

all FAIRLINGTON BULLETIN



www.fca-fairlington.org

JANUARY 2020

Volume 46, Number 1

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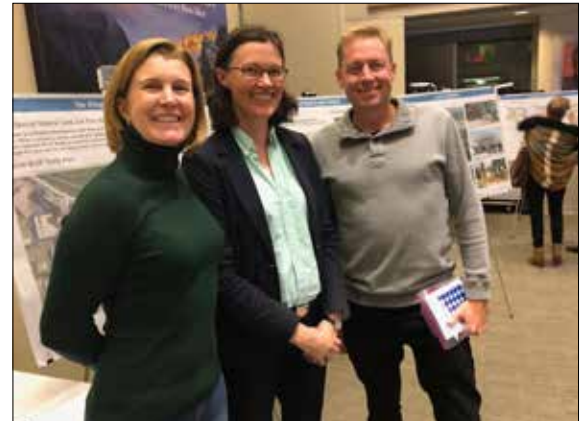
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Proposal to add density to Shirlington

On November 20, Shirlington residents, business owners, and adjacent civic associations were invited to a community forum to hear more about plans to increase density in Shirlington.

In December 2017, Federal Realty Investment Trust (FRIT) submitted to the Arlington County Zoning Office a formal application for a Special General Land Use Plan (GLUP) Study for a 5.45-acre area which includes the cinema real estate tax parcel and roughly half of the 8.43-acre Parcel 2 located within the Shirlington Phased Development Site.



A community forum in November gave residents a chance to learn more about plans for increased density in Shirlington. From left, FCA Director Jennifer Davies; Fairlington resident and Arlington County Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development staff member Margaret Tulloch Rhodes; and FCA Director Chris Weathers.

In the letter that accompanied their application, FRIT noted that the office space market had continued to decline in Shirlington, and with it, the number of customers available to patronize the retail businesses. The real estate developer expressed a desire both to update an aging portion of the development and also increase the population of Shirlington and create a more robust retail environment for the shops, restaurants, and businesses there.

As was reported in the September 2019 *All Fairlington Bulletin*, the request to the county includes increasing zoning density from the zoning designation "low" density to "medium" density, meaning height and number of units could increase from 8–10 floors and 72 units per building to 12–16 floors and 115 units respectively.

Arlington County's Department of Planning, Department of Housing, and Department of Parks and Recreation were on hand to field questions and solicit feedback on initial public response to concepts and designs. Margaret Tulloch, a Fairlington resident who works with the Department of Planning, Housing, and Development, led the well-attended meeting.

Continued on page 17

Coming up ...

The FCA Board invites all Fairlington residents to attend its meetings, which occur on the second Wednesday of the month at the Fairlington Community Center (3308 S. Stafford St.) unless otherwise noted. Before the beginning of each monthly Executive Board meeting, FCA members may address the board on matters affecting the community, limited to three minutes per member.

FCA monthly meeting January 8

There will be no presentation at the January 8 meeting. The Board will hold a work session.

Regular board business:

- Approval of December minutes
- Officer and committee reports
- Unfinished business
- New business

Meeting minutes: Minutes of prior meetings can be found on the FCA website.

Online resources:

Find more information on the FCA website, www.fca-fairlington.org. Sign up for updates delivered to your inbox.



Find us on Facebook at Fairlington Appreciation Society.

Find the latest *AFB* online at the FCA website the week before hard copies hit doorsteps.

Web design by Avatar Systems Ltd., Alexandria, VA, www.avatar-systems.com.

USEFUL CONTACTS

If you see something immediately alarming or suspicious, call 911.

Police, Alexandria (non-emergency)	703-746-4444
Police, Arlington (non-emergency)	703-558-2222
Animal Warden	703-931-9241
Dominion (power outages)	888-667-3000
Fairlington Community Center	703-228-6588
Metrobus Complaints	703-228-7929
Miss Utility	811
Pothole Patrol Hotline	703-228-6485
Shirlington Library	703-228-6545
Street Light Hotline	703-228-6511
www.arlingtonva.us/departments/EnvironmentalServices/dot/traffic/streetlights/index.htm	
Helicopter Noise Complaints	Mike Lucier (VA 8th Dist.) 202-225-4376

Fairlington Citizens Association

PO Box 6182 • Arlington, VA 22206-0182
571-403-1943 • president@fca-fairlington.org

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All Fairlington Bulletin

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— DEADLINE —

6 PM, **10th of month** preceding publication month for commercial advertising, mini-ads, and editorial copy.

Send material on disk with paper proof to:

FCA • PO Box 6182 • Arlington, VA 22206-0182

Email editorial announcements to:

editor@fca-fairlington.org

Email commercial and mini ads to:

admanager@fca-fairlington.org

Drop off location: Drop box in the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford Street

COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING RATES

Artwork and check made payable to **FCA** are due the 10th of the month preceding desired publication date. Direct inquiries regarding advertising file requirements to the Advertising Manager at 571-403-1942.

Ad Size	Height	Width	Rate
1/8 page	2 3/16 in.	3 5/8 in.	\$47
1/4 page	4 5/8 in.	3 5/8 in.	\$94
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Full-Page	9.5 in.	7.5 in.	\$395
Back Cover (Full Page)	9.5 in.	7.5 in.	\$505
Full-Page Insert (1 Side)	11 in.	8.5 in.	\$525
Full-Page Insert (2 Sides)	11 in.	8.5 in.	\$570

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Fairlington is a National Register and Virginia Landmark Historic District

For more information, visit www.fca-fairlington.org

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Designed and printed by More Vang.

