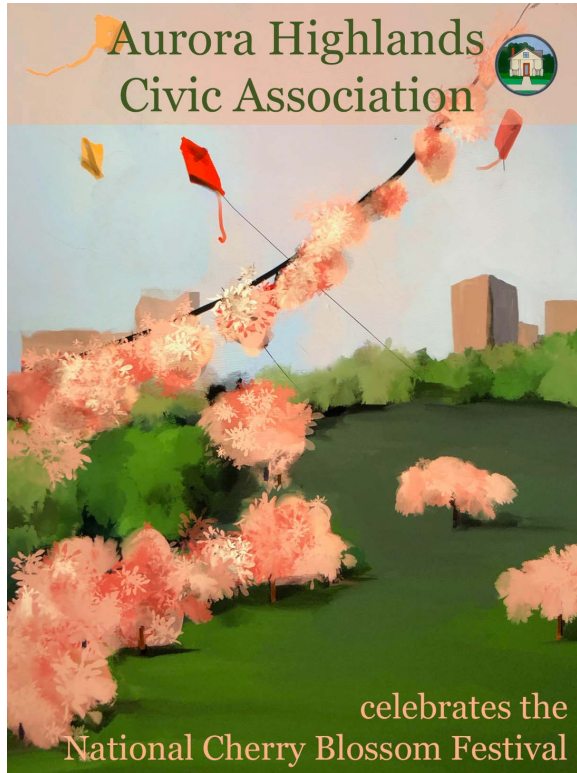




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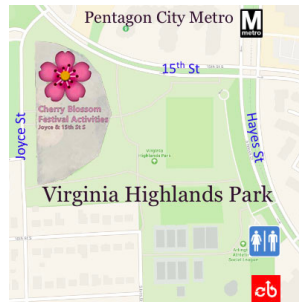
MARCH NEWSLETTER

GET READY FOR A FUN SPRING AHEAD!



March 19 - April 11
Virginia Highlands Park
 1600 Hayes St. (Hearts Field)
 Free activities and events!

- Live music
- Art installations
- Kite Flying
- Family activities
- Exercise classes
- Pet Day
- Neighborhood porch decorating contest
- Virtual events & more!



AHCA Celebrates the National Cherry Blossom Festival!

The National Cherry Blossom Festival is almost here... in our backyard! Can you feel the excitement? You will soon, when porches get a spring in their steps, *pun intended*, with springtime theme décor (see below for more info). Virginia Highlands Park will be activated with multiple art installations, live music, kite flying, activities, and exercise on a daily basis for 3 weeks! Because of our recent community activities in the park, hosting safe events for all ages, our community was asked to partner with the Festival to host some of the time-honored Festival activities this year! We hope to see everyone at the park, decorating their porches, and showing their Cherry Blossom Festival spirit. <https://aurorahighlands.org/cherryblossom>

Petal Porch Parade - Registration ends March 15th!

Bring the National Cherry Blossom Festival (NCBF) to your doorstep by decorating your yard, porch, or window with a cherry blossom, pink, or springtime theme. Register your porch decorations on the NCBF website before March 15 to be added to their virtual map of petal porches. Let's make Aurora Highlands the most spring-spirited neighborhood of the DMV region! Areas with the largest numbers of decorative houses will be treated to a surprise procession of "blossom cars" painted by local artists, so be sure to get everyone on the block in on the fun! #StepIntoSpring Learn more at <https://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/event/porch-parade/>

Thank you, Amazon, for supporting AHCA's Festival Activities at the Park and in the Neighborhood!

Next Meeting: **Wednesday, March 10**

7-9pm, Virtual -- Zoom / Facebook

<https://aurorahighlands.org/event/mar2021>

On the Agenda

Cherry Blossom Festival

Find out what to expect as the Cherry Blossom Festival arrives on March 19th. We'll also have special guests Luna and Dan Barry, two of the awesome Festival musicians, play their music, and Peijisan Art will talk about the art installations planned for the park.

Volunteer! We will need your help. Join to hear more or email us at info@aurorahighlands.org.

Pre-Register for your COVID-19 Vaccination

You can now pre-register for your COVID-19 vaccination. Go to: <https://vaccinate.virginia.gov/>

Residential Permit Parking Changes Approved

After substantial pushback from AHCA neighbors and elsewhere, the County Board voted to approve most of the proposed changes to permit parking. Notably, adding 2-hour paid parking to all zones was rejected. Changes go into effect in April and include the ability for some additional apartments and condos to apply, increased permit prices to cover the full cost of the program, and much higher thresholds for streets to be eligible and residents to petition. See <http://bit.ly/arlnow-rpp-feb21> and the County notice at <http://bit.ly/rpp-changes-feb21>.

