

ARCA NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2021

GUESTS

**Caroline Herre from Federal Realty
Arlington Broadband Proposal
Open Mic for Issues of Concern**

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

PENTAGON ROW HAS NAME CHANGE

Now the name is “Westpost at National Landing”. Our guest, Caroline Herre from Federal Realty will fill us in on this.

WANT TO HAVE A HAND IN RENAMING?

No More Confederate Generals in our Midst

Arlington wants your feedback on a draft policy for renaming parks, facilities and streets, which the County Board will consider at its January Board meeting. The objective is to create one policy with criteria that can be used for all renaming.

https://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&event_id=1491&meta_id=199721

“CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL” IN AURORA HIGHLANDS

The Cherry Blossom Festival has migrated to our neighborhood, thanks to our neighbors in Aurora Highlands. From March 20 – April 11 they hope to bring family-friendly activities to Virginia Highlands Park. Nothing is firm yet, so stay tuned for updates. The group has been bringing very popular family events to the park for some time now, and if you are a fan of these activities and would like to see them continue, please let the County know at <https://www.change.org/vhp-openspace>

RETHINK ENERGY

Input Needed to Implement the Community Energy Plan by Feb.1

<https://arlingtonva.konveio.com/community-energy-plan-implementation-framework-draft>

Last year Arlington County adopted sweeping updates to its Community Energy Plan, setting ambitious targets for the County’s energy sector. Highlights include setting a goal of carbon neutral by 2050; government operations to achieve 100% renewal electricity by 2025, and the community by 2035. The county staff is working to finalize the plan and needs the community’s input by February 1.

HANDS-FREE

Distracted Driving Law in Effect

Virginia’s new hands-free law that went into effect on January 1 decrees that it is illegal to drive while holding any personal communications device in the state. Police will now

be able to pull over drivers holding cell phones: you can talk hands-free. The fine is \$125 for the first offence, \$250 for the second or if drivers are holding phones in a construction zone. Now you know, and have no excuse.

COVID NEWS

Probably you know all that there is to know about Covid and the vaccine now that group 1c is eligible: but if you need a refresher, please go to the County's very informative Covid website: <http://www.arlingtonva.us/covid-19/vaccines/registration>. The County is working with Arlington Hospital Center for the vaccine distribution.

FREE COVID-19 TESTS AT AURORA HILLS

Beginning this week (Jan 13) a free, no-referral testing is available daily from 12 – 8pm at Aurora Hills Community Center. It is a walk-up, but you can make an appointment at <https://newsroom.arlingtonva.us/release/curative-covid-19-testing>

FAUCI SAYS OPEN THEATERS BY FALL

The *NY Times* reports that Dr. Fauci told performing arts professionals at a recent conference that he believed that theaters and other performance venues could open “sometime in the fall 2021” depending on the vaccine rollout though audiences will still be required to wear masks. This timeline will depend on the country reaching a vaccination rate of 70 – 85%. Go get your jab!

4D-A NEIGHBORHOOD LISTSERV REBOOT

Those of you who belonged to the local Yahoo listserv 4D-A that has been around since 2001 and was recently disbanded, can now resume getting its excellent coverage at <https://groups.io/g/4D-A22202>. It is a great alternative to Next Door, with no ads, for-sales etc. and definitely a neighborhood resource.

RESIDENTIAL PERMIT PARKING

<https://projects.arlingtonva.us/rppreview/>

Arlington is in the process of reviewing the Residential Permit Parking program, and In October 2020, County Staff released the proposed changes and launched a public engagement effort. Key changes to the program include:

1. Two hour paid parking allowed on all streets; the zone parking would remain in effect;
2. The number of vehicle permits per household will be reduced
3. Fees per permit will increase
4. Fees for the program will now cover 100% of the cost of the program. Fees currently cover only 60% of the program.

Our neighbor association, Aurora Highlands, has more streets reserved for permits, and are very concerned about the 2 hour parking plan, that will be beset with enforcement issues as in the past.

The proposed changes were presented to the County board last December, and will be brought back to the board in February for approval. Check the [website](#) for details and how it might affect you.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION

NEW COUNTY ECOLOGY & NATURAL RESOURCES WEBPAGE

<https://environment.arlingtonva.us/natural-resources/>

Covering Habitat Restoration, Native Plants and Wildlife

MASTER GARDENERS FEBRUARY PROGRAMS

All these events are online and open to all. RSVP at <https://mgnv.org/events> to receive the link to participate. If you can't join live, video recordings will be posted.

