

# CRYSTAL CITY INSIDER

The monthly newsletter of the Crystal City Civic Association



January 2026

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Happy New Year! Just like that, we're welcoming 2026. I hope you all had a joyful and safe holiday season. Looking ahead, a core theme of our work as an association is about representing and engaging with our community. Your ideas and suggestions are important to us!

This coming year, the CCCA will continue to monitor and communicate updates via our newsletter and social media accounts. The topics cover everything from development and transportation projects to commercial openings and community engagement opportunities. As part of this work, we will also submit feedback to the county that reflects neighborhood concerns and priorities. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to us [here](#).

We would like to host member events over the course of the year. These could range from an outdoor event at Long Bridge when the weather is nicer or working with a local business for an after-work social hour. If you have any ideas or suggestions for what might draw you out, we would love to hear them. Finally, we would like to bring in new members. We welcome your ideas for creative ways to connect with people in your buildings.

See you Jan. 21 at 7 p.m. for our next meeting at the usual 251 S. 18<sup>th</sup> Street location or sign up to join via Zoom [here](#).

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tarsi Dunlop". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and "D".

– Tarsi Dunlop, CCCA President

### **Renew your CCCA Membership for 2026**

CCCA dues of \$10 are on an annual basis, Jan. 1-Dec. 31. You can renew your membership online via [PayPal](#) or by check to our Treasurer (see last page of the newsletter). The deadline for renewals to continue receiving newsletters and emails is Feb. 28, 2026. Although our sister civic associations in 22202 charge \$20 or more for annual dues, we have not increased ours since the CCCA was established in 2014.

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## INFORMATION AND EVENTS: ARLINGTON AND STATE

### County reports tax take smaller, expenses higher than expected

Arlington County is off to a grim budget year, with revenue from real estate, sales, meals, and lodging taxes down \$13 million for the first four months of the fiscal year, which began July 1, county manager [Mark Schwartz](#) told the County Board last month. In addition, expenses for public safety and health care are higher than expected, and officials are girding for possible federal cuts in state and local assistance. Schwartz hopes to present his fiscal year 2026 spending plan in February.

### Volunteers sought to review grants for non-profit organizations

The county is seeking to draw on the diverse talents of residents willing to serve on a focus group that reviews proposals for Opportunity Grants. Members will prioritize proposals based on greatest urgency and largest impact. The group will meet twice in the next two months, each time for two to three hours. For more on the grant program and to sign up for the focus group (deadline Jan. 19), visit [here](#).

### Library tallies most borrowed books

"[Onyx Storm](#)" by Rebecca Yarros and "[The Women](#)" by Kristin Hannah each were checked out more than 4,000 times from Arlington libraries. In all, the libraries checked out 3.6 million items.

The [Empyrean series](#) by Rebecca Yarros was a big hit with all three titles in the top 10. Emily Henry had two titles this year with "[Funny Story](#)" and "[Great Big Beautiful Life](#)."

"[Throne of Glass](#)" by Sarah J. Maas is one of the most popular teen reads for the third year in a row, but the rest of the top five are all books from [The Hunger Games series](#) by Suzanne Collins, with "[Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes](#)" keeping its position at number one.

Like last year, younger readers put Jeff Kinney's "[Wimpy Kid](#)" series at the top.

For a complete list of top reads, visit [here](#). Looking for other reading ideas, visit [here](#).



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## Historical society collecting oral histories of the Underground

What was it like during the heyday of the Underground? The [Arlington Historical Society](#) has launched an initiative to collect oral histories on that [subterranean Crystal City landmark](#) along with other narratives of the county's past.

Meanwhile, the historical society continues to collect stories toward its goal of 250 of them in honor of the nation's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The society can offer suggestions of areas worth pursuing or writers can propose their own. The suggested length is 300 to 500 words; submission deadline is March 2026. For details, visit [here](#).

## DEVELOPMENT

### Hardware, bakery, butcher expect to open this year

Twins Ace Hardware Store hopes to open by around March 1 on the first floor of Zoe building, 2051 S. Bell St., according to owner Jeff Smith.

