



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

JUNE 2023 NEWSLETTER

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

Our tiny neighborhood has been barraged by many existential issues in the past couple of years, including increasing density, traffic, crime, noise, and a severe loss of tree canopy. While there have been positive changes as well, there are many issues that concern us and it takes a lot of work to monitor and respond to the construction projects, use permits, and zoning changes. The effort required to make sure our interests and concerns are considered is enormous and falls to a very small but dedicated group of your neighbors.

In order to know that we are truly and faithfully representing your interests and concerns as a resident of Aurora Highlands, we need to hear your voice. We need you to let us know what concerns you and what your hopes and goals are for the future of our neighborhood. We also need you to be involved. Please share your time, passion and expertise in any way you can by attending our monthly meetings and volunteering in some small way to help us do what AHCA exists for: to strive to keep Aurora Highlands a desirable place to live that not only has cool amenities and access to public transit, but is also safe, quiet, clean and healthy, with good schools and an enriching cultural environment. Come to the meeting on Wednesday and tell us what matters to you.

At our June 14 meeting, Pam Van Hine of the Pedestrian Advisory Committee and Dana Bres of the Bicycle Advisory Committee will give an update on the Route 1 Multimodal Feasibility Study. We will then have a video presentation by neighborhood NGO, The Sustainable Scoop, on the loss of Arlington's Tree Canopy, followed by a presentation on how to apply for free trees through the Tree Equity Fund.

AHCA will be on hiatus for the summer, returning in September with renewed vigor and determination. In September we hope to return to in-person meetings at the Aurora Hills Rec Center.

Cory Giacobbe, President, AHCA

Calendar

See aurorahighlands.org/events/

- June 1-30 - [Gallery Underground: UN|NATURAL](#): A Group Exhibition by the Students of the Arlington Career Center
- June 9 to August 11 - [Lubber Run Summer Concert Series](#), Fri-Sat-Sun
- June 12 - [Gateway to Fitness: Yoga](#), Gateway Green, 6-7 pm, free, [Register here](#)
- June 12 & 26 - [Virtual Open Door Mondays](#) with County Board members 7-9 pm
- June 13 - [Words for the World: An Anthology of Arlington Young Poets](#), Central Library, 6:00 to 7:30 pm
- June 14 - June AHCA Meeting, 7 - 9 pm, [online via Zoom](#)
- June 17 - [Grand Opening Celebration](#) of Amazon HQ2 at MetPark 9 am - 1 pm
- June 17 - [Reinvention Garage](#) by artist Chris Combs, at Columbia Pike Blues Festival
- June 19 - [Gateway to Fitness: Yoga](#), Gateway Green, 6-7 pm, free, [Register here](#)
- June 20 - 55+ [Juneteenth Presentation and Poetry](#), Walter Reed Community Center, 11:30 am to 12:30 pm, registration required
- June 22 - [Open Lab at The Shop with Chris Combs](#), Central Library, 4:30 - 7:30 pm
- June 24 - [Teen Saturday Trip Series](#), Ages 11-16, Thomas Jefferson Community Center, 10 am - 1:30 pm, [click on link](#) for future dates and destinations.
- June 26 - [Gateway to Fitness: HIIT](#), Gateway Green, 6-7 pm, free, [Register here](#)
- June 26 to August 11 - [Arlington Mill Teen Drop-In](#), Arlington Mill Community Center, weekdays, 1-5 pm, ages 11-16
- June 24 - Fort Scott Invasive Plant Removal, 9-11 a.m. [Register here](#)
- June 30 - 55+ Movies at Aurora Hills, "What About Bob?" (comedy), 12:30 - 2:30 pm
- July 1 - Hale Park Invasive Plant Removal, 9-11 a.m. [Register here](#)

55+ Activities - [Summer Registration](#) for 55+ programs, events and classes is open!

The Summer Activity Guide is [here](#). [View activities](#) and [register](#)! There are great programs for fitness, art, music, dance, trips, hikes, parties and more!

