



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2023 NEWSLETTER

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

At our last meeting on February 8, Corporal Kenneth Giles and Corporal Areyal Hall from the Community Outreach Unit of Arlington County Police Department gave a community update on crime trends in our area. You can read about it in the [minutes](#) and view the presentation in the [video of our meeting](#). Both the minutes and the video are available in the Minutes section on the [Documents page](#) of our website, AuroraHighlands.org.

Also in February, Dana Bres returned to update us on the Arlington National Cemetery expansion project and the significant disruptions to traffic patterns on Columbia Pike and Southgate. Dana's slides from his presentation are available on our [website in the Documents section](#).

At our March 8 meeting, we have invited Cathy Bonneville Hix, President of the Arlington Historical Society to give a presentation on the AHS, their programs and a brief history of the Hume School.

This month AHCA has been asked by the County to provide comments on three issues. One is a use permit review for the Veritas Collegiate Academy on 23rd Street. They are approved for 25 students but have been operating at 110 students. The second issue is a request at Westpost (Pentagon Row) to renovate, add 1,300 square feet of retail, construct a 2,400 square foot terrace and add a large format media screen to the main plaza (below the clock). The final issue is a minor site plan amendment to allow an Avis car rental facility in the garages and 601 and 701 12th St. South (ex-TSA HQ). A board member will present our concerns on each of these issues.

Cory Giacobbe, President, AHCA

Calendar

See aurorahighlands.org/events/

- March 3 until April 2 - [Beauty and the Beast at Syntetic Theater](#)
- March 4 and Apr. 1 - Haley Park Invasive Plant Removal, 9-11 a.m. Register [here](#)
- March 8 - February AHCA Meeting, 7 pm, [online via Zoom](#)
- March 13 - Virtual Open Door Mondays with County Board members 7-9 pm
- March 17 - 55+ [St. Patrick's Day Luncheon](#) at Aurora Hills Library 12:30 pm
- March 20 - 55+ [Documentary Discussions](#) at Aurora Hills Library 1:30 pm
- March 20 to April 16 - National Cherry Blossom Festival
- March 22 - [Native Plants for Northern VA](#), Long Branch, 3-4:30 pm
- March 24 to 26 - [Tossed and Found](#) rummage sale, Crystal City Shops
- March 25 - RIP Fort Scott Invasive Plant Removal, 10 a.m. Register [here](#)
- March 27 - [Crystal City Pentagon City Open House](#), 4-7 pm, Long Bridge Aquatic Cntr
- April 1 - Pink in the Park Cherry Blossom Celebration (details below)

Celebrate Spring and Cherry Blossoms!

You can watch the Cherry Blossoms on the [Bloom Cam](#). Monitor their progress at the [NPS Bloom Watch](#) site for key developmental stages and dates. Visit the website of the [National Cherry Blossom Festival](#) to learn about all of the festivities. Decorate your porch for Petal Porches. Let's have a critical mass of [Petal Porches](#) in Aurora Highlands!

Come join the National Landing BID at their [Pink in the Park](#) Cherry Blossom Celebration in the parking lot of the Long Bridge Aquatics & Fitness Center, 333 Long Bridge Drive, on Saturday, April 1, from 3-7 PM. Celebrate the arrival of cherry blossom season with an unforgettable festival hosted by Orlando Jones, featuring musical guests DJ Chan Don, Crush Funk Brass, Umami House, Reesa Renee, Footwerk, and headliner Black Alley. Enjoy a beer & wine garden, food trucks, giveaways and all things pink. Before the music starts, check out [Pink in the Pool](#) from 9 AM to 12 PM and enjoy a pool day with free access to the leisure pool at the Long Bridge Aquatics & Fitness Center.

AHCA Membership Dues for Calendar Year 2023

Please show your support for AHCA and the community by paying the annual dues for 2023. The cost is \$20 per household and is used to support the monthly newsletter, community events, and other neighborhood building activities, and additionally, is required to be able to vote on referendums at meetings. There are two ways to pay dues, either mail 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, March 8

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

<https://bit.ly/March2023AHCA>

AGENDA

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

7:10 pm - Presentation: Arlington Historical Society

7:40 pm - County requests for Comment:

- Veritas Academy
- Avis Car Garage
- Westpost Center Renovations

8:10 pm - SPRC reports (Americana and CT3)

8:20 pm - Committee Reports

8:40 pm - Other Business

- New Business/Announcements

9:00 pm - Adjourn

Newsletters & Social Media

We hear from neighbors that they really enjoy having a print newsletter. 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.

