

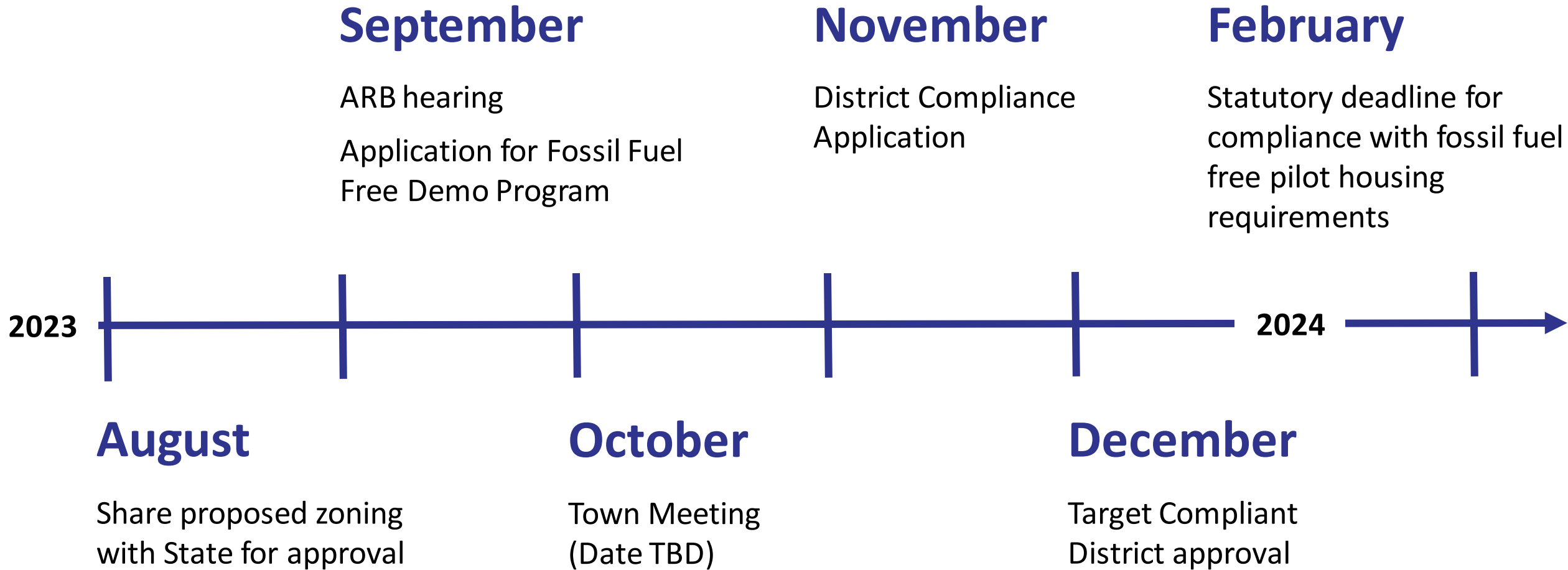
MBTA COMMUNITIES

ZONING FOR MULTIFAMILY HOUSING IN ARLINGTON

7/25/23

Public Meeting 4: Presentation & Public Comment on Proposed Zoning District
Town of Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development
MBTA Communities Working Group

TIMELINE



1

TONIGHT'S MEETING

Goals & Objectives

TONIGHT'S MEETING







- Welcome & Introductions
- Refresher on MBTA Communities Legislation
- Engagement Update
- Presentation of Updated Proposed Zoning District; Building Dimensions and Open Space Considerations; and Affordable Housing and Commercial Incentives
- Break
- Questions & Comments

REMINDER: WHY SECTION 3A MATTERS

By allowing multifamily housing near transit or services, we can accomplish goals laid out in several recent plans*.

The result is



-  Participation in State's fossil fuel free demonstration pilot (approved by 92% of Town Meeting Members)
-  Better access to work, services, and other destinations by increasing mobility and utilization of public transit
-  More housing closer to the places that we go every day, such as local shops, jobs, schools, restaurants, parks, etc.
-  Increased demand for locally-serving retail and transit services in walkable neighborhoods
-  Reducing reliance on single occupancy vehicles, which helps our larger effort to confront the climate crisis
-  Housing choice for empty nesters who want to downsize, adult children who want to live in town, first-time homeowners, etc.

* Master Plan, Housing Production Plan, Net Zero Action Plan, Connect Arlington, Fair Housing Action Plan, Affordable Housing Trust Action Plan

2

LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES

A refresher on our Section 3A assignment

MGL C.40A SECTION 3A

GUIDELINES FOR ARLINGTON

At least one district
of reasonable size



Minimum 32 acres

Multifamily housing permitted
as of right



Building with 3+ residential
dwelling units

No age restrictions; suitable for families with
children



No age restrictions or bedroom
limits in zoning

Minimum gross density of 15 units/acre



Minimum capacity of 2,046 units

Not more than ½ miles from a subway station
or bus station,
if applicable



District(s) must be at least 5 contiguous acres;
location unrestricted, but recommended
location along transit corridors and commercial
centers

MGL C.40A SECTION 3A RESTRICTIONS

- **Commercial uses** are allowed but may not be required.
- Development must be as of right, **without the need for a special permit**. Site Plan review is permitted for review of vehicular access, architectural design and screening of adjacent properties.
- District may be split into multiple subdistricts, but at least 50% of the total must be in one contiguous area, and none smaller than 5 acres.

MGL C.40A SECTION 3A CAPACITY MODELING

The "Model" is a calculation method developed by the State to **estimate** the potential unit capacity of an area based on zoning inputs such as:

- # of Stories
- Setbacks – front, sides and rear
- Parking minimums
- Open space
- Dwelling Units per acre
- Minimum lot size

ARLINGTON + DHCD GUIDELINES



Community categories



Capacity



“Reasonable size”
criteria



District location



Incentives*

*Not entirely a component of
DHCD guidelines

ARLINGTON + DHCD GUIDELINES



Community categories



Capacity



“Reasonable size”
criteria



District location



Incentives*



Arlington is now an
“adjacent” community

ARLINGTON + DHCD GUIDELINES



Community categories

Arlington is now an
“adjacent” community



Capacity

10% of total housing
units, or 2,046 units



“Reasonable size”
criteria



District location



Incentives*

CORE CONCEPT: “CAPACITY”