Calendar

New Year's Day

Wednesday, January 1
FCC Closed

Fairlington Diners

Monday, January 6, 6:30 pm
Ramparts
1700 Fern St., Alexandria

FCA monthly meeting

Wednesday, January 8, 7 pm
FCC, 3308 S. Stafford St.

Fairlington Knits

Monday, January 13, 6:30 pm
FCC, 3308 S. Stafford St.

Paint, Build, Create

Saturday, January 18, 11 am
FCC, 3308 S. Stafford St.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, January 20
FCC Closed

Fairlington Diners

Thursday, January 23, 6:30 pm
Cheesetique
4024 Campbell Ave.

Fairlington Knits

Monday, January 27, 6:30 pm
FCC, 3308 S. Stafford St.

Book Group

Tuesday, January 28, 7:30 pm
FCC, 3308 S. Stafford St.

Full stop



In December, two new stop signs appeared at the intersection of Wakefield St. and 28th Rd. S. Photo by Guy Land.

Contributors this month: Jennifer Davies, Donna Felipe, Guy Land, Rachel Mallory, Andrew Raab, Susan Renahan, Bill Sullivan, and Chris Weathers.

Some images in this publication may be digitally enhanced.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to 2020! Your FCA Board has been scoping out a large menu of activities for the coming year. We'll be refining these at a January work session, but here are some of the things we are considering.

Development issues. FCA is always concerned about development in our area and the implications for parking and traffic. At least three of these are on our agenda. The most consequential is the proposal to more than double the existing density in Park Shirlington. In return for the increased number of units, the owner would make a long-term commitment to provide 294 units as affordable housing.

A second issue is the re-use of Fire Station 7, which was closed in October 2018. County staff have assured us that they will work with the community in determining how it gets repurposed. Finally, the owner of Shirlington has proposed additional density there, in part to strengthen the customer base for the businesses.

We'll be monitoring these throughout the year.

Contacts with public officials. FCA represents the community in discussions with public officials and provides opportunities for you to talk with them directly. This year's session of the General Assembly in Richmond promises to be lively, and I suspect we'll be inviting selected members of the Northern Virginia delegation to give us an update.

We will likely continue our tradition of having a county board member as a featured speaker. We are also participating in the county's 2020 census effort. And we will continue to engage with Arlington Public Schools on matters affecting the schools Fairlington residents attend.

Activities to enhance life in Fairlington. FCA tries to add value to your Fairlington experience. February brings the return of our popular home remodeling showcase, featuring contractors who routinely work in Fairlington. Later in the spring we will again be sponsoring the Fairlington 5K. Also on the drawing board is another Family Movie Night, and, of course, the Fourth of July parade.

In last year's survey you told us that you would like to see more opportunities to spotlight and share the arts, and we'll be looking at how we can best boost our work in that area as well.

This is just a short sample of things on our working list. To accomplish them, we need your help. We could use you. I hope one of your New Year's resolutions is to join us.

Guy Land, FCA President,
president@fca-fairlington.org

The Tom Team's New Year Resolution: *Make Fairlington Sellers MORE MONEY Than Ever Before in History!*



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Pedestrian improvements planned at S. 34th St. and S. 36th St. intersection

Last fall at a monthly FCA meeting, Arlington County's Department of Environmental Services and Transportation Engineering & Operations (DES-TEO) provided residents several proposals to improve pedestrian safety in the neighborhood.

Given the information provided in the studies including cost estimates and safety concerns, FCA directed DES-TEO to proceed with the proposal to improve the crosswalk on S. 36th St. that intersects with S. 34th St. The project will result in the construction of a curb



This image shows the planned improvements for the intersection of S. 34th and S. 36th Sts. Image courtesy Arlington County.

extension on both ends of the crosswalk, effectively shortening the distance between the corners and sharpening the vehicle turn radius onto S. 36th St.

Drivers will have to reduce speed to make the turn. Construction is expected to start in early spring.

FCA will review other opportunities to make pedestrian improvements at the January monthly meeting. Residents are encouraged to continue raising traffic or pedestrian concerns to FCA.

—Jennifer Davies

FCA announces new Executive Board

At the December 11 annual meeting, Fairlington residents elected the Executive Board of the Fairlington Citizens Association to guide the Association for 2020. All officers and board members are elected to one-year terms. The newly elected board consists of seven returning members and two new ones.

Returning to officer slots are President Guy Land, Secretary Rebecca Sayres, and Treasurer Ed Hilz. Jennifer Davies joins the officer lineup as Vice President.

Returning board members are Kent Duffy, Chris Weathers, and Sam Wolbert. They are joined by Fairlington Mews resident Julie Butler and Fairlington Court resident Donald Staren-Doby.

All candidates were elected without opposition. Officers and directors receive no compensation for their service on the board.

—Guy Land

U.S. Census Bureau seeks census takers

The Constitutionally-mandated 2020 Census is underway and the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of the Census is hiring hundreds of people temporarily in Arlington and the rest of northern Virginia over the next few months to help carry it out. The principal position available is that of Enumerator. The pay is good (\$25–\$27.50/hour in Arlington) and the hours are flexible.

