

BLUEMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWS



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www.bluemontcivic.org

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CONTACT: Bluemont Civic Association Sidewalk Safety Task Force

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Bluemont Representatives Appreciate Wilson Boulevard Reconfiguration Plan

"We are grateful that Arlington County is listening to us and working to make our 'Main Street' a safer and more pleasant place for all residents and visitors." —BCA President, Jonn Lau

Making note of long-standing positions of the Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) in support of sidewalk safety improvements, BCA President Jonn Lau and BCA Sidewalk Safety Task Force members welcome plans of the Arlington County Transportation Department to restripe Wilson Boulevard between N. Frederick Street and Four Mile Run in conjunction with previously scheduled repaving work.

In cooperation with the BCA, the county is hosting a general community meeting for the project on Thursday, November 20, 7 p.m. at Arlington Traditional School's Multipurpose Room (855 N. Edison Street). Further information on the county's plans is available at <http://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/wilson-boulevard-improvements/>.

The county's plans are responsive to BCA requests. BCA members in October 2012 voted in support of reconfiguring Wilson Boulevard to make it safer and more accessible for all modes of transportation. The BCA called for implementation in two phases: (1) Restriping of the existing four lanes to two through-lanes, a two-way center turn lane (with dedicated turn lanes at intersections) and two bicycle lanes; and (2) Widening of sidewalks and planting strips to meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and Arlington County design guidelines. The improvements would take place within the existing public right-of-way.

In addition, Bluemont residents in 2013 voted to include the Wilson improvements as a priority project in the updated Bluemont Neighborhood Conservation Plan.

The neighborhood's proposals would make Wilson Boulevard more similar to Washington Boulevard between Westover and N. Harrison Street. Washington Boulevard in this area has a number of features that Wilson Boulevard does not, including unobstructed sidewalks, street trees, and bicycle lanes. According to county data, traffic volumes on Wilson Boulevard west of N. George Mason Drive over the past 34 years have not increased, and have decreased slightly over the past 10 years.

"The Sidewalk Safety Task Force has worked tirelessly over many years to incorporate opinions and knowledge from the community and from experts into these plans. Working together, the efforts of neighborhood residents and county officials have led us to this long-awaited first step for improving our neighborhood and an important Arlington corridor," Jonn Lau said.

Long-standing problems with obstructed, narrow sidewalks, ongoing vehicular speeding well above posted limits, and serious accidents have plagued the corridor for decades. In [December 2011](#), BCA members set up the Sidewalk Safety Task Force to analyze options to remedy non-ADA-compliant, unsafe sidewalk conditions along Wilson Boulevard (see attached photos) within the association's boundaries. The task force built on the work of the 2004 [Arterial Transportation Management Study](#), which analyzed the corridor from N. George Mason Drive to the county line and resulted in sidewalk and pedestrian safety improvements being made to a 3-block span of Wilson

Boulevard in 2007.

Wilson Boulevard not only is Bluemont's "Main Street," it is also a primary community thoroughfare for reaching the Ballston Metro station. A 1999 report issued by the [Arlington County Ad-Hoc Committee on N. Glebe Road Pedestrian Safety](#) stated that 44% of Ballston Metrorail riders would arrive from the west, with approximately 30% crossing Glebe Road (coming from Bluemont and other neighborhoods to the west). And in [March 2001](#), BCA members voted to consider altering Wilson Boulevard west of George Mason Drive to make the roadway safer and more accessible for local residents.

Recent efforts were prompted, in part, by safety concerns for school children. At least one school bus stop is located in the reconfiguration zone. Moreover, with the addition to Ashlawn Elementary School, more young school children, including some from Bluemont, are being asked to walk to school. The neighboring Dominion Hills and Boulevard Manor Civic Associations also have voiced support for the goal of improving pedestrian safety along Wilson Boulevard.

Though the task force and BCA members have explored alternative options, in the end, the reconfiguration option was the only one determined to be feasible. County officials, citing the huge cost, have declined to pursue the placement of utility lines along Wilson Boulevard underground. Likewise, county staff has remarked on the cost-prohibitive nature and other challenges of purchasing additional right-of-way from private property owners to accommodate sidewalk expansion.

The BCA Sidewalk Safety Task Force continues to search for options to improve the sidewalks and pedestrian safety along the stretch of Wilson Boulevard between N. Glebe Road and N. George Mason Drive.

"Wilson Boulevard's unsafe and unwelcoming sidewalks have no place in a great neighborhood like Bluemont. We are grateful that Arlington County is listening to us, and working to make our 'Main Street' a safer and more pleasant place for all residents and visitors," said BCA President, Jonn Lau.

Additional information is available at www.bluemontcivic.org and at <http://bluemontroads.wordpress.com/>.

Photos:



Typical sidewalk width and obstruction in the reconfiguration area.



A school bus stop is located near this section of Wilson.



Even without any obstruction, sidewalks on Wilson are often extremely narrow, as shown near N. Greenbrier St.



Wilson Blvd. obstructed sidewalk w/a large vehicle passing nearby.



Bluemont's 2007 Walking Town Meeting with County Board Members.

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