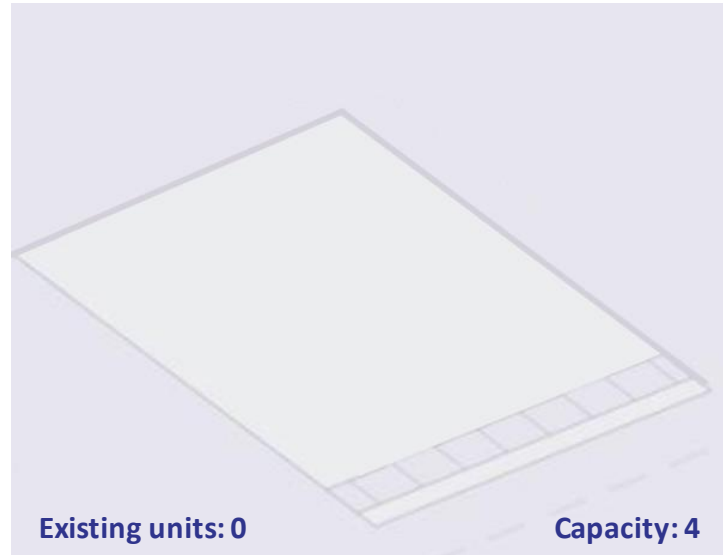
Existing use: duplex



Treat or count as an undeveloped parcel



Evaluate for what could be built by right under zoning: fourplex



IMPORTANT! To determine the unit capacity of a new or existing multi-family zoning district, you do not “count” existing units—you instead determine how many multi-family units the zoning district would allow by right on that parcel if it were undeveloped.

ARLINGTON + DHCD GUIDELINES

1

Community categories



Arlington is now an
“adjacent” community

2

Capacity



10% of total housing
units, or 2,046 units

3

“Reasonable size”
criteria



32 acres (~1%)

4

District location

5

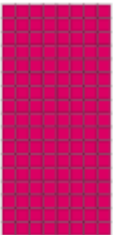
Incentives*

CORE CONCEPT: "REASONABLE SIZE"

Arlington's
minimum district
sizes (to scale; 1 box
= 1 acre)