Additionally, there are many good reasons for our community to ensure that Census participation is as complete as possible, since the results impact Congressional representation and federal funding for education, healthcare, infrastructure, and other areas. Further, Personally Identifiable Information (PII) collected by the Census is confidential under Title 13 of the U.S. Code. PII is never shared with other government agencies or any other entity or person.

For more information and to apply, please visit 2020census.gov/jobs.

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Market commentary - "Fairlington has had an incredibly active winter season so far! Our winter listings have averaged 7 days on market and have sold for over asking. A common misconception that we hear is that it is best to wait until the spring to list your home. The truth is, especially in our area, that you should do what's right for you and your family. Less inventory means that there is less competition, which can be great if your home isn't as updated. By waiting to list, you could be missing out on buyers who are ready to make a purchase now." Kay



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Jennie Dean Park renovation is set to begin in Spring 2020



This illustration shows the plans for the completed Jennie Dean Park. Image courtesy Arlington County.

Over the past several years, various stakeholders have provided input on an extensive renovation and revitalization of Jennie Dean Park, which sits between Shirlington and Green Valley along Four Mile Run.

The park, which is in close proximity to the Shirlington dog park, is used by a number of Fairlington families as both a playground and a recreation area. The ball fields at Jennie Dean are frequently utilized by Arlington Little League teams, including those based out of Fairlington.

Jennie Dean Park has a particular significance because it was developed during a time when Arlington County was segregated along racial lines. First developed in 1949 by the county, Jennie Dean Park was originally designed to serve as the county's only recreation area for African-American residents of Arlington.



The county held a number of information sessions to keep the community up to date on the planned improvements to Jennie Dean Park. Photo by Jennifer Davies.

On November 16 of last year, the county board approved the construction contract for the \$15.5 million project as well as a number of land use actions necessary to build the 12.5-acre park.

The new park will feature markers on Jennie Dean's historic significance, a new playground, new all-gender restroom facilities, two picnic shelters, new parking configurations as well as new diamond fields (one of which will also serve as a soccer field), and new tennis courts. The plan assumes the current WETA building will be relocated.

Construction is expected to start in Spring of 2020, but given demands on playing fields, may be delayed to accommodate spring season baseball.

—Jennifer Davies

Metrobus service to Fairlington under review

As part of the Metro budget process, WMATA has reportedly proposed to eliminate or restructure the services of several Metrobus lines, including some of those that serve Fairlington.

Metrobus Routes 22A and 22C are both being considered for elimination, with Route 22F proposed for additional trips. This would eliminate any service by a 22 bus from 34th and Wakefield through North Fairlington down to Shirlington (the route currently taken by the 22C). The proposal would effectively eliminate off-peak service.

The Metrobus Route 7Y, which serves North Fairlington, is being considered for restructuring, with the proposal to terminate the route at the Pentagon (currently, it goes to Farragut Square).

In many cases, Metro riders would still be able to reach their destination by transferring to rail service instead of taking the entire trip via Metrobus.

These changes are initial proposals and are part of a longer budget process; the next step will be a public comment period during which time feedback will be collected and compiled. Then, after the public comment period, the proposed budget goes before the WMATA board in February. This will be followed by a more detailed proposal with specific provisions, which will invite another round of public comment.

FCA will continue to follow the proposed changes and

Continued on page 13



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Morning show broadcasts from Abingdon

The ABC morning show, *Good Morning America*, was at Abingdon Elementary in mid-December to do a live broadcast.

The show was highlighting an after-school program, Rosie Riveters, that partners with Arlington Public Schools (APS). The non-profit organization aims to bring science and math programs to elementary-age girls in northern Virginia.



Cameras captured the excitement as both Abingdon's science program and the non-profit Rosie Riveters received gifts from retailer Amazon. Photo courtesy Jacqueline Firster's Twitter feed, @STEM_K12.

As part of the five-minute segment, hosted by *Good Morning America* meteorologist Ginger Zee, online retailer Amazon made a surprise appearance and presented Rosie Riveters with the items on their Amazon wishlist as a gift to the organization.

Abingdon science teacher, Jordan Kivitiz, was also on-hand to highlight STEM programs at Abingdon and receive a special gift: a 3D printer courtesy of Amazon.

The segment was broadcast live from Abingdon's cafeteria and included a number of Abingdon students, teachers, and staff.

Amazon's gift continues its commitment to Abingdon. In spring of 2019 Abingdon was one of a hundred schools nationwide to receive Amazon Future Engineer Robotics Grants to inspire the next generation of computer scientists.

—Susan Renahan

New transportation option comes to Fairlington

South Arlington has another transportation option for those seeking alternative ways to travel around the county and area.

FLARE is an amenity shuttle service that connects people and the places they live.

On November 12, FLARE had an official ribbon cutting ceremony with the Arlington Economic Development office.



FLARE is a new transportation option currently seeking partnerships in south Arlington. Photo by Andrew Raab.

Starting at the end of August, FLARE was originally offering rides to and from the Fairlington Farmers Market and to residents living along Columbia Pike. The company's goal is to partner with area property management companies and businesses to provide shuttle service, particularly in areas that have low-volume bus routes.