AHCA Membership Dues for Calendar Year 2023

\$20 per household. Pay dues either by mailing a check to AHCA, P.O. Box 25201, Arlington, VA 22202, or go to www.aurorahighlands.org and click the "Donate" button to pay by PayPal.

** Paying by check saves the AHCA the PayPal transaction fee.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, June 14

7 pm-9 pm, [Virtual via Zoom \(Register Here\)](#)

<https://bit.ly/June2023AHCA>

AGENDA

7:00 pm - Call to order and approve [May minutes](#)

7:10 pm - Presentation: Pamela Van Hine and Dana Bres will discuss [VDOT Route 1 Multimodal Feasibility Improvements study Phase 2](#)

7:40 pm - Presentation: Mary Glass of Sustainable Scoop will present a video on the condition of Arlington's tree canopy

8:10 pm - County requests for Comment - Use permit for Lantern Karaoke at 320 23rd St. S

8:20 pm - Committee Reports -

8:30 pm - Other Business / New Business

9:00 pm - Adjourn

Newsletters & Social Media

We know you enjoy having a print newsletter. We'll do our best to continue it. It 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 Facebook or Insta to stay connected no matter what.

The 4D-A group list-serve is an alternative to Nextdoor for hyper-local information and to post queries to your neighbors: To subscribe, go to the group website, read the rules and scroll down to the membership button. Here is the website: <https://groups.io/g/4D-A22202>

All Underlined Items are Links to Websites and Other Content - Go to our Website for Live Links! [AuroraHighlands.org](https://aurorahighlands.org)

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? ;)

Read Up & Reach Out!



www.aurorahighlands.org



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[Nextdoor - Aurora Highlands](#)



info@aurorahighlands.org



[\(703\) 594-1344](tel:(703)594-1344)



[P.O. Box 25201 Arlington, VA 22202](#)

Neighborhood News

AHCA June Meeting Guest Presentation:

Mary Glass of Sustainable Scoop will present a **video on the condition of Arlington's tree canopy**. Sustainable Scoop develops strong future civic leaders by providing ground-breaking employment training, programming, and production experiences in the Media Arts, especially for generation Z. On May 25, Sustainable Scoop held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate their new permanent home in the Melwood Complex on 23rd Street. Thanks to the Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Sustainable Scoop can now provide a media library, instructional materials, studio space, and production training to students who are passionate about the mission. Courses encourage questioning and aim to develop global civic-minded citizens. They produce impactful Interviews, Public Service Announcements, News Stories, and Narrative Films. These projects, along with the experience they provide, fulfill community service requirements and offer internship oversight. Mary Glass will introduce the Sustainable Scoop program and show a video produced by students that explores the disappearing tree canopy of Arlington.

For the full article please go to the online version of the newsletter at our website:

<https://aurorahighlands.org/news/june-2023-newsletter/>

Grand Opening Celebration of Amazon HQ2 at MetPark on Saturday, June 17, 9 am - 1 pm

Amazon invites neighbors, employees and their families to a free Community Day in Metropolitan Park to celebrate the opening of HQ2. The festival will feature HQ2 retailers, community leaders, neighborhood small businesses and restaurants, more than 50 local farmer's market vendors, Amazon creators, and more. Check out Amazon's new Rivian electric delivery vans, see local art, dance with the DJ, hang in the kids zone, take photos in the photo booth.

There will be a brief program at 10 am with local community leaders to celebrate the official opening of the 2.5 acre public park and kick off the farmer's market season.

Home to Arlington's newest public open space, Metropolitan Park is thoughtfully designed with native plantings for a variety of uses, including a dog park, recreation areas, walking and bike paths, a children's area, and art installations.

The location of the celebration will be:

Metropolitan Park at Amazon HQ2
510 14th Street South, Arlington

Amazon HQ2 at MetPark: Metropolitan Park, and Farmer's Market Open in June!