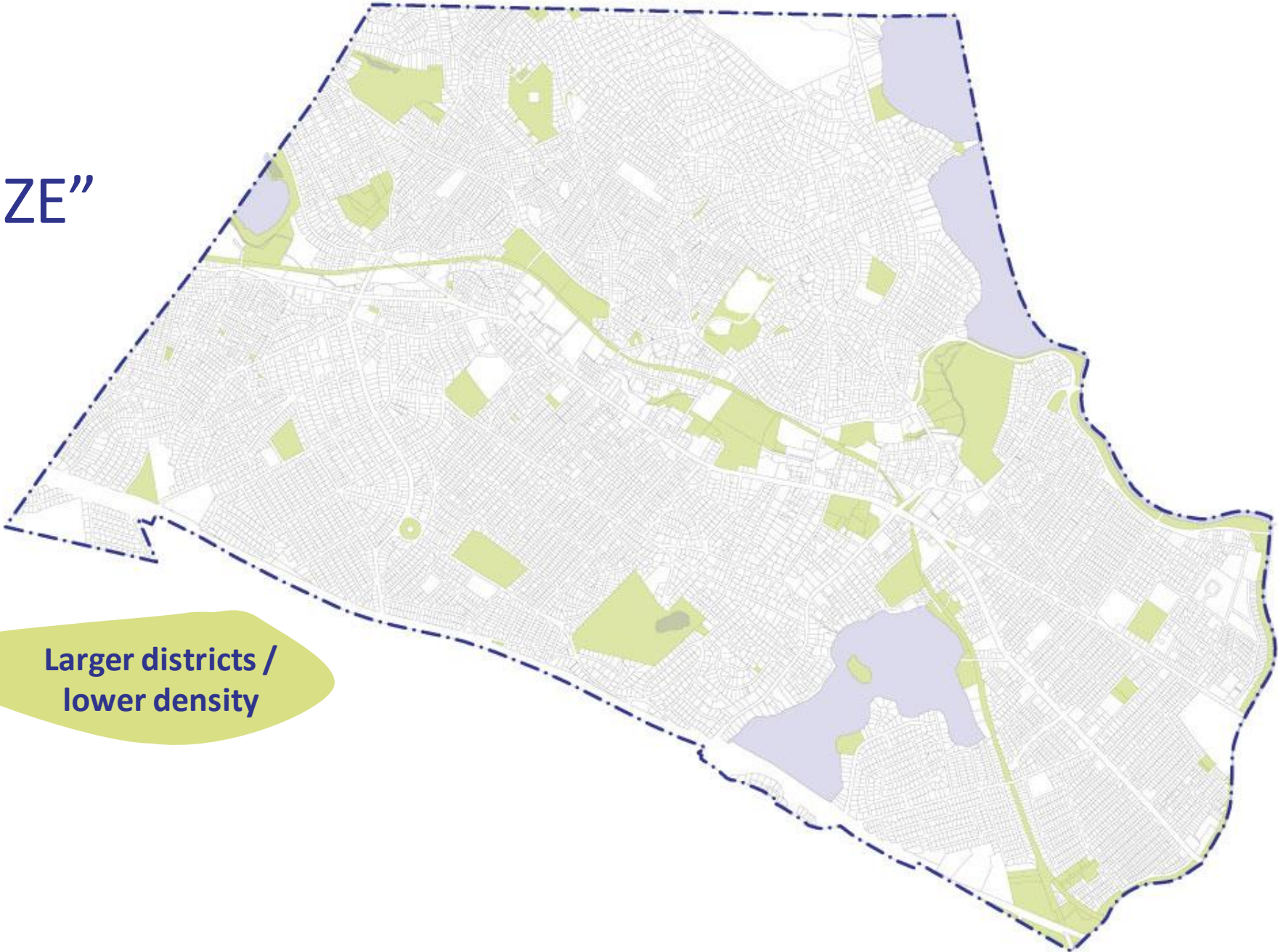
32 acres



136 acres

Smaller districts /
higher density

Larger districts /
lower density



CORE CONCEPT: VISUALIZING DENSITY

Triple Decker
3 units
Gross density: 11-30 du/acre



Fourplex: Stacked
4 units
Gross density: 14-22 du/acre



Multiplex building
5-16 units
Gross density: 10-50 du/acre



Courtyard building
6-25 units
Gross density: 21-56 du/acre



CORE CONCEPT: VISUALIZING DENSITY

Downing Square
48 Units
45 Units per Acre



438 Mass Ave
134 Units
49 Units per Acre



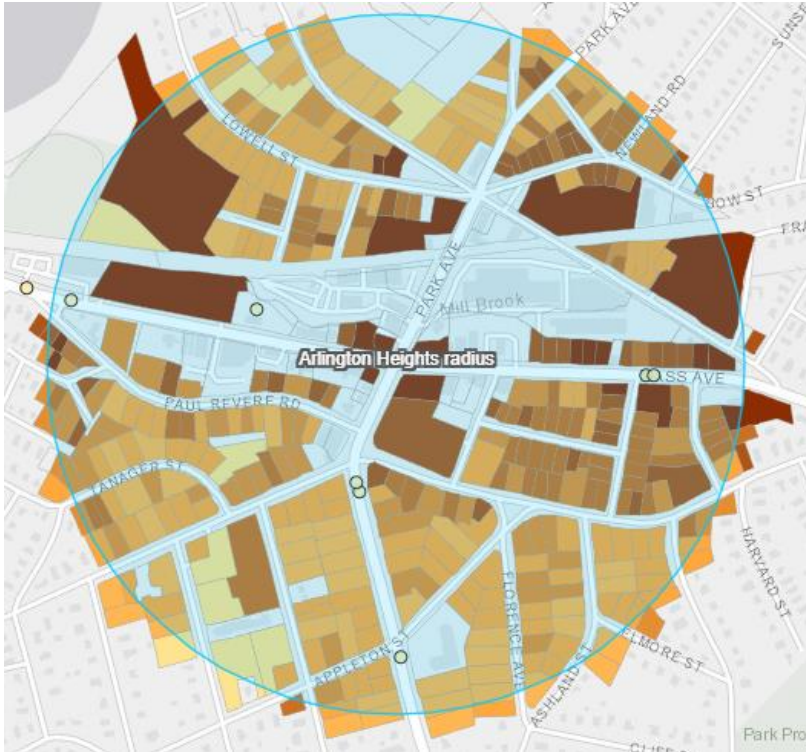
389 Mass Ave
29 Units
117 Units per Acre



YOUR DENSITY AND YOU

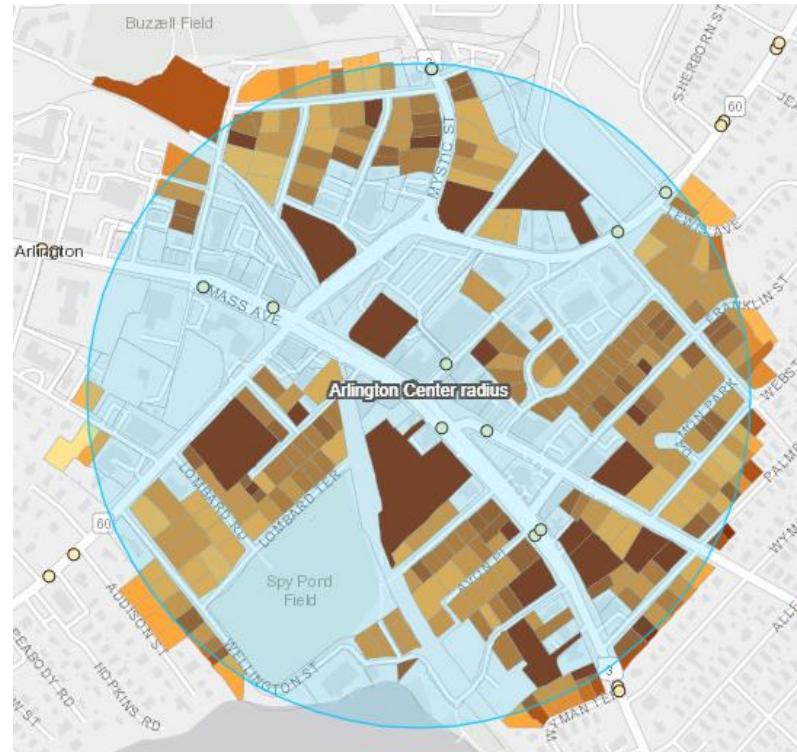
Existing Multifamily Parcels along Mass Ave

50-100 Dwelling Units/acre



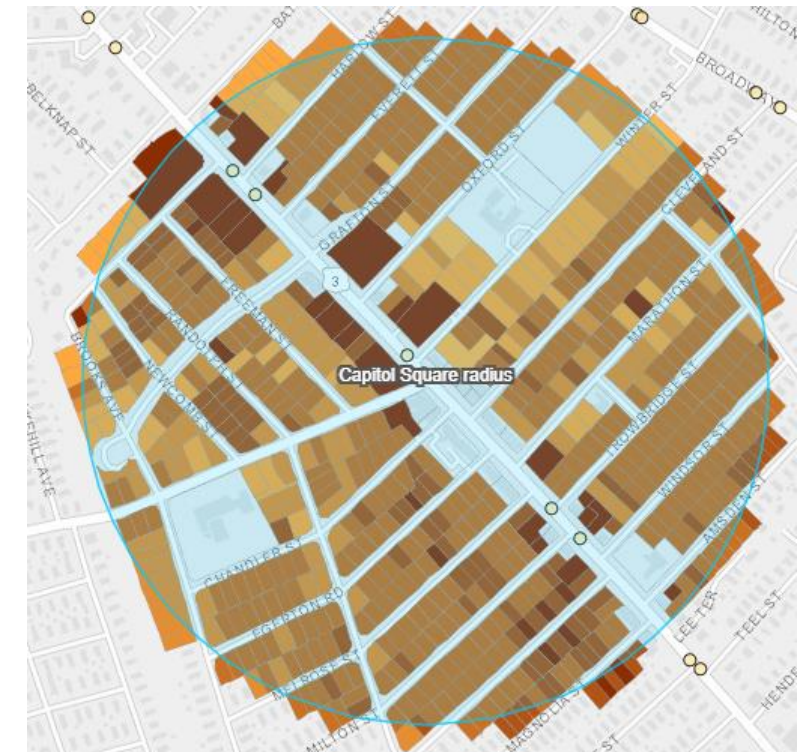
Arlington Heights

10.34 Dwelling Units/acre



Arlington Center

11.48 DU/acre



Capitol Square

14.37 DU/acre

ARLINGTON + DHCD GUIDELINES

1

Community categories

Arlington is now an
“adjacent” community

2

Capacity

10% of total housing
units, or 2,046 units

3

“Reasonable size”
criteria

Reduced to 32 acres

4

District location

**Arlington gets to
choose location**
(Not limited to 0.5 miles from Alewife
Station)

5

Incentives*

ARLINGTON + DHCD GUIDELINES

1

2

3

4

5

Community categories

Capacity

“Reasonable size”
criteria

District location

Incentives*



Arlington is now an
“adjacent” community



10% of total housing
units, or 2,046 units



Reduced to 32 acres



Arlington gets to
choose location

(0% required to be within ½ mile of
Alewife)

CORE CONCEPT: INCENTIVES

By complying with MBTA
Communities legislation, Arlington
would remain eligible for funding
from...