“We’ve worked hard to build a neighborhood destination where people can find everything from tools and paint to unique gifts, party supplies, plants, and more,” Smith wrote in a press release.”

Smith and his brother, Craig, opened an Ace Hardware in Courthouse in 2016. The new store will take up the entire 8,000-plus square feet of the Zoe ground floor.



*Jeff Smith is readying a branch of Twins Ace Hardware Store for Crystal City at 2051 S. Bell St.*

Developer JBG Smith expects several other shops to open nearby over the coming months. A bakery plans to open in the Valen, 2050 S. Bell St., and a butcher shop opposite the Grace, which is at 19<sup>th</sup> Court Street and Crystal Drive.

Meanwhile, expect numerous changes at Water Park as budding restaurants open and close testing out a variety of cuisines. For example, Bird’s Eye Thai is slated to move out of the Water Park to join its sister restaurant Tiki Thai when it opens in fall on the ground floor of Reva on 19<sup>th</sup> Court Street.

### More than 600 housing units approved for Potomac Yard

Alexandria has approved JBG Smith’s plans for a large mixed-use development in four vacant parcels next to the Potomac Yard Metro station and the new Virginia Tech campus. The project will include:

- 432 market-rate units in a seven-story building
- 120 single-family for-sale townhomes built by Toll Brothers
- 88 units of affordable housing – mainly two- and three-bedrooms – in a six-story building constructed by nonprofit Wesley Housing on land donated by JBG Smith. Eligible household income will be between 30 percent and 80 percent of area median income.
- 13,000 square feet of retail space
- 30,000 square feet of open space

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*A one-acre park stretching between South Lynn and South Joyce streets is part of RiverHouse plan.*

### **An additional 743 units approved for RiverHouse complex**

A major expansion of the [RiverHouse](#) complex received the unanimous backing of the County Board last month. The board approved the addition of 743 units spread out over three sections of the Pentagon City development: 132 four-story town-home-style properties; and two mid-rise buildings, one with 102 units and the other, 509 units (the latter also containing a Virginia Health Care clinic). Subsequent plans call for 2,000 more multi-family units spread across four buildings. All of this is in addition to 1,676 units in the existing three apartment buildings on the 36-acre RiverHouse site, which is bounded by Army Navy Drive and South Joyce Street.

### **As civic groups push for amenities, county delays office conversion vote**

The County Board has pushed into this year a decision on JBG Smith's application to convert a pair of 1970-era office buildings at [1800 and 1901 S. Bell](#) into apartments. The developer hopes to fast track the proposal under the county's new Adaptive Reuse Policy, which expedites the conversion of surplus office space into housing. The Crystal and Pentagon Cities Council (CPCC) has endorsed the goal of more housing but has expressed concern that the rapid approval of new projects will jeopardize long-term neighborhood goals. In a [letter](#) to the County Board last fall, the CPCC criticized the South Bell project for disregarding cultural amenities called for in [Crystal City Sector Plan](#):

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- **Center Park.** The sector plan had envisioned that 1901 S. Bell would be demolished at the end of its useful life as an office building. It would be replaced by a “two-acre central park, programmed for active use, which will be the principal gathering space for the entire community. Concerts, festivals, pick-up games, and family picnics are just a few of the activities anticipated for this park.” In meetings with civic association representatives, JBG Smith said that realistically the choice is between repurposing the building or leaving it vacant, since the county would not likely have funds for a new park any time soon.
- **Performance spaces.** The plan calls for a pair of “125-seat black box theaters, ideally with 18-foot high ceilings, specifically designed and programmed to accommodate fledgling, as well as professional theater companies.” Currently, a theater space stands vacant under 1801 S. Bell that was once home to the Synetic Theater.
- **Library branch.** A first-floor space at 1800 S. Bell has been proposed as a location for a long-promised Crystal City branch library. The county has \$6 million set aside for the fixed costs of a Crystal City branch, but the issue is whether an already tight budget can absorb the operating costs.

