

## 9. PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES

### A. INTRODUCTION

The public services and facilities element of a master plan tries to anticipate the buildings, other facilities, and human resources that a local government will need in order to meet future demands for services. A public facility is any town property with improvements designed for public use and providing a base of operations for municipal services. The term also includes local roadways, utilities, such as public water or sewer service, and other types of facilities such as parks, playgrounds, and cemeteries.

Common public facilities include town halls, fire and police stations, and public schools. In addition to these “basic” public buildings, many communities have unique facilities such as town hospitals, an airport, or a function hall and grounds. For example, Arlington owns several historic buildings and former schools that currently house municipal programs and private offices. Together, a town’s buildings, land, infrastructure, and equipment make it possible for municipal employees and volunteers to provide basic services to residents and businesses. Public facilities are often located in strategic locations. Siting emergency departments in centrally located areas means the greatest number of residents can benefit. Arlington’s Central Fire Station is a good example of a strategically located facility at the confluence of multiple street grids which enable quick access in an emergency. Its prominence along Broadway also demarcates a bend in Massachusetts Avenue, adding visual significance to its role in the physical fabric of the town.



The Town of Arlington is a large, complex corporation with an annual operating budget of \$132 million. In the eyes of credit rating agencies, Arlington is an exceptionally well-run town because it ranks among an elite group of Massachusetts communities with a triple-A bond rating. It is a “full-service” community, too: a town that offers many programs and services for people of all ages. Overall, residents seem satisfied with the quality of the services they receive. Participants in public meetings for this master plan usually gave high marks to town government in general and the schools in particular, and many say Arlington’s historic civic buildings are among the great strengths of the community. Unlike commercial or residential development that is closely tied to market dynamics, public facilities are institutions built to last. Their scale and design embodies the values of the community. Arlington’s Town Hall, Robbins Library, and the gardens that connect them are more than just a reflection of the community when they were built; they represent Arlington’s cultural identity.

The educational, cultural, recreational, and health services that Arlington provides enhance the quality of life in town, but they are increasingly expensive. Complaints about property taxes are hardly unique to Arlington, but the frequency with which people mention “structural deficit” in Arlington suggests a heightened awareness about the imbalance between a major dependence on the local tax base and high expectations for services. Arlington is a largely built-out community. It benefits from the efficiencies that come with a fairly compact development pattern, yet it still faces a constant challenge of funding local government services. There are several reasons for these challenges, ranging from Arlington’s lack of land for new growth to its small nonresidential tax base. The aging of the population, the impact of economic cycles on municipal revenue growth, the unpredictability of state aid, constitutional constraints on the taxation powers of Massachusetts

cities and towns, and the cost to operate high quality services mean that Arlington's financial challenges will probably intensify in the future.

## **B. PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES GOALS**

- ⑤ Coordinate and efficiently deliver town services.
- ⑤ Build, operate, and maintain public facilities that are attractive and help to minimize environmental impact and that connect Arlington as a community.
- ⑤ Balance the need for additional revenue with the ability and willingness of property owners to pay for new expenditures and investments
- ⑤ Guide public facility investments through a long-term capital planning process that anticipates future needs.

## **C. KEY FINDINGS**

- ⑤ Arlington is a well-run, fiscally responsible town. Over the past twenty years, its average annual rate of expenditure growth has been about average or slightly below that of most of its peer group, and the Town has made cautious borrowing decisions. Through prudent financial management, Arlington has earned a triple-A bond rating – an achievement often reserved for wealthier suburbs.
- ⑤ By contrast, Arlington has found it difficult to keep up the cost of community services. Revenue growth has not kept pace with cost growth. Over the past ten years (2003-2013), Arlington has reduced its municipal workforce by approximately 14 percent.
- ⑤ Among the most severely affected departments is Public Works, which has absorbed a 29 percent decrease in personnel during the same ten-year period.
- ⑤ Arlington spends slightly less per capita on local government services than the median for its peer group.
- ⑤ Commercial and industrial taxes make up a much smaller percentage of the tax base in Arlington (6.3 percent) than in most of the towns in its peer group (average ???).
- ⑤ Arlington owns a considerable amount of property and more than 40 buildings. Assuming the accuracy of published estimates of buildings by size, the Town has approximately 9.6 square feet (sq. ft.) of public building floor space per capita (excluding schools). The typical planning standard for basic facilities – general government, public safety, libraries, recreation – is about half of the floor area per capita that exists in Arlington today.
- ⑤ Arlington High School's accreditation may be at risk unless the Town addresses facility deficiencies identified in a recent accreditation review. There are competing needs for improvements to the Stratton elementary school, however.

## **D. TOWN SERVICES**

### **1. General Government**

“General government” includes the Town's executive, financial, legal, administrative, policy, and planning functions. Arlington has a Town Manager/Board of Selectmen form of government with a legislative body composed of 252 elected Town Meeting members. The Town Manager, a professional appointed by the selectmen, directs the day-to-day operations of local government and acts as the chief executive officer. In addition, the Town Manager prepares a proposed annual operating budget and capital budget and submits them to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee, which reviews all spending requests and makes recommendations to Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen issues warrants for Town Meeting, makes recommendations on some warrant articles, sets town policies, and adopts financial guidelines for the annual

operating budget and capital improvements. In addition, the selectmen approve the Town Manager's appointments to boards and commissions, hold public hearings, oversee traffic issues, and issue various licenses, including liquor and food vendor licenses.

In 1986, Arlington established a Capital Planning Committee (CPC) to help the town plan for and prioritize capital expenses. The CPC includes the Town Manager, Superintendent of Schools, Treasurer, and Comptroller (or their designees), along with a representative of the Finance Committee and four registered voters. As a matter of policy, Arlington dedicates approximately 5 percent of town revenue for capital items annually, including debt service from projects approved in prior years. The CPC uses the following criteria to evaluate capital requests from town departments:

- ◆ Imminent threat to the health and safety of citizens/property
- ◆ Maintenance of operations/necessary expenditure
- ◆ Requirement of state or federal law/regulation
- ◆ Improvement of infrastructure
- ◆ Improvement of productivity
- ◆ Alleviation of over-taxed/over-burdened population

The CPC develops a five-year capital plan and submits recommendations to the Town Manager for inclusion with the operating budget. Over the five-year period FY 2014-2018, Arlington's capital plan calls for a total investment of \$47 million from a combination of debt, cash outlays from general revenue, and other sources such as user fees and grants.<sup>1</sup>

The Board of Selectmen and Town Manager develop annual goals. Both have embraced goals of transparency, public information, and customer service. Toward these ends, Arlington has established an online Request/Answer Center to make, track, and search requests for town services. The service has been heavily used by both staff and residents. In addition, there is a town email distribution list for official notices, information on town activities, and public alerts. According to the 2012 *Annual Report*, subscription has increased to more than 4,500. Arlington residents take participation seriously, and they expect timely access to information. In Vision 2020 surveys, many respondents have said they rely on the town website and public alerts to stay on top of town and school issues.<sup>2</sup>

Several departments comprise the general government operations at Arlington Town Hall (Table 9.1). In addition to the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen, Arlington has the core functions of town clerk, comptroller, treasurer/collector, and assessors; and planning and zoning in the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD). The general government functions in Arlington have a combined total of 57.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, or approximately 1.3 general government employees per 1,000 population.<sup>3</sup> Most departments provide support to elected and appointed boards, notably DPCD, which works with many volunteer entities: the Redevelopment Board, Board of Appeals, Historic District Commission, Conservation Commission, Vision 2020, the Open Space Committee, the Master Plan Advisory Committee, and others.