... and, if zoning is adopted this fall,
can participate in



MassWorks Infrastructure Program



Housing Choice Initiative



Local Capital Projects Fund



MA Fossil Fuel Free Demonstration Program

CORE CONCEPT: OBLIGATION

“The Massachusetts Antidiscrimination Law and Federal Fair Housing Act prohibit towns and cities from using their zoning power for a discriminatory purpose or with discriminatory effect.”



3/15/2023 – Attorney General Advisory Concerning Enforcement of MBTA Communities Zoning Law



All MBTA Communities must comply with the law. Communities that fail to comply with the law may be subject to civil enforcement action.



MBTA Communities cannot avoid their obligation under the law by foregoing this funding.



Failure to comply with the law risk liability under federal and state fair housing laws



The Law requires that MBTA Communities “shall have” a compliant zoning district and does not provide any mechanism by which a town or city may opt out of this requirement.

3

Engagement Update

Summarizing your feedback

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES TO-DATE

Public Meetings

- **November 17, 2022** staff presented an overview of MBTA Communities legislation to describe the basic requirements of MGL Ch. 40A, Section 3A & what it means for Arlington
- **March 9, 2023** Community Visioning Session held online to discuss community goals for neighborhood features, amenities, and potential locations
- **June 8, 2023** An in-person Community Presentation on size and scale of housing on the proposed Draft MBTA District Communities map

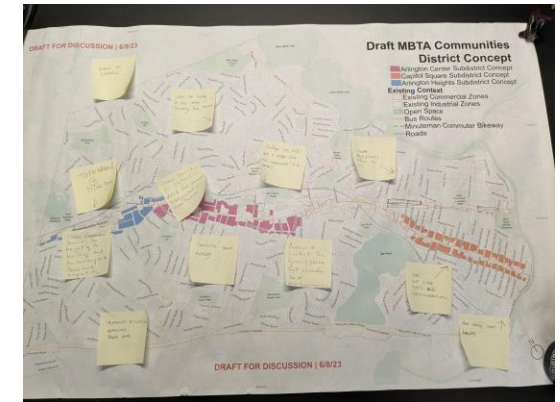
Surveys & Feedback Opportunities

- **March – April 2023 Community Survey** 1033 responses, including 2,325 comments from 506 distinct respondents
- **April – June Visioning Kits**
- **June 8 – July 17th Feedback Form** 213 responses, including 550 comments
- **June – Current Meeting in a Box**

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES TO-DATE

Engaging with the Community

- Resource & Connections Fair
- Farmers Market
- Library Office Hours & Library Table
- Council on Aging Pop-Up
- Arlington EATS Pop-Up
- Collaboration with Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA)
- Presentation at Calvary Church



Conversations with...

- Arlington Chamber of Commerce
- Arlington Public Schools
- Assessors Office
- Interfaith Community
- Housing Corporation of Arlington
- Department of Public Works
- Arlington Police Department
- Health and Human Services
- Open Space Committee/Green Streets Arlington
- Residents
- **And more!**

FUTURE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Engaging with the Community

- Farmers Market 8.2, 8.30, 9.6,
- Library Office Hours 8.5, 8.15, 8.25
- Business Focus Group in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce
- Arlington EATS outreach
- Sidewalk outreach
- Res Concert Series
- Town Day
- Continued collaboration with Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA)
- Interfaith Community Presentations
- Friends of Robins Library Presentation 9.27
- And more!



**get your questions answered by the MBTA
Communities Working Group**

Robbins Library Conference Room
Friday, July 14th, 10am–12pm
Saturday, August 5th, 10am–12pm
Tuesday, August 15th, 4pm–6pm
Friday, August 25th, 10am–12pm



Who are some community members impacted by the shortage of housing in Arlington?

I want to keep consistency for my kids, but I'm concerned we'll have to move because I can't find housing we can afford.

I work a decent paying white collar job and I can't afford to buy in Arlington. Housing prices are crazy even for condos/multifamily.

More buildings like Downing Square Broadway Initiative (DSBI) for more people -HCA Resident

I've lived in Arlington my whole life. I'm 65 & work two jobs. I make too much for affordable housing, but not enough to cover the basics.

I work in Arlington and can't afford to live here.

It would be great to get more housing diversity in Arlington for those looking to downsize or those who can't afford a single-family home.

JUNE 8TH PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

Objective

- Solicit residents' input on:
 - a) Size / scale of multifamily housing
 - b) How MBTA Communities zoning relates to Commercial and Industrial zones in Arlington

What was the response?

- Over 120 attendees
- Support for expanding the multi-family district, having a variety of housing types, sizes, and price points.
- Report available www.tinyurl.com/MBTACommunitiesArlington

ONLINE FEEDBACK FORM

Objective

- Solicit feedback from those unable to attend June 8 meeting, capture additional comments from June 8 meeting attendees

What was the response?

- Survey open from June 12 - July 17, 2023. 213 people responded, including 550 comments.
- Support for multi-family along corridors, 6+ units, affordable housing, and transit-oriented development.
- Disagreement on whether to put multi-family housing in existing commercial districts vs surrounding residential neighborhoods.

KEY PRIORITIES FROM RECENT ENGAGEMENT

Size and Scale

- Along corridors like Mass Ave and Broadway
- 6+ units and larger apartments, to create affordable housing
- Taller buildings on corridors, stepping down into neighborhoods



Relationship to Commercial

- Adding housing near commercial centers
- Mixed-use (residential over ground-floor commercial)
- Not a clear consensus: in commercial districts vs surrounding neighborhoods