“The slowdown in the approval process is an opportunity to assess potential to deliver on aspects of the CCSP in the nearer term and develop a more nuanced approach to adaptive reuse approvals for future projects,” says Tarsi Dunlop, the newly elected president of the Crystal City Civic Association.

## TRANSPORTATION



*Rendering shows pedestrian bridge in white crossing GW Parkway then landing just north of the Long Bridge aquatics center.*

### **Rail bridge, then people bridge to be built over Potomac**

Construction on the pedestrian/bicyclist bridge is not expected to begin until after completion of the adjacent rail bridge. That means 2030 is the earliest you'll be able to pedal the half-mile span from just beyond Long Bridge sports complex to Washington. Walkers and cyclists will share a 16-foot-wide path, which is twice as wide as the pedestrian/cycle lane on the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge to the north.

The new rail bridge will be constructed just south of the existing two-track Long Bridge. Together, the bridges will provide four-track service between Washington and Virginia, eliminating a major bottleneck impeding freight and passenger traffic.

The pedestrian/bike bridge will run between the new rail bridge and the Metro's Yellow line bridge. There isn't room for construction crews to work on both new bridges at once, which is why foot and cycle traffic will have to wait.

Crews are present on the Mount Vernon Trail near the 14th Street Bridge to remove shrubs and trees ahead of construction of the rail bridge. Construction activities will require brief, intermittent stoppages (up to 5 minutes) on the Mount Vernon Trail as equipment and construction materials cross. Flaggers will be present at all times to ensure safety of all trail users. This prep work is expected to be completed early this month. For details and updates on the project, visit [here](#).

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### **Crystal City Metro Station to be closed 10 weekends in spring**

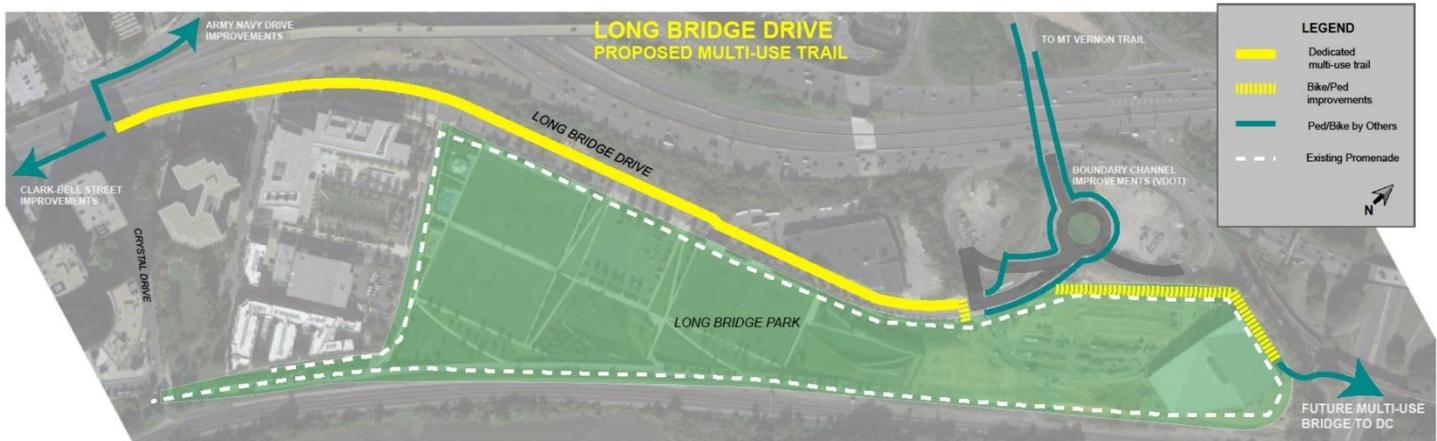
Construction of the Crystal Drive entrance to the Metro is expected to require the station to be closed for as many as 10 weekends between Feb. 14 and June 21 (with a break for the Cherry Blossom festival). A free shuttle will be offered with an estimated 8-10 minute wait time. Overall, the project appears to be on schedule for an opening in May 2027. For more on the project, visit [here](#).

