

Zoning Articles for
2023 Special Town Meeting
(MBTA Communities Excluded)

Zoning Articles for STM

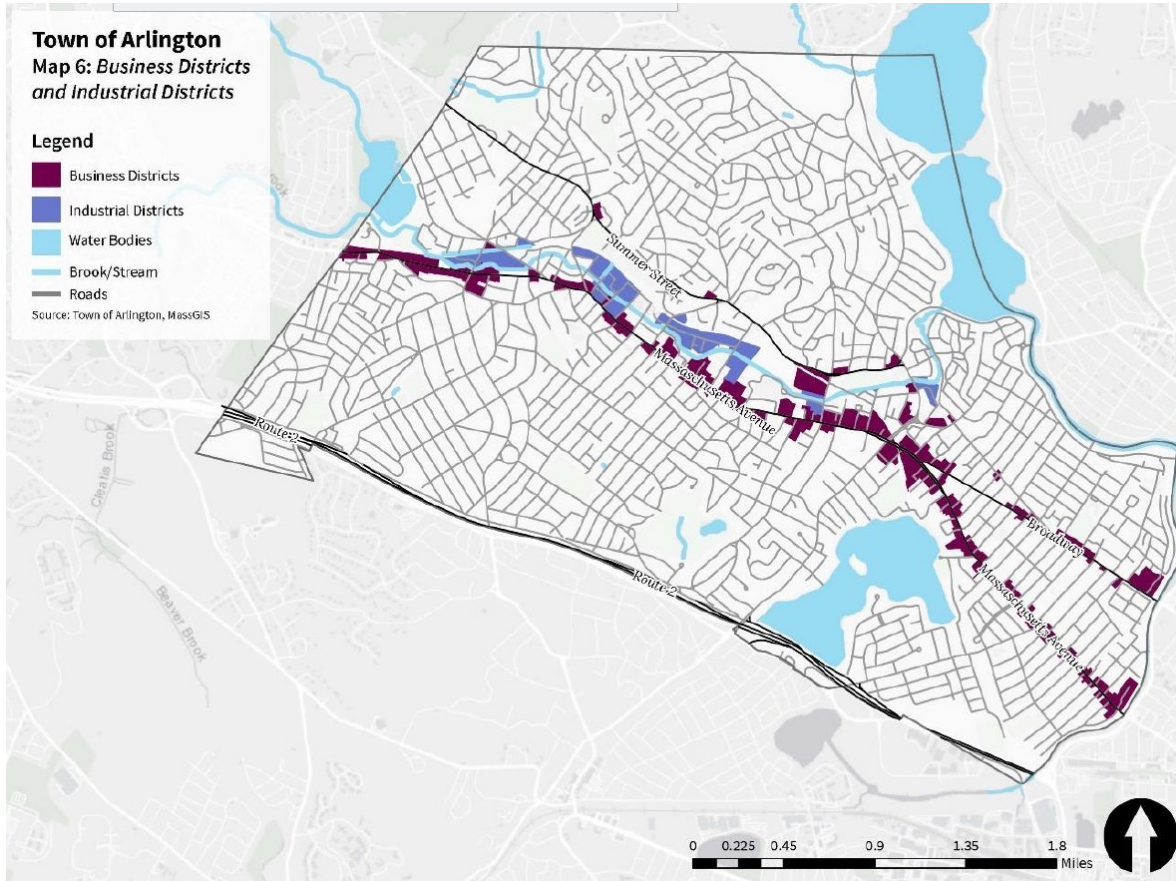
- Article 3 - Administrative Correction
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- Article 11 - Residential Uses in Business Districts

Business District Zoning as a Package

With the exception of Article 3 (Administrative Correction) and Article 10 (Street trees) these articles are specific to business districts. Goals include:

- Encouraging investment in underutilized properties
- Encouraging higher-value developments that generate more tax revenue & reduce the need for overrides.
- Encouraging better commercial spaces that can attract more businesses to Arlington.
- Addressing challenges the ARB has faced when permitting projects in business districts.

Map of Business Districts



(Business districts are shown in red)

Article 3 - Administrative Correction

- Corrects a citation
- A section of the bylaw refers to 8.1.3.E where it should refer to 8.1.3.D.

Article 4 - Reduced Height Buffer Area

- Board unanimously voted that no action be taken on Article 4.

Article 5 - Open Space in Business Districts

Open Space:

- Is a defined term in Arlington's Zoning Bylaw
- Generally refers to a private yard, or private outdoor space
- May be located on a roof or balcony, no more than 10' above the lowest floor used for residential purposes.
- Requirements are based on a percentage of gross floor area (i.e., interior square footage)

“Open space” does not mean “public space”, “green space”, or “pervious space”. It means only what the definition says.

Article 5 (continued)

Article 5 would make the following changes *in B districts only*:

- Allowing open space on rooftops and balconies at any height (not limited to 10' above lowest residential floor).
- Basing the requirements on a percentage of lot area, rather than gross floor area (15% of lot area as landscaped open space)
- Removing the usable open space requirement for mixed-use and “other permitted uses”.
- Goal is to allow more commercial space on the ground floor.

Article 6 - Rear Yard Setbacks in Business Districts

- Rear yard setbacks in B districts vary by use, and are formulaic (e.g, $10+(L/10)$ or $(H+L)/6$).
- Article 6 proposes a fixed set of rear-yard setbacks, as follows:
 - 0' when abutting an alley or right of way $\geq 10'$ wide
 - 10' when abutting a non-residential district
 - 20' when three stories or less abuts an R district
 - 30' when four or more stories abuts an R district

Article 7 - Step Back Requirements in Business Districts

- Current requirement: 7.5' upper story step back on each side of a building with street frontage, starting at the fourth story.
- Article 7 proposal: 7.5' upper story step back on the principal facade, starting at the fourth story. Clarifies that step back is measured from the property line.
- Motivation: Arlington has numerous small corner lots. Requiring setbacks on multiple sides makes it challenging/uneconomic to develop upper stories.

Article 8 - Height and Story Mins. in Business Districts

- Requires buildings to be at least two stories and 26' tall, where the second story has at least 30% of the gross floor area of the first story.
- Proposed to encourage higher value redevelopments that make better use of the small amount of land in the B districts.
- Single-family dwellings in B districts are exempt from this requirement.

Article 9 - Corner Lot Requirements

- Current Section 5.3.8: Requires corner lots to have front setbacks that are the same as adjoining lots, even if the adjoining lots are in different districts.
- Article 9: would apply B district setbacks to corner lots in B districts.
- Section 5.3.16 already allows the ARB to do this. Article 9 is intended to provide clarity and predictability in the permitting process.

(Note: Section 5.3.12.A (Traffic visibility around corners) does not apply to business districts).

Article 10 - Street Trees

- Section 6.3 of Zoning bylaw requires applicants to provide a public shade tree every 25', for new construction, large additions, or redevelopment in B districts that's subject to a special permit.
- Article 10: would make this a requirement in B and R districts, regardless of whether a special permit is required. This would include the proposed MBTA Communities multi-family district.

Article 11 - Residential Uses in Business Districts

- Current bylaw: allows single-family, two-family, and duplex dwellings by right in all B districts.
- Article 11: would disallow these uses in B districts (as they're disallowed in the Industrial districts).
- Existing single-, two-family, and duplex dwellings in B districts would become pre-existing non-conforming (as they are in the Industrial districts).

Questions?