FLARE celebrated its opening with a ribbon cutting in November. Photo courtesy Arlington Chamber of Commerce Twitter feed, @ArlVACHamber.

Developed by Chris Yeazel, a former Army transportation specialist, the company name is a synonym of the word "Zoom" and is meant to convey the idea of getting around quickly.

Once fully operational, the property management companies or businesses will pay a fee for the service and those in need of a ride will not be charged a fee. An app will soon be available for riders to schedule a pick up.

For additional information, please visit their website: www.flarerides.com.

—Andrew Raab



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– Patty, Fairfax, VA



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– Erik, Arlington, VA



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Abingdon Thanksgiving drive a big success

The Abingdon and Fairlington communities coordinated to provide Abingdon families with a bountiful and delicious Thanksgiving meal.

Fairlington MOMS Club, FCA, and Abingdon PTA donated gift cards and turkeys while the Fairlington-based Girl Scout Troop 4646 spent many hours shopping and packaging the meals. FCA volunteers and Abingdon staff delivered some of the meals in person to those families unable to pick them up.

Girl Scout Troop leader Elizabeth Lyons remarked on how the middle schoolers enjoyed returning to their alma mater. "The Scouts were thrilled to be back at Abingdon, helping pack meals for families in the community. It was also really fun to watch them shop!"

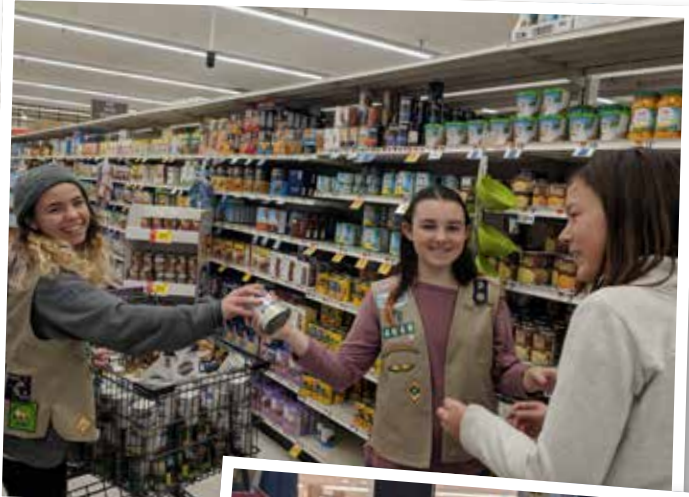
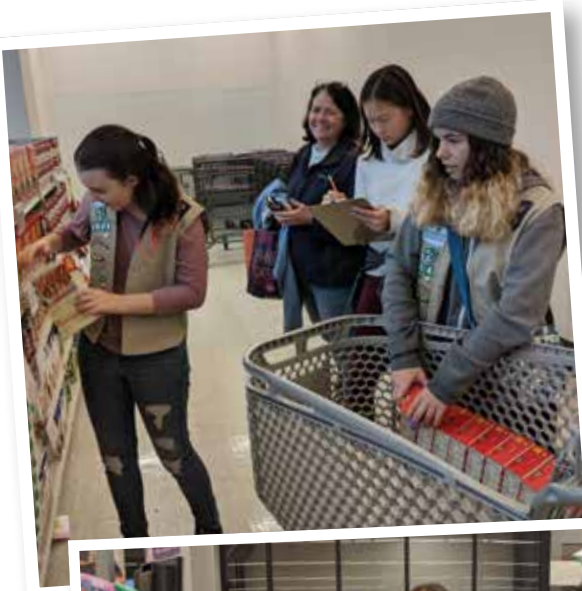
Lyons continued, "They had to work within a budget and figure out how to get the most for their money.

There was a lot of negotiation and math going on!"

Abingdon's Caty Branco, Bilingual Outreach Coordinator, was very appreciative of the effort. "On behalf of Abingdon Elementary School, we would like to thank our school community, Abingdon's PTA, Girl Scouts, Fairlington MOMS Club, and the Fairlington Citizens Association for their generosity, support and endless work. We served 40 families, which is an increase of five more from last year, and this is only due to the continuous support of our generous community and phenomenal parent leaders! Thank you, thank you!"

Gift cards collected for the coat drive will be used prior to the winter break to ensure that all students will have adequate outdoor clothing for the season.

—Jennifer Davies



Girl Scout Troop 4646 shops for food to be packaged and donated to Abingdon families in need. Photos by Melody Kisor.

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Paint, Build, Create



Join in a day of creative exploration on Saturday, January 18, from 11 am to 2 pm at the Fairlington Community Center (FCC), 3308 S. Stafford St., at Arlington County's Paint, Build, Create event. This annual program is free and open to the public and will feature STEM-based projects for all ages and abilities.

Food trucks will be parked along S. Stafford St. Attendees are encouraged to park on-street in the neighborhood on S. Stafford St., S. Utah St., and S. 32nd Rd. View the event webpage for more information: <https://parks.arlingtonva.us/paint-build-create>.

Celebrate your milestone with the AFB

Do you want to honor someone celebrating a milestone who lives here in the neighborhood?

Would you like to recognize a special teacher, caregiver, or coach?

Do you want to congratulate your child's teammates on a successful season?