### **Rehab work on GW Parkway shifts south into Alexandria**

The major focus of rehab work on the GW Parkway is moving south this spring with repaving from Spout Run to Old Town Alexandria. Most of the work on the northern portion of the parkway has been completed with only minor disruptions expected, Jerry Garcia, GW Parkway acting chief of staff, told [ARLnow](#). The \$161 million project had been expected to last from 2023 to 2025. For updates, visit [here](#).

## PARKS AND RECREATION

### New trail will reroute bikers away from Long Bridge esplanade



*New pedestrian/bike trail will run in its own dedicated space parallel to Long Bridge Drive.*

Have you ever strolled along the Esplanade in Long Bridge Park and nearly collided with a fast-moving bicycle? Such close calls will become less frequent with the completion of a [bicycle and pedestrian bridge](#) across the Potomac River (see page 8). Slated for completion as early as 2030, the bridge will come in just south of the aquatics center.

The [Long Bridge Drive Multimodal Connection](#) project aims to create a safer, dedicated route for cyclists adjacent to Long Bridge Drive. Work is expected to begin in 2028 on the multi-use trail, which will run from the Boundary Channel Drive area near I-395 to the intersection of 12th Street S.

The project aligns with Arlington County's [Vision Zero](#) initiative—a commitment to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries while promoting safe mobility for everyone.

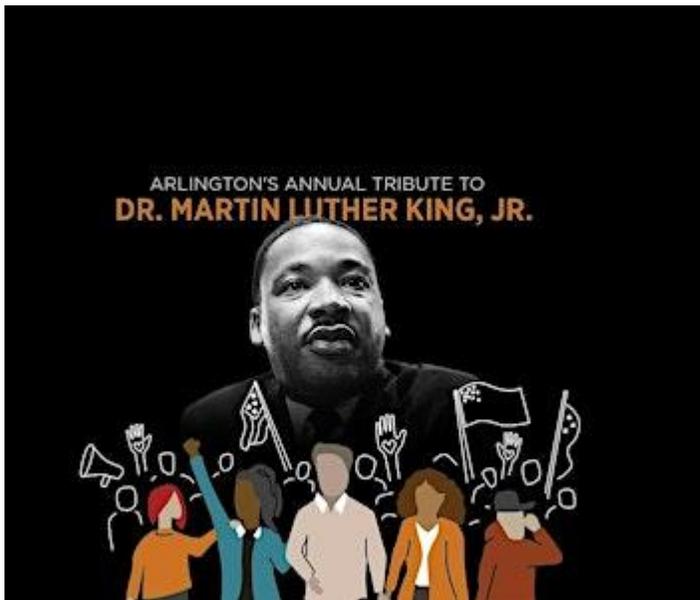
Key features include enhanced crossings near the Long Bridge Aquatics & Fitness Center, with more visible markings and potential raised crossings to slow vehicles.

The path will connect to the new bike/pedestrian trail being constructed along Clark-Bell streets from 12th Street S. to the Crystal City Metro Station. By early in the next decade, pedestrians and cyclists will have a continuous route from the Metro to the Aquatics Center area – and then across the new bridge to Washington, D.C.

## DOINGS IN CRYSTAL CITY (AND NEARBY)

### Meet your neighbors, share your thoughts on National Landing

Residents of Crystal City, Pentagon City, and Potomac Yard are invited to attend a focus group Jan. 8, 5-6 p.m., at Daydrift Books & Café, 1550 Crystal Drive. Over a complimentary beverage, attendees will discuss their ideas for improving life in National Landing. The event is sponsored by the National Landing Building Improvement District (BID). RSVP by Jan. 5 [here](#).



### County's annual MLK tribute features dance, music, and talks

The county holds its annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute on Jan. 18, 2026, 5-6:30 p.m., at Wakefield High School. The event includes music, dance, and oratory reflecting King's principles and legacy. The free event is produced by Encore Stage & Studio under the direction of Madaline Y. Langston. Seating is on first-come, first-served basis. To learn more and register, visit [here](#).

