



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

JANUARY 2023 NEWSLETTER

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

Happy New Year! I hope you had a wonderful holiday, and that you made a New Year's resolution to be more involved in your neighborhood issues and events. We have a new team of officers for our civic association. We held an election at the November 9 meeting, and the slate of candidates was unanimously approved. Your AHCA officers for 2023 are:

2023 AHCA officers

President Cory Giacobbe
1st Vice President John Whall
2nd Vice President Jill Braun
Treasurer Ben Watts
Recording Secretary Nick Giacobbe
Corresponding Secretary Natasha Atkins

Please join us for our January 11 AHCA meeting, virtual via Zoom. On the agenda we have an update from Dana Bres on the VDOT Route 1 proposals presented at the most recent PIM3. Details and links to the project proposals are detailed in the article below. Also on the agenda is an update from David Litman on the Arlington Neighborhoods Program (the committee formerly known as NCAC). He will brief us on the many changes to the program and ask for input to identify new projects for our neighborhood. Please see his article below.

-Cory Giacobbe, President, AHCA

Calendar [See aurorahighlands.org/events/](https://aurorahighlands.org/events/)

- January 2-27 - [Bright New Days - All Member Show at Gallery Underground](#)
- January 7 - RIP Haley Park Invasive Plant Removal, 9-11 a.m. Register [here](#)
- January 8 - Free [HUSTLE HIIT Class at Crystal City Marriott](#) at 1 p.m.
- January 11 - January AHCA Meeting, 7 pm, [online via Zoom](#)
- January 15 - [Arlington's Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King](#) - 5 pm Wakefield High
- January 16 - [MLK Day of Service](#), 8:30 a.m. at Washington-Liberty High School
- January 28 - RIP Fort Scott Invasive Plant Removal, 10 a.m. Register [here](#)
- March 3 - April 2 - [Beauty and the Beast at Syntetic Theater](#)

Souper Bowl of Caring: Food Drive For AFAC

Advent Lutheran Church (corner of S. 23rd and S. Arlington Ridge Rd.) will collect non-perishable food for 8 weeks starting Jan. 1. They hope to collect 800 items by Super Bowl Sunday on February 12. All donations will go to the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC). Collection boxes will be available at the front door Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 11-3 and weekends from 9 to noon. All non-expired, non-perishable, non-glass items are welcome but ESPECIALLY needed items include: low-sodium canned tomato products, beans, soup, tuna, vegetables; low-sugar, kid-friendly cereal; and peanut butter.

Aurora Highlands Civic Association (AHCA) Dues for Calendar Year 2023

Please participate in AHCA and become involved with issues facing the Aurora Highlands Community. Members discuss and vote on matters that affect our neighborhood at the monthly meetings. The AHCA and neighboring civic associations interact with the Arlington County Board and staff, and express the collective opinion of neighborhoods based on votes taken at meetings. In order to vote on issues and motions, and to vote for officers of the civic association, you must be a member. There are two (2) criteria needed to become a member of AHCA and vote:

1. Reside within the AHCA borders (see map here: <https://bit.ly/AHCAMap>)
2. Pay the annual AHCA membership fee of \$20 each calendar year.

Dues can be paid in two ways.

1. Pay online at <https://aurorahighlands.org> by clicking the "Donate" button to pay via PayPal.
2. Mail Checks to: AHCA P.O. Box 25201, Arlington, VA 22202

** Email treasurer@aurorahighlands.org with questions. Thank You.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 11

7pm-9pm, [Virtual via Zoom](#) ([Register Here](#))
<https://bit.ly/Jan2023AHCA>

AGENDA

7:00 pm - VDOT Rte. 1 Proposals - Dana Bres
7:45 pm - Arlington Neighborhoods Program - David Litman
8:15 pm - SPRC reports - Americana - John Whall
8:30 pm - Other Business

- New Business
- Announcements
- Adjourn

Newsletters & Social Media

We have heard from residents that they really enjoy having a print newsletter. While we'll do our best to continue it, that will depend on continued support from advertisers and volunteers to distribute it. Sign up for newsletters by email at aurorahighlands.org/join-ahca and follow us at @AuroraHighlands on Twitter, Facebook, or Insta to stay connected no matter what.