**Table 9.1. General Government FTE Staff (FY 2014)**

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager, *FY 2014 Annual Budget and Financial Plan*, 177-198 passim; and interview, September 25, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> *Vision 2020 Annual Report to Town Meeting* (May 6, 2013), 4.

<sup>3</sup> *FY 2014 Annual Budget and Financial Plan*, 61-101 passim.

Position	Board of Selectmen	Town Manager	Human Resources	Finance
Managerial	1	2.0	1.0	2.0
Clerical	2.5	1.0	2.5	11.2
Professional/Technical	0	2.7	0.0	3.0
Custodial	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	3.5	5.7	3.5	16.2
Position	Assessor	Information Technology	Legal	Town Clerk/Registrars
Managerial	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0
Clerical	3.0	1.0	1.5	3.0
Professional/Technical	0.0	5.5	1.0	1.0
Custodial	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	4.0	7.5	4.5	5.0
Position	Parking	Planning & Community Development	Redevelopment Board	Zoning Board of Appeals
Managerial	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Clerical	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.5
Professional/Technical	0.0	3.8	0.0	0.0
Custodial	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0
Total	1.0	5.8	0.5	0.5
Grand Total				57.7

Source: Town of Arlington, FY2014 Budget

**Facilities.** All of Arlington’s general government functions are housed within the historic Town Hall and annex at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Academy Street in Arlington Center. The 100-year-old building includes administrative offices, meeting rooms, and a beautifully restored auditorium used for town meetings and other community events. Town Hall is partially accessible to people with disabilities.

## 2. Public Safety

### POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Police Department has the largest staff of all Town departments in Arlington (excluding the schools). Organized into three divisions, the Police Department has a total of over 83 FTE employees (Table 9.2), or 1.95 FTE per 1,000 population. Staffing for the traffic and patrol functions in the Community Services Division and the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) have been reduced from historic levels but remained constant for the last few years. In the past, administration and support for the fire and police departments were accounted for separately in the Community Safety Administration & Support Budget. As of FY 2014, these functions have been integrated within the police and fire department budgets, but the support staff levels will remain the same. The public safety dispatchers now fall within the police department’s purview as well.

Position	Total Staff
Chief	1
Captain	3
Lieutenant	6
Sergeants	9
Police Officers	47
Parking Control Officers	2.4
Animal Control Officer	1
Dispatchers	10
Clerical	4.3
Custodial	1
Total	83.7

Source: Town of Arlington, FY2014 Budget

- ◆ The **Community Services Division** includes all uniformed patrol operations: the Traffic Unit, Patrol Division, Community Services Officer, K-9 Unit, Bicycle Unit, and Animal Control. Officers answer calls, enforce traffic and parking laws, and perform special assignments such as school safety. The Crime Analysis Unit tracks trends and patterns and uses the information to direct police resources.

**Table 9.3. Police Department Calls for Service: 2009-2012**

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Emergency Calls	25,268	26,732	27,483	30,168
Police Reports	3,510	3,810	3,638	3,488
Arrests	309	293	226	209
Protective Custody	35	22	15	35
Summons	205	181	192	183
M.V. Citations	3,369	3,567	4,049	3,914

Source: Arlington Police Department, 2012 Annual Report

- ◆ The **Investigative Services and Professional Standards Division** administers the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) and Professional Standards/Accreditation Office. The CIB has responsibility for crime follow-up, maintaining the sex offender registry, police prosecutions in court, the school resource officer, drug task force, family services, and code enforcement. This division also develops and implements department policies and procedures, maintains state accreditation and certification, and conducts internal and special investigations.
- ◆ The **Support Services Division** provides logistical support to all police units and carries out administrative functions. The division’s responsibilities include recruiting, hiring, and training new officers; managing information systems; issuing firearm and hackney licenses; scheduling; maintaining the fleet and building; recordkeeping; and dispatch.

The Police Department receives grants for special programs, e.g., the Hoarding Response Team (a joint effort with the Fire and Health Departments) and the Jail Diversion Program. Both efforts pair a mental health clinician with public safety officials to help residents with mental health problems.

Arlington belongs to the North Eastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (NEMLEC), which provides mutual aid and has an assistance agreement to share resources and personnel among member communities.

**Calls for Service.** Between 2009 and 2012, the Arlington Police Department’s calls for service increased steadily (Table 9.3). According to the 2012 *Annual Report*, the Police Department responded to more than 30,000 emergency calls that year. However, arrests decreased, as did reported “Part A” crimes: murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, arson, and motor vehicle theft. In Arlington, burglaries are the most common Part A crime. In 2012, a total of 582 crimes were reported to the Police Department, representing a 15 percent decrease from 2011. Traffic problems generate many of the public safety complaints. The Traffic Unit is understaffed, with only one full-time officer assigned to it. With increasing investigative and administrative functions, the Traffic Unit’s productivity has decreased.<sup>4</sup>

**Facilities.** The Police Department operates from Arlington’s Community Safety Building. Built in 1983, it is currently in the second phase of a three-phase renovation. Phase 1 involved rebuilding the central courtyard. In Phase 2, the building’s damaged envelope—caused by chronic water infiltration—is being reconstructed. Phase 3 will focus on interior renovations and programmatic improvements to support police operations. This last phase, budgeted at \$2.5 million, is currently planned for FY 2015 and FY 2016.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Arlington Police Department, 2012 *Annual Report*.

<sup>5</sup> Arlington Capital Planning Committee, *Report to Town Meeting*, April 2013.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

The Arlington Fire Department’s responsibilities include fire prevention and suppression, hazard mitigation, planning for local emergencies, and emergency medical service. Fire prevention includes code enforcement and inspections as well as public education efforts, e.g., Student Awareness of Fire Education (SAFE) and the Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention Program (JFIP). All Arlington firefighters are trained in emergency medical techniques, and all newly hired firefighters are required to become emergency medical technicians (EMTs). There is one Town-owned ambulance with one backup. Arlington continues to explore expanding its emergency medical service to include advanced life support (ALS) and a second full-time ambulance. Currently, the privately owned Armstrong Ambulance Service provides the paramedics for all ALS calls. The paramedics and their non-transport vehicles are based in Arlington.