In addition to the [grand opening](#) of the Amazon HQ2 MetPark buildings Merlin and Jasper, also look for [EatLoco](#), a new [Farmers' Market](#) starting on June 17, as well as new retail on Eads, 14th, and 15th. The local resident humans and their dogs are already using the new playground, small and large dog runs, and the beautiful new paths through the park.

County News

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

Voting Reminder – In person Voting for Democratic Primary is Tuesday, June 20

Important dates for the Democratic Primary:

- It's too late to register to vote or update your registration before the June 20 primary – but you can complete forms to update your registration records (or register) on Election Day at your polling place!
- Last day to [apply for a mail ballot](#): 5 pm, June 9
- Last day to vote early in person is Saturday, June 17, between 9 am and 5 pm. Find all early voting sites and their dates and times that they are open [here](#).
- Mail Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked on or before June 20 and received by 12 pm June 23. Don't forget that you can also drop off your completed ballot (and signed envelopes) at your regular polling place on Election Day – or in our local Drop Box (outside Aurora Highlands Community Center) until 7 pm on June 20.
- Vote in person in your precinct on Tuesday June 20, any time between 6 am and 7 pm. Find all the information you need to vote in person through this County [voting page](#).

Know before you go: Who you'll vote for (sample ballots are [here](#); see this Arlington Democrats [page](#) for candidate page links); how [ranked voting](#) works (only being used for the Democratic Candidates for the County Board); [where](#) you vote; [ID requirements](#) (hint – please don't present an out-of-state driver's license); and curbside voting (65+, disabled, COVID+ - try it!)

New Stormwater Utility Fee Coming in 2024

The County is changing the way it funds the Stormwater Management Program. Currently, the program is funded by a sanitary district tax based on a property's real estate assessment. Beginning in 2024, the County will change to a Stormwater Utility fee based on the amount of impervious area (IA) on a property, i.e. hard surfaces like roofs and driveways that don't let rain runoff soak into the ground, as shown in yellow in the [image on the website here](#). Customers will receive the first Stormwater Utility fee with the real estate bill in May 2024.

The Stormwater Utility billing unit is called a Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU), based on 2,400 square feet of impervious area (IA). This is the median impervious area on Arlington County residential parcels. The amount of impervious surface on each property is determined by satellite imagery.

For the full article please go to the online version of the newsletter at our website:

<https://aurorahighlands.org/news/june-2023-newsletter/>

FOOD for Thought

County staff are continuing to incorporate aspects of the current Temporary Outdoor Seating Area (TOSA) program into the new Future of Outdoor Dining ([FOOD](#)) program. Meanwhile current TOSA regulations will stay in effect until August 15, when the new FOOD regulations will take effect. See the recently released [FOOD study overview](#) presented at the ZOCA meeting on May 9. How do you feel about local outdoor dining in our neighborhood? The issue will be considered by the various county committees and commissions in June and July, and will come before the County Board on July 15. Send in your comments to TOSA@arlingtonva.us.

Glebe Substation and Electric Transmission Project - Dominion Energy Update:

On May 24, Dominion Energy sent out this construction alert for the Glebe Substation project:

Arlington County side updates:

Construction crews are nearing the end of installing the metal rails for the receiving pit inside Glebe Substation. Once complete, we will begin excavating the receiving pit. There will be an increase in truck traffic on S. Eads Street Monday through Saturday while we haul away the excavated material from the substation.

When necessary, flaggers will be utilized on both sides of the substation to ensure the safety of trail users as trucks enter and exit the work site.

For the full article please go to the online version of the newsletter at our website:

<https://aurorahighlands.org/news/june-2023-newsletter/>

Transportation

AHCA June Meeting Guest Presentation:

Pamela Van Hine and Dana Bres will discuss VDOT Route 1 Multimodal Feasibility Improvements study Phase 2 (Comments due June 16!)

VDOT held the virtual 4th Public Information Meeting for Phase 2 of the Route 1 study on Monday, May 15. In case you could not attend the meeting (or want to review the materials), you can find the meeting recording and slides [here](#), under "materials". Details on how to submit your comments are also on the meeting page. Comments are due Friday, June 16. This project is behind schedule; watch for a delayed draft and final Phase 2 report and PIM 5 (Spring, 2024!).

