

CRYSTAL CITY INSIDER

The monthly newsletter of the Crystal City Civic Association



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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Message from CCCA's President

Livability22202 is looking at the problem of crime in the area. We are meeting with the police and are looking for volunteers to work on the issue. If you are interested, please email me at: president@crystalcitycivic.org.

Last month we did a survey on potential names for the two parks at the Amazon HQ2 sites: MetPark and PenPlace. [The results are here](#). Overall, the names chosen are likely candidates for the final names.

Lastly, have a great summer! Be sure and take some time off and enjoy life!

- Eric Cassel, CCCA President

INFORMATION AND EVENTS – ARLINGTON COUNTY

Free Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for children

Arlington County is now offering FREE Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines to children as young as 6 months old, **by appointment only**, at Sequoia Plaza. Visit the [County website](#) or go directly to the [VAMS portal](#) to schedule an appointment.

Projects To Watch in 2022

Arlington County has been busy in 2022! From a new stormwater vault to a new fire station to two new parks that just opened, [check out some of the Projects to Watch this year.](#)

The 2021 annual Police report is out

This report details the many significant accomplishments achieved throughout the year in support of the Arlington County's Police Department's key initiatives of community engagement, transportation safety and crime prevention and control. It also summarizes crime and crash statistics and provides an overview of multi-year trends in both categories. [Read more here.](#)

Arlington Named 'America's Fittest City' For 5th Consecutive Year

Arlington County has been named "America's Fittest City" for the fifth consecutive year in the annual American Fitness Index rankings published by the [American College of Sports Medicine](#) and the [Elevance Health Foundation](#).

This is the first time in the 15 years of the [fitness index](#) that a jurisdiction has earned the No. 1 designation five times. Arlington ranked first in six indicators and scored among the top 10 cities in 19 of the 34 categories. [Read more here.](#)

County Board Gives Input on Next Phase of Missing Middle Housing Study

On Tuesday, July 12, the Arlington County Board provided feedback to guide the next phase of the Missing Middle Housing Study, including housing types, parking requirements, and building design standards.

During a work session with County Manager Mark Schwartz and staff on Tuesday afternoon, where Board members received a presentation summarizing the community feedback received over the past two and a half months and considered key policy questions regarding the next phase of the study. The work session marked the end of Phase 2 of the study, which was a focused study of specific housing types that sought to balance the community's priorities and concerns identified in Phase 1.

A draft framework for expanding housing options was released in late April, and the County embarked on a multifaceted public engagement period. Phase 3 will focus on additional public engagement and

the drafting of zoning text and General Land Use Plan amendments, which will be brought before the Planning Commission and County Board for public review in late fall 2022.

For more information on the MMHS [visit the County website](#).

9-8-8 National Hotline Now Available for Arlington Residents

A [new 9-8-8 crisis and support hotline](#) is now active across the United States, including here in Arlington County.

In 2020, Congress designated a new 9-8-8 dialing code to operate through the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) network, which has more than 200 locally operated and funded crisis lines across the country. PRS, Inc. operates the local network in Arlington.

Dialing either 9-8-8 or the existing NSPL number, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), will connect you to behavioral health care and support 24 hours a day. Virginia continues to be invested in building capacity to enhance community-based crisis services. Further updates will be provided in the upcoming months.

[COVID-19 case levels remain high in Northern Virginia, but impacts minimal | Headlines | insidenova.com](#)

Driven by new variants, COVID-19 case levels remain significantly higher than they were either of the past two summers in Northern Virginia, even though by one estimate only a small portion of cases are actually being reported. Arlington County remains at Medium transmission level, due primarily to the B4 and B5 sub-variants.

