy, safe, and stable living environments.



# Strategies to Address Affordability Goals

Slide 1 of 2

- Arlington Affordable Housing Trust
  - Enhanced homebuyer assistance, e.g., local funding to make MHP ONE Mortgage loans even more affordable
  - Low- or no-interest loans or grants for purchase price write-downs or write down affordable rents to very-low affordability
- Housing Choice vouchers for homeownership (AHA)
- Capital grants for AHA: ARPA, CPA, DHCD Preservation/Modernization
- Short-term rental tax



# Strategies to Address Affordability Goals

Slide 2 of 2

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CPA funds to acquire, support development of group homes for people with disabilities (examples: Lincoln, Rockport, Hamilton)

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Provide architectural barrier removal grants for property owners to address disability access

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Work with organizations like Cascap, Inc., to develop and manage supportive housing for people in recovery

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General obligation bonds as a funding source

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Provide financial support for multifamily development, e.g., AHT set-aside to fund affordable rental housing



# Questions about Housing Affordability Goals & Implementation?

ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN 2022-2027





# The Problem: Impediments to Housing Choice

Slide 1 of 6

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The existing inventory of affordable housing in Arlington tends to be concentrated in areas once described as “definitely declining” – areas near town’s borders with Somerville, Medford, and Lexington, and along Massachusetts Avenue.

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Housing choices for lower-income buyers or renters are rare in Arlington’s single-family neighborhoods.

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Arlington’s existing zoning all but freezes in place the inequitable residential land use pattern that existed 50+ years ago.

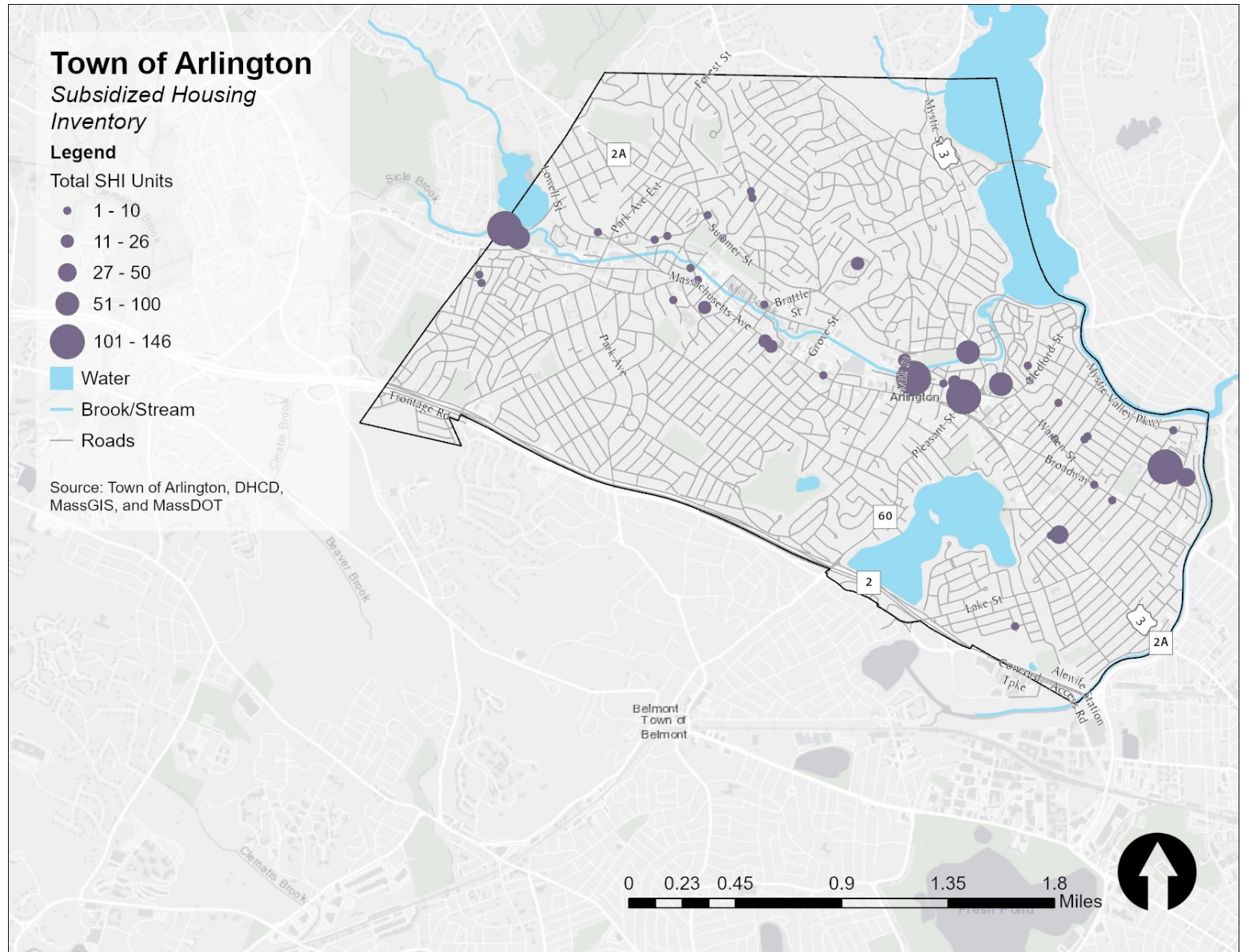
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# The Problem: Impediments to Housing Choice