The *All Fairlington Bulletin* has ad space available to interested residents in multiple sizes and a range of prices. Contact the Advertising Manager at admanager@fca-fairlington.org.



Home Improvement Showcase set for February 15

The Fairlington Home Improvement Showcase is set to return for its fifth year running on Saturday, February 15. It will once again be held at the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St. The event will feature contractors who know the intricacies and quirks of our historic buildings and help unit owners improve their homes.



Last year's Home Improvement Showcase drew a crowd of homeowners seeking information and inspiration. Photo by Guy Land.

The seminar format will highlight common strategies contractors use to create a brand-new kitchen, finish an attic, install new windows and doors, and brighten up a basement, just to name a few remodeling possibilities. There will be many opportunities to ask questions and learn about unique design options that can enhance the quality of living and value in Fairlington.

More details, including the format, speakers, and schedule, will be announced in the February issue of the *AFB* and on the FCA website, <http://www.fca-fairlington.org>.

—Chris Weathers

Bus from page 7

FCA Director Kent Duffy will be in touch with Arlington county transit in order to be apprised of the process as it develops.

The FCA board expects to consider this at its January meeting. FCA is also discussing this with the chair of the Parkfairfax Transportation Committee, since Parkfairfax would also be potentially affected by the proposed changes.

—Susan Renehan



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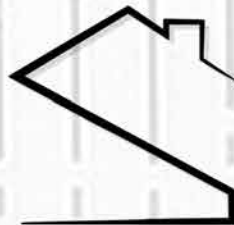


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Santa rides again

On December 14, despite the threat of rain, Santa made his annual appearance via fire truck throughout the Park Shirlington and Fairlington neighborhood.

From his seat in the front of the Station 9 fire engine, Santa waved to children as the engine drove slowly by with lights flashing. Santa also greeted children and posed for photos at stops throughout the neighborhood.

Santa's annual fire truck ride is sponsored by FCA. Special thanks go out to Captain Thomas Shamblin and all the members of Fire Station 9, which now serves Fairlington; Fairlington Villages, which provided the use of the Santa suit; and Presto Valet, for dry cleaning services.



Capt. Thomas Shamblin of Station 9, Santa, FCA Vice President Jennifer Davies, and FCA President Guy Land. Photo by Sara Tuke Carr.



FCA Vice President Jennifer Davies organized Santa's ride through the neighborhood. Photos by Guy Land.

Santa greets families in Park Shirlington.

For Rent Clarendon in the Arbor

Nicely updated Clarendon for rent in the Arbor in December. 3 Levels, 2 BR, 2 BA + Patio. Tasteful light grey paint and pretty hardwood floors. White Kitchen with Stainless Steel appliances. Energy Efficient windows and newer HVAC. Updated baths. Assigned parking and convenient Arbor location. Private setting with green space out front. Don't miss it! \$2500/mo



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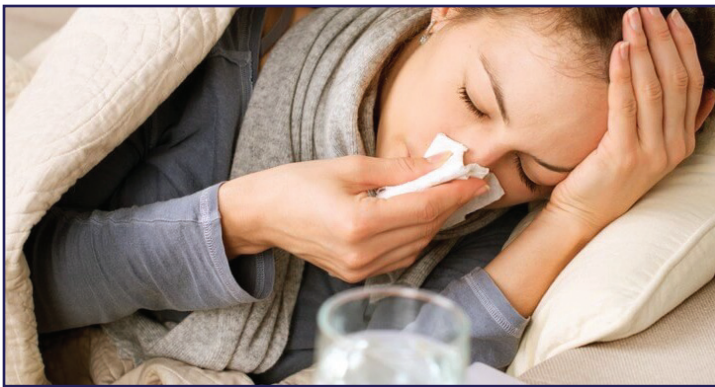


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Tulloch's presentation included some interesting facts including:

- Shirlington is the only "urban village" in Arlington County that is not Metro accessible, meaning that more people tend to drive to Shirlington and therefore parking should be a greater priority than in other urban village developments.
- The Transit Center, located at the bottom of 31st St. and S. Randolph St., sees about 2000 users daily. It is the only one like it in the county and could be expanded to increase capacity, therefore potentially off-setting some of the demands on street parking.
- Shirlington was originally built from fill over parts of Four Mile Run. As a result, the neighborhood has a high water table and therefore cannot accommodate underground parking.



This map shows the proposed increase in density for parts of Shirlington. Image courtesy Arlington County.

Attendees were asked to comment or pose questions on several poster boards, including very preliminary concept designs, to engender discussion. The concept designs showed what a medium-rise Shirlington would look like, with higher residential, office, and parking garages.

Almost all of the designs preserved the "main strip" of 1-2 floor retail space along Campbell Ave. that most universally supported. Other posters focused on aesthetics asking people what they liked about Shirlington (examples included trees, Beaux Arts style, pedestrian-friendly, night life, and outdoor seating).

Additional posters looked at massing and spacing

(height location of buildings) as well as sustainability. As Tulloch put it, the poster boards helped "bracket the range of possibilities" to help direct staff on future designs and features.

At the conclusion of the comment period, county staff identified some general preferences and concepts:

- Strong support for the "village feel" of the original section of Campbell Ave.;
- Attendees are quite comfortable with increased density;
- General support to increase height on the periphery and not in the middle of Shirlington;
- General support for "step" massing (i.e. don't build high next to a two-story building, but do so gradually);
- Ensure sufficient parking given lack of Metro service.