Position	Total Staffing
Chief	1.0
Deputy Chief	5.0
Captain	6.0
Lieutenant	15.0
Firefighter	50.0
Professional/Technical	2.0
Clerical	1.0
Total	80.0

Source: Town of Arlington, FY 2014 Budget

The Fire Department employs 80 people, most with combined firefighter/EMT responsibilities (Table 9.4), or 1.87 FTE per 1,000 population. In 2012, the Fire Department had 73 EMTs on staff and three first responders. According to the 2012 *Annual Report* and the Town’s FY 2014 Budget and Financial Plan, the Fire Department’s capacity has been strained by increasing demands, particularly for training, prevention, and inspections. This year, the Fire Department expects to create a five-to-ten- year plan that will likely involve reorganization of functions and personnel.

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Fire	79	132	111	133
Emergency Medicals & Medical Assists	2,546	2,490	2,581	2,450
Other*	2,093	2,426	2,125	2,169
Total Calls	4,718	5,048	4,817	4,752

Source: Arlington Fire Department, 2012 Annual Report.

**Calls for Service.** The Arlington Fire Department responded to 4,752 calls for service in 2012, including 133 fires. Over half the calls were for medical emergencies or medical assists. The overall call volume has remained relatively constant for the past several years (Table 9.5).

**Facilities and Equipment.** Public facilities are often built in strategic locations. By siting emergency departments in centrally located areas, the greatest number of residents can benefit from their services. Arlington’s historic Central Fire Station is a good example of a Public Facility that is strategically located at the confluence of multiple street grids which enable quick access in an emergency. Its prominence along Broadway also demarcates a bend in Massachusetts Avenue, adding visual significance to its role in the physical fabric of the Town. Arlington has three fire stations that house a variety of apparatus (Table 9.6). The Fire Department Headquarters are located in the historic Central Fire Station, which is currently in the final phase of a complete renovation. Funding for design for interior renovations is budgeted in Arlington’s capital plan for FY2014, with construction budgeted in FY2015 (estimated construction cost: \$5.6 million). The Highland Fire Station,

Station	Equipment
Central Fire Station	Engine 1 Engine 5 Ladder 1 4 cars 1 pick up 1 trailer 1 maintenance truck 1 boat
Highland Fire Station	Engine 2 Engine 4 Rescue 1 Rescue 2
Tower Fire Station (Park Circle)	Engine 3

Source: Northeast Fire News, 2013.

The Fire Department Headquarters are located in the historic Central Fire Station, which is currently in the final phase of a complete renovation. Funding for design for interior renovations is budgeted in Arlington’s capital plan for FY2014, with construction budgeted in FY2015 (estimated construction cost: \$5.6 million). The Highland Fire Station,

renovated in 2011, is certified as LEED Silver<sup>6</sup>. The third facility, the Tower Fire Station on Park Avenue in the Heights, was built in 2007 to replace an earlier station at that site.

**INSPECTIONAL SERVICES**

The Inspectional Services Department (ISD) administers the State Building Code and enforces the Zoning Bylaw. In addition to the ISD director, who serves as the Town’s building commissioner, the department employs three other inspectors and a zoning assistant (Table 9.7). In FY2012, the ISD issued a combined total of 5,760 building, plumbing, gas, and wiring permits. Like most building departments, Arlington’s ISD generates significantly more revenue from permit fees than the town’s cost to operate the department. The 5,760 permits issued in 2012 brought over \$1.7 million to the Arlington’s general fund compared with a total operating budget of \$378,190.<sup>7</sup>

Managerial	1.0
Clerical	1.0
Professional/Technical	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.0</b>
Source: Town of Arlington, FY 2014 Budget	

**3. Public Works**

The Arlington Department of Public Works (DPW) consists of eight divisions with a combined total of 77.3 FTE employees (Table 9.8), or just 1.8 FTE per 1,000 population – including those employed under the water/sewer enterprise. The DPW was Arlington’s largest town department a decade ago (2004), but it has felt the effects of budget shortfalls more than most other municipal operations. As in most towns, the DPW in Arlington is the “go-to” department for numerous requests, and it is a very busy operation. Public works departments everywhere tend to be capital-intensive operations, and the same applies to Arlington’s DPW. Virtually all of the projects the DPW is responsible for involve both workers and heavy equipment: dump trucks, tractors, backhoes, street sweepers, sanders, materials and equipment for water and sewer main repairs and improvements, plows, and so forth. Its \$24.2 million share of the 2012-2013 capital plan is one-half of the total that Arlington expects to spend on capital projects between FY 2014-2018.<sup>8</sup>

Position	Total Staffing
Administration	7.2
Engineering	4.0
Cemeteries	3.6
Natural Resources	18.0
Highways	22.0
Water/Sewer	16.5
Fleet Maintenance	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>77.3</b>
Source: Town of Arlington, FY 2014 Budget.	
Note: two DPW divisions - Properties and Streetlights – do not have employees.	

**DPW Services.** In addition to core DPW administrative functions, the DPW maintains over 100 miles of roadways and 175 miles of sidewalks; provides engineering services (e.g., design, construction oversight, development review); maintains all town parks and playgrounds and all trees on public property; manages building custodians; and maintains forty town buildings,<sup>9</sup> cemeteries, the town’s 250 miles of water and sewer infrastructure, and over 150 town vehicles. The DPW also oversees the vendor contract for curbside solid waste disposal, composting, and recycling services. Although Arlington is not a “pay-as-you-throw” or PAYT

<sup>6</sup> LEED Silver indicates a score of 50-59 out of 100 points on a scale that measures energy efficiency and environmental design.

<sup>7</sup> FY2014 Annual Budget and Financial Plan, 137.

<sup>8</sup> FY 2014 Budget and Financial Plan, 191-194.

<sup>9</sup> Supervision of building maintenance resides in the DPW, but the budget for building maintenance and all of the maintenance personnel are in the School Department.

community, the DPW is particularly proud of its accomplishments with solid waste and recycling. In 2012, for example, the Town reduced solid waste disposal from 14,527 to 14,214 tons and increased recyclables from 4,395 to 4,652 tons.<sup>10</sup>

**Constraints and Challenges.** Aside from a 29 percent decrease in DPW employees between 2003 and 2013 (measured in FTE),<sup>11</sup> the DPW operates with some constraints that are unique to a built-out community. For example, Arlington has no designated storage areas for snow and tree removal, so the DPW has to work with the owners of vacant or underused sites such as parking lots in order to find places to dump snow or trees during or after a storm. According to the DPW director, the Town has had to move snow to some of the public parks, but doing so runs the risk of costly damage to these facilities. An inter-local or regional approach may be explored, though concerns about contamination and the added problem of longer turn-around times makes an out-of-town snow disposal site difficult.