Read Up & Reach Out!



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New & Coming Soon in the 'Hood

Irish Restaurant coming to Westpost (Pentagon Row)

Replacing Siné will be an 'Irish Farm-to-Table' restaurant concept called Mattie and Eddie's from renowned local chef Cathal Armstrong. Opening date is unknown. Dishes will include "Irish sausage rolls, a black pudding with onions and crusty bread appetizer, and a house cured corned beef with cabbage confit and parsleyed potato entree... and Eamonn's fish and chips" <http://bit.ly/pr-new-irish>

The 'Shrooms Are Up! Sydney based artists Amigo & Amigo are bringing the bright and colorful Shrooms to National Landing as the next installation of Turn up the Love!, sponsored by the BID. Visit the 10 brightly colored inflatable 'Shrooms day or night at 101 12th St through March 13!

Second Elevator Coming to Pentagon City Metro

The second elevator will eliminate the need for pedestrians to cross six lanes of traffic, two parking lanes, and a bike lane on Hayes St to reach the one elevator currently in operation on the other side of Hayes near the Pentagon Centre shopping center. The Pentagon City Metro station has one of the highest riderships in Northern Virginia, averaging about 12,500 entering riders in 2019, though that number has been cut by more than two thirds in 2020 due to the pandemic.

<http://bit.ly/arl-pc-2nd-elevator>

Melwood has Big Plans for the Future in the 'Hood

Melwood is contemplating big changes to its services and its building on 23rd St. They are planning a (virtual) Town Hall Mar. 30, 7pm for community feedback. Stay tuned for details.

Kids Returning to Schools

Arlington Public Schools began a phased return to hybrid, in-person learning on Tue, March 2, starting with Pre-K through 2nd grade students. Review these ACPD school traffic safety tips and the APS Superintendent's Return-to-School Update on COVID safety. <http://bit.ly/inside-arl-feb26>

Pentagon Row Retail Requirement Changes Still Pending

Federal Realty's proposed retail requirement changes at Pentagon Row are still under review. The County held a Mar. 3 afternoon meeting, where everyone, including Federal Realty, expressed a strong desire to maintain a full service grocer like Harris Teeter or similar. But should this remain a clearly defined site plan condition or a more flexible condition subject to County review? <http://bit.ly/arl-planning-applications>

Neighborhood Conservation Project (900 block of 21st St)

We currently have two small sidewalk improvements in the queue, and the one for 21st St. between Ives and Joyce St. has finally come up after years of waiting. Property owners on the block need to re-confirm support for initial design work to proceed. See <https://aurorahighlands.org/nc-status/>

Cherry Blossom Festival (continued from front)

For info on these FREE activities and required registration, go to the AHCA festival page

<http://aurorahighlands.org/cherryblossom>

Live music at the park Every FRIDAY and SUNDAY March 19 - April 11, 6pm - 7:30pm and Sat. & Sun., March 27 & 28, 12pm - 2pm. View musicians' bios and register for the live music events at www.aurorahighlands.org/music

- FRIDAY, March 19th 6-7:30pm -- Luna
- SUNDAY, March 21 6-7:30pm -- Dan Barry
- FRIDAY, March 26th 6-7:30pm -- MAAM (pending)
- SATURDAY Mar 27 12-2pm (kite flying) -- Gary Chambers
- SUNDAY Mar 28 12-2pm (kite flying) -- Sunshine Gang
- SUNDAY, March 28 6-7:30pm -- Jim Sheats
- FRIDAY, April 2 6-7:30pm -- Carter Farm Band
- SUNDAY, April 4 6-7:30pm -- Ardmore
- FRIDAY, April 9 6-7:30pm -- Bella & Waylor
- SUNDAY, April 11 6-7:30pm -- The Loop

Kite flying: FREE KITES! The National Landing BID has 100 free Festival Kite Kits to distribute to the community! Register to get yours at a pick up date at Virginia Highlands Park using the link on the AHCA page. Bring your own kite or fly AHCA's public-use kites at Virginia Highlands Park every day. Festival Kite Flying days are March 27th & 28th.

