



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

July 2, 2026

Mr. Matt de Ferranti, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Comments on Capital Improvement Plan for 2027-2036

Dear Chair de Ferranti and Members of the County Board,

The Aurora Highland Civic Association requests your support for two items in the draft Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that will have a direct impact on our growing neighborhood:

- AHCA supports continued funding of the Arlington Neighborhoods Program (ANP); and
- the refresh of the core of our neighborhood's open space, Virginia Highlands Park (and nearby public spaces).

In the last CIP (2025–2034), \$1.485 million was set aside in fiscal year 2032 to begin planning for Virginia Highlands Park and Nearby Public Spaces. The current CIP increases that amount slightly, to \$1.755 million, but delays it to 2034.

Pushing planning of Virginia Highlands Park back eight years, and the build-out even further, could be problematic. There is a possibility that during the next decade the economy will improve and JBG Smith will proceed with the full River House redevelopment. That project will realign Joyce Street and contribute a large portion of land to Virginia Highlands Park, which the County will be responsible for planning and developing. The County has already acquired land for the park at Ives & 20th Streets (Ives Park) and the former Dominion substation at Ives & 18th Streets (the two "Nearby Public Spaces"), which remain unused while awaiting planning for the park system. We have requested modest interim improvements such as trees, benches, and trash cans, but have been told to wait for the master plan and implementation.

Even without the River House redevelopment, our neighborhood, home to Amazon HQ2, continues to grow, and major projects will bring thousands of new neighbors over the next decade. As a matter of equity, these new residents, too, will need access to open space, and we need to plan for it properly. I urge you to look carefully at the planning timeline for Virginia Highlands Park.

You are aware that the ANP has enhanced the quality, safety, and character of Arlington's neighborhoods since the Program's inception almost 60 years ago. The Program's community-driven approach gives residents opportunities to identify and advocate for projects that directly improve their daily lives. The Program delivers physical improvements that preserve the

walkability, community character, and quality of life that residents have come to rely on and enjoy.

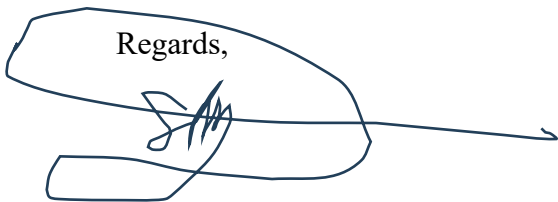
The ANP has specifically improved the Aurora Highlands community through projects such as Nelly Custis Park, which has given children a large, safe, fenced-in area to play. The greenery of this park has also been enjoyed by neighbors passing by and visitors. We have a few priorities going forward:

- Continue improvements to Nelly Custis Park through additional planting, walls, and fencing to better buffer it from the adjacent and extremely large Melwood project.
- Build on successful projects such as the sidewalk on the west side of Fern Street between 19th and 22nd Streets; which has been especially important while construction continues on the east side of Fern Street.
- Continue improvements to sidewalks on other neighborhood streets, additional streetlights, and other parks in our neighborhood.

ANP projects include a wide range of improvements, such as pedestrian safety, traffic calming, environmental enhancements, parks, and neighborhood safety throughout Arlington County. As Aurora Highlands is already one of the densest areas in Virginia and continues to grow, the ANP provides a way for us to identify and pursue priorities that help mitigate the impact of this growth. Some areas of focus include increasing the amount of green space in our neighborhood and ensuring that all residents can safely walk through the neighborhood with their children and pets. ANP projects capture improvements that are important to residents' everyday lives but might not otherwise receive the attention of County departments. The continued success of the ANP depends on maintaining sufficient CIP funding so neighborhood-generated projects can continue to move from concept to construction.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss these funding requests further.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stacy Meyer', is written over a large, irregular blue oval shape. A long horizontal line extends from the right side of the oval.

Stacy Meyer
President

CC: Arlington County Board Members
Mark Schwartz, County Manager
Crystal and Pentagon Cities Council
AHCA Board