### AI enthusiasts to converge at Cursor Hackathon

Developers, designers, students, founders, and first timers are invited to build solo and group AI projects at Cursor Hackathon D.C. on Jan. 30, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. at the National Landing Experience Center, 241 18<sup>th</sup> St. S. The event features workshops, prizes, and feedback from AI professionals and venture capitalists. For more information and to register, visit [here](#).

### For more activities, visit ...

- [Events at National Landing](#)
- [Arlington Parks and Recreation](#)
- [Arlington arts events](#)
- [Arlington Convention and Visitors Services](#)

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## READY REFERENCE

# Looking for answers? Check these websites

### Quick links

[Arlington Alert](#) Emergency notices and other important information from the county

[Report a problem](#) Where to notify county of rodents, potholes, noise, abandoned cars (or find your towed one), broken signs, unplowed sidewalks

[Metro alerts](#) Subway and bus system service status and changes

[Arlington Transit Alerts](#) Updates on delays, service changes, and routes for county buses

[Live traffic cameras](#) 200 of them at critical intersections countywide

[Building and transit projects](#) Maps and lists roadwork and other construction

[Private Development](#) County website tracking commercial and residential plans

### Local and state leadership

[Arlington County Board](#) 703-228-3130; [CountyBoard@arlingtonva.us](mailto:CountyBoard@arlingtonva.us)

[County Manager](#) Mark Schwartz, 703-228-3120, [countymanager@arlingtonva.us](mailto:countymanager@arlingtonva.us)

### Official county website

### Arlington County School Board

**House of Delegates, 2nd District** [Adele Y. McClure](#) (D), 703-239-4425, 804-698-1002 (Legislative Office when in session); [Email Del. McClure](mailto:Email Del. McClure)

**Virginia Senate, District 39** [Adam Ebbin](#) (D), 571-384-8957; 804-698-7539 (Legislative office when in session. [Email Sen. Ebbin](mailto:Email Sen. Ebbin))

### Police Department

- [Police Homepage](#)
- [Office of Professional Responsibility](#)
- [File a Complaint or Commendation](#)
- [Arlington County Crime Solvers](#) 866-411 TIPS (8477)
- [Online Crime Map](#)
- [Pay Parking Tickets Online](#)
- [Get Crash Reports](#)
- [All Online Services and Forms](#)

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## **Fire Department**

- [Fire Homepage](#)
- [Inspection and permits](#)
- [Office of the fire marshal](#)
- [Emergency Medical Services](#)
- [Request a smoke alarm](#)

## **Utilities**

- Washington Gas Emergency Line: [1-844-WASHGAS \(927-4427\)](#)
- Washington Gas Non-Emergency Line: [703-750-7944](#)
- Arlington County Water-Sewer-Streets: [703-228-6555](#)
- Dominion Energy: [1-866-366-4357](#)
- All other emergencies: 9-1-1
- [County environmental services](#)

## **Other helpful websites**

[Vision Zero](#): Updates on county studies and projects to improve traffic safety and reduce fatalities

[Green Living](#) Resources for leading an environmentally friendly life

[Get Involved](#) How to join a county advisory committee

[Data Dashboard](#) Regularly updated demographic and economic statistics for National Landing

[Tenant-landlord](#) County Housing Division posts rights and responsibilities

[Get help](#) finding housing

[Arlington Thrive](#) offers emergency financial assistance for rent, utilities, medical bills, and more.

[About - Livability 22202](#) Planning priorities of the three civic associations of 22202 – Arlington Ridge, Aurora Highlands, and Crystal City.

[Highlands Urban Garden \(HUG\) - Arlington Friends of Urban Agriculture \(FOUA\)](#)

## ABOUT THE CCCA

The Crystal City Civic Association (CCCA) was formed on Jan. 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 ensure the needs of residents are met.

### CRYSTAL CITY CIVIC ASSOCIATION BOARD

**President** Tarsi Dunlop

**Vice President** Steve Miller

**Treasurer** Marj Leaming

**Meeting Secretary** Sheryl Eaton

**Membership Liaison** Mary Ellen Hable

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