



Civic Pride

Newsletter of the Yorktown Civic Association

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New Yorktown High Classrooms Should be Ready for Fall Classes

Students attending Yorktown High School can expect to enjoy new classrooms and other facilities in the fall since no major delays have been encountered during the first phase of the nearly 5-year long high school rebuilding project.

The current phase of the project will result in a new cafeteria, administrative offices, auditorium and dozens of classrooms. When school reopens in the fall, all students will be expected to enter the building via a new, consolidated main entrance which will be at the northeast corner of the building near the Yorktown Boulevard and N. 30th Street intersection.

Residents will receive a presentation on the status of the project at the February 22 civic association meeting. Even though the project is being separated into several distinct phases, there will be no stoppage in work between phases. Residents should expect significant impacts from the next phase of work, which will be along the south side of the building facing N. 28th Street. During that phase, the existing parking spaces along the 28th Street side of the building will be lost to construction equipment.

The total length of construction has been estimated at 55 months, with a target completion date of December 2013. The project cost is \$83 million with the majority of that going to the prime contractor, Hess Construction, the same contractor leading the recent reconstruction of Washington-Lee High School.

During the second phase of construction, a new gym and swimming pool will be completed, as will new music and performing arts classrooms. The final major phase, starting approximately 18 months later, will involve construction of a new media center and auxiliary gym, along with a new center courtyard.

Parking will continue to be a major problem during construction, dropping to a low of 127 spaces during the third phase, down from about 220 now and 160 off-street spaces during the next phase. However, once the project is complete, the site will have 347 off-street parking spaces.

Another issue is whether the building is being built with enough classroom space to accommodate Arlington's continuing enrollment increases. The official capacity of the new structure at completion is 1600 students. However, the current Yorktown enrollment is already 1700 and projected to go higher in coming years. Meanwhile, enrollment at the new Washington-Lee high school jumped this year to just over 1800 students, and that building was also built for just 1600 students.

Residents Receive Lower 2010 Property Assessments

Arlington residents received their annual property tax assessments in mid-January, and despite reports from the real-estate industry of firming prices, most homeowners received lower assessments for 2010 compared to 2009.

Overall, Arlington's 2010 real estate assessments declined 7.2%, the first year-over-year assessment decline since 1995. The commercial sector, including office and apartment properties, declined 12.7%. The commercial sector now accounts for 43% of Arlington's property tax base. Meanwhile, residential property values, including detached homes, condominiums, townhouses, and new construction declined 2.5%, with the average residential value in the county now standing at \$503,200.

In the Yorktown neighborhood, residential assessments declined by a total of \$19 million to \$760 million, a drop of 2.4%. The average valuation of a home in this neighborhood now stands at \$715,000.

While the vast majority of households in the neighborhood saw their valuations drop for the year, not all assessments were lower. Of the 1063 homes in the neighborhood, 168 went up in value. Meanwhile, 31 households had declines of more than \$150,000, and the number of homes assessed at over \$1.5 million fell to 14, from 24 the prior year.

The decline in property values has contributed to a roughly \$65 million gap in the county's budget projections for the next fiscal year.

Residents wishing to appeal their 2010 assessments have until March 1 to file an appeal. Information on the appeals process can be found at http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/realEstate/appeals_board_of_equalization/Appeals%20Page.aspx or by calling 703-228-3920.

Yorktown Boulevard Safety Improvements Under Review

The rebuilding of Yorktown High School will be bringing the main entrance of the building to a new location, which will be just steps away from the Yorktown Boulevard and N. 30th Street intersection. Consequently, the unsafe traffic conditions that have always existed on Yorktown Boulevard in front of the school are likely to become even worse next fall.

To address these safety concerns, the civic association has requested that the county present the neighborhood with design options that could be funded through the county's Neighborhood Conservation Program. Those options might include improved crosswalks and pedestrian signals, as well as a raised median in Yorktown Boulevard. The process for reviewing these options with county staff will be discussed at the February 22 civic association meeting.

Terry Costello will be serving as the "block captain" to represent the neighborhood in working with the county on this project.

Civic Association Executive Committee

Position	Name	Phone
President	David Haring	703/241-8111 (h) 703/208-5660 (o)
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Secretary	Frank White	703/241-9820 (h)
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At large	Ted Weihe	703/533-2815 (h)
At large	Alice Harrington	703/533-5581 (h)
At large	Eileen Colton	703/534-7445 (h)
At large	Terry Costello	703/534-0408 (h)
At large	Dustin Anderson	703/534-0059 (h)
At large	Andy Semmel	703/237-6505(h)
At large	Andrew Schneider	703/532-0997 (h)

Marymount University Hoping to Complete Expansion in October

While much of the work to-date on the Marymount expansion project has seemingly been underground, Marymount University expects to be occupying several new facilities sometime in October at its project site at 26th Street and Yorktown Boulevard.