Sat. Feb 6, 10-11.30am Seeds: Selecting and Starting

Fri. Feb 12, 10 – 11:30am Build Healthy Soil and Manage Water in your yard

Sat. Feb 20, 10 – 11:30am Growing Food in Troubled Times

Fri. Feb 26, 10 – 11:30am Spring Lawn Care

TRANSPORTATION

RECONFIGURATION OF ARLINGTON RIDGE ROAD AND LYNN ST S. INTERSECTION AND ARLINGTON RIDGE ROAD AND 395 RAMP

<https://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/arlington-ridge-road-and-lynn-street-safety-improvements/>

The two intersections covered by this project have experienced a high number of collisions, and the goal is to improve safety for all modes of transport, for pedestrians, and to create predictable vehicle movements at Lynn Street and the on/off ramps to I-395.

The proposed changes to the S Lynn St-Arlington Ridge Rd intersection would realign Arlington Ridge Rd so that northbound traffic would flow directly on to S Lynn St, while the current intersection would be redesigned to create a T-shaped intersection requiring northbound Arlington Ridge Rd traffic to make a left-hand turn to remain on Arlington Ridge Rd, as shown in the on the accompanying picture.

ARCA submitted a formal letter to the county in 2019 voicing our concerns with their redesign and recommending that Arlington Ridge Rd remain the continuous street, with southbound traffic on Lynn St being forced to stop to make a right or left turn onto Arlington Ridge Rd in either direction. This recommendation was rejected based on the County's traffic data.

The changes at the 395 ramp would include enhanced crosswalks on the west side of Arlington Ridge Rd, a narrowing of the exit ramp onto Ridge Rd, removal of the dedicated left turn lane onto the ramp from northbound Arlington Ridge Rd, and additional modifications to the curbing as traffic calming measures.

METROWAY BUS ROUTE CUT

Metro has proposed to eliminate the Metroway dedicated bus route that runs from Pentagon City to Braddock Road Metro Stations due to budget concerns. Arlington and Alexandria spent millions building the Transitway, that has stops mainly in the Crystal City and Potomac Yard area. This is causing concern for many as Virginia Tech's new Innovation Campus and Amazon's new HQ2 headquarters could be affected. Further bus news: Fare collection is back, and masks are mandatory.

LONG BRIDGE RAIL BRIDGE FUNDING

The project to build a new rail bridge across the Potomac, with new bike and pedestrian facilities, is one of the key components of a \$3.7 Billion plan to expand passenger and rail freight in Virginia that recently passed the House of Representatives. The bill ceded National Park Service land to Virginia and DC as "necessary for the Long Bridge Project." Next step, the Senate, and then the actual bridge.

NEW CONCOURSE AT NATIONAL AIRPORT REOPENS IN SUMMER 2021

The \$1 billion concourse will do away with the cumbersome Gate 35X, and replace it with 14 new jet bridges. The passenger slowdown due to Covid has been dramatic, with fewer than half the number of passengers as in the previous year.

DEVELOPMENT

THE COMING TRANSFORMATION OF 22202

Our November newsletter contained background information about the County's ongoing study of Pentagon City to determine whether and where it could be more densely redeveloped in the coming years. We already know that the construction of additional, high-rise residential units in recent years has allowed 22202's population to grow by 50% since the year 2000. Plus, the Crystal City Sector Plan calls for doubling the existing number of residential units in its territory, and Amazon's new HQ2 will grow Pentagon City's day-time population by 25,000. Consequently, the foundational component of the study was to be a determination of how much more density could be constructed in 22202 before hitting the capacity ceiling of its transportation infrastructure.

We have just learned that the County has made that determination. It has concluded that if all of the ambitious development currently underway, including plans in the pipeline, or just contemplated in the Crystal City Sector Plan or Pentagon City's PDSP were to be fully built out in the coming years, 22202 would still be able to increase its overall population by an additional 20 percent, much of it located in Pentagon City.