The [Livability22202 Route 1 Working Group](#) continues to review Route 1 plans. Overall members are pleased with the proposed 160' right of way for Route 1 North of 18th, with a wide tree-lined median and generous tree-lined landscaping zone, and adequate "roll lane" (for cyclists and micromobiles) and sidewalks. Plans for Route 1 intersections with 23rd, 20th, and 15th are major improvements over current conditions. Preliminary plans for changing ramps/intersections for I-395/Route 1/Route 110 are exciting, but yet unfunded and a separate project. However, many members of the Working Group remain concerned about several Route 1 plans, especially regarding: an at-grade intersection of Route 1 and 18th Street; the scope, design, and details of the TDM program (appears to be both redundant, yet insufficient), the incomplete 25 MPH speed study, lack of enforcement plan, and still-too-wide 11' travel lanes.

As many area cyclists and pedestrians also share these concerns about VDOT plans, the BAC-PAC invited Dan Reinhard, the Route 1 project manager, and Route 1 team, to the joint [BAC-PAC meeting held on Monday, June 5](#) (VDOT presentation starts at 31 minutes into video). Much of this presentation was similar to PIM 4, but some surprising new details came up as well. Pamela Van Hine and Dana Bres will discuss these during the June 14 virtual AHCA meeting. Please plan to attend.

Army Navy Drive Complete Street Project Updates

In the coming weeks, crews will begin preparing to begin work on the [Army Navy Drive Complete Street Project](#), on Army Navy Drive between South Joyce Street and 12th Street South. Ahead of construction, expect to see digital signs and equipment staged for work. Construction will take place in five broad stages, starting with demolition of the medians in the roadway. The project will rebuild Army Navy Drive within the existing right-of-way as a multimodal complete street featuring enhanced bicycle, transit, and pedestrian facilities. The goal of the project is to improve the local connections between the Pentagon and the commercial, residential and retail destinations in Pentagon City and Crystal City. Traffic impacts will be shared on an ongoing basis. To learn more, visit the [project page](#).

West Glebe Road Bridge Reconstruction – Progress

The bridge is now open to two-way vehicular traffic, the [west side sidewalk](#) is again open again, and the 4 Mile Run Trail under the bridge is again open. Work on the east side of the bridge is not complete, so watch for short-term detours. The project is due to be completed this summer. Next up, reconstruction of the [Arlington Ridge Road/Mt Vernon Avenue Bridge](#) – design being finalized, and West Glebe Street Bridge needs to be finished first!

Transportation (Continued)

Yellow Line Reopens and the new Potomac Yard Metro Station Opens!

The Metro Yellow Line reopened on schedule on May 7, and the new [Potomac Yard Metro station](#) opened on May 19. Hopefully both will increase Metro ridership.

CC2DCA – Next public engagement coming soon:

Plans for CC2DCA – a multimodal bridge between Crystal Drive and DCA, with connections to the new Crystal City VRE station and Mt. Vernon Trail – are moving along. The Arlington County Board, during their May meeting, endorsed CC2DCA preferred alternative 7D and approved funding for the engineering study. The County project web site includes a link to the CC2DCA [Spring newsletter](#) that covers project progress and next steps. Watch for the next public engagement this summer! By the way, do NOT confuse CC2DCA with the older, but still unbuilt [DCA South Pedestrian Access Project](#), along Route 233, the Airport Access Road.

