



AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

SEPTEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

Welcome back. I hope you had a great summer, and that you survived the heat wave of 2023. Please join us on Wednesday night for our regular AHCA meeting, virtual via Zoom. In addition to regular business, our main topic of the evening will be a discussion of our neighborhood priorities for our quality of life going forward.

Back in the fall of 2019, AHCA joined with our fellow 22202 civic associations, Arlington Ridge and Crystal City to produce the Livability 22202 report for the County (link: <https://livability22202.org>). This comprehensive report became a blueprint for our priorities into the future.

Now that a large batch of development projects are coming to a close, the County has asked the community to update our priorities going forward. I recently joined with the leadership of the other two civic associations to discuss where we stand with the 2019 priorities, what has been accomplished, and what should be our priorities going forward. The slides that guided that discussion are posted on our web site [here](#).

Our shared vision for the future of our neighborhood will be on the agenda at our next meeting on September 13. What do you think should be our priorities for the future? Are the priorities from 2019 still valid or do they need reshaping due to the many changes in the neighborhood. I hope you can join the conversation, but if you cannot, please be sure to let me know your thoughts (by email at President@AuroraHighlands.org).

There also will be an open meeting of the residents of all three civic associations on September 25 at 7 p.m. at Amazon at Met Park. The final draft will then be reviewed by the Crystal and Pentagon Cities Council on October 3 and then presented to the County. As a part of the Livability 22202 framework, there are several work groups looking at topics such as Route 1, Open Space, Housing Affordability, Crystal City Underground, Schools, and Performing Arts Spaces. I hope you join and help out with the workgroup(s) that meet your interests. It's a good way to ensure that your voice is heard for the Arlington that you want to see in the future.

Cory Giacobbe, President AHCA

Calendar

See aurorahighlands.org/events/

- Sept 1-29 - Gallery Underground: Travelogue: Solo Show by James Edwards
- Sept 9 - 9/11 Memorial 5K @ The Double Tree, 6 pm (see article on page 4)
- Sept 9 - Migrating Monarchs Campfire @ Long Branch Nature Cntr, 6:30 pm - [Register](#)
- Sept 9 - Teen Night at Lubber Run Community Center, 7 - 10 pm, Free - [Register Here](#)
- Sept 11 - September 11 Remembrance - Bozman Government Center Plaza, 9:30 am
- Sept 11 - 55+ Jeopardy! at Aurora Hills - 2-3 pm - [Register here](#)
- Sept 11, 18 & 25 - Virtual Open Door Mondays with County Board members 7-9 pm
- Sept 13 - September AHCA Meeting, 7 - 9 pm, [online via Zoom, register here](#)
- Sept 13 - 55+ Learn To Cook Plantains at Aurora Hills, 11 am to noon. [Register here](#)
- Sept 14 - Honoring the Immigrant Experience in Arlington - Arl Historical Society, 7pm
- Sept 15 - 55+ Movies at Aurora Hills - 12:30-2:30 pm - [Register here](#)
- Sept 22 - 55+ Welcome Back Bingo at Aurora Hills, 1-2:30pm. [Register here](#)
- Sept 23 - Fort Scott Invasive Plant Removal, 9-11 a.m. [Register here](#)
- Sept 23 - Teen Night at Lubber Run Community Center, 7-10 pm, Free - [Register Here](#)
- Sept 29 - 55+ Movies at Aurora Hills - 12:30-2:30 pm - [Register here](#)
- Sept 29 through Nov 5 - The Tell-Tale Heart at Syntetic Theater - [Tickets here](#)
- Oct 7 - Haley Park Invasive Plant Removal, 9-11 a.m. [Register here](#)

55+ Activities - Fall Registration is open for 55+ programs, events and classes!

