



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

APRIL NEWSLETTER

RECAP OF MARCH MEETING

Thank you to the 30 or so people that participated in the March 11th AHCA meeting. See aurorahighlands.org for meeting minutes.

Pocket Park. The Ives Park working group presented their consensus concept plan of a simple and beautified Ives Park with volunteers to help implement it over the next couple of years. After a lot of substantive questions, suggestions and words of thanks, the Civic Association membership voted unanimously in favor of the proposed concept plan, which you can view at <http://aurorahighlands.org/ives-park-working-group/>. The working group will continue to work with the County on the implementation.

Housing Workshops. Ben D'Avanzo provided an update of how the Housing Affordability have been going. He and other neighbors have been volunteering to organize the community workshops and are doing a terrific job building consensus on our unique concerns.

Missing Middle. Finally, County Board member Katie Cristol presented the County's upcoming "Missing Middle" study, which you can find at <https://housing.arlingtonva.us/missingmiddle/>. This study is expected to lay the foundation for increasing the types and quantity of housing across the county through potentially significant changes to zoning and land use, so there is understandable concern about the overall impact.

Residents expressed a wide range of concerns and substantive questions such as whether changes would really help affordability, displace existing residents, why more condos aren't already being built, if changes could actually decrease diversity, etc.

A common refrain was the lack of comprehensive data on current housing and demographics, since our area has a diversity of historic housing types, informal rentals, and cohabitation arrangements. There is concern that the study will be overly optimistic about the benefits of changes if it doesn't use realistic data to assess need and implementation. This goes hand-in-hand with how the county intends to plan for and monitor changes about how Missing Middle would factor in the Livability 22202 effort by ensuring that our already stretched transportation, school capacity, parks, and other infrastructure would be able to handle additional density. Katie acknowledged that residents seemed to want to see how data would play a role and asked everyone to provide her with the kinds of data that they thought would be important to the study.

MEETINGS CANCELED

We will not be holding meetings in April or May for obvious reasons. Related events such as the Livability Workshops have also been postponed. We will be considering the possibility of a virtual meeting for future dates if the need arises.

This month's newsletter will not be distributed door-to-door. Please forward an electronic copy to anyone you know that may be interested or print one out for a neighbor that needs a paper copy.

If you have questions or suggestions for the civic association, please email us at info@aurorahighlands.org.

Read Up & Reach Out!



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COVID-19 RELATED INFORMATION

COUNTY

Authoritative Information: As you all know, Gov. Northam has issued a Stay at Home order through June 10. Please visit the County's very comprehensive website which will also provide updated info on County services, meetings, etc. <https://health.arlingtonva.us/covid-19-coronavirus-updates/>

The Crystal City BID also has a special page with a wealth of information focused on our local neighborhoods, such as restaurant status, virtual programming from local businesses, and other information useful to our local area. Visit the website to see special offers or other updates. Some have special programs to help their staff. Your purchase of a discounted gift card for Jaleo will go to support employees, for example. Sign up for their newsletters for periodic updates and local events. <http://crystalcity.org/covid-19/>

Trash & Recycling: With more people staying home from work and refraining from going to the grocery stores, we are seeing a surge in yard waste, trash, and recycling as folks spend time doing spring cleanups indoors and out and ordering deliveries with lots of packaging. Please try to minimize the volume of your waste. We are fortunate to have a glass dropoff site at the Aurora Hills Library. Please take your glass there rather than putting it in the trash. It's a good excuse to get a little regular exercise. If you're cleaning out your clutter, wait until later in the season to dispose of your castoffs—you will also find more people willing to take usable items once the virus dies down.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Masks: The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is asking that when people must go out in public to visit essential services locations, such as the grocery stores, that they wear masks (cloth, non-surgical types) or scarves over their noses and mouths to help to reduce the spread of the virus to others and onto objects. Masks protect your neighbors. Thank you!

Volunteer: If you're an Aurora Highlands resident, in the lower risk group, and you're interested in helping your neighbors and community during this crisis, please consider joining the Arlington Community Corps at <https://beaneighbor.vomo.org/org/arlington-community-corps>

FOOD

Grocery Stores: Most of the bigger stores offer delivery, but getting a delivery scheduled is difficult because of the demand. If you go to the store, in addition to following healthy practices, remember that a word of thanks goes a long way for staff who are working long hours and putting themselves at risk. Remember to sanitize groceries and containers you bring into your house from restaurants or stores.