Arlington National Cemetery Southern Expansion (ANC SE) construction remains a challenge

Arlington National Cemetery is expanding its space and number of burial sites through its Southern Expansion and the FHWA Defense Access Roads (DAR). DAR and the County are working together to relocate and realign the section of Columbia Pike next to the ANC, as well as make modifications to Joyce and existing connections to Washington Boulevard from Columbia Pike. Southgate Road, a favorite alternative for cyclists and pedestrians heading west on Columbia Pike, will be removed, but the realigned Columbia Pike will have a wide bike-ped path to replace it. Construction on South Parcel (for the new Operations Complex and maintenance bays) began in May 2023 and it is expected to be completed in June 2026. Construction at the cemetery is expected to begin in the summer of 2025 and be completed in the winter of 2027. Meanwhile, expect at least two more years of road construction, disruption, and detours in our area. The DAR project website is [here](#). Arlington has both an [ANC SE](#) site and a [Columbia Pike multimodal improvements site](#), which link to the DAR plans as well. Note that the section of Columbia Pike by the ANC is Segment A

Long Bridge Project – Update

The Long Bridge Project consists of a new 2-track RR bridge over the Potomac and new RR tracks on both sides of the Potomac. Part of the NEPA mitigation is adding a new bike-ped bridge just to the north of the new RR bridge. This bike-ped bridge will connect to the Mount Vernon Trail and the northern end of Long Bridge Park. Cyclists can then connect to a future new [bike route](#) by Long Bridge Drive.

For the full article please go to the online version of the newsletter at our website:

<https://aurorahighlands.org/news/june-2023-newsletter/>

1900 Crystal Drive – Stormwater Work requires nighttime closures of eastbound lane of 18th Street

Nighttime road work on the south side of 18th Street at the mid-block vehicle entrance between the hours of 6pm and 6:30am for about 4 weeks starting in early June. The two eastbound lanes of 18th Street are anticipated to be closed during these hours to allow for the installation of required new stormwater drainage infrastructure serving the surrounding areas; traffic control will be provided so that 2-way traffic, east and westbound, on 18th Street is unimpeded during this night work. During daytime hours, the work area will be covered with metal plates to allow typical access and vehicular traffic on 18th Street South.

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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>

Teen Police Academy with Arlington County Police Department | Applications Due June 11

The Arlington County Police Department is accepting applications now through June 11 for the Teen Police Academy. Rising 10th-12th grade students are invited to apply for the ACPD Teen Police Academy to learn how the police department operates and its role in the community. Learn more [here](#).

Free Outdoor Summer Movies Series on Wednesday Nights

Westpost/Pentagon Row is hosting a series of free outdoor movies on Wednesdays in June and early July, starting with "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" on Wednesday, June 14. Movies start at 7:45. Bring your own chairs and blankets.

- June 14: "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles"
- June 21: "Jumanji: Welcome To The Jungle"
- June 28: "Toy Story 3"
- July 5: "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory"

No tickets required. [RSVP here](#) to receive updates.

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

Nature in the Neighborhood

You can qualify for a reduced stormwater fee by planting a tree!

Soon we are all going to be paying a new stormwater utility fee (see article on page 2). Get a break on the new stormwater utility fee and help restore our declining tree canopy at the same time. June 16 is the deadline to apply for a free tree--planted free of charge--through the Tree Canopy Fund. The County Board is expected to vote to allow your new tree to help offset your 2024 stormwater utility fee with a 5% credit for each tree planted in your yard in 2023. There are many beautiful tree species to choose from. And because our neighborhood has been losing so many trees, Aurora is part of the priority Tree Equity Program and we have a greater variety to choose from. For details and to apply online, visit <https://bit.ly/TreeCanopyFund>

Tree Canopy Application Deadline: June 16

Young Trees Need Water Every Week

Newly-planted trees require at least 25 gallons a week to survive and thrive. [Sign up here](#) to get an alert from Casey Trees when there hasn't been enough rain and to water your young trees.

Arlington County Draft Historic and Cultural Resources Plan Feedback Form (Through June 20)

How should we celebrate people, stories and buildings? Share your comments on the updated draft Historic and Cultural Resources Plan through June 20 to help guide how to protect, interpret, celebrate and educate people about Arlington's history, built environment and cultural heritage.

Commercial Development News

For stories on the commercial development projects in our zip code such as The Americana, RiverHouse and Crystal Tower 3, go to the web version of our newsletter at <https://aurorahighlands.org/news/june-2023-newsletter/>

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