4

UPDATED PROPOSED ZONING DISTRICT

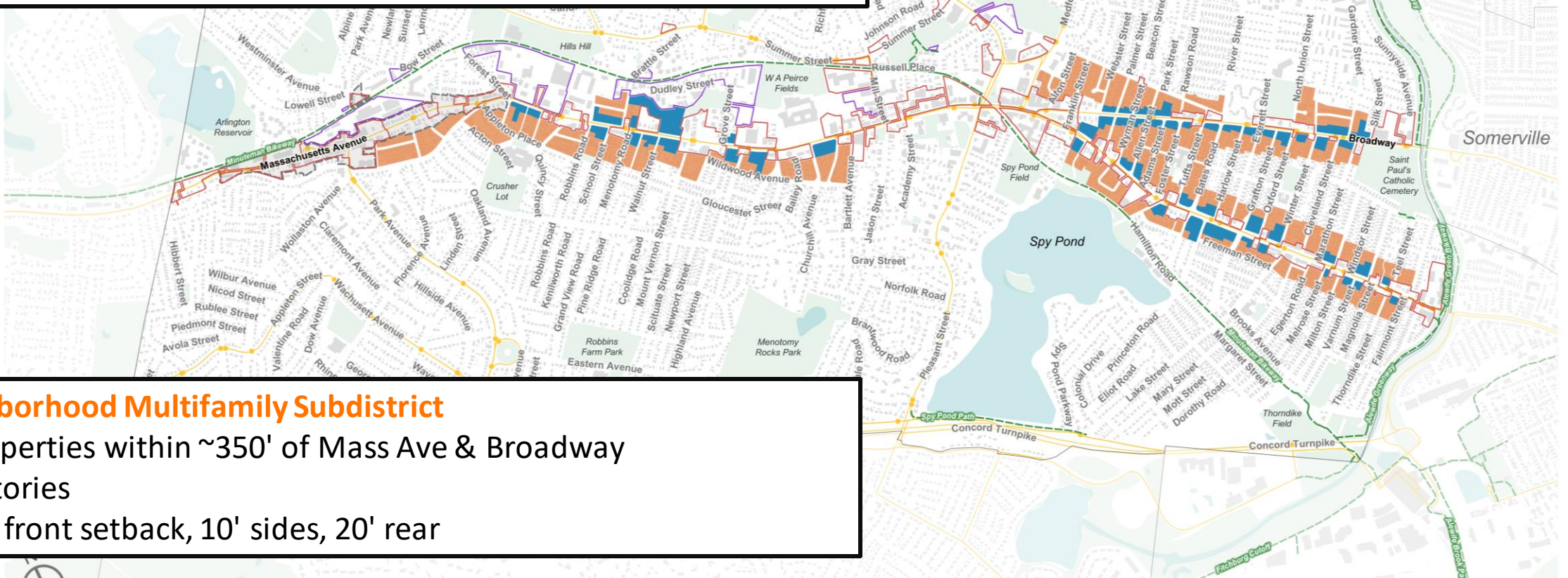
Visualizing & Detailing Our Priorities

Mass Ave & Broadway Corridor Subdistrict

- Properties with frontage on Mass Ave & Broadway
- 4 stories
- 10' front setback, 5' sides, 20' rear
- Bonuses:
 - +2 stories for ground floor commercial
 - +1 story for "extra" affordable housing
 - Open space bonuses being discussed
 - Max height: 6 stories on Mass Ave, 5 on Broadway

Proposed MBTA Communities District

- Mass Ave & Broadway Corridor Subdistrict
- Neighborhood Multifamily Subdistrict
- ▨ ARB Arlington Heights Rezoning Study Area
- ▭ Existing Commercial Zones
- ▭ Existing Industrial Zones
- Open Space
- Bus Routes
- Minuteman Bikeway



Neighborhood Multifamily Subdistrict

- Properties within ~350' of Mass Ave & Broadway
- 4 stories
- 10' front setback, 10' sides, 20' rear

INCORPORATING OUR PRIORITIES: SUPPORT TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

What the Working Group heard

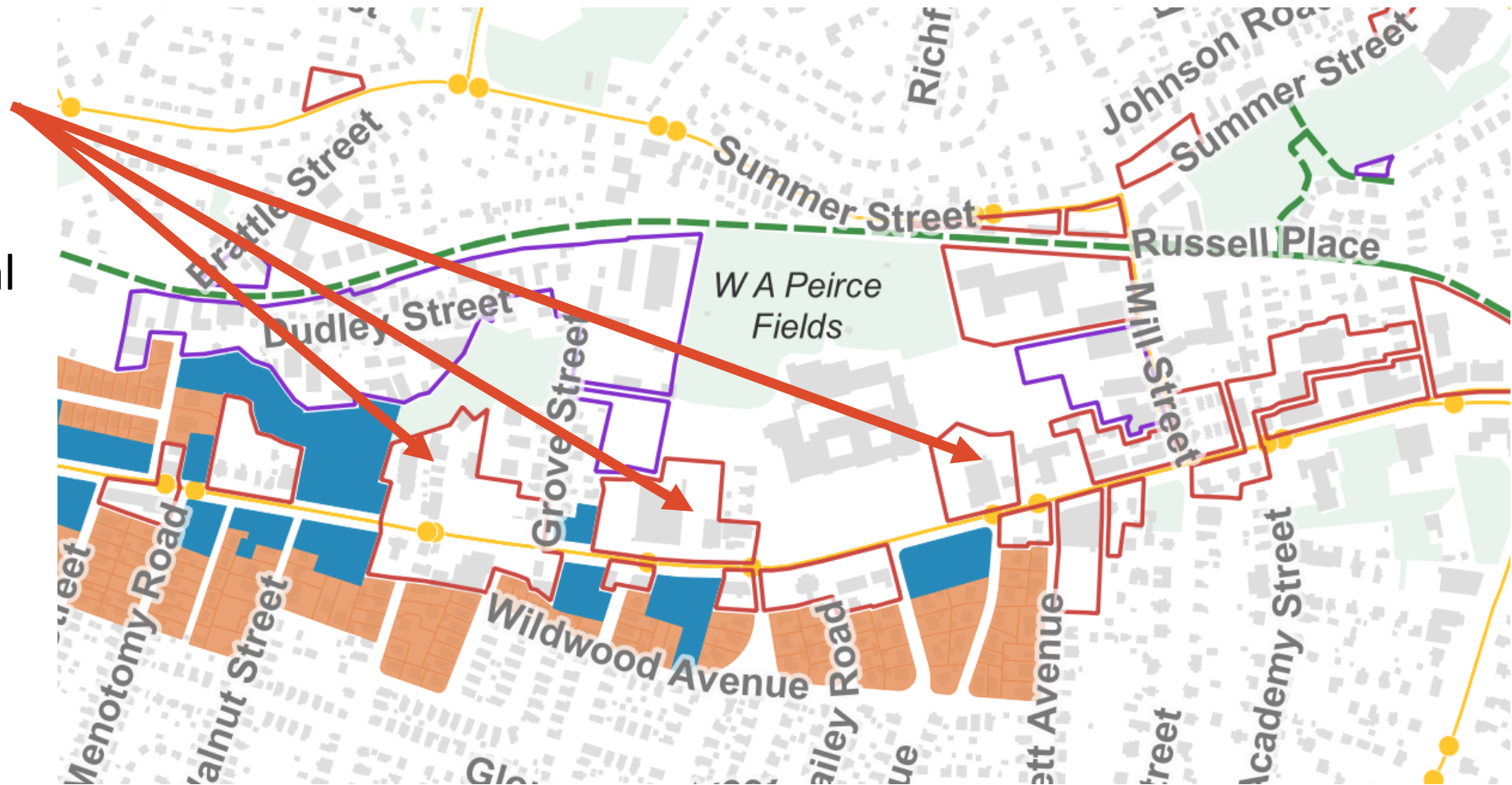
- Locate zone along major bus routes
- Desire for improved transit service
- Being able to make trips without a car