Exercise: In addition to Zumba (Weds, 6pm and Sat. 10:30am) and Barre classes sponsored by Pure Barre, Pentagon City (Mon. 6pm), there will be many exercise opportunities from the County. See full calendar on AHCA.

Art at the Park: The National Landing BID is sponsoring an interactive art mural. Peijisan Art will unveil two large-scale springtime displays, including giant flowers in the field and 3ft origami cherry blossoms on the fence, sponsored by AHCA.

Activities: Lots of new chairs and lawn games!

Pet Day: Mar 21, 12-3pm get a free photo session and digital copy of you and/or your pet by Jeremy Robbins. Supported by Pentagon City Dogs and Two Way Pet Services.

Even more! There are just too many activities to list here, including many virtual events, kids activities, and exercise classes. So check out the full list at AHCA's webpage.

Due to COVID-19 regulations, all events will have capacity limits and require registration, social distancing, and masks.



Check out these Mardi Gras and Rose parades turned into porch festivals for inspiration



Metro Proposes Closures for Stations, Bus Routes

WMATA's budget proposal would close up to 22 Metro stations, including Clarendon, Virginia Square, Arlington Cemetery, and East Falls Church, cut train schedules, and impact 22202 bus lines with elimination of 10A, 23 A, B, and T, and MetroWay and merging of the Columbia Pike lines 16 A, C, and E into one route 16 C. Changes would go into effect in Jan. 2022, unless additional funding is secured. Take Metro's 2022 Budget Survey by 5pm, Tuesday, March 16! <http://bit.ly/wmata-survey>.

WMATA is also doing work February 13 - May 23, 2021:

- No trains will travel between Pentagon and Rosslyn due to platform work at Arlington Cemetery station (free shuttle service will be provided).
- No Blue Line service will operate. Yellow Line trains will replace Blue Line trains at Franconia-Springfield and Van Dorn. Silver Line trains should be used as an alternate to the Blue Line in DC and Maryland
- No station service at Addison Road Station in Maryland, trains will pass through non-stop between Capitol Heights and Morgan Blvd, shuttle service from Capitol Heights to Addison Road is available. More info www.wmata.com

VDOT Feasibility Study - Is this what we want for Route 1?

VDOT is about halfway through the feasibility study of bringing Route 1 "down to grade" at 15th and at 18th streets and has published their existing conditions study and shared preliminary concepts. The only project goal that is fulfilled by these proposals is maintaining traffic throughput. We would be less safe, especially if walking or cycling. Some proposals are better than others, but all are still a challenge for pedestrians and not really an urban boulevard. Our Livability22202 Route 1 Working Group has been coordinating responses to VDOT, Commonwealth representatives, and the County Board after surveying the community, performing detailed analysis, and sponsoring public meetings. You can help. Please review the VDOT meeting materials, then send your comments about the proposal to VDOT by March 15. Use the online comment form, send an email, or write to the project director. Read more at aurorahighlands.org/news/is-this-what-we-want-for-route-1/

Water Park Plans Revised

Changes proposed for the Water Park in Crystal City caught many off guard and included several environmental, bicycle, and pedestrian issues. After much effort, the plans were tossed back for more review. We are awaiting the final plans, but the problematic staircase has been removed, and the sidewalk extended to 10', according to the last meeting. aurorahighlands.org/news/water-park-plans-being-revised/

Police: Crime Update & March 17 Public Meeting

Although ACPD has been responding in various visible and less visible ways over the past year to an uptick in concerning crimes like carjackings, there has been a much more high profile approach lately. This seems to be a big deterrent, and ACPD has highlighted a number of cases where the much more proactive monitoring has resulted in several arrests related to stolen vehicles and weapons charges. An overview of recent changes is available at <http://bit.ly/acpd-update>. ACPD will provide a community update and answer questions 8-9pm at the March 17 Crystal City Civic Association meeting (via zoom), which will be open to all residents of 22202. bit.ly/march17ccca

VA COVID Restrictions Easing, Slightly

Social gatherings: 25 people (outdoor) 10 persons (indoor). Entertainment venues: up to 1,000 individuals or at 30% capacity, whichever is lower (outdoor) or at 30 percent capacity with a cap of 250 people (indoor). Dining establishments: alcohol will be permitted until midnight, closed between midnight and 5:00 a.m. Overnight summer camps: As of May 1, overnight summer camps will be able to open with strict mitigation measures in place. See <http://bit.ly/bid-covid-march1>