A second challenge for the DPW and the Cemetery Commission, is that Arlington is running out of cemetery space. The Mount Pleasant Cemetery is the only public cemetery facility in Arlington that still has room for additional burials, but the estimated capacity of the available space is about five years.

Arlington residents clearly value the tree canopy that defines most neighborhood streets. The abundance of mature trees found throughout Arlington has an indelible impact on the town's visual character and environmental quality. The DPW Natural Resources Division has responsibility for tree maintenance and, according to local data, Arlington has approximately 19,000 public trees. Due to the number of severe storm events that occurred in 2012 – the July “microburst” and Tropical Storm Sandy in October – coupled with staff shortages, the DPW has a current backlog of about 400 tree repair/removal requests, or roughly one year of catch-up work. The Natural Resources Division also maintains thirty parks, twenty-six playgrounds, nineteen athletic fields, several parcels of open space, and twenty-one traffic islands.<sup>12</sup>

Private ways present additional public works challenges in Arlington. The Town has approximately twenty-three lane miles of private ways. According to the DPW, the private ways serving many houses on small lots are in relatively good condition, but the short private ways in lower-density parts of town need work. Mainly for public safety reasons, Arlington plows all roads during the winter and provides curbside trash pickup as well, including on private roads, but regular road maintenance is limited to public streets under the Town's jurisdiction. The DPW estimates that approximately one-third of the private ways in Arlington are in serious disrepair posing a hazard for pedestrians and vehicular access to abutting properties.

**Water/Sewer Enterprise.** Arlington purchases water and sewer service from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) but maintains its own water and sewer infrastructure: 135 miles of water mains, 127 miles of sewer mains, nine sewer lift stations, and many hydrants, valves, and service connections/shut offs. The Town charges residents and businesses for water and sewer use and pays the MWRA approximately \$12 million per year. Arlington operates these services as a municipal enterprise, which means water and sewer revenues are accounted for separately from the General Fund. Since these services receive a set level of subsidy (approximately \$5.6 million) from taxes, water and sewer rates must be set at levels that will cover the Town's obligations to the MWRA and provide for reasonable operating and capital reserves.

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<sup>10</sup> Public Works Department, *2012 Annual Report*, and Michael Rademacher, DPW Director, interview, September 17, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> *FY 2014 Budget and Financial Plan*, 58.

<sup>12</sup> Public Works Department, *2012 Annual Report*.



#### 4. Health & Human Services

Arlington has a multi-purpose human services agency with programs supported both by tax revenue and user fees. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) includes the Board of Health, the Council on Aging (COA), COA Transportation, Veterans Services, and the Youth Counseling Center. It also provides professional support to several town boards, notably the Fair Housing Commission, the Disabilities Commission, Board of Health, Council on Aging, Human Rights Commission, and Board of Youth Services. The department employs fourteen people (FTE) and provides services on a contractual basis as well (Table 9.10). In addition to these budgeted services, the HHS oversees a federally funded program known as the Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition, which employs three people.

**Table 9.10. Health & Human Services Staff (FY2014)**

Position	Municipal Enterprises				
	Board of Health	Veterans Agent	Council on Aging (COA)	COA Transportation	Youth Counseling Center
Managerial	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
Clerical	0.8	0.0	0.9	0.5	1.5
Professional/Technical	2.5	1.0	1.1	0.0	1.7
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>4.2</b>

Source: Town of Arlington, FY 2014 Budget.

HHS programs are scattered among several community facilities, though all are located in the town’s civic center. The main administrative offices are at 27 Maple Street in the former Central School building, which also houses the COA and the Arlington Senior Center. The Central School was rehabilitated from a school building to a senior/community center and leased office space in 1984. The existing space available to the COA is inadequate to serve the 4,420 Arlington seniors who seek service annually, according to correspondence from the COA Board of Directors.<sup>13</sup> The COA is subject to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) privacy rules which are challenging for the COA to meet in shared workspaces. According to the town’s Capital Planning Committee (CIC), the Central School is managed by the Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB). The Youth Counseling Center occupies space in the Whittemore Robbins House, located behind the library. The Veterans Agent has an office at Town Hall.

#### 5. Arlington Public Library

Arlington’s public library system is a vital asset to the community, serving as a cultural hub and providing free and equal access to traditional and technological resources for all Arlington residents. The main library, Robbins Library, is located in the heart of Arlington, on Massachusetts Avenue. Built in 1892, Robbins Library was designed in the Italian Renaissance style, modeled on a palace in Rome, and finished extravagantly with marble, gold leaf, and custom furniture and fixtures.<sup>14</sup> It is on the

**Table 9.11. Library Staff (FY2014)**

Position	Total Staffing (FTE)
Managerial	1.0
Clerical	17.5
Professional/Technical	12.0
Custodial	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>31.3</b>

Source: Town of Arlington, FY 2014 Budget

<sup>13</sup> May 15, 2014 letter to Director of Planning and Community Development from the COA Board.

<sup>14</sup> Arlington Public Libraries, History of the Library. See also, Part 6, Historic & Cultural Resources.

National Register of Historic Places. Arlington also operates a branch library on Massachusetts Avenue in East Arlington, the Edith M. Fox Library, which was built in 1965 to replace the original East Branch library on Massachusetts Avenue. Since 1994, the Fox Library has also served as an active, multi-purpose community center.

Both libraries offer a variety of programming for children, teens, and adults. Examples of library programming include panels of local authors, summer reading program, teen book group, and story time. In addition, both facilities have public computer workstations, which are heavily used, and the library has a laptop lending service. Robbins Library also has display space for local organizations, special exhibits, study rooms, a local history room, and community rooms available for local group meetings. Rooms at the Robbins Library can be rented after hours for events. Arlington is part of the Minuteman Library Network of forty-three public and academic libraries, offering residents access to combined holdings of over six million items.

**Operations.** The Town Manager oversees the library operations, and the Library Board of Trustees administers library trust funds. The seven board members are appointed by the Town Manager for terms between one and three years. In addition to public funding, the Friends of Robbins Library and Friends of the Fox Branch Library provide financial support for programs and extended hours. The Anne A. Russell Children’s Educational and Cultural Enrichment Fund, established in the 1990s, supports children’s services. Further, the Arlington Libraries Foundation was started in 2013 to attract private donations to support the library’s goals.

Robbins Library is open Monday through Friday year-round, with Saturday hours in September through June and Sunday afternoon hours in October through April. Sunday hours are funded through private donations. A decrease in private funds could place Sunday hours in jeopardy unless the Town provides financial support.<sup>15</sup> The Fox Library is open Tuesday through Friday, with Friday hours funded by the Friends of the Fox.

The library budget provides for a total of 31.3 FTE positions, but the libraries employ and approximately 20 part-time employees (Table 9.11). Due to budget cuts, staffing has decreased since 2003. The increasing demand for library services has led to growth in responsibilities for staff members. Implementing new technologies, such as the radio frequency identification (RFID) system for tracking and inventory, can help the library meet its growing demands with current staff levels.