There's just one problem. The County has not revealed what assumptions were made, or data relied upon, much less what methodology was employed in order to achieve this finding. Although transparency by County staff has not exactly been forthcoming during

the course of this study, we intend to press for information and answers that will enable us to analyze the efficacy of staff's conclusion.

Meanwhile, the study will now proceed in the coming weeks to consider urban design guidelines for this future development and it will be relying heavily on our community's input on proposed alternative concepts and scenarios. Please stay tuned to help us with analysis and input during this new phase of the study that will eventually have a major impact on our community.

WASHINGTON HOUSING CONSERVANCY PURCHASES CRYSTAL HOUSE APARTMENTS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

<https://www.washingtonhousingconservancy.org/news/whc-first-property>

The Washington Housing Conservancy (WHC), with the support of JBG Smith and Amazon, has purchased the Crystal House apartments, that sits between Eads, Fern, 18th and 22nd Sts. WHC is a non-profit that plans to provide affordable housing options, and with their purchase of Crystal House has promised to preserve this affordable housing for 99 years.

SCHOOLS

GUNSTON TEACHER RECEIVES AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Shanta Smith, an education coordinator at Gunston Middle School, has been named a recipient of the 2020 Mary Peake Award for Excellence in Education by the Virginia state government at a reception Dec. 3. Smith has been "a pioneer in efforts to narrow achievement gaps among student groups," the award was named after a pioneering African-American educator.

NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

The School Board welcomes the two new board members, Cristina Diaz-Torres and David Priddy, who are replacing retiring Tannia Talento and Nancy Van Doren. The Board is accepting applications for its Advisory Council on Teaching and Learning (formerly the Advisory Council on Instruction) and the Budget Advisory Council. To apply, go to <https://www.apsva.us/school-board-advisory-councils-and-committees/>

LIVABILITY

Route 1 VDOT Report and Livability Response

<https://livability22202.org/route-1-working-group/>

On January 11, presidents of the three civic associations in 22202, Arlington Ridge, Aurora Highlands and Crystal City, forwarded to VDOT the Livability 22202 comments on the VDOT Feasibility study. These comments provide feedback to the VDOT Public Information Meeting on the Multimodal Improvements Study for Route 1 on December 16, 2020.

See also the article in ArlNow on Jan 13, Civic Associations Recommend Taking Route 1 Underground, <https://www.printfriendly.com/p/g/9f44c7>

HOUSING

<https://livability22202.org/wp-content/uploads/Livability22202-Housing-Report-11.12.20.pdf>

The November 2020 Livability report on housing has detailed recommendations on addressing concerns about our neighbors' ability to find and keep their homes. The full report identified barriers to housing, proposed solutions for avoiding displacement, developing new and diverse affordable housing, and building community. It draws on a year of citizen led community engagement, with a "format that encouraged skeptics to move beyond knee-jerk rejections against change and toward solutions that accept the reality of population growth in the County." The group comprised renters and homeowners, long-term residents and new neighbors.

OPEN SPACE

<https://livability22202.org/open-space/>

Recommendations for strengthening connectivity between Arlington Ridge to Crystal City, Long Bridge Park and Roaches Run, supporting natural ecosystems, developing walking/biking loops, reducing heat island effects, mitigating stormwater impacts, providing wildlife habitat, incorporating solar energy and increasing tree coverage.

CALENDAR

Signature Conservatory Spring Semester for the serious acting student aged 14 – 18. sigtheatre.org

Live from the Rug Shop: Great local performers streamed live at <https://www.facebook.com/RugShopConcerts> from a unique local venue on Columbia Pike – Manoukian Rugs. Many artists have lost their performance spaces during the pandemic, so local performers in dance, singers, classical blues, Cuban and more. The next performance will be in February.

Tue. Jan 26 **Masha Gessen in Conversation with Arlington Library Director Diane Kresh.** 7 – 8pm. <https://library.arlingtonva.us/arlington-reads>

Thu. Feb 18 **Jenny Offill in Conversation with Arlington Library Director** 7 – 8pm. <https://library.arlingtonva.us/arlington-reads>

Feb 20 A Russian Valentine: National Chamber Ensemble presents a concert of the best of Russian romantic composers: Tchaikovsky and Borodin, followed by a virtual wine and cheese party. Nationalchamberensemble.org