



neighborhood news

The Latest News and Information from Your Bluemont Civic Association

October 2023

bluemontcivic.org

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Help distribute the newsletter

The Civic Association needs more volunteers to help distribute its newsletter. Every April and October, a small volunteer army of neighbors hand delivers a free Bluemont newsletter to every home and business in our Association's borders. That's over 2000 newsletters. It's a lot of work, and we need more help. If you are willing to help, please email exec@bluemontcivic.org.

BCA Represents Bluemont in Negotiations on Site Plans

The Association represents the neighborhood in discussions on site plans for major developments near Bluemont, including the Ballston area. We recently have been involved in reviewing plans for 4600 Fairfax Drive, the site of the Holiday Inn, and for the site of Macy's on Glebe Road.

Our involvement in plans for the redevelopment of the **4600 Fairfax Drive (Ballston Holiday Inn)—Official Website of Arlington County Virginia Government (arlingtonva.us)** site began in 2022. Since that time, BCA has participated in three

Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) meetings held by the County.

As reported in April 2023, the developer improved their plans for the project and added a walking/biking path that runs through the complex, connecting N. Woodrow with N. Fairfax and the Custis trail. They also took steps to ensure that the project wouldn't enable traffic to use local streets to drive through the complex between Wilson Boulevard and the entrance to I-66.

After hearings by the Transportation Commission, Planning Commission, and County Board, the County approved the site plan on July 15. The figure above depicts the planned new development which includes a large apartment complex (building 1) and townhomes (building 2 and 3).

BCA pressed the County and developer on concerns raised by our members and residents regarding the impact on residents during construction. Those concerns were not answered, and BCA was told discussions on neighborhood impact and related mitigation would not occur until after the County approved the site plan. Now that the site plan has been approved, BCA intends to support nearby residents in dialogue with the County and the developer on construction impact mitigation.



Proposed Site Layout from 4600 N. Fairfax Site Plan

(cont'd on p. 2)

Wilson Boulevard Maintenance Will Not Require Turn Restrictions

After the Association protested, the County agreed that a project on the Wilson Boulevard Bridge over Four Mile Run can be done without turn restrictions.

The County began doing maintenance on the bridge on August 30. As part of this work, they closed the left-hand turn from Lexington Street to Wilson Boulevard. They also closed the left-hand turns on to Wilson from Arlington Mill Drive and Manchester Street, which are just outside our Association in Boulevard Manor and Dominion Hills respectively. In addition, they closed two lanes on Wilson.

The Association President contacted the County, told them that closing the left-hand turn from Lexington seriously burdened residents, and questioned whether the closing was necessary. He also criticized the lack of advance notice concerning the project. The County reopened the closed turns and lanes and temporarily halted the project. The project now will be done without turn restrictions.

Work on the bridge will restart in early October. It will be done in three phases, and each phase will take about three to four weeks to complete. Lane closings will be required, which may force cars to use the bike lanes. Lane closings will be required, which may force cars to use the bike lanes. Phase 1 will involve median work and will require closing the left lane in each direction. Phase 2 will involve work on the eastbound side of the road and will require closing the eastbound right lane and the westbound left lane. Phase 3 will involve work on the westbound side of the road and will require closing the westbound right lane.

Site Plans (cont'd)

BCA also represented the neighborhood in discussions of a plan to replace Macy's with a large apartment building and supermarket. One major issue was pedestrian safety at the left-hand turn from southbound Glebe Road into the private street that now runs alongside Macy's. The County will increase pedestrian safety by timing the signals, so pedestrians have a walk sign before cars have a green light. Thus, pedestrians may be more visible as they are in the intersection before the cars move. Also pedestrians will have more time to cross. (The County is also timing signals this way at George Mason and Wilson.) In addition, left turns at the intersection will only be allowed for retail shoppers not for residents. (We have questioned how that will be enforced.) Finally, the intersection will be monitored after the project is done to see if more steps should be taken to improve safety.

Demolition of Macy's is planned for late spring of 2024. The developer has promised to discuss construction plans with BCA and other nearby civic associations to limit the effects on our neighborhoods.



How to Report Problems to Arlington County

Arlington County can't fix problems it doesn't know about. People who report problems to the County contribute to having those problems addressed more quickly, thus improving life in our neighborhood and possibly preventing the problem from getting worse. If you want to report a problem to Arlington County or request County services, you can do it at [this Arlington County website](#).