Links to Websites and Other Content

We use many links in the AHCA Newsletter to easily lead you to websites where you can get more information and stay up to date on the issues that interest you. Any underlined text is a hyperlink to a site. To save space in the print version, we haven't printed the long URLs, but it lets you know that you can go to the AHCA website for a clickable version of the [AHCA Newsletter](#). See what I just did there? ;)

The 4D-A group list-serve is an alternative to Nextdoor for hyper-local information and to post queries to your neighbors: To subscribe, send a message to :

4DA-22202+subscribe@groups.io

Read Up & Reach Out!



www.aurorahighlands.org



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P.O. Box 25201 Arlington, VA 22202

Neighborhood News

JANUARY MEETING TOPIC:

Arlington Neighborhoods Program

David Litman, our AHCA representative to the Arlington Neighborhoods (AN) Program (formerly known as the Neighborhood Conservation Program) will present at the January 11 meeting to give us an update on the recent changes to the program and solicit our input in choosing projects for our community. For those of you who are not familiar with the program, it is Arlington's grass roots program for neighborhood infrastructure projects such as sidewalks, intersection improvements, park renovations, and the like. It differs from other programs, such as Neighborhood Complete Streets, in that the neighborhood chooses its priorities, not the County. Recent completed NC projects for AHCA include the Fern St. sidewalk between 20th and 23rd St. and the Nelly Custis Park renovation.

AHCA had previously identified a sidewalk for 19th St. S between Hayes St. and Ives St. as a potential project. Below please see a call for a volunteer to serve as a Block Captain and do an informal survey of the owners on that block to determine if there is sufficient support for the CA to move the project forward.

Alternatively, the AHCA could use this as an opportunity to reevaluate its priorities (current proposals were identified well before Amazon's arrival) and identify a different project entirely, in line with new priorities such as sustainability and social equity.

We look forward to a fruitful discussion of our community priorities and goals.

Proposed 19th St. S. Sidewalk Project

Several years ago, AHCA identified a sidewalk on 19th St. S. between S. Hayes St. and S. Ives St. as a backup Neighborhood Conservation Project (now the Arlington Neighborhoods (AN) Program).

Since our current project in the AN Program is no longer viable, AHCA is considering whether to propose the 19th St. Project as its primary AN project or select another project entirely.

AHCA needs to be assured that the owners of property on the affected 19th St. block support moving forward with a sidewalk project. Therefore, we are asking for someone who owns property on that block to volunteer as a Block Representative for the project. Their first task would be to informally survey other owners on the block to determine if they would support the project.

If you are interested in volunteering as Block Representative (or finding out more information about it), please contact the AHCA AN Representative, David Litman, at david.litman@verizon.net. If we do not hear from anyone within a reasonable time, the CA will look for a different project.

County News

Engage Arlington: Visit this site frequently for new opportunities to give the County feedback!

FY 2024 Budget Engagement - Feedback Form

Through January 17, the County Manager is gathering feedback on what is important to the community as he develops his FY 2024 budget. [Share your thoughts](#) and [visit the project page](#) to learn more.

Updates and Closures

All Arlington County facilities, including Aurora Hills Community Center, will be closed on Mon., Jan. 16 for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Be sure to check out [Arlington's annual tribute to Dr. King](#) on Sun., Jan. 15, 5-6:30 p.m. at Wakefield High School!

Missing Middle Housing Study – Update

All of the records for the missing middle study are available through the [County website](#). The County's Missing Middle Housing Study is now in **Phase 3**, working towards implementation. The recordings from the December 12 and 15 Planning Commission meetings are available through the Planning Commission [meeting materials website](#). Stay informed and involved – [Subscribe](#) to receive study updates in your inbox.