The Fall Activity Guide is [here](#). There are great programs for fitness, art, music, dance, trips, hikes, parties and more! [View activities and register!](#) Or register by phone by calling 703-228-4747, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

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, September 13

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

<https://bit.ly/September2023AHCA>

AGENDA

- 7:00 pm - Call to order and approve [June minutes](#)
- 7:10 pm - Livability22202 Update
- 8:10 pm - County requests for Comment
- 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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info@aurorahighlands.org



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



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

Neighborhood News

AHCA September Meeting Topic: Livability22202 Reboot

Livability22202 is a coalition of the 3 civic associations of 22202 – Arlington Ridge, Aurora Highlands, and Crystal City. The three associations all face common pressures and impacts from rapid commercial and residential development. Community leaders, activists, and interested citizens came together in 2018 to tackle the challenges facing our area with holistic strategies based on shared themes to create a better, more livable community. Through collaborative hard work, we created working groups, offered workshops and public meetings, wrote reports, and drafted the [Livability22202 Action Plan](#) and [Framework](#). The Livability Framework has been cited and its recommendations incorporated into guidelines for various County projects, such as the [Pentagon City Sector Plan](#), and state government projects, such as the [VDOT Route 1 Multimodal Study](#). Key recommendations such as the “green ribbons” are now being incorporated into new developments such as the [RiverHouse Neighborhood](#).

At the June 20 meeting of the [Crystal and Pentagon Cities Council](#) (CPCC, formerly the CCCRC), County staff asked the Council to prepare a list of the highest priority large public amenity projects for our community. The Council agreed that the way to do that was to start with the Livability Framework and update it for current priorities. A small group of Livability22202 leaders met recently to evaluate the current Framework and draft new recommendations through a collaborative process with the civic associations during September. We will discuss the update at the September 13 AHCA meeting and also at a larger community meeting on September 25 at 7:00 p.m. at the Amazon Community Room at Met Park. We hope you can join us.

Rebooting the Livability22202 plans gives us an opportunity to invite all community members old and new to let their voices be heard. Please consider volunteering for working groups of interest to you and participate in the updates. Please see the President's column for more on the reboot.

Farmers Market at Metropolitan Park Continues on Saturdays 'til November 18

Join [EatLoco](#) from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. every Saturday through November 18 at Met Park for an exciting lineup of vendors and entertainment. Location: 1330 S Fair Street

Events in National Landing

Between BID events, seasonal celebrations, and other neighborhood festivities, there's always something to do in National Landing.

Discover National Landing activities such as fitness, art, concerts, theater, movies, comedy, karaoke and more. To view all events, go to:

<https://nationallanding.org/events/calendar>

County News

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

Don't Forget to VOTE this Fall!

The results of the General Election on November 7 will be critical to the future direction of Arlington County and Virginia. Make sure you VOTE to make your voice heard! Everything that you need to know to vote successfully in Arlington is linked through the County Voting [website](#).

Check your registration – or register to vote - through this [link](#). Registration closes 21 days before the General Election. Last day to [register to vote or update existing registration](#) is October 16. Note [Same Day Registration](#) starts on October 17!

Where, How, and When to Vote – Lots of Options!

[Vote early by mail](#): You may request a ballot to vote by mail now through October 27.

[Vote early in person](#) starting September 22 in the Bozman Center. We do not have an early voting site in 22202; the closest early voting site to 22202 is the Walter Reed Community Center, which offers early voting starting October 24, with limited hours and days.

[Vote in person on Election Day, November 7](#), between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. Know where you vote, what you need, and who's on the ballot before you go!

Who's on your ballot? Go to this [page](#) and select the sample ballot that matches your Virginia Senate and House Congressional Districts. All Virginia Senate and House seats are up for election this year. We are also selecting TWO new County Board members. Note that you may write-in legitimate names for all positions on our ballot. To learn more about the County Board candidates, try searching for their websites or attending candidate forums.

Goodbye Sanitary District Tax, Hello Stormwater Utility Fee

Beginning in 2024, the County will replace the sanitary district tax with a Stormwater Utility fee. Unlike a tax, which is based on a property's assessed value, a household's fee is based on the amount of impervious area on a property (hard surfaces like roofs and driveways that don't let rain runoff soak into the ground). The Stormwater Utility manages rainwater runoff to keep rain from standing in yards and on roadways. You can start taking action now to reduce stormwater runoff and offset your bill. Learn more about the utility fee and ways to receive credit at the [Stormwater Utility Fee page](#). See [this ARLNow story](#) too.

To read our more detailed June article on this topic, please visit our website:

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

Arlington Public Library Events in September

An escape room in Shirlington; Collage Club at Central; Latin dance at Courthouse; a conversation with Javier Zamora, author of “Solito” at Central; Arlington Reads Author Event with Art Spiegelman, author of “Maus”; Writer's Cafe at Aurora Hills; Zine workshop with graphic novelist Sierra Barnes at Columbia Pike! View these and many more exciting and interesting events at all branches of our libraries at [Arlington Public Library - Upcoming Events](#).