[County Board Adopts \\$3.9 Billion 10-Year Capital Improvement Plan – Official Website of Arlington County Virginia Government \(arlingtonva.us\)](#)

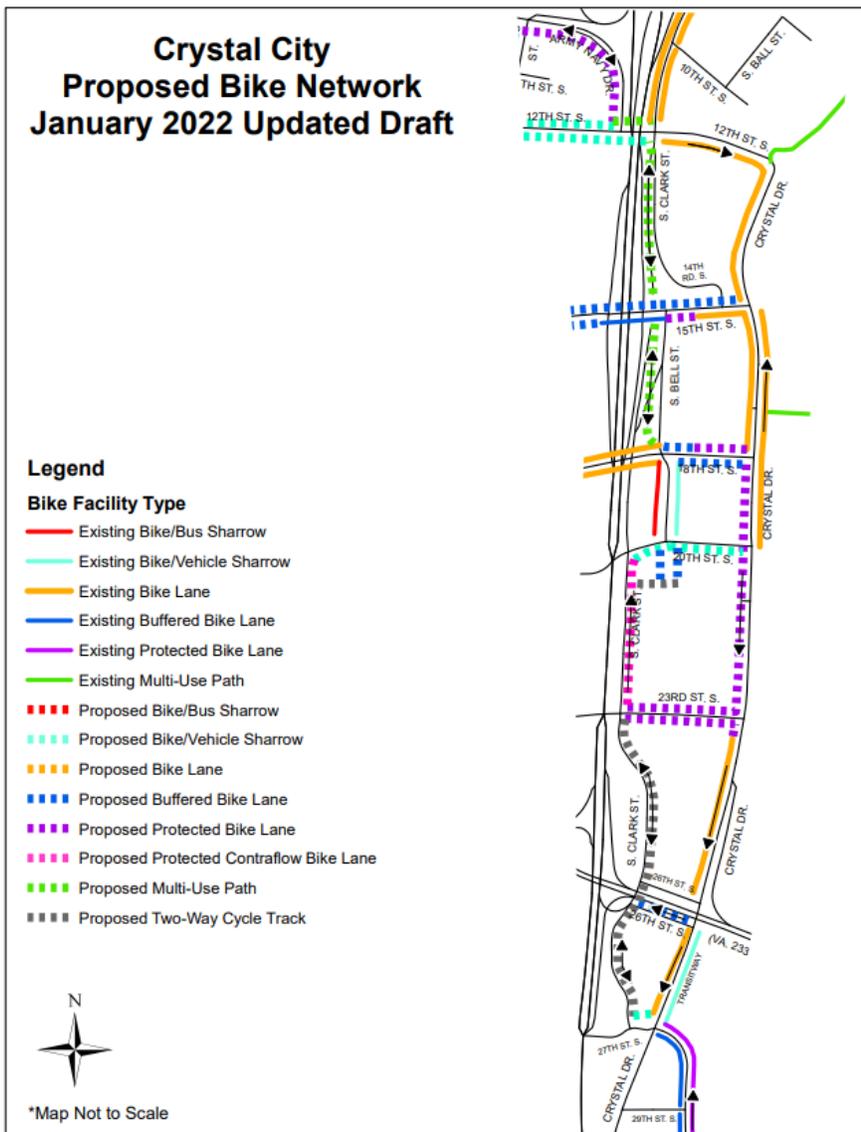
The Arlington County Board has unanimously approved a \$3.9 billion ten-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that focuses on stormwater management and flood response, climate and environmental programs, parks, transportation, and community infrastructure over the next decade. This is a return to the first ten-year capital plan since FY 2019. It follows a series of short-term CIPs adopted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It includes the investments the CCCA and Livability22202 lobbied for: three new parks in Crystal City (Metro Market Square, Center Park, and 23rd Street Plaza Park). It also includes planning for future investment in a Master Park Plan for Virginia Highlands Park, but not until FY2028.

Virtual and Hybrid Commission and Advisory Board Meetings

A new Virginia Electronics Meeting Policy goes into effect September 1, 2022, that will offer additional flexibility for hosting virtual and hybrid meetings. This new policy offers most of our Commission and Advisory Boards the option to conduct an all-virtual meeting two times (or 25 percent of all meetings) annually and allows for remote participation for the public and individual Commission Members on exception.