**Use.** Arlington’s libraries are heavily used. In FY2012, the libraries reported over 325,000 visits, a total circulation of 665,437, the highest in the library’s history, and a 23 percent increase since 2002 (Table 9.12).<sup>16</sup> The library also reported that circulation of electronic content, including ebooks, quadrupled between 2011 and 2012, to over 8,900. Circulation at the Fox Library has also increased significantly in recent years.

<b>Table 9.12. Arlington Library Use: 2011-2012</b>		
	FY2011	FY2012
Circulation of materials	641,994	665,437
eContent circulation	2,213	8,902
Children's programs	331	460
Adult and young adult programs	85	119
Visits to Robbins Library	321,898	325,550
Uses of Meeting Rooms	997	1,053
Source: Arlington Libraries, Department Report in Arlington’s 2012 Annual Report.		

The library director estimates that overdue fees and fines generate approximately \$40,000 annually, which goes to the Town’s General Fund.<sup>17</sup>

**Facilities.** Robbins Library had a major renovation with a new addition, in 1992. Since then, the way residents use the library has changed, shifting the focus away from print materials to computer-based resources. Demand has also increased significantly. The Library staff is currently developing a strategic plan that will include an

<sup>15</sup> Ryan Livergood (Library Director), interview by Caroline Edwards, October 17, 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Arlington Libraries, Department Report in Arlington’s 2012 Annual Report.

<sup>17</sup> Ryan Livergood (Library Director), Department Survey, October 2013.

observational study of how library patrons currently use the space. The study’s results will influence future capital improvements for the facility. Robbins Library has also been proposed as a public cooling zone for the community during summer weekends, which would require additional funding to keep the library open for summer weekend hours.<sup>18</sup> The Fox Branch Library, which has not had a major renovation since 1969, also has capital needs. Both library buildings are managed by DPW.

## 6. Recreation

The Arlington Recreation Department is responsible for managing town recreation facilities: scheduling, developing and providing programs, collecting user fees, and so forth, and provides staff support to the Park and Recreation Commission (Table 9.13). The department consists of two divisions: recreation, and the Ed Burns Arena/Sports Center. Arlington operates both as municipal enterprises, so all of the town’s recreation services have to be self-supporting from user fees. Together, the Recreation Department’s programs and the ice rink generate approximately \$1.1 million per year in revenue. The Arlington Friends of Parks umbrella group, individual friends groups, and the numerous youth leagues help with routine maintenance and special projects, but the DPW is responsible for most of the maintenance of public recreation facilities.

Position	Recreation	Ed Burns Arena
Managerial	0.5	0.5
Clerical	0.6	0.6
Professional/Technical	1.0	1.0
Custodial	0.0	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>3.1</b>
Source: Town of Arlington, FY 2014 Budget		

Arlington’s rich variety of opportunities for active recreation include Town-owned softball and baseball fields, football fields, multi-use fields for soccer, lacrosse, and other sports, an ice rink, public beach, spray pool, basketball, bocce and tennis courts, and playgrounds. There are also state-owned trails and private fields and clubs. Other recreational opportunities include boating on Spy Pond, home to the Arlington-Belmont Crew, a high school rowing program, and The Recreation Department sponsors seasonal offerings of sports, fitness, skating, and other programs for residents of all ages.

The Recreation Department manages 28 parks, playground and buildings throughout the Town including the following major facilities:

- ⑤ **Veterans Memorial Sports Complex.** This major multi-sport complex includes the Ed Burns Arena and all the surrounding baseball, softball, little league and soccer fields that are used by local sports organizations.
- ⑤ **Ed Burns Arena.** The state owned Ed Burns Arena is also the Recreation Department’s headquarters. Built in 1971, the facility originally offered a seasonal regulation-size skating rink. The Ed Burns Arena is now a year-round, multi-sport facility with an ice rink that operates during the fall and winter, and batting cages, indoor soccer programs, and summer camps in the spring and summer. It is used for a variety of special events and serves as home facility for the Arlington Hockey and Figure Skating Association and Arlington High and Arlington Catholic High School hockey teams. Table 9.14 tracks annual usage statistics for the skating rink for the past five years. Public skating as an activity for both adults and children has grown significantly over the past several years, and the department offers a variety of instructional programs and special skating events.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

**Table 9.14. Participation Statistics: Veterans Memorial Skating Rink**

	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	% Change
Ice Rental Hours	1,913	2,086	1,859	1,944	1,962	2.6%
Rec & Public Skate Hours	496	552	500	610	622	25.4%
Public Skate #'s-Adult	3,597	3824	3,979	4,484	4,258	18.4%
Public Skate Passes #'s-Adult	46	55	58	53	53	15.2%
Public Skate #'s-Child/Seniors	8,356	8597	7,846	8,317	8,411	0.7%
Public Skate Passes #'s-Child/Seniors	85	92	98	127	79	-7.1%
Skate Rentals	2,713	2597	2,762	3,235	2,959	9.1%
Skate Sharpening	932	962	982	1,112	848	-9.0%
Skate Sharpening Passes	N/A	11	20	15	9	N/A
Stick and Puck	280	452	557	518	657	134.6%

Source: Arlington Recreation Department, August 2013. Note: the skating rink is actually owned by the Commonwealth and managed by the Arlington Recreation Department.

- ⑤ **Robbins Farm Park.** The historic Robbins Farm was owned and farmed by the Robbins Family for more than three generations. In 1941, the Town acquired the land for a public park. Residents use the Robbins Farm fields, court, and playground year-round for active and passive recreation. The site includes a large playground, renovated in 2003, with unique hillside slides and a picnic area, a basketball court, baseball and soccer fields, and a hillside used for sledding in the winter. The Park and Recreation Commission prepared a master plan for Robbins Farm Park in the early 2000s.
- ⑤ **Menotomy Rocks Park**
- ⑤ **Spy Pond Park.** Located on Spy Pond’s north shoreline, this public park includes a playground, a public boat ramp, benches, and picnic tables. In 1999, the town commissioned a feasibility study for the park and shoreline. The plan recommended park improvements, environmental remediation, and site improvements to prevent soil erosion, improve drainage, remove invasive plant species, and deter geese. The Town’s Vision 2020 Spy Pond Task Group and the Friends of Spy Pond Park participate in stewardship and planning efforts at the pond.
- ⑤ **McClennen Park**
- ⑤ **Reservoir Beach.** Located on Lowell Street in Arlington Heights, Reservoir Beach includes a filtered/chlorinated swimming area, bathhouse, vending machines and playground. The beach is supervised by certified lifeguards and other beach staff when open. Boston.com recently listed Reservoir Beach as one of the state’s top ten swimming holes.<sup>19</sup>
- ⑤ **Hurd Field.** Located near Mill Brook and the Reservoir, Hurd Field offers two softball diamonds and a multi-use field. The Town received a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant for a Porous Pavement Education Project at Hurd Field, which funded the installation of a new porous parking surface at the field. A rain garden was also installed in 2013 with support from the Town and the Mystic River Watershed Association.
- ⑤ **Thorndike Field**