In addition, staff also highlighted ideas that were proposed:

- Make Shirlington an arts destination, using Signature Theatre and WETA as anchors and bookends of the Village;
- Make Campbell Ave. permanently pedestrian-only;
- Incentivize WETA to build in Shirlington so that the county might acquire their property near Jennie Dean Park to complete the park re-design;
- Ask developers to improve pedestrian access to Shirlington, including the pedestrian overpass on I-395 (which would benefit Parkfairfax and some South Fairlington residents).

Tulloch commented that the county is seeking input from all residents and strongly encourages residents of Fairlington and Green Valley to be part of the process. Fairlington Citizens Association (FCA) will continue to remain involved and will look to invite county staff to a future meeting as the proposal moves forward.

A meeting was also held on December 11 at Shirlington Public Library that more closely addressed parking and building height. The next meeting is scheduled on January 21, again at Shirlington Public Library, to present refined modeling scenarios based on feedback.

More information can be found at: <https://projects.arlingtonva.us/plans-studies/general-land-use-plan/special-study-shirlington-village>.

—Jennifer Davies



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Trip to the Outdoor Lab



5th graders at the Outdoor Lab. Photo courtesy Ms. Hartman's Twitter feed, @hartman_maddy.

In November, 5th grade classes at Abingdon took an overnight trip to the Phoebe Hall Knipling Outdoor Lab, a 225-acre facility in Fauquier County. The Outdoor Lab provides a natural classroom for Arlington Public School students and was fully funded for another year of education by the tax increase approved by the Arlington County Board.

This year, students were able to:

Participate in a stream study: Students assessed the water quality in the Outdoor Lab stream, observing and recording what organisms lived in a stream sample.

Classify animals: Students viewed the live animals kept at the lab, including a snapping turtle. While staff fed the animals, students learned about what each ate and their natural habitats.

Enjoy free time: Students could choose between boating, fishing, hiking the grounds, or playing tetherball. Many students loved canoeing with their teachers.

Complete a night hike: Students

learned about nocturnal animals and how night vision worked. Usually, there is an outdoor campfire at the conclusion of the hike, but due to the extremely cold weather this year, staff had to build an indoor fire instead.

Learn camping skills: Students also usually learn about tent set-up and take-down and get the chance to camp outside overnight, but because of the cold weather all students and volunteers slept inside in the nature center building.

Enjoy a day hike: On the following day, students hiked on the nature trails while learning about the effects of weathering and soil erosion.

If students and families would like to learn more about the Outdoor Lab in person, there will be an open house in May (date TBD). There are also three week-long summer camps beginning in late June for rising 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th graders.

For more information, please visit <https://outdoorlab.org/>.

—Rachel Mallory

Donation of hand-knitted hats for students



Abingdon students show off their new winter hats. Photo courtesy of the APS newsletter.

Helen Staren, a former Fairlington resident, recently donated more than 50 hand-knitted winter hats to Abingdon Elementary School, the third year in a row she has made such a donation.

The mother of Deborah Staren-Doby, who is herself a Fairlington resident and an Abingdon teacher, Ms. Staren lived in Fairlington from 1976 until 2006. Her children and two of her

grandchildren attended Abingdon.

Ms. Staren is a retired teacher who has spent 17 years as a volunteer with the Arlington Education and Employment (REEP) program, which provides English and career development classes to adults in Arlington.

—Adapted from the Arlington Public School newsletter's *Making a Difference* series

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A look at Gunston Middle School

The 2019-2020 school year marks the first year of new middle school boundaries. This is in addition to the new elementary school boundaries adopted by APS in fall of 2018 that were put in place this year.



Gunston's Principal, Dr. Lori Wiggins, congratulates 8th grader and Fairlingtonian Dorothy Edson on her amazing solo performance in the Glee Club. Photo by Emily Janka.

Gunston Middle School (GMS) continues to serve as Fairlington's "neighborhood school." This means that all 6th graders, whether they attended Abingdon or option schools such as Claremont Immersion School, Drew Montessori, or Arlington Traditional School, have the opportunity to be classmates at Gunston.

Located in the Arlington Ridge neighborhood, just off Glebe, the campus is a joint use facility with Arlington County. Amenities

include indoor and outdoor turf soccer fields, a turf baseball field, two community theatres, and shared space with Gunston Community Recreation Center.

Gunston's mascot, the Hornet, adorns the school's purple and teal halls. The school is home to three academic programs: the traditional middle school program, the Spanish partial immersion language program, and the Montessori Middle Years program. This allows for the continuation of studies for students who attended those instructional programs in elementary school.

Consistent with countywide student population trends, Gunston has also seen tremendous growth. From 2008–2018, the school grew from 585 students to 1025, or a 75% increase in a decade. This increased growth is even more than the 40% county average over the same period.

The start of the 2019 school year is no exception. Despite the new 2019 boundaries and an opening of a new middle school in North Arlington, Gunston is now the largest middle school in all of APS (1126 students), including having the largest 6th grade class this year.

Beth Hicks, serving her second year as PTA President at Gunston, feels the school is special because it has one of the most diverse staff among APS schools, which makes

it uniquely situated to educate the school population.