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

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

Missing Middle Housing Request to Advertise: Community Feedback - [Feedback Form](#)

On January 25, the County Board authorized public hearings in March on proposed Zoning Ordinance and General Land Use Plan amendments. The advertisement sets the parameters for what the Board can consider at the [March 18 County Board Meeting](#). [Provide your comments](#) to the County Board on advertisements for Missing Middle Housing. [Visit the feedback form](#) to learn about specific amendment documents and the authorized Request to Advertise. Upcoming County meetings addressing Missing Middle Housing (see side panel on [Missing Middle Page](#)): Planning Commission (March 6), Board of Zoning Appeals (March 7), and Permit Arlington Open House: Certificate of Occupancy (March 8).

[Regional Fair Housing Plan - Feedback Form through March 31](#)

Share your thoughts with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments on the [draft Regional Fair Housing Plan](#). Visit the project page to learn more.

[S. Arlington Ridge Road and S. Lynn Street Safety Improvements](#)

This County proposed project would create safer intersections and traffic flow at the intersections of Arlington Ridge Road at Lynn and at the I-395 ramps. Approval for construction of this project was scheduled for the Saturday, February 18 County Board meeting, but it was removed from the consent agenda and moved to the Tuesday, February 21 meeting. At this meeting, the project manager, Gabriela Kock, presented the project, and R. Rebh presented the ARCA concerns. Nevertheless, the County Board voted unanimously to approve it. See County Manager's [Board Report](#), [Project Manager Slides](#), and watch the [Meeting Recording](#) starting at 3 hr 39 min for R. Rebh, ARCA, and starting after 4 hours for Ms. Kock, Board Q&A with Ms. Kock, and the Board vote.

[Army-Navy Country Club \(ANCC\) Trail Connector – Revised Plans](#)

Designing and building the long-promised and long-delayed ANCC Connector will provide bike-ped access through the edge of the ANCC from Army-Navy Drive to the Hoffman Boston campus, a critical “missing link” for our community. County staff offered a major virtual public engagement in 2022. Based upon strong public pushback to initial plans for the ANCC Trail Connector, the County is revising its plans by creating an improved hybrid of Concept 2, with additional public engagement this Spring/Summer. Many of the public comments for Concept 2 (Stairs + Runnels) noted lack of acceptable accessibility for all users and challenges for taking larger bikes, strollers, and carts up the runnels. Check out the engagement summary and project page for more details.

Construction Resources

The County [Crystal City-Pentagon City Area Map](#) shows information on commercial development and transportation projects in our area, with links to project pages and contact information. [The National Landing BID page on construction projects](#) provides additional construction information. The County is holding a [Crystal City Pentagon City Open House](#) on March 27 from 4-7 pm at the Long Bridge Aquatic Center.

County News

[Engage Arlington](#): Visit [this site](#) frequently for new opportunities to give the County feedback!

55+ Activities - Spring Registration is Open!

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

Upcoming activities for seniors at Aurora Hills Center include [St. Patrick's Day Luncheon](#) on March 17, [Documentary Discussions](#) on March 20, [Magazine Article Discussion Group](#) on March 22, [Paint a Bowl](#) on March 24, [Movies at Aurora Hills](#) "Mrs Harris Goes to Paris" on March 31, 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](#).

It's County Budget Time! [County's Proposed Budget FY 2024](#):

The County Manager presented his Proposed FY 2024 Budget to the County Board at the monthly Board meeting in February. From February 28 through April 16, the County Board hosts a series of work sessions with County agencies to learn more about the specifics of their budget proposals. The public is invited to attend – in person or virtually. During the FY 2024 Budget Work Sessions, numerous questions are raised on the budget proposals presented to the County Board. Those questions and the responses will be posted to [this page](#). Note the two public hearings – general budget hearing March 28 and Public Tax Rate Hearing on March 30. These are your opportunities to share your comments and concerns directly to the Board. You can also submit written comments through the link on [this page](#).

P.L.A.C.E. Grant – Applications due April 28, 2023

[Arlington County P.L.A.C.E. Grant](#) (Promoting Local Arts and Community Equity Grant) is a competitive grant program that will support community-initiated projects related to Arlington's history, built environment and/or cultural heritage. The grant reinforces the goals of the Arts Commission to advance cultural equity in Arlington for all and enhances Arlington County's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Read the full article in the online version of the February newsletter at [AuroraHighlands.org](#)

[2023 Community Engagement Forum on Aging Issues - Hybrid Event on March 20 at 9:30 AM](#)

[Join](#) County staff, Commission on Aging members, and community partners for an interactive discussion on what matters most to older Arlingtonians. [Register to attend](#) and [learn about](#) resources for older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers.