Produce Pickup: One shopping alternative is being offered by a local company, Keaney Produce & Gourmet. Keaney usually supplies schools and institutions with large orders, but they are offering fruit, vegetable, and dairy boxes that you can order online and pick up at the YMCA on Monroe Ave. in Alexandria. Visit <https://keaneyproduce.com/curbside/>.

Farmers Markets: A couple of local farmers markets are taking orders that you can pick up at the market. Some vendors at Courthouse Market have offerings at <https://www.freshfarm.org/covid-19-shopping-alternatives>. The Columbia Pike vendors can be found at <https://www.columbiapikefarmersmarket.org/>

Restaurants: You can support the many area local restaurants (some of which are owned by neighbors) who are trying to keep neighbors fed and staff employed by continuing to offer delivery or curbside pickup. Please tip generously if you can. Many providers have also set up a fund to help their staff through these tough times. An updated list of our local restaurants with delivery and pickup status at <https://www.crystalcity.org/delivery>.

ACTIVITY

Got Cabin Fever? Here are some suggestions.

Connect, with family and friends by playing a game on Facetime, Skype, Zoom....Here's a start: <https://www.mkewithkids.com/post/10-fun-games-you-can-play-over-facetime>

Walk. Local parks are closed and lots of us live in places with small or no backyards. You can, however, explore the neighborhood and see all the signs of spring by taking a walk (with appropriate social distancing).

"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo. "So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

—JRR Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

Please use sidewalk etiquette. With narrow and missing sidewalks in Aurora Highlands and so many people using the sidewalks to get the fresh air and exercise we all need, it's important to practice good etiquette for everyone's safety. Here are some of the tips from Tree Hugger, treehugger.com/health/sidewalk-etiquette-times-covid-19.html

- Walk single file on narrow or busy sidewalks
- Do not bike or scooter on sidewalks
- Walk on the edge of narrow sidewalks
- Walk on the right side
- No sudden stops; no stopping in the middle
- Don't multitask
- Consider the less agile people (eg those with strollers, disabled or older) and move off the sidewalk
- Shorten the leash when necessary
- Herd the kids
- And if you are running...pass with 6 feet distance

Indoor or backyard exercise options: Your ad hoc "home office" may not be ergonomic, or your binging on Netflix might be turning you into a couch potato. But here are some great online offerings. <https://www.ekhartyoga.com/classes> offers a two-week free trial. Several Local yoga studios [Unity Woods](#), [Mind the Mat](#), [Sun and Moon](#) are offering live courses through Zoom, either free or for a fee. If your kids are getting antsy and can't be outside, tune into P.E. with Joe on YouTube, a special 30-minute workout designed for kids who are out of school.

Art, Culture, & Education. Museums are closed, but most have virtual tours you can take. Others, such as the National Gallery of Art, have digital resources for virtual visitors and teachers. The Gallery Underground in Crystal City (<https://galleryunderground.org/>) has a photo gallery where you can view (and purchase) the works of local artists.

The pandemic has also led to a surge of musical creativity. Yo-Yo Ma has spurred musicians to offer up Songs of Comfort.; see <https://bit.ly/3aQZ8H6>. The Metropolitan Opera is streaming a different opera every day. If you're a musician, consider playing outdoors for your neighbors.

The web has a host of online resources for kids and adults. Check out <https://learninglab.si.edu/>. The Smithsonian has many resources tied to national learning standards.

During National Poetry Month and beyond, The Poetry Foundation Library will feature an activity each weekday for those who want to discover new poets and poems, connect with others through poetry, and compose original poems. Prompts specifically for youth and teens will be offered each week. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/library/prompts>

Science & Nature. Lucky for us, it's spring—birds are in their breeding plumage, plants are leafing out and flowering. It's a great time to learn more about the natural world right around us. There are some great free ID references: Cornell's bird app, Merlin <https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>, PlantNet and LeafSnap for plants. Join the vast network of Citizen Scientists by reporting your findings using free apps such as iNaturalist, eBird, or BumbleBeeWatch. Data collected by citizens throughout the world are being used to track migration, population changes, rare sightings, and climate change. The Smithsonian will be holding its Earth Optimism Summit as a digital event later this month to celebrate Earth Day. Also check out <https://www.zooniverse.org/> for all kinds of ways to get involved in Citizen Science projects

CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

Construction is vital to our communities. As such, numerous commercial construction projects across the region have been deemed essential infrastructure and are continuing to safely operate in accordance with CDC, OSHA, and local health authority guidelines. Companies have implemented numerous preventative strategies as part of their overall COVID-19 Management Plan.