INCORPORATING OUR PRIORITIES: RETAINING AND SUPPORTING COMMERCIAL USES

What the Working Group heard

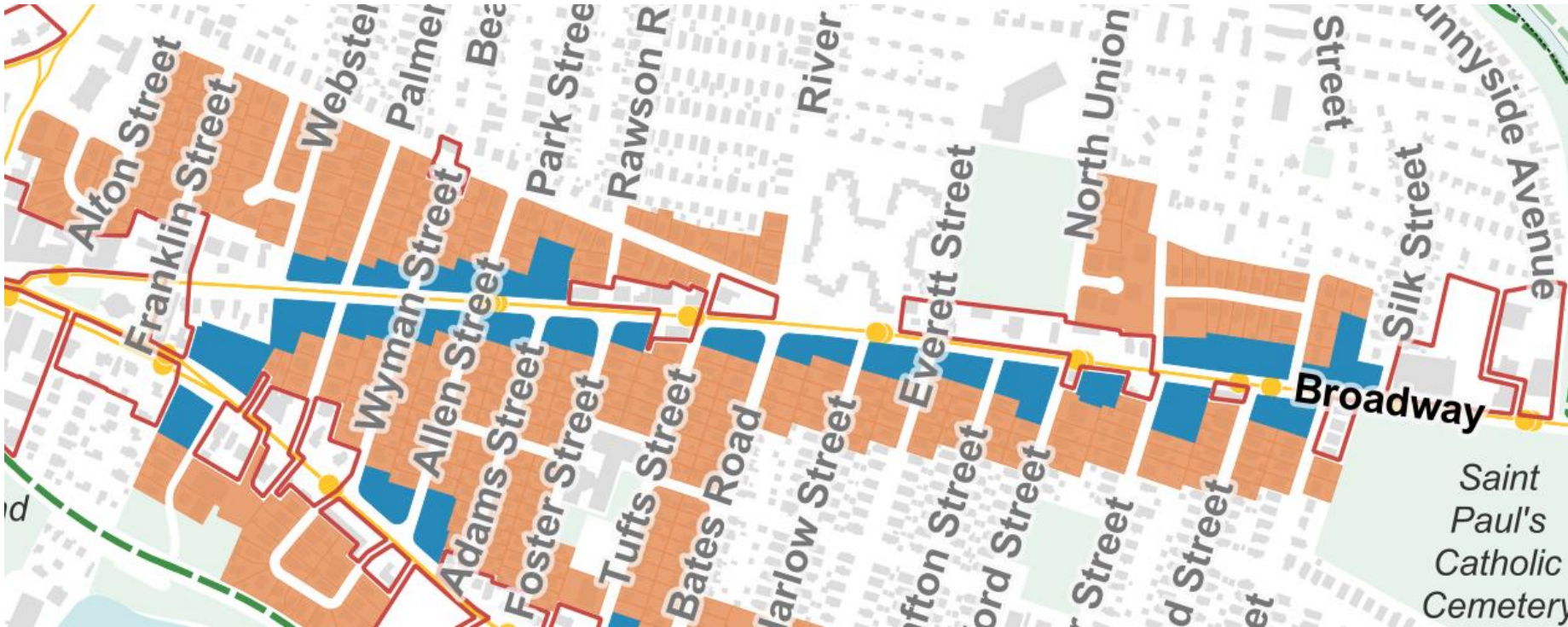
- Exclude commercial parcels along key corridors
- Mixed-use (residential over commercial)
- Putting customers closer to businesses and amenities



INCORPORATING OUR PRIORITIES: INCLUDING BROADWAY

What the Working Group heard

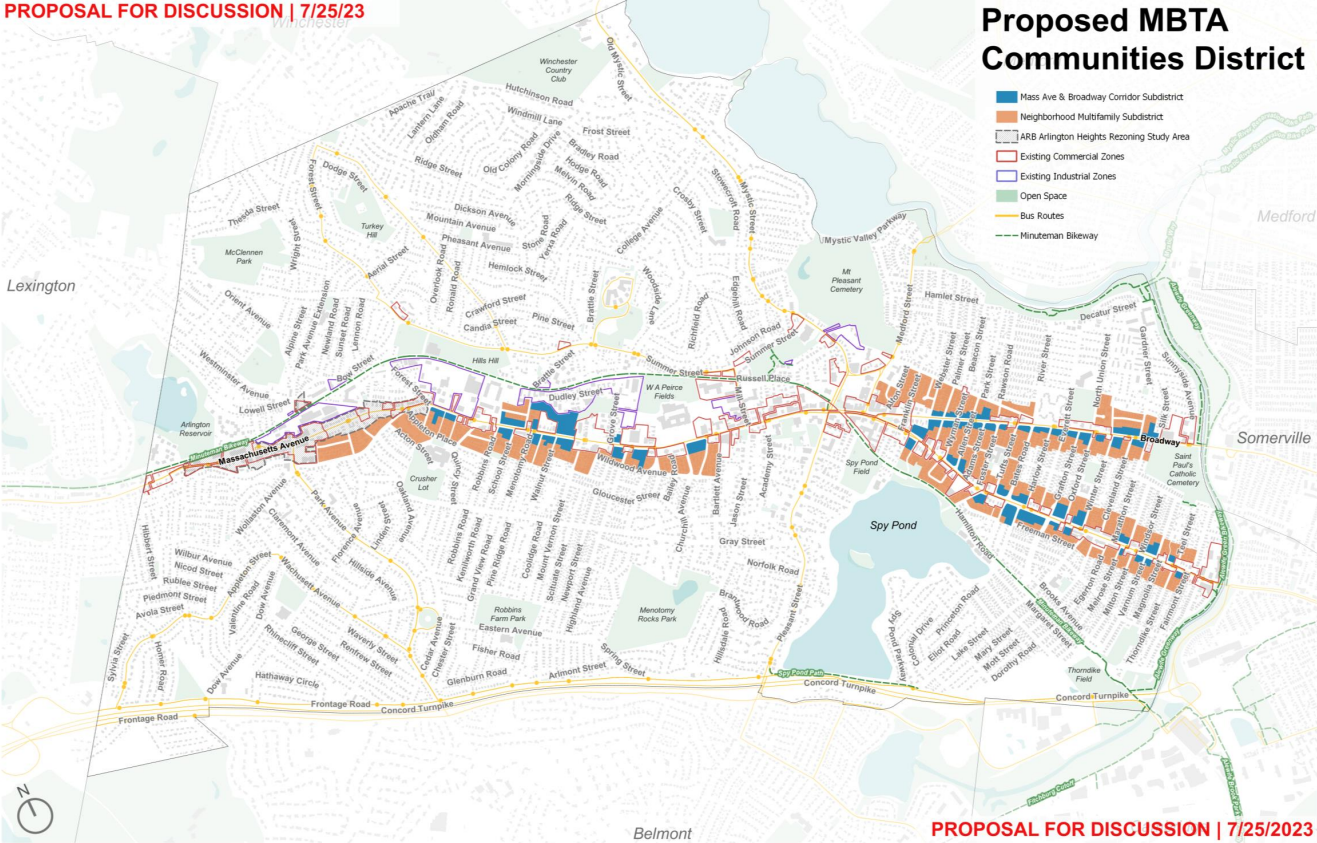
- June 8th: "What about Broadway?"