This website can be used to address a large variety of problems, such as a blockage or a need for maintenance on a street, sidewalk or bike trail, downed or loose wires, flooding or drainage issues, problems with traffic signs or signals, and litter and graffiti, and trash collection problems.

Reporting any of these issues is simple and easy, and the County generally responds quickly to complaints.

Changes May Come to Glebe Road



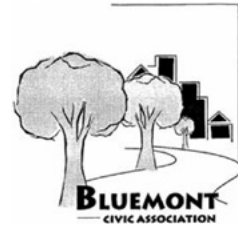
Changes to Glebe Road may be made in hopes of relieving congestion, improving safety, and encouraging multimodal transportation. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is doing

a study of the 2-mile stretch of this road from I-66 to Columbia Pike. Glebe Road, which forms part of the eastern boundary of our neighborhood, is a state road and thus VDOT's responsibility.

The study is being done under the Strategically Targeted Roadway Solutions (STARS) Program. This program provides VDOT regional offices with funding to identify steps that would reduce congestion and improve safety. Those steps are then considered for possible funding.

VDOT is now developing a set of possible options that it plans to submit for public comment this Fall. After considering the public feedback, VDOT will then present a final set of recommendations this winter. VDOT representatives will come to our January 31st meeting to discuss the Glebe Road project.

A description of the [Glebe Road study can be found here](#). More information on the [STARS program can be found here](#).



Executive Board

BCA Officers & Reps

President Henry McFarland
president@bluemontcivic.org

First Vice President Matt Harrison

Second Vice President Carla Conover

Treasurer David Smith

Secretary Laura Kirkconnell

Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF)

Delegates David Hughes, Allen Norton,
Shakti Shukla, David Smith

Alternates Laura Kirkconnell,
Chris Kuhman, Kate Mattos,
Kathleen Reilly

Arlington Neighborhoods Advisory Committee (ArNAC)

Representative Christopher George
Alternate Nick Pastore

Come Ring Our Bell!

Come to Constitution Gardens, the corner of Wilson Boulevard and George Mason Drive, at noon on Veteran's Day (observed) November 10 and ring the bell. This bell ringing will include CUPCAKES and books for the kids. Neighbors join the Bluemont Civic Association in ringing the bell at noon on every national holiday. Everyone, kid or adult, gets to ring the bell. It's fun for the entire family!

Also mark your calendars for bell ringings on Thanksgiving (Thursday November 23), Christmas Day (Monday, December 25) and all federal holidays!



County Deals With Stormwater Issues

Arlington County continues to take important steps to deal with stormwater issues. These include establishing stormwater utility fees to encourage conditions that will reduce stormwater runoff and the renewal of Ballston Wetland Park, which will reduce peak flows of stormwater through Lubber Run.

In April of this year, the County Board approved a resolution on the intent to move to a Stormwater Utility fee. A final public hearing will be this fall. This new utility will replace the existing stormwater fees collected through the real estate tax and will base the fee on a property's impervious area. In simple terms, the more stormwater runoff your property produces, the bigger your fee. The County has already started a campaign to alert residents of the change and the available credit program. Credits may be applied for between Nov. 1, 2023 and Jan. 15, 2024. See [Stormwater Utility Implementation —Official Website of Arlington County Virginia Government \(arlingtonva.us\)](#) for more details on the utility, a fee estimator, and the credit program.

The Ballston Wetland Park renewal appears to be largely complete, and the County held [a ribbon cutting for September 26th](#). While serving as a nice amenity to Bluemont residents, the wetland park also helps reduce Lubber Run peak flows during storms by 30%.

If you have stormwater issues or want to get involved, we encourage you to contact the Bluemont Civic Association at exec@bluemontcivic.org.

For more information on how to reduce your flood risk, [visit the county webpage](#) which includes tips on reducing your flood risk and provides a home flood-prevention checklist.



Ballston Wetland Park photo taken from Arlington County project webpage

Committee to Monitor Expanded Housing Option (Missing Middle) Development

The Bluemont Civic Association established an EHO Committee to monitor permit applications submitted to the county under the Expanded Housing Option (EHO) Development ordinance (informally referred to as Missing Middle). The Arlington County Board adopted this ordinance in March 2023. It allows for the construction of duplexes, townhouses, and multifamily buildings in neighborhoods previously zoned for single-family homes. To date, 27 permit applications have been submitted in the County, 8 have been approved.