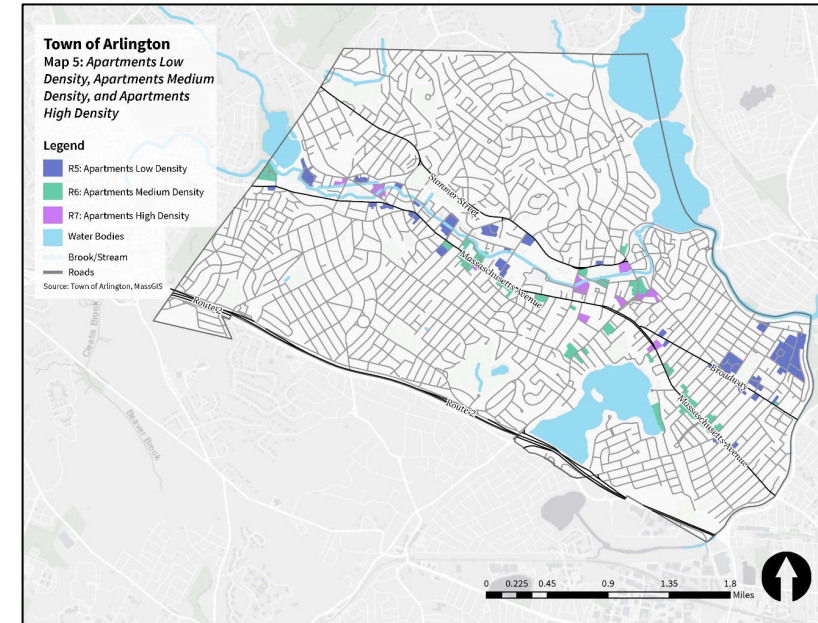
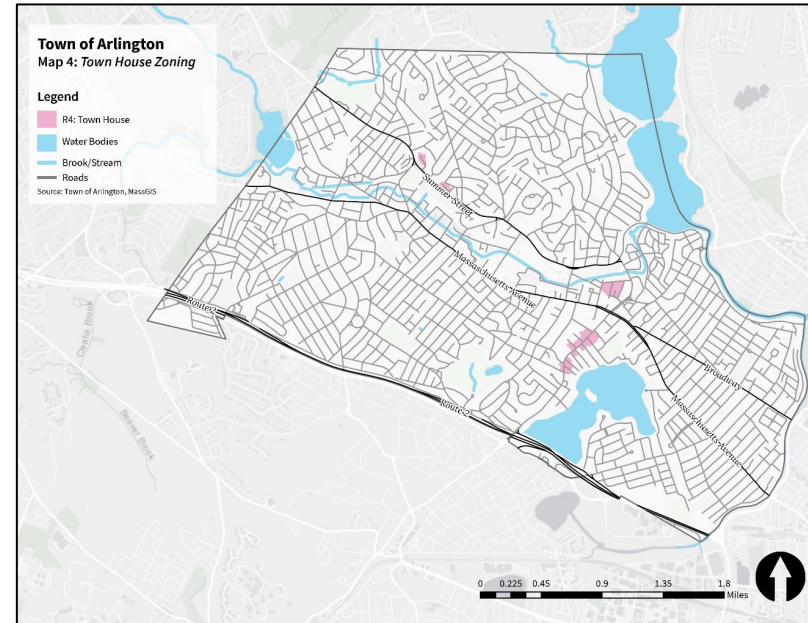
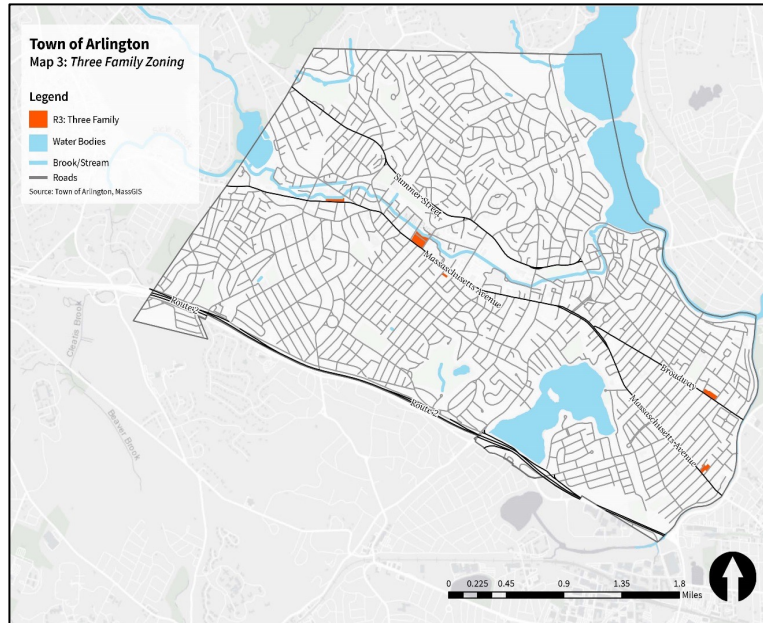
