

9. PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

The Town of Arlington is a fairly large, complex corporation with an annual operating budget of \$132 million. In the eyes of credit rating agencies, Arlington is also a well-run town, for it ranks among an elite group of Massachusetts communities with a triple-A bond rating. Arlington provides all of the services found in other towns in the Greater Boston area, and 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 the Town’s historic civic buildings are among the great strengths of the community.

At the same time, Arlington residents have concerns about the cost of local government. While the public safety, public works, educational, and other services that Arlington provides enhance the quality of life for its residents, these services 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 land use on one hand and public expectations on the other hand. Arlington is a built-out urban 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, ranging from Arlington’s lack of land for new growth to its small nonresidential tax base and the unpredictability of state aid.

A. General Government Operations

Arlington has a Town Manager/Board of Selectmen form of government with a 252-member representative Town Meeting as its legislative body. The selectmen serve three-year terms and appoint the Town Manager, who serves as the Town’s chief executive officer and directs the day-to-day conduct of local government. The Town Manager prepares a proposed annual operating budget and capital budget and submits them to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee, which is responsible for reviewing all spending requests and making recommendations to Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen issues warrants for Town Meeting, makes recommendations on 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 official boards and commissions, hold public hearings, oversee traffic issues, and issue various licenses, including liquor and food vendor licenses.

Public Facilities Goals

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

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, Comptroller (or their designees), a representative of the Finance Committee, and four registered voters. Each year, the CPC distributes Capital Budget Request Forms to each town department and reviews these requests and general departmental needs. As a matter of policy, Arlington tries to dedicate approximately 5 percent of town revenue on capital items annually, including debt service from projects approved in prior years. Since requests typically exceed available funds, the CPC evaluates capital requests prioritizes them using the following criteria:

- 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 presents its recommendations to the Town Manager for inclusion with the Operating Budget. Over the next five years (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.¹

The Board of Selectmen and Town Manager develop annual goals. Both have embraced ongoing 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, public alerts, etc. According to the most recent *Annual Town Report* (2012), subscription has increased over time to over 4,500 in 2012. Arlington residents take citizen participation seriously, and they have high expectations for timely access to public information. In Vision 2020 surveys, a noticeably large share of survey respondents have said they rely on the town's website and the public alerts to stay on top of town and school issues.²

Several departments comprise the general government operations at Town Hall. In addition to the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen, Arlington has – like all communities – the core functions of town clerk, comptroller, treasurer/collector, and assessors; and planning and permitting operations in the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) and Inspectional Services Department. Most of these departments provide considerable support to elected and appointed boards and commissions, such as DPCD, which works with numerous volunteers: the Redevelopment Board, Board of Appeals, Historic

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

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

District Commission, Conservation Commission, Vision 2020, the Open Space Committee, the Master Plan Advisory Committee, and others.

B. Town Buildings

The Town of Arlington owns nearly 50 buildings. In addition to those most recognizable to the general public – Town Hall, the library, the schools, public safety, and public works – the Arlington Redevelopment Board manages several decommissioned facilities and leases the space to tenants, primarily local non-profits such as the Dallin Art Museum, Arlington Chamber of Commerce, and the local cable access station. Map 9.1 identifies the location of most of Arlington’s public facilities. Appendix 1 contains the complete inventory by type, size, and location.

1. Preventative Maintenance

In the past, Arlington has not had a coordinated approach to preventative maintenance of town facilities. There was no town-wide policy. Departmental coordination was lacking, and the town had multiple maintenance service contracts with vendors. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of preventative maintenance, Arlington recently created a Building Maintenance Committee. Led by the Assistant Town Manager, this committee is in its infancy, but it is working to develop a comprehensive preventative maintenance plan for the entire town.³

2. Energy

Arlington became a state-designated “Green Community” in 2010.⁴ Today, the Town has a part-time Energy Manager whose time is divided between Arlington and another town. 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; 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; energy efficiency upgrades to the HVAC system at Robbins Library; and installing anti-idling devices in DPW cars and trucks to lower carbon emissions.