New Charges for EV's in Arlington

The County Board approved on July 16 an ordinance to establish a user fee for charging electric vehicles at County government-owned charging stations available for public use. The charge sets an interim rate of 14.52 cents per kilowatt-hour. This will allow the County to recover the cost of electricity, contract costs, and administrative overhead for the 7 charging stations around the community. The initiative furthers the County’s plan to expand County-owned electric vehicle charging stations for public use and develop a strategy to decarbonize transportation within the County government, the community, and Arlington Public Schools. Charging stations have been free until now.



Crystal City Bike Study

The final Crystal City Bike Network Plan and Implementation have just been released. You can find those on the [project page here](#). The plan features a network of enhanced bike facilities on key north-south and east-west streets in Crystal City that will connect residents and workers with key destinations, parks, transit, and trails. Implementation will begin later this year and continue in coordination with adjacent projects through Winter 2024. For more information, see the final network plan and timeline on the project page.

CIVIC ASSOCIATION AND LIVABILITY 22202 ISSUES

Route 1

VDOT held a [virtual public information meeting](#) #2 June 21. Watch the [meeting video here](#). Comments were requested by Friday, July 15. Livability22202 and the People Before Cars Coalition submitted a [letter of joint comments](#) on July 7, focusing on areas of agreement. This was a follow-up to [the joint letter sent on May 20](#). Livability22202 sent [a letter July 14](#), focusing on the need for better protection for peds/cyclists at 18th Street and additional measures to improve VDOT's plans for the boulevard Right of Way. The Crystal City Citizens Review Council submitted [a letter July 14](#) as well. Review the [CCCA meeting June 15](#) for a full understanding of the Livability22202 concerns and proposals to VDOT.

Next steps: The third PIM is scheduled for September and will include more information on TDM methods.

No CCCA Meeting in summer

We're taking the summer off. See you September 21 for our next meeting. Agenda TBD.

LONGER TERM ISSUES

Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline for the Arlington County

If you see suspected incidents of financial fraud, waste, and abuse that have a negative impact on the County, you can confidentially and securely report it on the [Financial Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline](#).

Arlington office vacancy rate continues to rise amid work-from-home trends

The pandemic and [work from home trends](#) are causing pain for owners of office buildings in Arlington and across the region. Arlington's office vacancy rate reached 20.8% this month, according to data from CoStar, as relayed by Arlington Economic Development. That's [up from 16.6%](#) at the beginning of 2020, as the pandemic first took hold, and 18.7% at the beginning of 2021. Arlington two main office submarkets, meanwhile, are seeing even higher vacancy rates. The Rosslyn-Ballston corridor's office vacancy rate rose to 23.3% and that of National Landing (Crystal City and Pentagon City) rose to 24.4% as of the second quarter of 2022, according to new data from commercial real estate firm [Colliers](#). Read more [here](#).

Retail Space Filling Up Fast At Amazon's HQ2 In Arlington

Four more locally owned businesses signed leases to fill retail space in the middle of Amazon's HQ2 campuses in National Landing. The latest group of businesses to commit to coming to National Landing "underscores Amazon's commitment to investing locally and enriching the Arlington community as it expands," Amazon announced Tuesday. The four new local businesses — Celebree School of National Landing, Good Company Doughnuts & Cafe, Glo30 and Peruvian Brothers — signed leases for space at Metropolitan Park, the first phase of new HQ2 construction in Pentagon City. Amazon's Metropolitan Park and HQ2's phase two PenPlace will have at least 140,000 square feet of retail space. [Read more here](#).

Article on Rent Increases

'It's Not Good To Be A Renter These Days': Rents Are Climbing In The D.C. Area, With No Relief In Sight. National and regional rent data support that conclusion. The median monthly asking rent in the U.S. exceeded \$2,000 for the first time in May, according to Redfin. In D.C., data from Apartment List shows that average rents have grown 9% over last year, and hikes range from 12.5 to 14% in suburban areas such as Rockville and Alexandria. There are extreme outliers, too: A dozen local tenants interviewed by WAMU/DCist say their rents have gone up 20% or more over last year.

<https://wamu.org/story/22/07/18/dc-rent-increases/>

How Much Have DC-Area Apartment Rents Risen in the Last Year?