The project, which was approved by the County Board in July 2007, involves construction of a new 3-story classroom, 240-bed dormitory and 370-space underground parking structure. For status reports and contact information on the project, Marymount has been maintaining a web site at: <http://www.marymount.edu/26thstreetproject/>.

In early April, area residents should expect several days of detours on Yorktown Boulevard around the project site. During that time, a new pedestrian bridge will be installed over the street to connect the new buildings to the main campus. The university is holding discussions with the county regarding performing that work during the night to minimize traffic disruptions.

An agreement has also been reached to use \$45,000 which was set-aside during the county approval process for landscape improvements on county-owned land across the street from the project site. That contribution was originally intended for improvements to the walls of the Yorktown Boulevard underpass, but the planned work did not meet with VDOT approval.

After attempting for several months to secure several different locations for construction worker parking, an agreement has also been reached to contract with the Knights of Columbus for up to 50 parking spaces, in addition to the 80 spaces already in use there by Hess Construction for the Yorktown High rebuilding project. Workers will be shuttled back and forth to the Marymount project in vans.

Marymount Begins Master Planning Process

Even though Marymount University is several months away from completing its current 26th Street expansion project, it is also well underway in performing a major update to its overall campus master plan that may lead to further campus changes.

In August 2009, Ayers Saint Gross Architects + Planners was selected to conduct Marymount's campus master planning process. Ayers Saint Gross is a 90-year-old architectural and planning firm headquartered in Baltimore, with offices in Washington and Phoenix. In the past 15 years, the company has completed more than 500 projects at more than 100 colleges and universities.

In early December, architects from Ayers Saint Gross spent a week on campus collecting data and insights. As part of this process, Marymount invited the leadership of the four civic associations that border campus to meet with the architects, and on February 9 was planning a broader open house to discuss the master plan with members of the neighboring community.

Sidewalk Project Finally Underway on 25th Street

In an effort that began seven years ago, the county is now installing a sidewalk and traffic circle on N. 25th Street from George Mason Drive to N. Columbus Street.

The project started as a joint traffic calming effort with the Old Dominion Civic Association and involved both N. 25th and N. 26th Streets from George Mason to N. Glebe Road. The traffic calming portion of the project was funded in 2004, and included the installation of speed humps on both streets as well as gateways at the Glebe Road intersections.

By that time, the Old Dominion Civic Association had already submitted sidewalk improvement plans for 25th Street between N. Columbus and N. Glebe, and that work has recently been completed.

The remaining work will include installation of a sidewalk on the north side of 25th Street, along with a traffic circle at the N. Emerson Street intersection, intersection improvements at N. Dickerson Street, and gateway treatments at the George Mason intersection.

The county will also be performing storm water and other under-the-street utility work as part of the project. The expected completion date is around April 1, depending on weather conditions.

**Yorktown Civic Association
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Please attend the Civic Association Meeting on Monday, February 22, 2009, at 7:30 p.m. at Yorktown High School, Room 1B.

For additional information about the Yorktown Civic Association and the issues covered in this newsletter, check out our website at <http://www.YorktownCivic.com>.

Yorktown Civic Association Meeting Scheduled for February 22

A civic association meeting has been called for Monday, February 22, at 7:30 pm in room 1B at Yorktown High School, and all neighborhood residents are encouraged to attend.

Residents will hear from Arlington Public School facilities staff on the status of the Yorktown High School rebuilding project. The first phase of the project is on schedule, and is expected to be available for use when school starts in the fall. Meanwhile, residents near the school need to start thinking about the impact that the next phase of work, which begins this summer, will have on traffic and parking patterns around the school.

An update will also be provided at the meeting on the neighborhood's other major construction project - the addition of a new dormitory, classrooms and underground parking at Marymount University. While that project started later than hoped, university officials believe it is now on track for completion in October.

Attendees will also be updated on civic association efforts to secure funding for traffic safety improvements on Yorktown Boulevard between the Little Falls Road and George Mason intersections. Residents living in this segment of Yorktown Boulevard are encouraged to attend the meeting.

The meeting will also involve the civic association's biennial elections. Association bylaws require a change in civic association leadership, and the nominating committee is recommending that Andrew Schneider be elected to a two-year term as civic association president.