C. School Facilities

In the 2012-2013 school year, total K-12 enrollment in the Arlington Public Schools exceeded 4,900 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. 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,

³ Andrew Flanagan, Assistant Town Manager, interview, October 9, 2013.

⁴ “Green Communities” is a program of the Mas. 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.

including 125 from Arlington. Minuteman Regional is in the Massachusetts School Building Authority’s (MSBA) Vocational School Repair and Renew pipeline for renovations and an addition.

1. Facilities

The Arlington Public Schools operates nine school facilities: seven elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school (Table 9.1). Menotomy Preschool is a non-profit 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 5. A redistricting plan for elementary schools went into effect for the 2013-2014 school year in an effort to address enrollment imbalances.

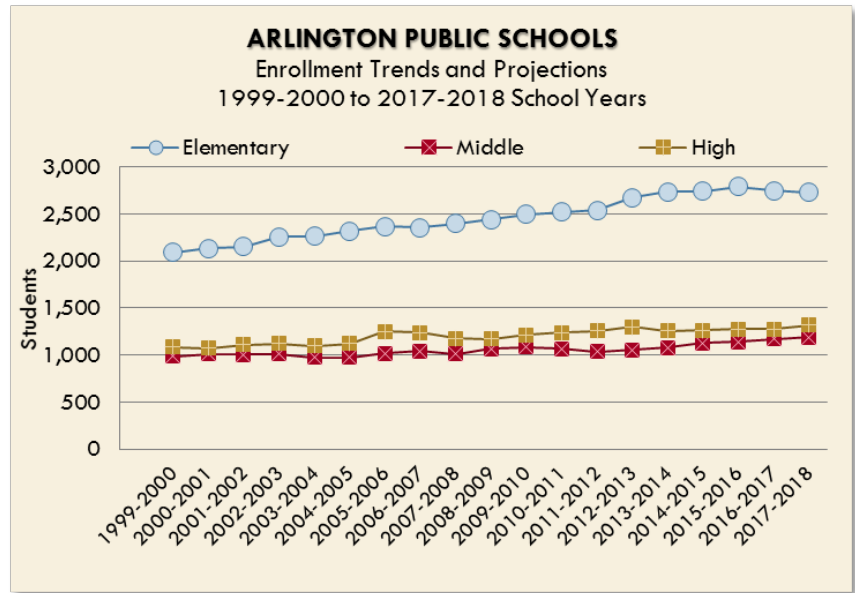


Table 9.1. Arlington School Facilities

School	Description
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, built 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 68,578 sf, built in 1956; renovated in 2005 Softball/little league diamond, basketball courts, multipurpose field
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, built in 1926; renovated in 2001 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, built in 1956; rebuilt in 2013

School	Description
	Basketball court, softball/little league diamond, 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; renovated 1980 Astroturf field, track, basketball courts, baseball diamond, softball/little league diamond, multipurpose field
Source: Arlington Capital Planning Committee, Report to Town Meeting, April 2013; Arlington Recreation Department	

Arlington is conducting a multi-year process of renovating or replacing all seven elementary schools. To date, five schools have been completed. The most recent reconstruction project involved the Thompson School, at \$20 million. The building re-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.

D. Police

The Police Department is the largest of all town departments in Arlington (excluding the schools). Organized into three divisions, the Police Department has a total of over 83 FTE employees. Staffing for the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB), traffic unit, and patrol division has 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 was 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.

- 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.

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 **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 also 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. Over the past four years, the Arlington Police Department’s calls for service have increased steadily. According to the *Annual Town Report*, the Police Department responded to more than 30,000 emergency calls in 2012. However, arrests decreased, as did “Part A” crimes –

	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, Department Report in Arlington’s 2012 Annual Report

– murder/manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, arson, and motor vehicle theft. In 2012, a total of 582 crimes were reported in Arlington, representing a 15 percent decrease from 2011. In Arlington, burglaries are the most common Part A crime. Traffic problems generate many of the public safety complaints. The Traffic Unit is understaffed, with only one full-time officer assigned. With increasing investigative and administrative functions, the Traffic Unit’s productivity has decreased.⁵

Facilities. The Police Department operates from Arlington’s Community Safety Building. Built in 1983, the Community Safety Building 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 phase is budgeted at \$2.5 million and is currently planned for FY 2015 and FY 2016.⁶

E. Fire

⁵ Arlington Police Department, *2012 Annual Report*.