Missing Middle Housing Study Information Sessions: The County Board hosted three information sessions touching on several key topics related to Missing Middle housing. Recordings of the sessions are available for viewing on YouTube and [archived here](#).

Housing Development and Economics

History and Future of Zoning and Housing Policy

Planning for G<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXYHaw764oQrowth>

Site Plan Review Committee Meetings

Americana (1400 Richmond Highway, building faces S. Eads)

AHCA has been asked to provide input on the proposed redevelopment of 1400 Richmond Highway which is the old American Hotel. While this redevelopment is not within the AHCA boundary, the County is requesting input from adjacent civic associations during the review process. This process includes reviewing the site plan, advising the Planning Commission on design specifics, and allowing the neighborhood input.

Stacy Meyer from the AHCA Zoning Committee submitted a report to the AHCA in November identifying issues with the proposed site plan that could impact AHCA residents. This report was reviewed and approved by the AHCA Board to be used as the initial basis for the AHCA position at the SPRC review meetings.

There was an initial meeting on November 28, 2022 for the SPRC to review the proposed design for the Americana Hotel. The meeting agenda reviewing Site Design and Layout; Building Height, Form and Architecture; and Open Space and Landscaping. In attendance were John Whall representing the AHCA Board and Stacy Meyer representing the AHCA Zoning Committee. John Whall and Stacy Meyer shared the AHCA concerns and suggestions at this meeting. The next meeting has not been scheduled at this time.

Private Development:

Stay tuned for dates for the second SPRC meeting for the [Americana](#), the first SPRC meeting for [Crystal Towers 3](#), and for the online public engagement for [RiverHouse](#). RiverHouse is still listed with the preliminary site plans and with an anticipated CPHD plan acceptance date of February, 2023. We are not aware of any recent activity for the Special GLUPs for [Melwood](#) or [South Eads Street Residential](#). And the County's [Crystal City Building Heights Study](#) has been quiet since October, 2021.

Transportation

JANUARY MEETING TOPIC:

VDOT Route 1 Multimodal Improvements Study, Phase 2, Public Information Meeting (PIM) 3

The Commonwealth of Virginia and Amazon signed a memorandum of understanding in November 2018 covering a number of issues associated with the Amazon HQ2 in our neighborhood. It specifically called the Commonwealth to "...in collaboration with local officials in the Eligible County, to expeditiously evaluate and implement opportunities to improve safety, accessibility, and the pedestrian experience crossing Rt. 1...".

Since that document was signed, VDOT has been studying changes to Route 1. This study runs from 23rd Street to I-395. Unfortunately, VDOT only chose to consider three options: no action, removal of the overpasses at 15th and 18th Streets, and the hybrid approach that is shown in the Crystal City Sector Plan (approved by Arlington County in 2011). The Sector Plan (https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2021/09/CRYSTAL-CITY-SECTOR-PLAN_JAN112012_web.pdf) indicated "Grade separations at 12th, 15th, and 18th Streets will remain ...". Unfortunately, the VDOT study quickly selected a strategy that replaced the overpasses at 15th and 18th that provided safe crossings at Route 1 with at-grade intersections.

VDOT has been conducting a number public meetings on this Route 1 project. You can read about the meetings and view the video recordings here: https://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/route_1_multimodal_improvements_study.asp. The Livability 22202 group (a collaborative effort of the three Civic Associations in our zip code) has been engaged since the beginning. The Livability 22202 input to this project is at <https://livability22202.org/route-1-working-group/>.

Much of the effort by the Livability 22202 group has been focused on the at-grade intersection at 18th and Route 1. Right now, crossing Route 1 is safe, quick, and stress-free regardless if you are driving, walking, or riding a bike. To make the at grade intersection safer, we proposed an shallow, open "Dutch underpass", a pedestrian overpass, and a dedicated all-way pedestrian phase. While VDOT rejected the underpass and overpass, they did suggest that the all-way pedestrian phase (often called a "Barnes dance") appeared to be feasible.