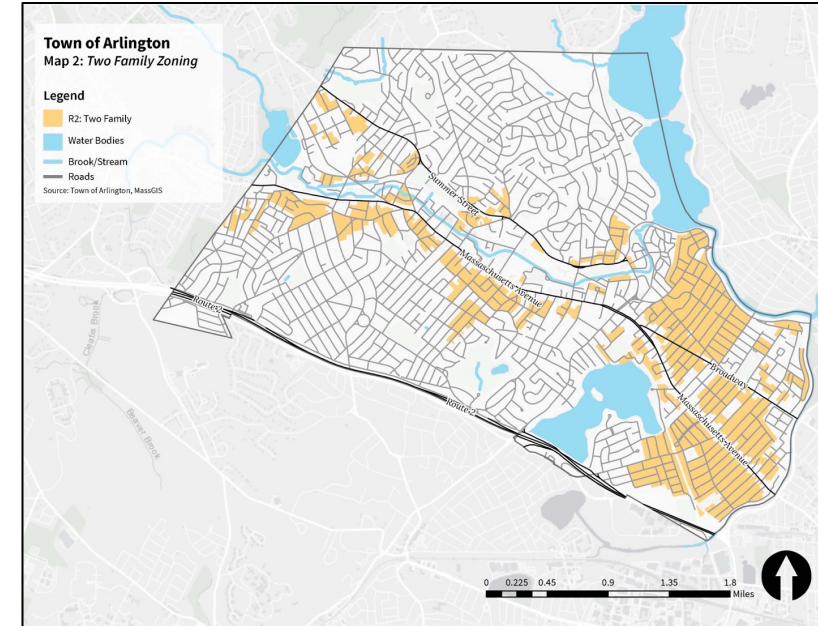
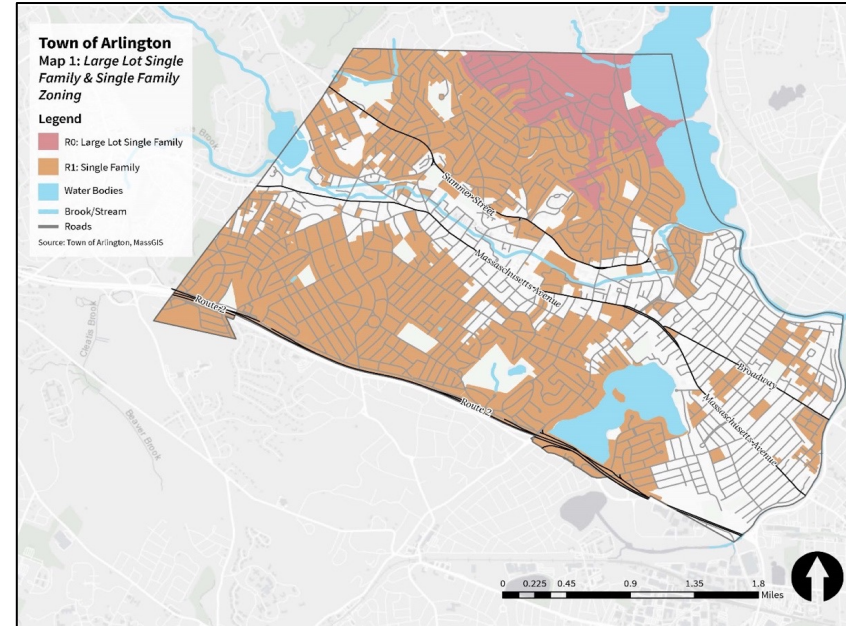
Slide 2 of 6