INCORPORATING OUR PRIORITIES: EXTEND THE DISTRICT THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOODS

What the Working Group heard

- Don't put all the housing in one neighborhood



INCORPORATING OUR PRIORITIES: PROPOSED COMMERCIAL BONUSES

What the Working Group heard

- Support for more small businesses, and residential over ground floor commercial.
- Commercial can't be required.
- Incentive: two-story bonus for ground floor commercial on Mass Ave and Broadway.



INCORPORATING OUR PRIORITIES: PROPOSED AFFORDABILITY BONUSES

What the Working Group heard

- Clear desire for more affordable housing.
- We'll ask the state to let us use our 15% affordability requirement (60% AMI).
- Incentive: one-story bonus for going beyond 15% requirement

INCORPORATING OUR PRIORITIES: BUILDING DIMENSIONS AND OPEN SPACE CONSIDERATIONS

What the Working Group heard

- Highest along Mass Ave/Broadway, decreasing into neighborhoods (6:4:3 floors)
- Consider landscaped setbacks for green space, public shade tree planting
- Balance neighborhood context so new housing looks like it belongs

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can our existing sewer system handle more residents?

- Current population is several thousand less than the peak Town population
- Any increase in population will be slow over years and decades
- Yes, per the Town's Engineering Department

Do the schools have the capacity for more students?

- School enrollment is peaking, and is expected to decline in coming years
- Recommended that the MBTA communities districts be spread out to provide more flexibility in adjusting elementary school boundaries

What about traffic and parking?

- The location of the MBTA districts is intended to encourage development near transit and along or near commercial corridors with the intent of reducing reliance on cars and making cycling and walking more convenient.
- The Working Group voted to limit parking to one space per dwelling maximum.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What percent of new housing will be affordable?

- Our current zoning requires 15% of dwellings be affordable, i.e., income restricted, in new multi-family dwellings with six dwellings or more. We will apply to the State to permit us to maintain our 15% inclusionary zone in the MBTA districts.
- The Working Group has voted to incentivize a higher percentage of affordable dwellings.

What about trees, private green space, and open space?

- A principle of the MBTA Communities Law is to "minimize impacts on sensitive land." The Working Group is working with DPCD to identify opportunities for bonuses and incentives to encourage the prioritization by developers of including public open spaces, mitigating heat islands, increasing the tree canopy, etc.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do we support businesses and an increased commercial tax base?

- The proposed plan maintains all current commercial and industrial zoning. It leaves room around existing commercial districts to allow for future expansion of the commercial district.
- The Working Group has voted for a height bonus in the Mass Ave multi-family district for the inclusion of ground floor commercial.
- Greater density near our Town business districts will support existing businesses and service providers and will create opportunities for new ones.

What does “capacity” mean?

- Capacity is a calculation based on the State's compliance model
- It is not a calculation of how much new housing will be built
- It is a calculation of a theoretical maximum capacity
- The actual number of new units built by a property owner will be affected by the practical limitations of design, livability, and marketability

QUESTION & COMMENT GUIDELINES

If you wish to ask questions or provide comment, please fill out a slip available at the check-in table or from staff during the break. All the slips will be put into a box and the Moderator will pull names and invite people to come up.

We look forward to hearing your questions and suggestions!



BREAK

5

Questions & Comments

QUESTION & COMMENT PROCESS

- Please come forward to the microphone when your name is called or raise your hand if you require a cordless mic.
- Please ask your questions to the Chair who can direct them to the panelists.
- After every 5-10 speakers we will ask the panelists to follow up on anything that didn't get a full answer.
- In order to hear from as many people as possible we have chosen a time limit per speaker based on the number of slips we've received.
- We will entertain a second chance to speak only if time allows.
- **State your name and address before you speak.**



7

THANK YOU AND GOODNIGHT

Please send any additional comments to the Working Group at mbtacommunities@town.arlington.ma.us by July 31st.