We will be discussing the current status of the project at our January AHCA meeting. More details on the VDOT proposals and PIM3, continued below.

Route 1 Multimodal Improvements Study, Planning Phase 2 – Update

Virginia Department of Transportation staff (VDOT) held their third Public Information Meeting for Phase 2 of the Route 1 Multimodal Improvements project on November 14. Topics included updated traffic analyses and projections, evolving plans for an urbanized Route 1, and an expansion of the study area. The good news was support for a 25 mph speed limit, a Barnes dance signalization at an at-grade Route 1 at 18th (one phase is pedestrians only), and plans for a realignment of the intersections and ramps of I-395, Route 1, and Route 110. Reconstruction of these intersections and ramps will be needed in the near future because the bridges can no longer be kept in good repair. And this reconstruction need is an opportunity to create a much safer design overall – and possibly a new 10th Street under Route 1 that connects Army-Navy Drive to Long Bridge Drive. The bad news is that the plans for Route 1 still have travel lanes that are too wide and insufficient space for pedestrians, cyclists, and trees along Route 1; that plans for 18th Street are still too inadequate and unsafe; and that VDOT still has no Transportation Demand Management TDM) plan. Perhaps VDOT will offer their TDM plan at PIM 4, scheduled for some time this spring. If you were not able to participate in PIM 3, you can find the meeting recording and slides on the [VDOT PIM 3 meeting page](#). The Livability 22202 Route 1 Working Group has been tracking the Route 1 project, providing community survey data, offering forums for VDOT to interact with the community, sharing information with the community, meeting with VDOT, County staff, and People before Cars, and offering detailed comments and proposals throughout the Route 1 study. Read the latest submitted comments and prior proposals on the [Working Group website](#).

Yellow Line/Blue Line Disruptions Continue through May, 2023:

[Arlington Transportation Partners](#) has an excellent summary of the current status of the Yellow and Blue Metro lines. Construction is now in Phase 2. All Metro stations south of DCA are again open, but served by Blue line trains only because the Metro bridge over the Potomac is still being reconstructed. Limited free rush hour shuttle service to/from DC is still available from Crystal City. VRE is offering reduced fares until the Yellow line construction is completed. Relevant WMATA page is [here](#).

Plan NOW for Columbia Pike Closures (starting January 23rd)!

The Arlington National Cemetery is expanding towards our neighborhood through its Southern Expansion, a multi-year, multi-jurisdictional plan that will realign both Columbia Pike and S. Joyce Street, eliminate most of Southgate Road, create new intersections, sidewalks, bike lanes, a new cross street (S. Nash), and create new cemetery burial grounds and facilities. This massive project will have an increasing impact on our neighborhood as road construction enters Phase 2 in late January!

The Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) is responsible for development of the land, but FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) is responsible for the [Defense Access Roads \(DAR\) redevelopment](#) of the streets and highways outside of the current ANC property. It is FHWA that is planning the redesign of Columbia Pike and the intersection with South Joyce Street. FHWA Phase 1 construction, which prepared Southgate and Nash for new traffic patterns, is almost complete.

When Phase 2 starts, Columbia Pike will be closed to all traffic between Nash and Joyce, and traffic will be diverted along Nash to Southgate, then down Southgate to the intersection with Joyce. As neither Nash nor Southgate is designed to handle the volume of traffic that Columbia Pike handles, traffic will be impacted and drivers may want to consider alternative routes or transportation methods. This portion of the Pike will be closed for years.

After virtually meeting with three AHCA representatives recently, County, FHWA, and ANC staff promised to do a better job of keeping us informed and providing a reliable way for the community to give feedback. The FHWA DAR site is [here](#). The main County Columbia Pike website is [here](#). Sign up for County Columbia Pike updates through the County page.