# The Problem: Impediments to Housing Choice

Slide 3 of 6





# The Problem: Impediments to Housing Choice

Slide 4 of 6

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Leadership for equity and affordable housing – not broadly recognized or well received.

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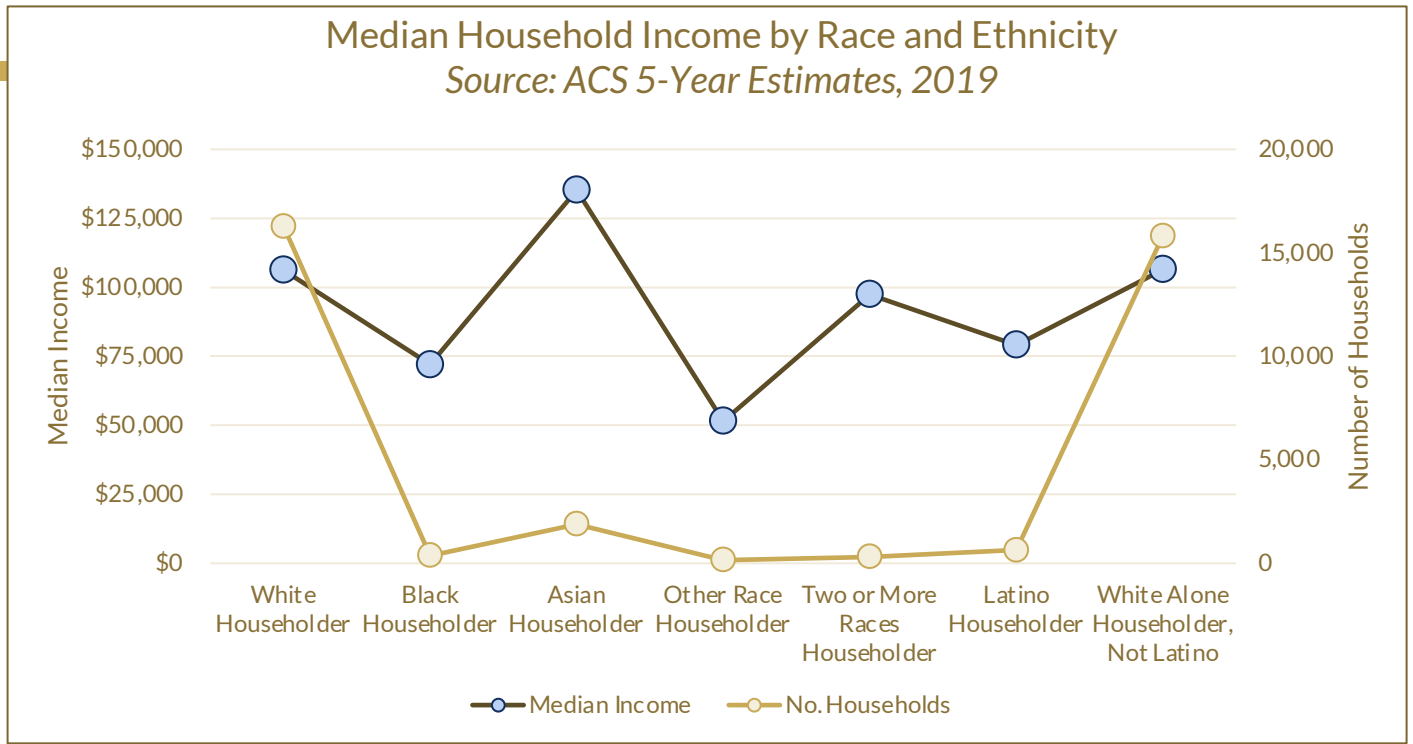
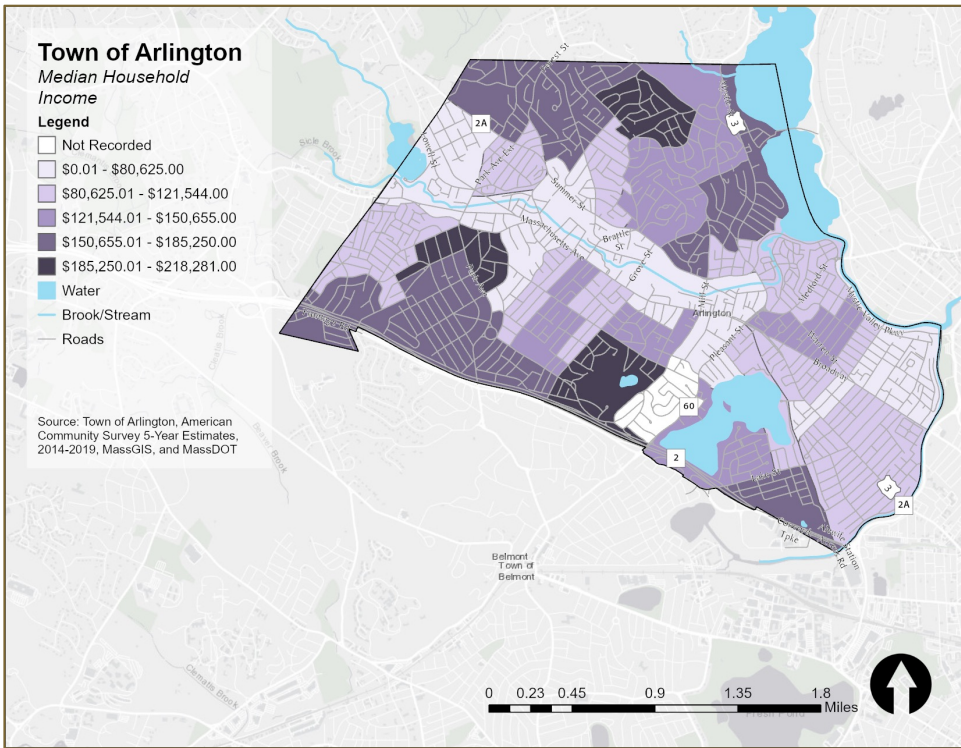
Housing insecurity is not evenly distributed across the population. It disproportionately affects people of color, older people, and those living on low incomes.