⁶ Arlington Capital Planning Committee, *Report to Town Meeting*, April 2013.

The Arlington Fire Department’s functions 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, but the Town continues to explore expanding its emergency medical service to include Advanced Life Support (ALS) and a second full-time ambulance. Currently, Armstrong Ambulance Service provides the paramedics for all advanced life support responses. The paramedics and non-transport vehicles are based in Arlington.

Table 9.4. Fire Department Staff FY 2014

Position	Total Staffing
Chief	1
Deputy Chief	5
Captain	6
Lieutenant	15
Firefighter	50
Professional/Technical	2
Clerical	1
Total	80
Source: Town of Arlington, FY 2014 Budget	

The Fire Department employs 80 people, most with combined firefighter/EMT responsibilities.⁷ In 2012, the Fire Department had 73 EMTs on staff and three first responders. According to the *Annual Town 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 5-10 year plan that will likely involve reorganization of functions and personnel.

Table 9.5. Fire Department Calls for Service: 2009-2012

	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, Department Report in Arlington’s 2012 Annual Report.				

Calls for Service, Inspections. The Arlington Fire Department responded to 4,752 calls for service in 2012, including 133 fires.⁸ Over half the calls were for medical emergencies or medical assists. The overall call volume has remained relatively constant for the past several years. The Inspectional Services Department issued 6,038 permits in 2012, including building, plumbing, gas, and wiring permits.⁹

Table 9.6. Fire Apparatus

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.	

Facilities and Equipment. Arlington has three fire stations. The Fire Department Headquarters are located in the historic

⁷ FY2014 Budget and Financial Plan.

⁸ Arlington Fire Department, Department Report in Arlington’s 2012 Annual Report.

⁹ Ibid.

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 was renovated in 2011 and is certified as LEED Silver. The last facility, Tower Fire Station, was built in 2007.

F. Public Works

The Arlington Department of Public Works (DPW) consists of eight divisions with a combined total of 60.8 FTE employees. The largest town department ten years ago, the DPW 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 improvements, plows, and so forth. Its \$24.2 million share of the current capital plan is one-half of the total that Arlington expects to spend on capital projects between FY 2014-2018.¹⁰

Table 9.7. Public Works Staff FY 2014	
Position	Total Staffing
Administration	7.2
Engineering	4
Cemeteries	3.6
Natural Resources	18
Highways	22
Fleet Maintenance	6
Total	60.8
Source: Town of Arlington, FY 2014 Budget	

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 also maintains forty town buildings,¹¹ 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 community, the DPW is particularly proud of its accomplishments with solid waste and recycling. In the past year, for example, the Town has reduced solid waste disposal from 14,527 to 14,214 tons and increased recyclables from 4,395 to 4,652 tons.¹²

Constraints. The DPW has many challenges. Aside from a 29 percent decrease in DPW employees over the past ten years (measured in FTE),¹³ the DPW operates with some constraints that are unique to a built-out community. For example, Arlington has no designated storage areas for snow 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 during a storm. According to the DPW director, the Town has also moved to snow to some of the public parks and a ballfield, but doing so runs the risk of costly damage to these facilities. An inter-local or

¹⁰ FY 2014 Budget and Financial Plan, 191-194.

¹¹ 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.

¹² Public Works Department, 2012 Annual Town Report, and Michael Rademacher, DPW Director, interview, September 17, 2013.