[Performance Parking Pilot \(PPP\) – Includes Route 1 Corridor](#)

The goal of the County's PPP is to improve drivers' access to available paid street parking by making more spaces available more frequently, sharing parking space availability in real time, and reducing the negative effects of searching for available parking spaces. The PPP are in two of the major County transportation corridors – Rosslyn-Ballston and our own Route 1 corridor. The County held a public engagement for this project on Thursday, February 23, unfortunately in conflict with the first SPRC meeting for Crystal Tower 3 (see story below). If you missed the virtual public engagement, please review the meeting recording, slides, and Q&A posted on the [project website](#). Please submit your [comments online](#) through Summer, 2023 (no specific deadline posted at this time).

Yellow Line/Blue Line Disruptions Continue through April, 2023

The Metro Yellow Line continues to be closed through April. Allow extra time to reach your destination. An excellent summary of the current status of the Yellow and Blue Metro lines can be found here at [Arlington Transportation Partners](#). The relevant [WMATA page](#) is [here](#).

Commercial Development

Americana: The second and final SPRC meeting for the Americana project was held on February 13. The final SPRC meeting topics were project updates, transportation, green building & sustainability, and community benefits. SPRC members and JBGS staff and consultants had a spirited discussion on appropriate energy efficient appliances and heating, the effective placement of bird-friendly glass, and the desire for on-site affordable housing and how the housing fund actually works. These are a few of the remaining transportation issues: PUDO space along Eads is limited, and expansion would require an agreement with Embassy Suites; the majority of residential parking will be located, inconveniently, in The Bartlett, and some aspects of pedestrian and biking pathways and infrastructure remain unclear. The upcoming project discussion at the Planning Commission should be interesting and worth attending.

Crystal Tower 3: The first SPRC meeting for Crystal Tower 3, held on February 23rd, covered Building Height, Building Form, Architecture, Land Use, and Site Design. SPRC members expressed concerns about tree loss and green space loss with the proposed one-story retail building along S. Eads and whether a one-story retail building was the best use of limited available land. Dweck representatives said they have studied it and are satisfied that the retail will meet a need and be successful. Overall SPRC members were okay with the building design, shape, height, and step-downs. Watch the Dweck site simulation to visualize how the buildings fit together (simulation starts at 14 minutes). Pedestrians cannot currently cross east-west through the middle of this megablock project site because Towers 1 and 2 have a connecting building corridor that is private. North-south crossing through the middle is also blocked by buildings and topology. However SPRC members expressed a strong desire for improving pedestrian access through the site, especially through fixing the dead-end pedestrian passage. Overall the tone of the first SPRC was cordial and productive. SPRC members gave their requests for more information and details needed to address the topics of the second SPRC, **April 3**, which will focus on transportation, green building & sustainability, and community benefits. Bird-friendly glass and energy use were briefly discussed, but will be further addressed at the second SPRC meeting. Pedestrian issues include mid-block crossings, the dead-end passage, and pedestrian pathways through the project site, and sidewalk widths along Eads. Other transportation issues include PUDO, parking access, and safe bike routes.

RiverHouse Neighborhood: Site plan pages can now be found under the Preliminary Site Plan section of the County Private Development Site Plan Review page. JBGS staff held a Community-Wide Project Open House on March 2 in their National Landing Experience Center (241 18th St South). JBGS staff and the project design team provided an overview of the recently submitted site plans and a Q&A session after the presentation. If you could not attend the open house, JBGS will provide presentation materials and an online engagement opportunity on the JBGS website, RiverHouseNeighborhood.com.

Transportation

Long Bridge Project Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge Update:

On Monday, February 13, VPRA (Virginia Passenger Rail Association) hosted a stakeholders meeting for the Long Bridge Project bike-ped bridge. Dana Bres and Pamela Van Hine, Aurora Highlands bike-ped advocates, were among the invited stakeholders "at the table". VPRA staff and consultants provided a project update, including a demo of how six people could easily stand in their proposed 16' wide bridge space. Unfortunately, these people were standing still and not accompanied by dogs, cargo bikes, luggage, strollers, or actually trying to MOVE through the space, at varying speeds, in both directions, or making sudden stops! Following the presentation, the stakeholders expressed their thanks for the project and update, then raised many issues about the bridge and its proposed landings on the DC and Arlington sides. Of primary concern is the need to expand the clear width further to at least a 20' minimum (24' would be better) to ensure sufficient space for comfort and safety for users of all abilities, ages, and speeds. Pullout spaces for rest, emergency repairs, and viewing the sites need to be added along the almost half mile long bridge. Watch the [meeting recording](#) to see and hear the presentation and stakeholder comments. Online engagement begins **March 6** (watch for details); pop-up in-person engagements are planned at many sites, including Long Bridge Park and the VRE Crystal City station between March 13-25.