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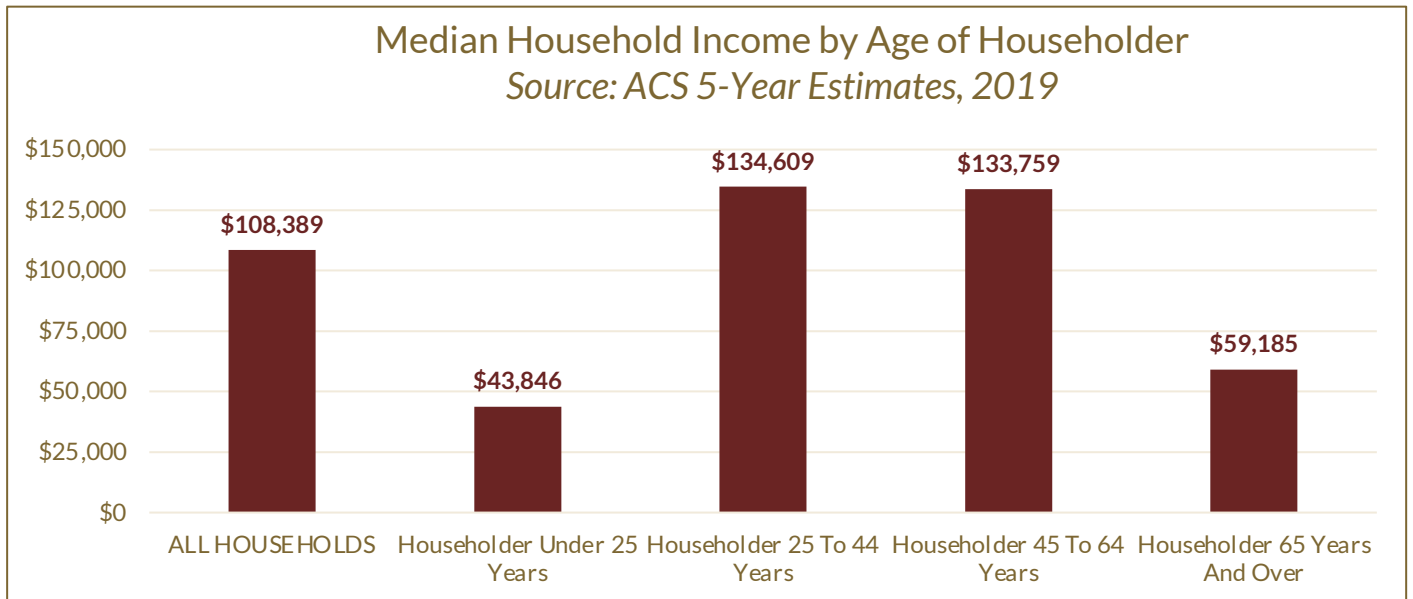
Fair Housing Action Plan: from 2010-2019, disability status the most commonly reported basis for discrimination (11 out of 24 complaints).

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High-quality, stable housing is central to the health and well-being of families with children. It helps foster relationships and opportunities in communities, limits chronic stress, and reduces food insecurity.



# The Problem: Impediments to Housing Choice





# The Problem: Impediments to Housing Choice

Slide 6 of 6

- Housing prices are out of sync with wage levels paid by local employers (including the Town).
- Arlington's housing prices are no longer affordable to families with modest incomes. As the town becomes more affluent, housing choice declines.
- Arlington has not used tools like Chapter 40R to create affordable housing and has opposed Chapter 40B development that could increase supply and choice.





# Response: Fair Housing Goals

Slide 1 of 1



- Provide equitable access to affordable homeownership and rental homes suitable for a variety of household types, including senior households and families with children.
- Integrate affordable homes in all neighborhoods through reuse of existing structures and redevelopment of underutilized properties, particularly within walking distance of schools, public parks, services, amenities, and transit.
- Review and update Arlington’s zoning and other housing policies to encourage development that increases affordable housing and fair housing choice.
- Improve development opportunities along major corridors to include a greater mix of housing options.
- Make equitable access to shared green spaces and a healthy living environment a priority for siting affordable homes.



# Strategies to Address Fair Housing Goals

Slide 1 of 3



Conduct a racial impact study to evaluate whether current rules disproportionately affect Black people and people of color.

Expand SHI information to include details about number of bedrooms, disability access, age restrictions, age and condition of units to support targeted program/subsidy design.