MBTA COMMUNITIES

ZONING FOR MULTIFAMILY HOUSING IN ARLINGTON

7/25/23

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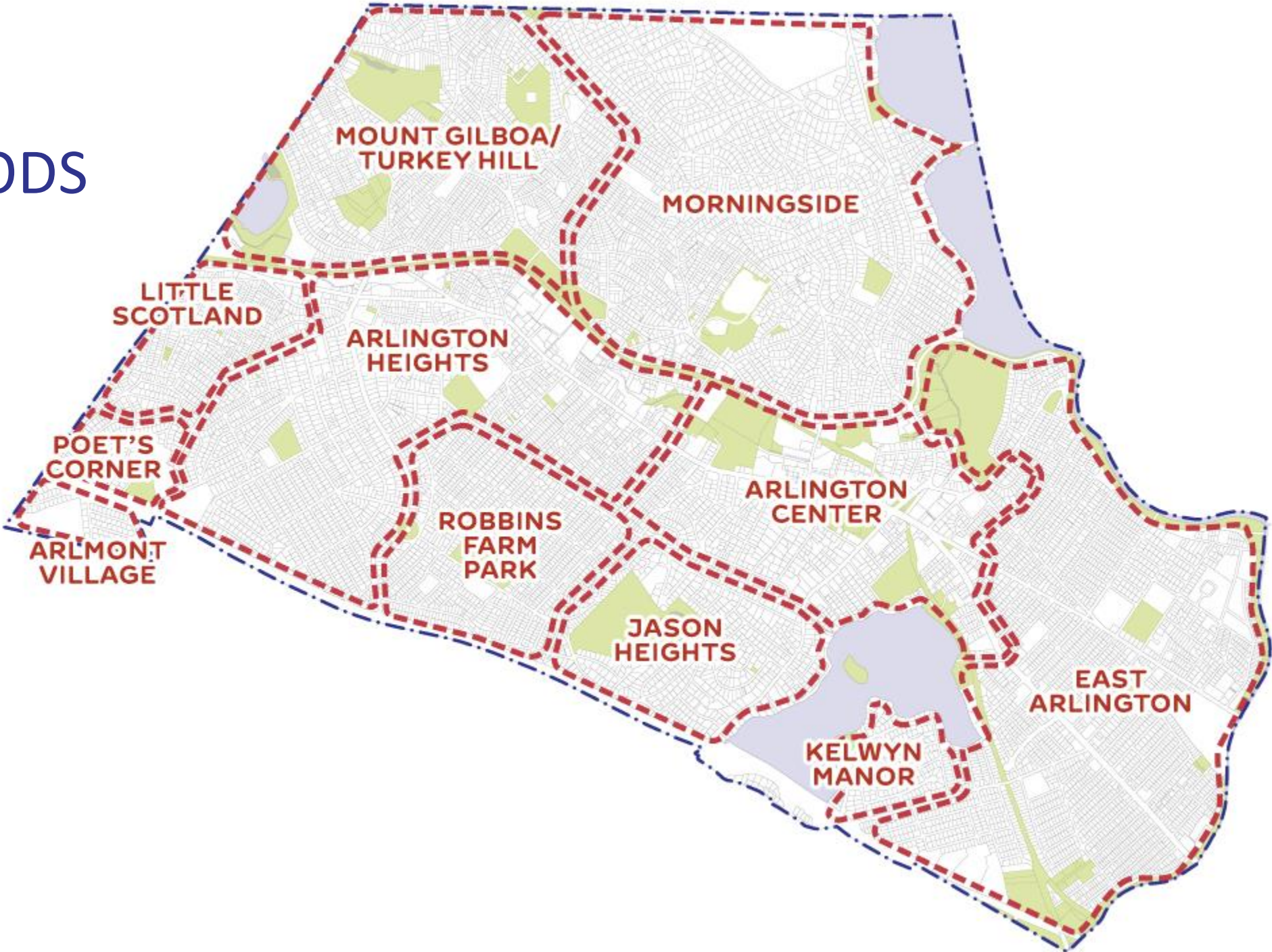


EXTRA SLIDES

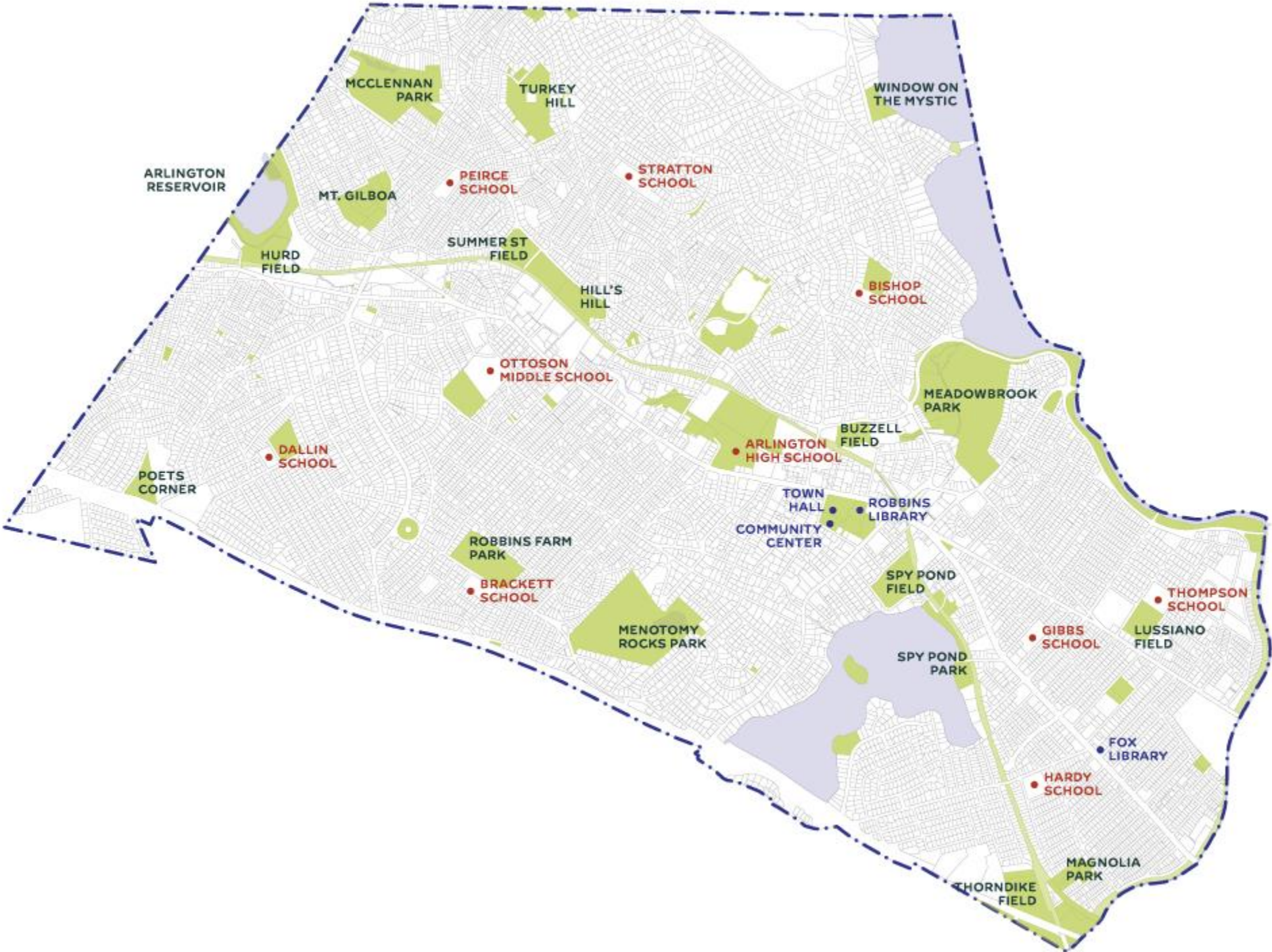
FEMA FLOODPLAIN



NEIGHBORHOODS



OPEN SPACE



TRANSIT



WALK/BIKE ACCESS