¹³ FY 2014 Budget and Financial Plan, 58.

regional approach may be explored, though concerns about contamination and the added problem of longer turn-around times makes an out-of-town snow dump site unlikely. A second challenge for the DPW is that Arlington is running out of cemetery space. The Mount Pleasant Cemetery is the only 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 have occurred in the past few years – the July 2012 “microburst” and Tropical Storm Sandy in October 2012 – 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.¹⁴

Private Ways. Private ways present additional public works challenges in Arlington. The Town has approximately 25 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.

Water/Sewer Enterprise. Arlington purchases water and sewer service from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) but has maintenance responsibility for local 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 there is no subsidy from the tax level, 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.

G. Libraries

Arlington's public library 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 Design, modeled off a palace in Rome, and finished extravagantly with marble, gold leaf, and custom furniture and fixtures.¹⁵ It is on the National Register of Historic Places. Arlington also operates a branch library in East Arlington, the Edith M. Fox Library, was established in 1965. Since 1994, the Fox Library has also served as a community center.

¹⁴ *Public Works Department, 2012 Annual Town Report.*

¹⁵ *Arlington Public Libraries, History of the Library.* See also, Part 6, Historic & Cultural Resources.

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 storytime. In addition, both facilities have public computer workstations, which are heavily used, and the library recently launched a laptop lending service. Robbins Library also has display space for local businesses and exhibits, study rooms, a local history room, and community rooms available for local organizations. 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 one million items.

Operations. The Library Board of Trustees oversees library operations and 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 September through June and Sunday afternoon hours October through April. Sunday hours are funded through private donations. In the future, the library’s Sunday hours are in jeopardy without financial support from the Town, as private donations have been decreasing.¹⁶ The Fox Library is open Tuesday through Friday with Friday hours funded by the Friends of the Fox.

The libraries have 31.3 full-time equivalents, but nearly twice as many employees. Due to budget cuts, staffing has decreased in the last ten years. The increasing demand for the libraries has led to increased responsibilities for staff members. Implementing new technologies, such as RFID system, can help the library meet its growing demands with current staff levels.

Use. Arlington’s libraries are heavily used. In 2012, 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 2002.¹⁷ 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. The Library Director estimates that overdue fees and fines generate approximately \$40,000 annually, which goes to the Town’s General Fund.¹⁸

	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.		

¹⁶ Ryan Livergood (Library Director), interview by Caroline Edwards, October 17, 2013.

¹⁷ Arlington Libraries, Department Report in Arlington’s 2012 Annual Report.

¹⁸ Ryan Livergood (Library Director), Ddepartment survey, October 2013.

Facilities. Robbins Library was last renovated 21 years ago, 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 is currently developing a strategic plan that will include an 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.¹⁹ The Fox Branch Library, which has not had a major renovation since 1952, also has capital needs. Although the Library is the primary user of the space, the building is managed by DPW.

H. Recreation

See Part 8, Open Space and Recreation, for information about Arlington’s Recreation Department and recreation facilities.

I. 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, property taxes, 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 today. In the intervening years (1986-2013), a combination of very little new growth, state aid fluctuations, three recessions, and changes in school spending requirements have made it hard for built-out suburbs like Arlington to pay for the services residents want to receive.

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

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

¹⁹ Ibid.

Arlington tracks financial indicators for thirteen comparison towns (Table 9.9): communities with similar populations, wealth, land area, road miles, budgets, and so forth. While Arlington relies more on residential 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 2/12 general overrides."²⁰

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 (the current fiscal year). Town leaders made several commitments for making the money last at least three years (listed to the right), 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.²¹

²⁰ FY 2014 Budget and Financial Plan, 15.

²¹ Ibid, 3-4. See also, Finance Committee Report to 2013 Annual Town Meeting, 4.