The theme in both the national and DC-area rental market of late has been the steady rise in apartment rents over the last year. A new report sheds a bit more light on how much rents have risen at the top of the market. In most parts of the region, average monthly rents for apartments have risen above \$2,200 a month. The area around Crystal City, Virginia saw rents jump 20% for Class A units since June 2021; Capitol Hill/Navy Yard (17%) and Alexandria and Upper Georgia Avenue (13%) are close behind when it comes to increases. [See more here.](#)

SPRC on Crystal Plaza 5

The County has begun reviewing JBGS' application for a rezoning and redevelopment plan for the [23rd/Crystal Drive site](#), part of the large Block M parcel shown in the Crystal City Sector Plan (CCSP).

The first Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) meeting was held on July 11 to evaluate the architecture of the proposed two 30 story residential towers and two open spaces called for in the Sector Plan. In response to staff concerns about the proposed lower level/podium on each building, the applicant showed modified designs that were generally favorably received, as was the overall façade treatment/material, although some preferred the original design which provided more varied and sculpted rooflines.

The project relocates open space #11 from the corner of Crystal Drive and 23rd to the north side of the corner building, creating a landscaped east-west walkway for pedestrian access between Crystal Drive and a new Underground entrance. Open space #10 will be partially constructed with this project; the completed park will be delivered when the We Work/We Live building is redeveloped and Clark/Bell Street is in its final location. The temporary open space is currently shown as grass. Members suggested it be landscaped and that a temporary dog run might be incorporated.

The second SPRC meeting on the project is scheduled for September 15 and will address transportation, circulation, community benefits and the timing of improvements to 23rd Street which are necessary for the project to proceed.

FUN STUFF IN CRYSTAL CITY (AND NEARBY)

Sushi spot Kusshi now open in Pentagon City

Kusshi is now serving sushi in Pentagon City. The Bethesda-based Japanese restaurant finally opened its doors last week at Westpost, next to [Mimi's Handmade Ice Cream](#). [Read more here](#).

New Amazon Fresh Grocery Store Now Open In Arlington

A new Amazon Fresh grocery store in Crystal City opened Thursday, offering customers the option of [Just Walk Out Shopping](#), which lets customers skip the checkout line. The store is located at 1550 Crystal Drive in Arlington, near Amazon's HQ2. The store's hours will be 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. [Read more here](#).

Psycho Bunny and several new restaurants are coming to Pentagon City mall

Psycho Bunny is bounding its way to the Pentagon City mall, along with restaurants Soul Wingz, Maizal, and Rosa Mexicano. [Read more here](#).

Concert Series

[Lubber Run Summer Concert Series](#) runs through August 14, on Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 11 a.m.'

Pentagon Row (Westport): From Nighthawk Brewery & Pizza, Bandito's Tacos and Tequila, and the other restaurants and bars of Pentagon Row comes our summer concert series! Saturday, August 27 — Feel Free; Friday, September 23 — Loving Paupers; Saturday, October 8 — FutureBandDC.

Long-time Greek restaurant Athena Pallas is planning to close in Crystal City

Athena Pallas in Crystal City is set to serve its final spanakopita on Sunday, July 31. The 25-year-old Greek restaurant at 556 22nd Street S. is closing at the end of this month, the owners confirmed to ARLnow. The reason seems to be a disagreement with the landlord of the 23rd Street S. "[restaurant row](#)." The landlords also wanted to make it clear that this isn't an "economic closure," but rather one related to the restaurant's lease being up. The lease has been month-to-month for some time now, both the restaurant owners and the landlord told ARLnow. The restaurant opened in the late 1990s.

The Arlington County Fair is returning next month

The annual county fair is scheduled to be held between Wednesday, Aug. 17, and Sunday, Aug. 21, at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center, at 3501 2nd Street S. It is free to attend and open to the whole family. Although canceled in 2020 due to the pandemic, the fair has been held for more than 40 years and attracted over 84,000 people from Northern Virginia and the D.C. Metropolitan area to attend in past years, according to [the fair's website](#).