Hicks noted that instructors at Gunston work hard to differentiate their teaching methods to meet the needs of different student populations, from Gifted to Special Education to English Language Learners. She hopes that APS will further support middle schools to ensure that all students are ready for the next level of schooling.



Gunston choir's winter concert. Photo by Jennifer Davies.

With one child in 8th grade and another a 9th grader at Arlington Tech, Hicks is also focused on the transition to high school. "I think I've seen the best preparation for high school in the 8th grade year. Students seem to be treated more as though they are able to manage their schedules and workload, allowing them to grow the confidence needed to do well in a more rigorous high school environment," she said.

Gunston strives to ensure students are in a nurturing and stimulating environment. Principal Dr. Lori Wiggins regularly emails parents with updates and reflections on what is happening at the school.

Recently, she shared the following: "I continue to be grateful for the privilege to be the principal at Gunston Middle School. I am proud of the work that our teachers are doing this year.

"I see the evidence of their collective work together in the distinct classrooms; we do have a collaborative instructional culture," she reflected. "There are structures in place to help share the expertise, wisdom, and resources of each teacher with other teachers."

Dr. Wiggins continued, "The effect is that students benefit from the collective wisdom in school not just the wisdom and skill of their particular teacher. We truly are better together."

—Jennifer Davies

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Wakefield happenings



Wakefield Stem for Her team again competed and won \$2,000 in the Audi Drive Like a Girl competition. Teams worked with Audi employees to design strategies for sustainable products. Photo courtesy Wakefield website.

Wakefield students investigate environmental studies this fall

Students in Ms. Huffman's math class explored solar energy. They toured the panels on the Wakefield roof as well as solar charging stations in the library. Students used this information to create mini solar houses and cars.

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Students also worked with Four Mile Run Conservatory to clean up the river. They went out in kayaks and pulled waste out of the water. They collected 81 pounds of trash (which includes one Bird scooter found at the bottom of the river).

Be on the look-out for opportunities to help Wakefield. As you clean out your closets, Wakefield collects adult size winter jackets to give to students. Later in the year, Wakefield PTA gathers formals as part of Formals for \$5 sale before prom.

—Donna Felipe



Wakefield students tour the solar panels on the school's roof. Photo courtesy Wakefield website.

Master Gardeners offer training on seed selection

The Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia is offering a free training on seed selection entitled, "Seeds: Selecting and Starting." Jumpstart your vegetable garden! Get the scoop on seed selection—hybrid vs. heirloom, which seeds to start indoors and what's required to get them growing.

Learn how to make your own starter pots, create simple lighting systems, and practice winter sowing by starting seeds outdoors in milk-jug greenhouses. Germination is complex, but seed starting is reassuringly simple.

This class is offered by Extension Master Gardeners. The training will be held on Thursday, January 23, from 7–8:30 pm at the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St. The class is free but advance registration is requested at mgnv.org.

Questions? Telephone 703-228-6414 or email mgarlalex@gmail.com.



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neighborhood news

Fairlington Diners

The Fairlington Diners gather a couple of times a month for relaxed dinners nearby. We focus on having a good meal and an opportunity to chat with neighbors. In December, we enjoyed our annual tradition of lunching at the Auberge Chez Francois in Great Falls.

For January, we'll return to our usual schedule of two events:

Monday, January 6, 6:30 pm, Ramparts, 1700 Fern St., Alexandria, 703-998-6616, www.rampartstavern.com. We'll return to this perennial local favorite on a Monday, when they offer a special price on hamburgers (and turkey burgers, and the occasional fish burger) with the purchase of any beverage. The rest of the menu is also available.

Thursday, January 23, 6:30 pm, Cheesetique, 4024 Campbell Ave., 703-933-8787, www.cheesetique.com. This wine and cheese-themed restaurant in Shirlington has recently moved into the space vacated by Luna, and is described as "bigger, better, cheesier." New features include two bars, ample seating, and a large outdoor patio. It features dishes such as "grown up" grilled cheese sandwiches, along with ample charcuterie and wine served by the glass.

Because we need to get an appropriate-size table on arrival, please call Carol at 703-379-6840 if you plan to attend either event. Do leave a voicemail if you don't reach her—include your name and how to contact you the day of the event, in case plans change.

If you want to receive a copy of these notices early in the previous month, send your email address to carol_dabbs@yahoo.com.

Book Group

Join the Fairlington Book Group in January to discuss *The Poison Squad: One Chemist's Single-Minded Crusade for Food Safety at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*, by Deborah Blum.

"Full of fascinating detail...a valuable contribution to understanding the politics of food."—*Nature*

The Book Group welcomes first-time visitors and drop-ins. No commitment required! Join us for our discussion, even if you haven't read the book. We are meeting on Tuesday, January 28, at 7:30 pm in the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St. We hope you'll join us.

Canasta group doubles the fun

Our local Canasta group has multiplied the cards, the luck and the fun. We are now playing "Hand and Foot," a Canasta-type card game played coast to coast. If playing your hand was fun, there may be wild cards waiting in your foot! Join this local group, which plays Tuesday mornings at a church hall near Fairlington. Having card-sense is helpful, but we're happy to teach you the rules of this game. Call Carol Ann 703-931-8533.