Parks and Rec Events in September for all ages

There really is an astounding number and variety of events and activities in Arlington: art, athletics, movies, music, nature, book clubs, cooking, hiking. To see the variety and volume, visit the Parks and Rec calendar for September here:

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Parks-Events>

Here is a link to the main Parks and Rec page with programs for all ages:

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Programs>

Report a Problem Adds new Features:

The County recently added a new Feature in Report-a-Problem: Suggest a Scooter Corral. As you're walking and riding around the neighborhood, look out for spaces on the street, usually close to the corner, that might make a good location for a County scooter corral. Open Report a Problem, sign in, put in the location (easiest by putting a pin on the map), select Bike and Scooter Issues, then Suggest a Corral, and follow instructions as you submit.

Did you also know you can report construction issues too? After marking the location on the map, select Blocked Sidewalk, Street, or Bike Lane and complete and submit the form. You can also report broken traffic signals, potholes, damaged sidewalks, street lights out, damaged traffic signs, and lots of other things! Try it.

Transportation and Public Projects

Route 1 – VDOT Rejects Livability22202 Recommendations (again!)

VDOT held their 4th Public Information Meeting (PIM 4) for the Route 1 project on May 15. PIM 4 meeting recording and slides are available through [the project website](#). In response to the PIM 4 meeting presentations, the Livability22202 civic associations sent a [joint letter](#) to VDOT on June 15, based upon the recommendations of the Livability22202 Route 1 Working Group. VDOT responded in writing, and rejected all of the recommendations in the Livability22202 letter. Meanwhile, we are still waiting for VDOT to release their draft report on Phase 2 of the [Route 1 Multimodal Improvements Study](#), now overdue. Stay tuned.

Arlington National Cemetery Southern Expansion – Continuing Closure of Columbia Pike; Narrow, Dangerous, and Awkward Detours on Joyce; and Ever-Changing Challenges for Drivers, Cyclists, and Pedestrians

Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) is expanding its space and number of burial sites through its Southern Expansion (ANC SE) 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. If you walk or bike on the current Joyce detour on the west side of Joyce, you can see the new intersection of Joyce and Columbia Pike taking shape, including beginnings of a new sidewalk and new shared use path. A rough, dark, poorly marked, and curvy Southgate Road and pedestrian path are the current detours for the closed sections of Columbia Pike. Construction on South Parcel (for the new Operations Complex and maintenance bays) began in May 2023; 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.

9/11 Pentagon Memorial Visitor Education Center Planning

The Pentagon Memorial Fund, with Army National Military Cemeteries as the lead federal agency, is proposing the construction of a Visitor's Education Center (VEC) on Arlington National Cemetery property for the existing 9/11 Pentagon Memorial. While a memorial exists that honors the 184 lives that were lost as a result of the attack on the Pentagon, there is no VEC that provides an understanding of the events of that day, the lives lost, and the historic significance of the 9/11 Pentagon Memorial Site. The proposed VEC would provide details of the 184 individuals who lost their lives on 9/11, interpretive displays discussing the symbolism of the memorial design, permanent restrooms, shelter for visitors, a café, bookstore, and conference space.

****Full story at [AuroraHighlands.org](#)****

Three big local projects issue draft Environmental Assessments – and Two of them still want YOUR comments!

(Please read the full story on our website [AuroraHighlands.org](#))

DCA Roadway Network Improvements and Associated Development Draft Environmental Assessment: Comment period CLOSED!

The Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority (MWAA) completed its [draft Environmental Assessment](#) for DCA roadway network improvements and new buildings and issued a [call for public comments](#), due August 28. Despite a short deadline, the three 22202 civic associations, [SUSMO](#), WABA, and many private citizens sent strong critiques of MWAA's plans.

Crystal City to Reagan National Airport Multimodal Connection (CC2DCA): Draft Environmental Assessment ready for public engagement September 19 and comments by October 3!

This is a joint project of the County and VDOT that will provide a bike-ped bridge between Crystal City and DCA, with platforms and access to the DCA Metro stop and a new Crystal City VRE station. For details on attending the meeting and sending comments, see full article at [AuroraHighlands.org](#).

Pentagon Reservation Master Plan Update – Environmental Assessment (EA): Comments due September 15

The DOD prepared the EA to evaluate the environmental impacts that would result from the implementation of the 2023 Pentagon Reservation Master Plan Update. For a detailed description of the plan and its potential impacts on our neighborhood, and how to comment, see the full article at our website.