Three permit applications have been submitted in Bluemont: 4611 North Carlin Springs Road, 735 North George Mason Drive, and 5630 8th Street North. All three permit applications were originally for the construction of 6-unit, multifamily structures. The county has approved the North Carlin Springs Road and North George Mason Drive applications, and the 8th Street North application is pending. The developer has reduced its proposed size to 5 units. Before the County adopted the new ordinance, BCA worked extensively in a coalition with other civic associations to persuade the County to adjust the proposed zoning change. Last spring, however, the Board passed the measure with only a few of our recommendations. BCA has not taken a position on any of the current applications. The EHO Committee will continue to monitor these developments and ensure neighbors are aware of them.

Other BCA Actions and Resolutions Since the April 2023 Newsletter

More information on civic association meetings, including the full text of resolutions, are in the minutes posted at www.bluemontcivic.org.

May 2023

The President reported that County staff is now recommending something very close to Concept 2 for the redesign of Upper Bluemont Park. BCA members endorsed that concept at a previous meeting. Construction may start in late 2024. David Smith discussed the Site Plan Review of the project at 4600 Fairfax Drive (the Holiday Inn site). Construction will begin in the fourth quarter of 2024 or early 2025. Matt Harrison reported on plans for Family Fun Day. The Chair of the Arlington County Board, Christian Dorsey, spoke at the BCA meeting and responded to questions from Bluemont residents.

June 2023

The membership elected a new Executive Board. Larry Smith described the activities of the Ballston BID (Business Improvement District). Christine Baker, Program Manager for Arlington County's Vision Zero, presented a description of this program, which focuses on traffic safety

The membership voted to approve a resolution concerning complaints that neighbors in the area of N. Jacksonville and 9th Street, North are experiencing significantly increased amounts of noise from I-66. The motion asks that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) take steps to (1) study the extent to which noise from I-66 in that area affects residents, (2) engage residents in the area on their experience with roadway noise, and (3) take all necessary and feasible steps to mitigate noise in that area.

July and August 2023

The membership does not meet in July and August. The Executive Board met and discussed its plans for the coming year. The Board approved funding refreshments, such as cupcakes, to be offered at many of the holiday bell ringings. The Executive Board unanimously approved the proposal to establish a BCA Committee to monitor permit applications to build Expanded Housing Option (EHO) housing. The Board reviewed a budget projection prepared by the President and decided not to raise dues.

The Board discussed the County's response to a request by neighbors to let them reestablish a garden at the corner of 9th and Harrison. The County now will only approve the project if a

large number of requirements are met. The feasibility of continuing the project in those circumstances is being discussed with neighbors in the area. The Board also discussed the County's continued slow response to queries related to whether the land at that corner should be designated as a park.

Residents' objections to an EHO development on Eighth Street were discussed with neighbors attending the Executive Board meetings.

September 2023

Constance Potter of the League of Women Voters gave a presentation about the rules for voting and registering to vote. Henry McFarland described successful efforts to reduce the effect of Wilson Boulevard Bridge maintenance on traffic and ongoing efforts to deal with I-66 noise. David Smith described steps being taken to deal with stormwater issues in the Lubber Run watershed.

Several resolutions were passed. The Board approved an appropriation to provide cupcakes at the Columbus/Indigenous Peoples Day and Veterans' Day bell ringings. The membership approved sending a letter in support of an outreach project to the parish council in Bilbury United Kingdom. The membership also agreed to publish a resolution asking that that when the School Board changes the catchment areas for middle schools, all Bluemont planning units now going to Ashlawn Elementary be in the same middle school's catchment area. That motion may come to a final vote in October.

Connect with Bluemont



Facebook: Like our [Bluemont Civic Association page on Facebook](#) for regular updates on news of interest to Bluemont, and civic association activities.

BCA website for BCA meetings and official information. www.bluemontcivic.org

BCA e-Mails: Neighbors who provide their e-mail address to exec@bluemontcivic.org receive e-mail reports roughly monthly on issues affecting Bluemont residents, and civic association activities.

Contact the Executive Board: BCA welcomes comments, suggestions and questions from members. Contact us at [exec@Bluemontcivic.org](mailto:exec@bluemontcivic.org).

Nextdoor.com is a free, private social network where you can connect with people who live nearby. BCA posts announcements on Nextdoor.com.

Join or Renew Today!

Keep your membership current! Please use this form to join or renew.

BCA Membership Form

Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____

Bring this form and cash or a check for \$15 to renew your membership at any General Membership meeting, or

Mail this form with your check made out to "Bluemont Civic Association" to
BCA Treasurer, PO Box 5134, Arlington, VA 22205.

All information is for BCA use only.