Many organized team sports for youth and adult sports leagues are popular in Arlington, but the Recreation Department reports increasing interest in youth lacrosse, which has gained popularity nationwide. Arlington had

<sup>19</sup> Boston.com, “Massachusetts Swimming Holes”.  
[http://www.boston.com/travel/explore/massachusetts/galleries/swimming\\_holes?pg=6](http://www.boston.com/travel/explore/massachusetts/galleries/swimming_holes?pg=6)

about twenty youth involved with lacrosse ten years ago; today, more than 500 children participate. The fees collected from participants of these leagues help to defray some of the capital and maintenance costs of the facilities. Arlington is also seeing growth in picnic permit requests at parks such as Menotomy Rocks, Robbins Farm, McClennen, Spy Pond, and Parallel Park. Furthermore, there has been increased use of Arlington's off-leash dog park at Thorndike Field, and a growing desire among residents for additional off-leash dog areas.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to traditional sports, leisure, and fitness programming for all ages, the Recreation Department has opened an after-school program for children in grades K-5. Arlington Kid Care, a state-licensed childcare program, operates at the Gibbs School and serves all of the Town's elementary schools, as well as St. Agnes, a local parochial school.

Arlington has made a substantial investment in developing and maintaining recreation facilities. Between 2003 and 2013, many playing fields, courts, and playgrounds were updated with new surfaces, equipment, lights, and irrigation systems. The Town completed a \$2 million improvements project at the ice rink and upgraded several playgrounds. The Recreation Department's long-term capital plan anticipates many more improvements, including a new bath house at Reservoir Beach, field and diamond repairs at Hurd Field and Poets Corner, field and court renovations at Robbins Farm, Scannell Field, and Spy Pond, and new play structures at several town playgrounds.

Arlington's public parks support passive enjoyment and active recreation. Robbins Farm Park, McClennen Park, Menotomy Rocks Park, and the Arlington Reservoir are some of the larger sites that offer natural settings for walking, picnicking, sunbathing, and relaxing, as well as designated areas for organized recreation. Arlington also has a dedicated off-leash recreation area (OLRA) at Thorndike Field and a limited off-leash program at several other recreation sites. Arlington also has facilities for active recreation, including tennis and basketball courts, playing fields, and an ice rink, as well as neighborhood pocket parks and playgrounds that are located throughout the town. In addition, the Town offers swimming at the Reservoir Beach and a spray pool in North Union Park. The Arlington School Department and/or Arlington Recreation Department maintains playgrounds and gyms at each school, and these facilities are available for general public use after school hours.

All of Arlington's recreation facilities are heavily used and valued by local residents. Table 9.15 reports summary-level program participation statistics for Recreation Department seasonal programs for the past five years and details activity at the Reservoir Beach.

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<sup>20</sup> Joseph Connelly, Arlington Recreation Director. Arlington Park and Recreation Commission, *Capital Plan FY 2014-FY 2024*.

	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
<b>Program Participants by Season</b>					
Summer	1,464	1,349	1,634	1,832	1,823
Fall	913	1,057	920	1,110	1,263
Winter	764	905	1,506	1,207	2,012
Spring	544	732	812	772	786
<b>Reservoir Beach Tags Sold</b>					
Adult Resident	464	352	455	437	437
Child Resident	461	346	443	395	395
Senior Citizen	67	51	70	71	71
Non-Resident	31	13	13	24	24
Resident Family	358	290	379	340	340
Non Resident Family	46	17	34	27	27
Resident Family Plus 1	90	59	70	64	64
Non-Resident Family Plus 1	8	1	3	6	6
Total	1,525	1,129	1,467	1,364	1,364
<b>Reservoir Beach Passes Sold</b>					
Weekday Pass	3,500	3,051	4,254	3,050	3,344
Weekend Pass	1,191	1,431	1,827	1,667	2,386
Total	4,691	4,482	6,081	4,717	5,730

Source: Arlington Recreation Department, August 2013.

**Other Recreation Facilities.** The Minuteman Bikeway provides various recreational opportunities, and it also functions as a habitat corridor due to its proximity to open space, brooks, and water bodies. The path connects the wildlife habitat of Arlington's Town-owned Great Meadows in Lexington to the natural environment of Spy Pond. The Minuteman Bikeway was constructed on the former Boston and Maine Railroad right of way in 1992 after 20 years of planning and construction. The entire path is almost 11 miles long, beginning in Bedford Center, passing through Lexington and Arlington, and terminating in Cambridge near the Alewife MBTA Station. In addition to its popularity as a commuter bike route, the bikeway links historic sites, attractions, conservation areas, and parks in Arlington, Lexington, and Bedford. Arlington's portion of the bikeway is about three miles long and runs largely parallel to Massachusetts Avenue. In 2000, Arlington renamed its portion of the bikeway as the "Donald R. Marquis/Minuteman Bikeway" to honor a former town manager.

The Arlington Boys and Girls Club, located next to Spy Pond, is an important private, nonprofit resource for children and teenagers. It has the only indoor swimming pool in town for classes and open swim times, and is home for the high school swim team. The club offers a large variety of classes and special events, including pre-school, after-school, and summer programs, and boating on Spy Pond. Fidelity House in Arlington Center is another private, nonprofit community center that offers a wide variety of programs for children. Arlington also hosts many privately owned health clubs, fitness centers, and yoga studios that offer a variety of facilities and programs, primarily for adults.

There are other open space and recreation oriented resources and facilities in town that are also important, but they are not "Town/public facilities and services" per se. (i.e., Alewife Greenway, Mystic River and Lakes)

## **E. TOWN BUILDINGS**

The Town of Arlington owns nearly fifty buildings. In addition to those most recognizable to the general public – Town Hall, the libraries, the schools, community safety, and public works – the Arlington Redevelopment Board manages several decommissioned facilities and leases the space to tenants, primarily local nonprofits

such as the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum, Arlington Chamber of Commerce, Arlington Center for the Arts, and Arlington Community Media Inc., the local cable access station. An inventory prepared by the Capital Planning Committee (CPC) has been reproduced for Appendix 1.

### **PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE**

In the past, Arlington had no town-wide policy for a coordinated approach to preventative maintenance of town facilities. Departmental coordination was lacking, and the town had multiple maintenance service contracts with vendors. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of preventative maintenance, Arlington has created a Facilities Maintenance Planning Committee. Led by the assistant town manager, this committee is in its infancy in 2013, but it is working to develop a comprehensive preventative maintenance plan for all Town-owned public facilities.<sup>21</sup>

### **UNIVERSAL ACCESS**

It is not clear how many town facilities in Arlington are fully accessible to people with disabilities. The Town prepared an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan in 1992, but it appears that the plan has not been fully implemented. Under ADA, local governments have to provide accessible programs (also known as program access), but the law creates some options for achieving access, such as moving programs to an accessible building. Access to and within buildings and in other types of public spaces, such as public sidewalks, needs to be reassessed.