Join us for Fairlington Knits! and get crafty

Join Fairlington Knits! on Monday, January 13, and Monday, January 27, at the Fairlington Community Center from 6:30-8 pm for a knit/crochet meet-up. Bring what you're working on, share what you know, and learn new skills. Meet new friends, some who might be neighbors, and enjoy an evening of making things with like-minded people. All levels of knitters and crocheters are welcome. The events are posted on the Fairlington Appreciation Society's Facebook page. For more information, contact: Turner at Turnerwork@aol.com.

Fairlington MOMS Club

The MOMS Club of Arlington-Fairlington VA® is a group for moms of young kids to find friends, get support, and have play opportunities for the kids. The Club participates in a number of annual service projects to help our community, four big annual parties, routine playdates and crafts, and moms' nights out. We have a great list-serv for sharing advice and connecting to other Fairlington families. We welcome all moms! Please email fairlingtonmomsclub@gmail.com for information on joining and visit us online at www.fairlingtonmomsclub.com. \$30 in annual dues goes to support the club's work and service projects. The MOMS Club of Arlington-Fairlington VA is the local chapter of International MOMS Club®.

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Dear Neighbors,

Wow, that went fast! Thank you for an amazing 25 years. The Fairlington community has been so supportive, and we are so proud to serve our neighbors. Please come out and help us celebrate on January 25th. Here's to the next 25 years!

Hope to see you there,

Tom Lapham
Owner - Auto Stop

DOWN TO EARTH patio gardening



Interesting tales and discoveries

Regularly, I'm the one receiving a consultation from my landscape customers; they're the ones posing design ideas. Usually, they work. Imagination in the garden is a wonderful thing. It manifests into different visuals that also are functional. It's no wonder we have the garden tour in Fairlington! Below are some situations I've encountered that offered many promising returns.

Beautifying the balcony under-story: Eva wanted flagstone laid here. So, I installed geometric shapes to fill the area directly beneath the balcony. It was a rectangular shape about eight by 20 feet.

Then she wanted the wide-open space in her oversized yard covered with sod. After raking away the existing mulch, smoothing the soil and soaking the surface, I pieced in tall fescue sod. The result was a lush lawn that butted up not only against curved planting beds at the fences but also against the new "stone patio" under the balcony. It was neat and handsome. And leaf removal from both the stone and grass surfaces was easy.

So many times, areas under balconies are filled with clutter and leaves. So why not make this area an attractive space in your garden?

Lush ground covers: Dean wanted something besides gravel surrounding the a/c compressor in the garden below his kitchen window. After removing the gravel and tilling the soil, I planted pachysandra, an evergreen ground cover that shows white



A view of a completed project to beautify the area beneath a Fairlington balcony. Photo by Bill Sullivan.

flowers in April-May. It's a vertical grower that prefers shade and reaches just six inches above the ground.

Once planted, it was an attractive green skirt around the functional but unsightly square-shaped unit. Since pachysandra is not a vine with meandering stems, there was no concern with the foliage entering the compressor vents.

In another garden, Mary wanted something to cover the expanse of brown mulch. So, I planted lamium, a colonizing ground cover that has (what appears to be) white frosting on the leaves. In addition, a magenta flower shows during summer. In her shade garden, not only does she have an evergreen ground cover but white and pink showing

throughout. It looks like a decorative blanket on the ground. And she sees a lot less mulch.

Hiding a tree stump: Grace suggested placing a decorative pot filled with flowers in the center of the unsightly and large (20-inch-diameter) stump. This is what was left after a monster silver maple tree was cut down in her patio. Then she said, "How about rooting some ivy all around the perimeter of the stump?"

It was a great idea. In time, the ivy filled in the circumference of the stump and even grew vertically. The result? A floral centerpiece surrounded by an evergreen ground cover.

Year-round decoration: Dawn installed some iron trellises in her garden space. In addition to planting vines at the base, she hung decorative dragonflies, butterflies, and frogs on the metal latticework. Once the vines trailed up to the top, it looked like these figurines were hiding in the foliage.

Winter color: Paula had a side garden filled with azalea and forsythia. But those floral shows were short-lived. I added azalea "encore" and camellia to the garden. The former bloomed into early December while the latter bloomed in winter (November into early April). No reason why your garden can't feature color from December through February.

—Bill Sullivan
www.sullivanlandscaping.net

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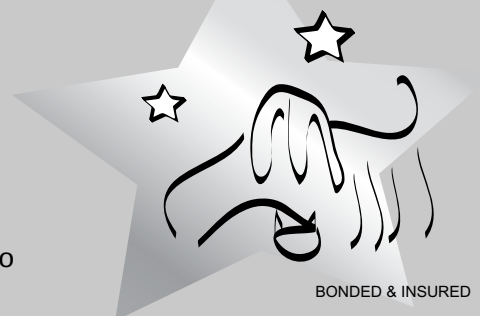


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- Send mini-ad copy via email, regular mail, or drop off at FCA drop box.
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Email: admanager@fca-fairlington.org

Mailing Address: FCA-AFB, PO Box 6182, Arlington, VA 22206-0182.

Drop Box Location: Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St. (Hours: 8 am-9 pm, M-F, 8 am-5 pm, Saturday; closed Sunday.)

Cost: 50 cents per word.

Include with ad copy: Name, address, phone #, email address, and ad category (see Mini-ads for options).

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