Met Park / HQ2

- Pile driving. Starting April 9 or 10, for six weeks. Three rigs will be used to drive 330 piles – measuring 60 to 70 feet long – across the project site. This will be noisy.
- Excavation. Starting week of April 6, for six months. Dump trucks removing soil during excavation will enter the job site near the northeast corner along S. Eads St near the intersection of 13th St. and exit the site at gates located along S. Eads Street and 15th St. and follow the designated hauling route along Route 1. Sidewalks adjacent to the site will be closed.
- Parking along Elm St from 14th to 15th St, and on 13th St is closed. Street parking along 15th St and S. Eads St is also slated to close in the coming weeks. These closures will remain in effect over the life of the project.

For more detail, see <https://www.metpark678.com/> or contact metpark678@clarkconstruction.com.

Pentagon Centre Construction Update

April will see a continuation of work from March:

- 15th & S Hayes Streets - Road work and Utility work will continue into late July.
- Demolition of parking lot and curbs on the project site.
- Modified pedestrian and vehicular travel on 15th street and S. Hayes Street.

If you have any further questions, please call 301-220-0100.

Mark Your Calendar

Virtual Synetic Fitness

Mondays, 12pm

The BID has partnered with Synetic Theater to bring you fitness classes taught by trained Company members. The classes will have a different focus each week. Sign up now and we'll send you an email with a link to the live session 1 hour before the workout begins.

<https://ci.ovationtix.com/34297/production/1028158>

Home Work-Ins

Daily, 7pm

Planet Fitness is bringing the gym to you with Home Work-Ins. Guided at-home workouts from trainers and celebrities, streamed daily on Facebook Live.

<https://www.planetfitness.com/united-we-move>

Census

Now!

If you haven't taken the Census already, do it now. Go to

<https://my2020census.gov/>, call 844-330-2020, or mail in the questionnaire you received. If you have taken it, spread the word and make sure family, friends, neighbors, and other people in your network do too.

COMMUNITY UPDATES

AFAC Food Drives. The three civic associations in 22202 partnered with JBG-Smith, property managers, the BID, and Flare Rides to organize a one-day food collection on March 21 with one goal in mind—testing out a pilot model for helping food-insecure neighbors while practicing social distancing.

Led by engineer Luis Castellanos, a long-time volunteer with the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC), Flare Rides is a local business that has committed to using their electric transportation to support the whole Arlington community.

What an outpouring of support from our 22202 neighborhood! The three drop-off sites — one within each civic association's boundaries — collected 824 pounds of food, which Flare delivered to AFAC in its electric vehicles. Thanks to all the residents of 22202 who participated, Miriam Gennari for spearheading the effort, and Jim Sheats for providing musical entertainment.

The need for food continues, so please donate food in bins located at the Aurora Hills Library and many building lobbies or support with a donation at afac.org.

Repaving & Complete Streets Projects. County Staff have reviewed the annual list of street projects up for routine maintenance such as 20th and 23rd Streets and identified a subset of streets for "Complete Streets" projects. Complete Streets "enable safe access by all user groups including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles and users, and motorists of all ages and abilities." Four potential projects have been identified, including Potomac Avenue from S Crystal Drive to the Alexandria City Line. Join Arlington County staff for an online open house on this project on Monday, April 6 from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. See <https://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/resurfacing-projects-for-complete-streets-2020-season/>

Aircraft Noise. The US Government Accountability Office (GAO) was tasked by Congress last year to conduct studies related to aircraft activity and potential noise in the DC area. They have been reaching out to civic associations and local groups to gather information for that effort. The current environment is certainly abnormal with commercial airline traffic off 90%, but providing them feedback on historical and more recent conditions up to March is important to the long-term livability of our neighborhoods. If you have comments you would like to share, please send them to info@aurorahighlands.org

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