2011 Override Commitments

- ◆ *Override funds will be made to last at least three years (FY2012-FY2014).*
- ◆ *If the override passes, there will be no PAYT fee implemented in FY2012, but the placement of a ballot question regarding a revenue neutral PAYT option will be considered in FY2013.*
- ◆ *Town and School operating budget increases will be capped at 3.5% per year. An additional allowance of up to 7% shall be allowed for documented special education cost increases. Should actual special education cost increases exceed this amount, the remaining School budget shall be decreased by the difference.*
- ◆ *Health care cost increases will be programmed at 7%. Should actual increases exceed this amount, the Town and School budget totals shall be proportionately decreased by the excess amount. Should actual increases be less than this amount as a result of negotiated health care savings, the extra savings will be:*
 - ◆ *Deposited into the override stabilization fund to extend the three year override period;*
 - ◆ *Used to preserve services; and*
 - ◆ *To satisfy any and all negotiated items between the Town Manager, its employees, and its retirees.*
- ◆ *An additional \$600,000 shall be appropriated for the School Department in FY2012 and \$400,000 shall be appropriated each year in addition to the amount currently appropriated in the capital budget for road improvements.*
- ◆ *Reserves shall be maintained in an amount equivalent to at least 5% of the budget.*

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Appendix 1

Arlington Public Buildings					
Building Name	Address	Footprint (sq. ft.)	Year Built	Year of Completion Last Major Renovation	Estimated Year of Completion of Next Major Renovation
Community Safety Buildings					
Tower Fire Station (Park Circle)	291 Park Ave	2,700	2007		
Highland Fire Station	1005 Massachusetts Ave	6,503	1929	2011	
Central Fire Station	220 Broadway	12,738	1926		2017
Community Safety Building	112 Mystic Street	20,780	1983		2020
Dog Pound	112 Mystic Street	1,214			
Public School Buildings					
Bishop Elementary School	25 Columbia Road	51,367	1950	2002	
Brackett Elementary School	66 Eastern Avenue	57,670	2000		
Dallin Elementary School	185 Florence Avenue	65,578	1956	2005	
Hardy Elementary School	52 Lake Street	55,107	1926	2001	
Peirce Elementary School	85 Park Avenue Extension	48,500	2002		
Stratton Elementary School	180 Mountain Avenue	63,300	1962	1968 & 2011	
Thompson Elementary School	60 North Union Street	59,000	1956	2013	
Ottoson Middle School	63 Acton Street	154,380	1920	1998	
Arlington High School (4 buildings)	869 Massachusetts Avenue	394,106	1914-1980		
Peirce Field "Snack Shack"	869 Massachusetts Avenue		2007		
Spy Pond Field House	50 Pond Ln	870			
Libraries					
Robbins Library	700 Massachusetts Ave	48,003	1892	1992	
Fox Branch Library	175 Massachusetts Ave	6,683	1940	1952	

Arlington Master Plan DRAFT Interim Report

Arlington Public Buildings					
Building Name	Address	Footprint (sq. ft.)	Year Built	Year of Completion Last Major Renovation	Estimated Year of Completion of Next Major Renovation
Managed by Arlington Redevelopment Board					
Former Central School Building	27 Maple Street	18,746	1894	1985	
Former Crosby School Building	34 Winter St	40,167	1895	1991	
Former Gibbs School Building	41 Foster St	53,769	1928	1972	
Jefferson Cutter House	Corner of Mystic St. and Massachusetts Ave	3,444	1817	1989	
Former Parmenter School Building	17 Irving St	27,616	1926	1988	
Former Dallin Library Building		4,164	1937	1999	
23 Maple Street (group home)	23 Maple St	4,760	1862	2008	
Department of Public Works					
Building A (Director/Engineer/Inspection)	51 Grove St	16,608	1920	1987?	
Building B (Assembly Hall)	51 Grove St	8,568	1950	1987?	
Building C (Maintenance Garage)	51 Grove St	40,000			
Building D (Snow Fighting Garage)	51 Grove St	6,402			
Building E (Small Salt Shed)	51 Grove St	2,304			
Building F (Large Salt Shed)	51 Grove St				
Transfer Station		1,332			
Ryder Street Garage		5,292	1950		
Cemetery Department					
Cemetery Building A (Chapel & Office)	70 Medford St	2,016	1903		2015
Cemetery Garage	70 Medford St	825	c. 1952		
Parks & Recreation					
Ed Burns Arena Ice Skating Rink/Indoor facility	422 Summer St	25,680	1969		
Bath House at Arlington Reservoir	Lowell St	815			
Pump House at Arlington Reservoir	Lowell St				