VDOT Route 1 Multimodal Improvements Phase 2 (update)

No update at this time: The dates for the Public Information Meeting 4 (PIM 4) and release of the draft and final Phase 2 reports have been pushed back. See the original Phase 2 schedule on this [VDOT PDF](#). At the PIM 4 meeting later this Spring, VDOT will provide updates to the project and discuss the VDOT proposed TDM. Stay tuned for details posted through 4D and through the Livability 22202 Route 1 Working Group [page](#).

Arlington Memorial Trail – Fixing a key Missing Link:

Existing bike-ped passages from our neighborhood to north Arlington are limited, crowded, sometimes inconvenient, dangerous, and at-risk for closure. To increase bike-ped connectivity, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), under agreements with the County, the Army, and VDOT, is designing a new, multiuse trail facility that will extend the bike-ped trail on the north side of a realigned Columbia Pike to Memorial Drive and links to the north. When both Cemetery projects are complete, 22202 bike-peds will be able to travel north on a realigned Joyce Street and connect to a trail heading west up Columbia Pike or east and then north around the Cemetery. Public comments were due in late February; watch for plan revisions based upon comments. Check the SUSMO page for this project to learn more on why this is an important missing link and how the plans could be improved. See next story for the Columbia Pike realignment update.

Arlington National Cemetery Southern Expansion (ANC SE) and Roadway Realignment:

This is a multi-year complex project that involves the Cemetery, the Army, FHWA, the County, and VDOT. To create space for the ANC SE, Columbia Pike and Joyce Street must be realigned. The finished projects will create a new bike-ped path on the north side of Columbia Pike that connects to a proposed path on the eastern edge of the Cemetery, but Southgate Road will be removed to create new burial space, after Columbia Pike has been realigned. Meanwhile, project construction creates challenges for our community members traveling on Joyce and on Columbia Pike. A section of Columbia Pike, between Nash and Joyce, is now closed and parts of Joyce are an active construction zone. The detour is on Southgate and Nash, before rejoining Columbia Pike west of Nash. The detour route continues to be poorly marked and dangerous for all modes; proceed with caution, especially at night, as the area is poorly lit at best. Please send comments to: Kerry L. Meeker, Chief of Public Affairs, Arlington National Cemetery (kerry.l.meeker.civ@army.mil). You may get a form letter back thanking you for your comments and noting that staff are working to resolve some of the issues, albeit not quickly enough for our safety. Alternatively, use the County [Report a Problem](#) site to report construction issues.

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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>

Oakridge Elementary Walking School Bus

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. 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

For more information visit WalkArlington.com or read our article in the [January 2023 AHCA newsletter](#)

It's Girl Scout Cookie Season!

According to the ARLNow article, pre orders will be filled shortly and Girl Scouts are selling cookies on site through mid-March. Use the [Cookie Finder link](#) to find official cookie selling sites, though other sites may pop up.

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

Tossed & Found Returns to Crystal City March 24-26

Since 1993, the Junior League of Washington's Tossed & Found rummage sale has welcomed more than 85,000 shoppers, providing bargain prices on high-quality, gently used merchandise to DC-area individuals, families, and community groups. Proceeds from the sale are used to advance the League's mission of improving our community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Over Tossed & Found's 30-year history, the sale has raised more than \$2.65 million, supported hundreds of community members through our Community Partner programs, and found new homes for thousands of items. The 31st annual Tossed & Found rummage sale will be held March 24-26 at 2100-B Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA 22202 (inside Crystal City Shops at 2100).

Skate Night returns to TJ!

A super fun community activity returns! Enjoy a family-friendly skating session select Saturdays, 6-9 pm, through spring 2023. On-site café will have snacks and drinks available for purchase. All ages.

Registration opens three weeks before event date

Thomas Jefferson Community Center, 3501 2nd St S

Teens Making a Difference (TMAD) – Youth Community Groups Volunteer Opportunity

Want to make a difference? TMAD (Teens Making a Difference) is a Service Club that helps students ages 12-18 plan service projects, learn leadership skills, and improve their schools and community. The program offers participants a chance to earn a stipend for work related learning programs. If interested in TMAD, apply through [this application](#) (no deadline). Visit [this page](#) for more information on the program.

Arlington County Civic Federation Update

The only item on the agenda for the February 21 CivFed meeting was the long-pending resolution aiming to Restore the Public's Confidence in Arlington County Governance. Due to parliamentary maneuvering on an amendment intended to gut the resolution, the leadership ran the clock until Arlington Hospital threw the group out. The CivFed Executive Committee met on February 26 to try to hammer out a solution and the CivFed will try again at the March 14 meeting to actually discuss the important resolution on the table. See the Draft Resolution and related documents at CivFed.org

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