### **ENERGY**

Arlington became a state-designated “Green Community” in 2010.<sup>22</sup> The Town has a part-time energy manager whose time is divided between Arlington and Bedford. The energy manager’s duties include administering energy programs and policies, managing and applying for grants, implementing sustainability projects, and monitoring energy consumption in municipal facilities. Since 2010, Arlington has used Green Communities funds to install energy conservation measures at several Town-owned buildings. The improvements included new, high efficiency boilers; variable speed drives (which save energy by adjusting the output of mechanical equipment in response to the amount of power required); energy management systems; steam traps; and motion light sensors. Arlington has also converted all of its streetlights to LED lights (Appendix 2). Through these efforts, the Town has reduced its energy consumption by 22 percent since 2008. Potential future projects include installing occupancy sensors and updating light fixtures at DPW facilities and Robbins Library; and installing anti-idling devices in DPW cars and trucks to lower carbon emissions.

## **F. ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

In the 2012-2013 school year, total K-12 enrollment in the Arlington Public Schools exceeded 5,000 students. Approximately half of these students are in the elementary schools. Enrollment has grown steadily for the past twenty years and is expected to continue to increase over the next five years (Table 9.18). At this writing, the increase in school enrollment for the 2014-2015 school year is more than double the projected increase.

In addition to providing its own public schools, Arlington belongs to the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School District. Located in Lexington, Minuteman Regional High School serves sixteen towns and more than 700 students, including 125 high school students and 14 post-graduate students from Arlington in 2012. Minuteman Regional is in the Massachusetts School Building Authority’s (MSBA) Vocational School Repair and Renew pipeline for renovations and an addition.

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<sup>21</sup> Andrew Flanagan, Assistant Town Manager, interview, October 9, 2013.

<sup>22</sup> “Green Communities” is a program of the Mass. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA). It provides funding to eligible cities and towns for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. To qualify for designation, a community must institute certain energy policies and provide streamlined zoning and other regulations for renewable energy development.

The Arlington Public Schools operates nine school facilities: seven elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school (Table 9.16). Menotomy Preschool is a nonprofit preschool located in Arlington High School and run by the childhood special education department at AHS, offering work-related training experience for high school students studying early childhood education. The elementary schools serve grades kindergarten through five. A redistricting plan for elementary schools went into effect for the 2013-2014 school year in an effort to address enrollment imbalances.

<b>School</b>	<b>Description</b>
Bishop Elementary 25 Columbia Road	Grades: kindergarten to 5 51,367 sf, built in 1950; renovated in 2002 Softball/little league diamond, basketball court, multipurpose field, playground, parking lot
Brackett Elementary 66 Eastern Avenue	Grades: kindergarten to 5 57,670 sf, originally built in 1930; rebuilt in 2000 Basketball court, multipurpose field, playground, across street from Robbins Farm Park (baseball diamond, multipurpose field, playground)
Dallin Elementary 185 Florence Avenue	Grades: kindergarten to 5 63,578? sf, originally built in 1956; rebuilt in 2005 Softball/little league diamond, basketball courts, multipurpose field, Playground
Hardy Elementary 52 Lake Street	Grades: kindergarten to 5 55,107 sf, built in 1926; renovated in 2001 Basketball courts, playground, parking lot available after 3pm
Peirce Elementary 85 Park Avenue Extension	Grades: kindergarten to 5 55,107 sf, originally built in 1926; rebuilt in 2004 Basketball courts, playground, parking lot available after 3pm
Stratton Elementary 180 Mountain Avenue	Grades: kindergarten to 5 63,300 sf, built in 1962; renovated in 1968, 2011 Baseball diamond, basketball courts, multipurpose field, playground, parking lot available after 3pm
Thompson Elementary 60 North Union Street	Grades: kindergarten to 5 59,000 sf, originally built in 1956; rebuilt in 2013 Basketball court, softball/little league diamond, playground, baseball diamond, multipurpose field, picnic tables, seasonal spray pool, parking lot
Ottoson Middle School 63 Acton Street	Grades: 6-8 154,380 sf, built in 1920; renovated in 1998 Softball/little league diamond, practice area, parking
Arlington High School 869 Massachusetts Avenue	Grades: 9-12 394,106 sf, built 1914; addition 1964 and renovated in 1980 synthetic field, track, basketball courts, baseball diamond, softball/ diamond, multipurpose field
Source: Arlington Capital Planning Committee, Report to Town Meeting, April 2013; Arlington Recreation Department	

Arlington is near the end of a multi-year process of renovating or replacing all seven elementary schools. To date, six of these schools have been completed. The most recent project involved the Thompson School, at \$20 million. The new building opened in September 2013. While the Stratton School is next, the timing of Stratton School improvements is complicated because Arlington High School – last upgraded more than 30 years ago – has major capital needs. Building conditions at Arlington High School led to a recent accreditation warning



from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). A needs assessment is being conducted to help the School Department plan for renovation or reconstruction of this facility in the next five years. The School Department has identified a need for a long-term capital maintenance plan and expanded technology in all schools.

## G. TOWN FINANCES

When asked to identify and rank Arlington’s current weaknesses and the conditions that threaten its future, participants at three public meetings for this master plan spoke almost in unison: lack of commercial and industrial tax base, and Arlington’s increasing dependence on residential taxpayers to fund the cost of local government. Most of the sixty-two residents who attended individual and small-group interviews made similar comments. Some characterized Arlington’s dilemma with words heard at all levels of government in the U.S. today: “structural deficit.” In fact, residential property values have driven Arlington’s tax base for many years. Since the mid-1980s, the tax base has gradually changed from 90 percent residential to almost 94 percent in 2013. In the intervening years (1986-2013), a combination of very little new growth, state aid fluctuations, three recessions, substantial increases in the cost of employee benefits such as pensions and health insurance and changes in school spending requirements have also contributed to making it hard for built-out suburbs like Arlington to pay for the services residents want to receive.