Bridges

[West Glebe Road Bridge Reconstruction Project](#): The ongoing closure of the W Glebe Road Bridge requires a continuing detour via Mt. Vernon Avenue and I-395 exits in Shirlington. But the reconstruction is due to be completed this summer - good news for all of us.

[Arlington Ridge Road-Mt. Vernon Avenue Bridge Reconstruction](#): You may have already noticed the new left turn signal at the intersection of Glebe with Mt. Vernon Avenue and Arlington Ridge Road. More intersection improvements will be coming, and bridge reconstruction can start after the W. Glebe Rd. Bridge is completed and the bridge is again open. We will need to learn new temporary detour routes again!

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Free ART Bus Rides for APS Students:

Middle and high school students from Arlington Public Schools ride free anytime on Arlington Transit (ART), the County's bus transit system, with an iRide SmarTrip card, <https://bit.ly/3B3q84L>.

National Landing BID

National Landing BID Transportation Roundtable, December 14, 2022: The National Landing BID hosts a quarterly virtual Transportation Roundtable that focuses on transportation projects - and development projects that impact transportation - in the National Landing area. The December 14 recording is [here](#). The roundtable is especially valuable for the succinct presentations by a variety of County transportation staff reporting on their projects and for the opportunity for participants to ask relevant staff questions about their projects. Recent Roundtables have promoted the [County's Crystal City-Pentagon City Area Map](#), which includes project information by owner and phase. Click on a project map site, and a project page opens up, with details on contact information, phasing, project description, and links for more information.

Proposed plan to improve the south section of George Washington Memorial Parkway and Mount Vernon Trail - Comments due Wednesday, January 18, 2023

Submit comments at [this link](#)
Read full article at [AHCA Website](#)

Aurora Hills Community Center Events for Seniors

Upcoming activities for seniors at Aurora Hills Center include [Jeopardy](#) on January 9, a lecture on the [King and Eisenhower Memorials](#) on January 11, and [Movies at Aurora Hills](#) on January 27 and February 10. See the full list of 55+ events [here](#). 55+ Pass holders only. Don't have a 55+ Pass? Learn how to get a pass [here](#).

Other County stuff:

Arlington County

Check out the [Engage Arlington](#) page regularly to find more projects that seek your comments!

Quick Build Safety Project: 26th & S. Ives

This project is one of several County Vision Zero projects to improve safety.

Project Description: Improvements include providing new curb and gutter, creating vertical separation from the existing sidewalk and travel lane, as well as an ADA compliant curb ramp. [Click to view the plan.](#) **Safety Need:** Identified through a storm water management improvement project. **Status / Timeline:** Winter 2022/2023

Get On Board Oakridge Elementary School's Walking School Bus!

22202 seniors: Ready to walk off those holiday calories and do a good deed?

22202 parents: Are you looking to simplify your kid's morning commute at least a little bit? The Oakridge Walking School Bus is the answer!

Known as "The Us Bus," the Oakridge Walking School Bus matches local seniors with families who live in the one-mile walk zone of Oakridge and who want their kids to walk to school. The Us Bus operates one morning a week, but the good feelings last all week. (School doors open at 8:40 am and school starts at 9 am).

This collaboration of 55+, Arlington Commission on Aging, Virginia Safe Routes to School, WalkArlington and Oakridge Elementary is a continuation of the pilot that started last Spring. Here are links to media coverage of that pilot: locally in [Patch](#) - bit.ly/3Za0pmj, and nationally on CBS - bit.ly/3X7Zh0A

Training and background checks (from both 55+ and APS) are provided, as well as safety vests...and new friends for all.

Seniors interested in volunteering should contact Andrea Walker at tasteless@verizon.net
Families interested in having their students join the Us Bus, contact Lauren Hassel at LHA1165@yahoo.com

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