Arlington Public Buildings					
Building Name	Address	Footprint (sq. ft.)	Year Built	Year of Completion Last Major Renovation	Estimated Year of Completion of Next Major Renovation
<i>Other Town-Owned Buildings</i>					
Arlington Town Hall & Annex	730 Massachusetts Ave	45,612	1913	2011	In process
Jarvis House (Town Legal Department)	50 Pleasant St	(included above)	1955	2011	In process
Mt. Gilboa House		1,960	1924		
Whittemore Robbins House	670R Massachusetts Ave	1,236	1799	1995	
Source: Arlington Capital Planning Committee, 2013 Report to Town Meeting					

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Appendix 2

Arlington Sustainability Report: Energy Conservation Measures and Results								
Measure		Status	Energy Data			Financial Data	Reference Data	
Category/Building	Energy Conservation Measure	Status (Completed with month/year or planned Qtr/year)	Projected Annual Electricity Savings (kWh)	Projected Annual Natural Gas Savings (therms)	Projected Annual Gasoline Savings (gallons)	Projected Annual Cost Savings (\$)	Funding Source(s) for Net Costs	Source for Projected Savings
Elementary School (Hardy School)	Installation of Energy Management System	Jun-11	20,018	2,270		\$3,561	N/A	Energy Working Group Analysis
High School (Arlington High School)	Replacement of Steam Traps	Mar-11		17,680		\$1,857	N/A	Energy Working Group Analysis
High School (Arlington High School)	Boiler Replacement	Nov-10		66,860		\$7,024	EECBG and Town Capital	Energy Working Group Analysis
High School (Arlington High School)	Motion Light Sensor Installation	Jan-11	63,473			\$10,561	Town Capital Plan	NStar

Arlington Sustainability Report: Energy Conservation Measures and Results								
Measure		Status	Energy Data			Financial Data	Reference Data	
Category/Building	Energy Conservation Measure	Status (Completed with month/year or planned Qtr/year)	Projected Annual Electricity Savings (kWh)	Projected Annual Natural Gas Savings (therms)	Projected Annual Gasoline Savings (gallons)	Projected Annual Cost Savings (\$)	Funding Source(s) for Net Costs	Source for Projected Savings
Rental Property (Gibbs School)	Steam Traps	Jun-12		23,760		\$2,496	Town Capital Plan	Energy Working Group Analysis
BUILDINGS SUBTOTAL			557,193	113,730	0	\$103,559		
Street Lights	LED Street Lights	Dec-11	207,123			\$34,382	Town Capital Plan	Energy Working Group Analysis
Street Lights - Updated	LED StreetLights	Nov-13	496,230			\$82,374	Town Capital Plan	Energy Working Group Analysis
STREET AND TRAFFIC LIGHTS SUBTOTAL			703,353	0	0	\$0		
WATER/SEWER/PUMPING SUBTOTAL			0	0	0	\$0		

Arlington Master Plan DRAFT Interim Report

Arlington Sustainability Report: Energy Conservation Measures and Results								
Measure		Status	Energy Data			Financial Data	Reference Data	
Category/Building	Energy Conservation Measure	Status (Completed with month/year or planned Qtr/year)	Projected Annual Electricity Savings (kWh)	Projected Annual Natural Gas Savings (therms)	Projected Annual Gasoline Savings (gallons)	Projected Annual Cost Savings (\$)	Funding Source(s) for Net Costs	Source for Projected Savings
Town Wide	Purchase of Fuel Efficient Vehicles	Ongoing			13,704	\$41,112	Town Capital Plan	Energy Working Group
VEHICLES SUBTOTAL			0	0	13,704	\$41,112		
TOTAL Projected Savings			1,260,546	113,730	13,704	\$144,671		
TOTAL MMBtu SAVINGS		17,373.28	4,300.98	11,373.00	1,699.30			