****Full story at [AuroraHighlands.org](#)****

Bridges – Project Highlights

(Please read the full story on our website [AuroraHighlands.org](#))

Long Bridge Project Moves Forward

Preliminary soil testing will begin soon, before construction of a passenger rail bridge that aims to untangle and increase daily passenger rail service between Virginia and DC.

West Glebe Street Bridge Reconstruction Project is done!

The bridge is open to all traffic. All are invited to attend the [Tuesday, September 12 2 PM Ribbon Cutting](#) in the Pizza Hut Parking Lot, 1049 W. Glebe Road.

Arlington Ridge Road-Mt. Vernon Avenue Bridge Reconstruction Project Up Next!

This project will replace the deteriorated roadway substructure and reuse the existing piers, which are stable. The new bridge will include expanded sidewalks and bike lanes in each direction. ****Full story at [AuroraHighlands.org](#)****

Retail and Restaurants

So much new retail is coming to Pentagon City.... Including (but not limited to):

At [Amazon HQ2/Met Park](#) we have South Block, Good Company, Peruvian Brothers, Toby's Ice Cream, Conte Bikes, and more. On Hayes St. there's a new [Ikea](#). At the [Milton](#), we've heard about a noodle house, bank and a nail shop. ****Full story at [AuroraHighlands.org](#)****

TOSAs to FOOD – Plan approved, but implementation not immediate - The [Future of Outdoor Dining \(FOOD\) Study](#), recommendations for permanent outdoor dining facilities was supposed to replace the existing Covid-area TOSA (Temporary Outdoor Seating Area) guidelines. The County adopted zoning amendments and an administrative review process.

****Full story at [AuroraHighlands.org](#)****

Private Development Projects

For updates on The RiverHouse Neighborhood, PenPlace, Pentagon Center, Brookfield-TSA, Crystal House 6. Also stay tuned for new Crystal City site plans. For details on all of these, see the full story at [AuroraHighlands.org](#).

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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>.

Volunteer Opportunity: Lead a Walking School Bus

The Alliance for Arlington Senior Programs is looking for adult volunteers to help lead Walking School Buses at elementary schools around the Arlington County. The first walking school bus was such a success at Oakridge Elementary School that the program is looking to expand around the County.

What's great about Walking School Buses?

- You help kids in your neighborhood get to school safely
- You can maximize the health benefits of walking for yourself and for students
- You reduce congestion and pollution near schools and in neighborhoods by walking instead of travel by car

What do I need to know?

- Each bus requires only one hour of your time
- Volunteers can set their own schedules

The new school year has already started. Learn more about leading a walking bus - or joining one with your elementary school student - at the Alliance's page --

<https://friendsofthealliance.org/walking-school-bus/>

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

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.

Native Plant Sales

Fall is the perfect time to enhance the beauty and ecological value of your garden, porch or balcony.

Long Branch Nature Center Native Plant Sale - Order by Sept. 13; Pickup Sept. 24

Northern Alexandria Native Plant Sale - Sept. 30

Earth Sangha Fall Open House and Plant Sale - Oct. 1

View more native plant sales at <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/local-native-plant-sales>

21st Annual Arl. Police, Fire, Sheriff and ECC 9/11 Memorial 5K

Register for the Arlington Police, Fire, Sheriff and ECC 9/11 Memorial 5K, scheduled for Saturday, September 9 at 6 pm. The race starts and ends at the Double Tree Hotel on Army Navy Drive. The route goes all around the Pentagon: up Army Navy to Joyce, under 395, up Washington Blvd. and then down 110 back to the Double Tree. Visit the webpage <https://www.arlington911race.us/> to register and to learn more. Watch for local street closures. The route map is here:

<https://www.arlington911race.us/course-map>

September 11 Remembrance: Join County staff in the Bozman Plaza as we remember the events that took place on the tragic day, 22 years ago on September 11, 2001. You can join the event in person or via live stream. Learn more here.

Bozman Suspended Public Art Project – Complete Feedback Form and Map through September 30: The County invites you to share the route you take to your favorite place in Arlington, to help inform the suspended public art project for the lobby at the Bozman Government Center. Complete the form on the bottom of the project page, draw your route on the County map, and explain why this route is your favorite.

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