

## **Arlington County Bicycle Advisory Committee Meeting**

Virtual / Online Meeting

Monday, January 12, 2026, 7:00 – 9:00 PM, TEAMS platform

### **Attendance**

**BAC members:** Cynthia Palmer (Chair), Andrew Martin, Dana Bres (Vice-Chair), David Ansell, Aaron Schuetz, Eliot Forster-Benson, Mike Hanna, Steve Offutt, Eric Goodman, Leslie Tierstein

**DES staff:** Elwyn Gonzalez

**Others:** Randy Swart, Pamela Van Hine (PAC), Collier Cook, Kevin O'Brien (WABA)

### **Welcome and Introductions**

- Elwyn Gonzalez opened the meeting and passed facilitation to Chair Cynthia Palmer.
- Members introduced themselves using a detour photo prompt, sharing how they would respond to a “Walk Your Bike” detour associated with the [Arlington Ridge Rd/Mount Vernon Ave bridge replacement project](#) between Arlington and Alexandria. Most participants said they would bicycle in the road (depending on traffic and direction) or ride slowly on the sidewalk.

### **BAC Annual Calendar**

Overview:

- Elwyn shared a draft calendar for BAC meetings, which includes potential topics and speakers to invite for 2026.
- Goal of this effort is to improve meeting planning, reduce the number of last-minute invitations, and help the Committee track priorities over the year.
- Committee members’ feedback included:
  - Move the invitation for Arlington County Police Department staff to earlier than October. BAC has been sending invites to ACPD for months.
  - Add discussions and presentations from the Arlington County Fire Department, Department of Parks and Rec, VDOT, and Arlington Public Schools (with special attention to school vehicle safety).
  - Include annual budget discussions.
  - Consider joint meetings with PAC and TAC.
  - Add a second page “topic checklist” to ensure recurring coverage.
  - Improve documentation and minutes to be posted publicly.

Discussion:

- Members expressed concern that many entities (fire, police, schools, DES, Parks, VDOT, etc.) do not seek BAC input on issues, and don’t want to bother with the county’s advisory committees.

- There is a perception that it is challenging to pin down staff for meetings, and often that there is little expectation of follow-up on matters discussed.
  - Need County Manager guidance clarifying BAC's expected role. Committee members vocalized that as a means to keep pursuing meetings with ACPD and others, the CM should signal to those entities that meeting attendance is important and part of their roles.
 Related questions:
  - Whether to request priorities directly from the County Manager.
  - How to avoid being "ignored" when agencies view meetings as optional.
  - Possible strategy: Provide specific annual priorities and request that the County Manager's Office direct staff to participate.

### **Letter on Long Bridge Drive Multimodal Connection**

- Vice-Chair Dana Bres led a discussion to review concerns associated with the final concept plan for the [Long Bridge Drive Multimodal Connection project](#):
  - Significant vehicular traffic to Pentagon parking lots and beyond.
  - Unsafe unsignalized mid-block crossing.
  - Inadequate integration between the Aquatic Center area and the new Long Bridge bike/ped bridge.
  - The likelihood that bicycle riders will avoid the new facility due to safety and health concerns and instead use the Esplanade.
- Kevin O'Brien (WABA) shared related advocacy updates and contact with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority.

Motions/Votes:

- Motion (Dana Bres): That the BAC send a letter to the CM for DES to address safety concerns associated with the Long Bridge Drive Multimodal Connection, including a note about the use of the Esplanade for people riding bikes. Motion was seconded by Cynthia Palmer and passed unanimously by the Committee.

### **BAC Priorities Discussion**

Overview:

Committee members cited that the reason most of them joined the BAC was to help address concerns about intersections and other road- and trail- safety issues. While the county no longer requests project-specific input from the BAC and other advisory committees, it is unclear to what extent they are open to systemic recommendations, which puts the BAC at risk of "stepping on toes" of county staff.

New strategies that were discussed during the meeting:

- Create themed reviews (e.g., quarterly or multi-month focus areas).

- Develop “quick fix” lists, “best/worst” lists, and systemic problem reports.
- Build data-backed submissions (photos, locations, examples).
- Choose themes in advance, e.g., dangerous intersections, traffic signaling, use of outside contractors, maintenance responsibilities, parking enforcement, MOT/detour challenges, etc.
- Start with lane delineation and physical separation types used across Arlington.
- Use shared Google Docs for committee members to upload findings.
- Sample Action Plan:
  - January–February: Members collect field observations on lane delineation (photos + location + comments).
  - February meeting: Brief check in.
  - March meeting: Full discussion and follow-up.

### **BAC Business and Announcements**

Noreen Hannigan has left the BAC to focus on her other efforts with the Arlington County Forestry and Natural Resources Commission.

Transportation Project Tracking Process:

- County is developing a process for BAC members to track specific upcoming transportation projects.
- BAC is open to considering this approach but requests clarity on:
  - What information committee representatives receive, and when.
  - Whether they will be included in the initial brainstorming.
  - Whether liaisons will be involved in the projects from the beginning or only to address the "asks" within the scope of the public announcement, at whatever project stage that might be?
  - What opportunities will there be to communicate with county staff?
- Elwyn will follow up with DES communications staff for examples of what projects and information liaisons would receive and when.

BikeArlington updates:

- MLK Day W&OD Trail Cleanup (Jan. 15)
- Rails-to-Trails documentary screening (Jan. 26)
- Winter Bike to Work Day (Feb. 13)
- Bike to Work Day 2026 scheduled for May 15

Eliot brought to the Committee’s attention the ongoing State Legislative sessions that have just begun — BAC members are encouraged to contact state representatives about bicycle-safety legislation. Eliot offered to share a letter template with Committee members to be posted on the BAC Google Groups webpage.

**Adjourn:**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 pm.

The next BAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 2 at 7:00 pm on Microsoft Teams.