NaLa Beach Club



Dive into summer! Throughout the sunny season [NaLa Beach Club](#) will outfit Gateway Green (101 12th Street) with everything you would want in an outdoor space. Close your eyes and enjoy this summer escape with your toes in the sand. Events will range from live music, family friendly outdoor activities, coffee breaks and more.

HOG Pull, Saturday, August 6, 2022, 9-11am

This is a continuing project on the first Saturday of each month to reclaim the natural area between Haley Park, Oakridge Elementary School and Gunston Middle School from non-native invasive plants. This is a RiP and ARMN approved project.

Meet at Haley Park, 2400 S. Meade St., Arlington, VA 22202

Bring:

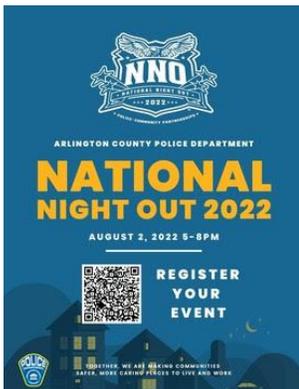
- Appropriate clothing, including good footwear, gloves, long pants and long sleeves. (Some parts of the area are rocky, and steep and contain thorns and poison ivy.)
- Tools - weeders, clippers, whackers, small saws
- Drinking water

Extra gloves and tools, plus disinfectant spray, will be provided.

Please preregister at <https://environment.arlingtonva.us/trees/invasive-plants/>

For more information, contact: Bill McLaughlin, billmcnative@gmail.com 703-477-8326; Jennifer Frum, frumjb@gmail.com, 703-300-2496

National Night Out



National Night Out (NNO) is a community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer. During the event, residents in neighborhoods throughout Arlington County and across the nation are asked to turn on their porch lights, lock their doors and spend the evening outside with their neighbors, police officers, firefighters and other County personnel. This year's event in National Landing is sponsored by the BID and will be held Tuesday, August 2, 2022, from 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at Gateway Green (101 S 12th Street)

Movies

[Watch free movies](#) under the stars in August in Columbia Pike: Fridays at Arlington Mill Community Center and Saturdays at Penrose Square between 8-8:30 p.m.

Comedy

Is trying stand-up comedy on your bucket list? Join Arlington Public Library for an in-person Improv for All workshop with Washington Improv Theater at Central Library on Tues. August 9 at 6 p.m.

Moths!

Celebrate National Moth Week with a virtual introduction to identifying moths, where to find them, and why they're important on Wed., August 3, at 7 p.m. Register [here](#).

TRANSPORTATION

Crystal City Station Improvements

This project includes the planning, design, permitting, and construction for an expanded and relocated station and platform for the VRE Crystal City Station and related track modifications. The project will construct an island platform to enable simultaneous boarding of two trains and accommodate full-length trains and the planned fourth track in and around the station. This project is related to and must be coordinated with the Alexandria Fourth Track project between AF and RO interlockings and the Long Bridge Capacity Improvements, part of Transforming Rail in Virginia (TRV) initiative. The station also has the potential to be connected to a future CC2DCA pedestrian bridge to Ronald Reagan National Airport depending on the outcome of the Arlington County alternatives selection. [Read more here.](#)

The CCCA is a stakeholder on the VRE project, but no meetings have been held in over a year. The big “news” is that VRE is officially breaking the project into two phases. This allows them to move ahead with the station platform and north/water park entrance while waiting until Arlington officially selects their “preferred alternative” for CC2DCA before proceeding with the south entrance (which will connect to CC2DCA). The key will be making sure that phase 2 happens ASAP and that it is designed/implemented cohesively to integrate the VRE, CC2DCA and Amtrak components.