Make two-family dwellings an allowed use as of right in all residential neighborhoods.

Change the Zoning Map to consolidate districts and create realistic options for parcel assembly along the major corridors in town.

Designate areas for “missing middle” housing interspersed with commercial centers.



# Strategies to Address Fair Housing Goals

Slide 2 of 3



- Remove regulatory barriers to multifamily development.
- Develop zoning for multifamily housing near existing and planned T stations.
- Adopt 100% affordable housing overlay (similar to Cambridge) along designated streets in lower-density areas and in nodes near Mass. Ave., Broadway.
- Partner with non-profit, faith-based, and for-profit developers to site eligible developments in 100% affordable housing overlay.
- Establish reserve account for Affordable Housing Trust to acquire existing single-family homes and redevelop as two-family dwellings with affordable unit.





# Strategies to Address Fair Housing Goals

Slide 3 of 3



Preserve existing parks and conservation land throughout Town, especially in areas with existing concentrations of lower-income and minority households, and ensure long-term public access for recreation.

Where limited opportunities exist for on-site green space, require new/better sidewalks, bike paths, or trails to access the nearest park or open space.

Audit current parking requirements and parking design standards.

Increase use of green infrastructure to minimize storm water runoff, reduce flooding and heat island effect.



# Questions about Fair Housing Goals & Implementation?

ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN 2022-2027





# The Problem: Limited Capacity

Slide 1 of 1



- In Arlington, advocacy for affordable housing development is fragmented and not well organized.
- There is considerable misinformation about housing affordability, housing development, market conditions, and local government's responsibility for housing affordability and housing justice.
- There does not appear to be a consistent, generally understood and respected policy framework for increasing the supply of affordable housing.



# Response: Goals for Building Capacity

Slide 1 of 1

- Increase capacity to produce housing through leadership development, advocacy, staffing, funding, and relationships with nonprofit and for-profit developers.
- Build awareness of affordable and fair housing needs within Arlington and the larger region, as well as Arlington's role in addressing broader inequities.





# Strategies to Strengthen Capacity

Slide 1 of 3



Build relationships with and encourage more non-profit housing organizations and CDCs to build in Arlington.

Establish a Community Land Trust to support the development of permanently affordable housing.

Work with CEDAC and LISC to identify potentially interested CDCs.

Sponsor roundtable for non-profit/CDC/for-profit developers and subsidizing agencies to provide public education about the cost of developing and managing affordable housing.



## Strategies to Strengthen Capacity

Slide 2 of 3



Support advocacy, tenant organizing efforts in AHA, HCA, other affordable housing developments.

Appoint affordable housing advocates to town boards/commissions.

Strengthen public education through Town website, other online resources.

Schedule periodic, predictable community conversation meetings with the Arlington Redevelopment Board, Housing Plan Implementation Committee, Affordable Housing Trust, and Select Board to set an annual housing implementation agenda consistent with this Housing Plan.



# Strategies to Strengthen Capacity

Slide 3 of 3



- Encourage and organize people to speak at public meetings, public hearings, and town meeting about the need for and benefits of affordable housing.
- Strengthen public education about affordable and equitable housing in Arlington.
- Engage Town elected officials to confront and address disinformation.



HERE'S THE DATA 2020 Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2019 American Community Survey

An **experienced server** in Acton makes an average of **\$36,173** a year.

Without being housing cost burdened, or paying more than 30% of their income on housing and utilities, an **experienced server** in Acton can spend no more than **\$900** per month on housing.

**Fewer than 25%** of the rental units are at this price range, and the median gross rent in Acton is **\$1,450** per month.

The median price of a house in Acton is **\$581,400**. In order to buy a home in Acton with a **10%** down payment, monthly housing cost would be **\$3,757**, requiring an annual income of **\$150,280**.



# Questions about Capacity-Building Goals and Implementation?

ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN 2022-2027





## Next Steps

Draft Housing Plan available for public review: Monday, November 29, 2021

Presentation to Arlington Redevelopment Board: December 16, 2021

Presentation to Select Board: January 3, 2022 (to be confirmed)

Target Date, Submission to DHCD: Early February 2022