Arlington tracks financial indicators for thirteen comparison towns (Table 9.17): communities with similar populations, wealth, land area, road miles, budgets, and so forth. While Arlington relies more on residential property taxes than most towns in the comparison group, its tax burden is relatively low. Arlington’s average tax bill rose at a faster rate than the state median for the past two years, presumably due to a Proposition 2 ½ override vote in 2011. However, even with accelerated tax bill growth, Arlington’s tax levy per capita remained comfortably below the midpoint of its comparison area, and its average tax bill as a percentage of median household income is low for the comparison area, too. Arlington also spends less per capita than similar towns. The available demographic, revenue, and expenditure data for Arlington suggest that lack of revenue growth, not excessive spending, lies at the root of what residents call the Town’s structural deficit. As the Town’s FY 2014 Financial Plan suggests, Arlington is left “with only two choices: significant budget cuts resulting in service reductions or Proposition 2 ½ general overrides.”<sup>23</sup>

Define DOR and EQV in table below. Also, 2012 data is now available. Include

Community	Census 2010 Population	Population Density Sq. Mi.	2010 DOR Income Per Capita	2012 EQV Per Capita	2011 Expenditures Per Capita	2013 Levy Per Capita
ARLINGTON	42,844	8,271	\$43,414	\$175,702	\$2,029	\$2,288
Belmont	24,729	5,307	\$65,808	\$226,958	\$2,678	\$2,914
Brookline	58,732	8,650	\$58,434	\$276,924	\$2,976	\$2,897
Medford	56,173	6,901	\$29,198	\$126,373	\$1,815	\$1,601
Melrose	26,983	5,753	\$37,402	\$138,817	\$2,435	\$1,779
Milton	27,003	2,071	\$51,918	\$169,647	\$2,372	\$2,406
Natick	33,006	2,189	\$46,091	\$199,265	\$2,891	\$2,706
Needham	28,886	2,291	\$80,902	\$281,849	\$3,533	\$3,477
North Andover	28,352	1,064	\$47,602	\$156,821	\$2,293	\$2,167
Reading	24,747	2,492	\$42,071	\$159,675	\$2,857	\$2,226
Stoneham	21,437	3,486	\$34,028	\$145,507	\$2,442	\$1,907
Watertown	31,915	7,765	\$35,554	\$169,115	\$2,801	\$2,456
Winchester	21,374	3,539	\$87,306	\$269,213	\$3,739	\$3,243

<sup>23</sup> FY 2014 Budget and Financial Plan, 15.

Sources: FY 2014 Budget and Financial Plan; Mass. Department of Revenue, Municipal Data Bank.

To preserve basic services and manage the rate of spending growth, Arlington approved an override of Proposition 2 ½ in 2011 with the understanding that the new revenues would maintain acceptable levels of service through FY 2014. Town leaders made several commitments for making the money last at least three years, and so far all of those commitments have been met. Recent changes in state law made it easier for Arlington and other communities to reduce expenditures for employee health insurance, and this has helped to stretch the benefits of the 2011 general override.<sup>24</sup>

## H. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) There seems to be a sense in Arlington that housing development (or redevelopment) has contributed to the decline in commercial and industrial tax revenue and exacerbated the “structural deficit.” Should the Town simply prohibit housing in the commercial districts?
- 2) What non-land use options should Arlington consider in order to reduce (or at least contain) the structural deficit? In other words, setting aside any land use policy changes, what else could the Town do? What should be the Town’s “structural deficit” policy?
- 3) By any measure, Arlington is a full-service community – that is, a community that provides a comprehensive package of programs and services for residents.
- 4) Arlington owns quite a bit of real estate. There may be good reasons for the Town to keep and manage so many buildings, but should there be a policy to guide the identification and disposition of “surplus” property? Do you think the Town has properties now that it could sell without sacrificing something very important to the community?
- 5) According to the DPW and Cemetery Commission, Arlington is rapidly running out of cemetery space. What options should the Town consider?
- 6) Arlington has other space problems, too, despite the amount of real estate the town actually owns. Arlington’s popular skating rink has reached capacity, it has playing fields that are overused, and the library has a space shortage. Does the Town have an effective, generally supported process for prioritizing capital improvements?
- 7) Sidewalks are a good example of a public facility that isn’t a building. There seems to be some concern in Arlington about the desirability of installing and maintaining brick sidewalks. Two issues have been identified: access constraints for people with disabilities, and cost. However, those who support brick sidewalks make a strong case for aesthetics. How should the Town address these opposing views?
- 8) One of the draft goals for the master plan calls on the Town to “build, operate, and maintain public facilities that are attractive and help to minimize environmental impact and that connect Arlington as a community.” In the context of public facilities, what could the Town do that it isn’t already doing to connect the community? Are there areas of town that are underserved by existing public facilities?
- 9) DPW is very overburdened and cannot keep with all its responsibilities, especially regarding recreation and building maintenance. How should this be addressed?

These items should be presented in the same order as the previous descriptions, and every key topic or department should be addressed in some way.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 3-4. See also, *Finance Committee Report to 2013 Annual Town Meeting*, 4.

For example, there is no question about town building energy policy and goals, or possible changes in public safety needs and resources to meet changing conditions.

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Table 9.18

<u>Year</u>	Births 5-yrs prev	<u>Pre-K</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>Tot</u>	Incr/(Decr) ) from Prior yr.	% Change
2006-2007	545	84	442	391	386	394	385	357	356	339	347	302	309	301	323	4716	-18	
2007-2008	537	79	409	439	399	384	381	382	337	354	317	316	271	299	292	4659	-57	-1.2%
2008-2009	496	82	456	405	439	387	376	374	369	344	354	296	308	266	300	4756	97	2.1%
2009-2010	558	64	457	451	411	423	387	366	365	373	343	320	295	323	272	4850	94	2.0%
2010-2011	545	60	450	442	435	399	427	367	349	350	365	306	325	296	311	4882	32	0.7%
2011-2012	537	47	434	455	421	426	390	412	355	335	348	308	304	342	299	4876	-6	-0.1%
2012-2013	496	57	453	472	446	420	429	395	379	337	337	322	313	309	354	5023	147	3.0%
2013-2014	558	60	477	478	483	464	434	429	357	393	328	299	320	321	314	5157	134	2.7%
5 year retention rate		1 (PK)	0.855 (K)	1.039 (K-1)	0.989 (1-2)	1.002 (2-3)	1.010 (3-4)	0.988 (4-5)	0.932 (5-6)	0.986 (6-7)	0.988 (7-8)	0.890 (8-9)	1.003 (9-10)	1.027 (10-11)	1.013 (11-12)			
Projected																		
2014-2015	517	60	442	496	473	484	469	429	400	352	388	292	300	329	325	5238	81	1.6%
2015-2016	563	60	481	459	490	474	489	463	400	394	348	346	293	308	333	5338	100	1.9%
2016-2017	545	60	466	500	454	491	479	483	431	394	390	310	347	301	312	5418	80	1.5%
2017-2018	597	60	510	484	495	455	496	473	450	425	390	347	311	356	305	5557	139	2.6%
2018- 2019**	525	60	449	530	479	496	460	490	441	444	420	347	348	319	361	5643	86	1.6%

Data from Arlington School Department PowerSchool as of 11/4/13  
 \*\*Birth Numbers from Arlington Town Clerk, estimated for 2018-2019