COVID-19 Utility Relief

A special relief program has been established for customers having difficulty paying water-sewer bills during this difficult time. Call 703-228-5080 weekdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m or apply online at water.arlingtonva.us/

Potomac Yard Land Bay C East Meetings Completed

The second, and final, SPRC meeting for this project to build two mixed-use buildings in Potomac Yard between 29th and 33rd Street S was held on March 1. While not directly located in the Aurora Highlands, there were several project aspects for community feedback consideration -- environmental, open space, tree canopy, bike lanes, pedestrian experience, affordable housing and density. Find out more <https://aurorahighlands.org/sprc-py-c-east/>.

Increase in Storm Water Tax

The Arlington County Board voted to advertise a new proposed stormwater tax rate increase at Saturday night's virtual meeting. The new base tax rate would be 1.7 cents per \$100 of assessed real property value, an increase from the current 1.3 cents. <http://bit.ly/arl-storm-tax-increase>

Pentagon City Planning Workshop #4

The County study to reevaluate long-term development goals for the Pentagon City area with an emphasis on its transportation network continues with the fourth open community workshop on March 22. bit.ly/pc-planning-study

Mark Your Calendar

For details, see related articles and <https://aurorahighlands.org/events/>

Mar 9, 7:30pm: CC Bike Plan Review

Mar 10, 7:00pm: AHCA Meeting

Mar 16, 6:30pm: BID Community Meeting (Update & Retail Outlook)

Mar 17, 6pm: Dominion Substation Expansion (Construction Plans & Art)

Mar 17, 7pm: CCCA General Meeting (MWAA and APCD)

Mar 18, 7pm: SPRC (2000/2001 S. Clark Street)

Mar 18, 7pm: ARCA Meeting

Mar 22, 6:30pm: Pentagon City Planning Study Public Workshop #4

Mar 25, 6:30pm: PenPlace/HQ2 Community Kick-Off

Mar 30, 7pm: Melwood Future Plans

Crystal City Bike Network. In response to community and Advisory Committee feedback, the County Board requested a plan for improving the Crystal City bicycle network by Dec 31, 2024. Project staff gave the Bicycle Advisory Committee a Feb 1 virtual presentation and the public a Feb 24 virtual meeting. Many who want safer bicycling and accessibility are very unhappy with the draft plan, for many reasons. Consider attending a resident-led meeting on Tues, Mar 9 and share your feedback with the county by Mar 14. See <https://aurorahighlands.org/cc-bike-network/>

2001 S Bell/2001 S Clark Review Coming up March 18! The second of three proposed SPRC meetings for this two-tower residential project will cover project updates, transportation, and PDSP/community benefits. A major part of the transportation discussion will focus on the plans for a new block of Clark-Bell, south of 20th Street, and the first part of an eventual realignment of Clark-Bell. Follow the project at <https://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/2001-clark-st/>

Crystal City Height Study Started. The Building Heights Study was requested by JBGS, and supported by CCCA and AHCA, with conditions that it apply only in areas where heights are 200' or higher to achieve very specific goals. The study kicked off at the Feb 24 LRPC meeting. Most relevant to AHCA is if heights appropriately taper to the residential neighborhood, and staff appear likely to clarify that tapering is meant to be in line with the the Sector Plan. Also discussed was a desire for varying Crystal City skyline heights and the need to balance density with adequate transportation and open space. aurorahighlands.org/cc-building-heights-study/

PenPlace (Amazon) Site Plan Review: Community Kick Off. The County will soon begin the public review process for the next phase of development at Amazon's HQ2. Join the first community meeting March 25 to learn more about what the proposed site plan includes, how the review process will work, and when the community can share feedback. Get ready to provide feedback on The Helix and a whole lot more! <https://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/pen-place-2021/>.

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FREE De-Clutter Your Life Event



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April 10

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location

819 S 21st St
Arlington 22202

To learn about our free community events, go to: gevaandjane.com/events

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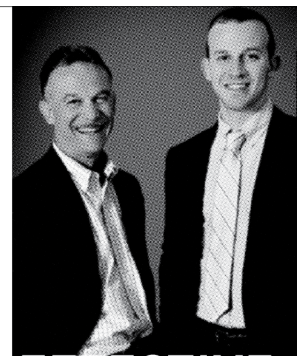
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