Update on CC2DCA Bridge Project

The project to build a bridge to connect Crystal City to the airport is in the NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act) process with the intent to reach a final report by summer 2023. Under the National Historic Preservation Action, Section 106 requires consultation with stakeholders to determine the impact a potential bridge might have on historic properties. The first stakeholder meeting took place July 18 to identify historic properties; a second meeting in September will evaluate the impact on them. The project has reduced the number of potential locations for the bridge from 14 to 2: 7D would be co-located with the proposed new VRE station on Crystal Drive; 9D would be further down closer to 23rd Street. See the project page here. [See the project page here.](#)

[Long Bridge rail project: A look at plans for new Potomac bridges - The Washington Post](#)

Virginia is advancing a \$2 billion plan to expand freight and passenger train traffic over the Potomac River, hoping to alleviate a growing bottleneck at a bridge that has connected the Southern and Northeastern U.S. for more than a century.

The plan calls for a new two-track span parallel to the Long Bridge, which serves as the main route for trains traveling south of the nation’s capital. The new span between Washington and Arlington would double train capacity to support commerce and increasing demands for passenger rail along the busy East Coast corridor.

The project will also add a pedestrian and bike bridge between Long Bridge Park in Arlington and East Potomac Park in the District, creating a walkable connection from the growing Crystal City neighborhood to the Southwest Waterfront area. Plans call for the project to be completed by 2030.

[A new day with Richmond Highway: Prince William County leaders celebrate roadway name change | Headlines | insidenova.com](#)

County supervisors and state leaders gathered July 16 to unveil the sign for the newly renamed Richmond Highway in Prince William County. The celebration was part of the county's effort to rename U.S. 1, which officially changed from Jefferson Davis Highway to Richmond Highway on July 1. Jefferson Davis Highway has now been renamed from Arlington to Alexandria to Fairfax to Prince William Counties. Stafford County needs to rename it too.

Second Crystal City Metro Entrance

The access improvement plan for the Crystal City Metrorail station includes [a new entrance near Crystal Drive](#), at the east end of the station, to provide easier access from Crystal Drive, the VRE station and the Metroway transit station at Crystal Drive and 18th Street South. In addition, the access improvement plan includes elevator upgrades to improve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and provide more conveniently located elevator access. The new east entrance will include elevators, stairs, a fare payment area with fare vending machines, a kiosk, and an underground passageway to the existing train platform. The new entrance will provide additional egress during emergency situations.

JBG Smith has been contracted to prepare the 30% design, which is expected to be done by the end of 2022. The full project is expected to be done by the end of 2025.

Update on 12th Street/Crystal Drive Construction

The 12th Street S and the Transitway Extension to Pentagon City Segment I projects are being built concurrently by the same contractor. The timeline to complete both projects is Spring/Summer 2023. Right now, crews are working on underground utilities for the 12th Street improvements project, and they are anticipating to initiate electrical work for the Transitway Extension to Pentagon City Segment I around the week of July 11th.

Regarding construction progress on the Transitway Extension to Pentagon City Segment I, the street parking has been eliminated at the locations of new transit stations, and tree removal and installation of the erosion and sedimentation control measurements are ongoing in preparation for the upcoming electrical work. In order to minimize the impact to the community, the County decided to keep some of the street parking on Crystal Drive and 12th Street open where crews are not working. The conversion of the parking lane into the designated bus lane is one the last activities on the contractor's construction schedule, so street parking can remain active for a few more months. The County will provide the public with advance notice of elimination of the parking lane to help facilitate the transition.

About CCCA

The Crystal City Civic Association (CCCA) was formed on January 28, 2014. We are a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization with the express purpose of advancing the common interests of the residents of the Crystal City neighborhood in Arlington County, Virginia. CCCA gives a voice to our residents. CCCA officers represent community members at county meetings, function as liaisons to state and local lawmakers, coordinate with the Crystal City BID on important issues and projects and ensures the needs of residents are met.

CRYSTAL CITY CIVIC ASSOCIATION BOARD

President Eric Cassel

Vice President Tarsi Dunlop

Meeting Secretary Alistair Watson (by appointment)

Communications Director Idris Clay

Membership Liaison Emily Norton

Treasurer Steve Miller

Join on our website:

<http://www.crystalcitycivic.org/>

Or [Renew Your Membership](#)

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Or

Send a check for \$10 to:

Steve Miller

Treasurer, CCCA

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