

# **NC PLAN- INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."  
- Mohandas Gandhi

## **Introduction to Aurora Highlands**

### **Description of the neighborhood with map**

Aurora Highlands encompasses an area of approximately 400 acres in the southeast corner of Arlington County, with a population in 2000 of \_\_\_\_\_. Our neighborhood is bordered by the Pentagon and I-395 on the North, Crystal City and National Airport to the east, the Arlington water treatment plant on the south and we share a long border with the adjacent Arlington Ridge neighborhood.

**Insert map**

Once the poor stepsister of the more fashionable North Arlington communities, Aurora Highlands has emerged as an up-and-coming residential neighborhood.

The community now sports amenities that were unheard of in our 1970 plan, like Arlington's only regional shopping mall, it's most luxurious hotels and some of its finest gourmet restaurants.

The proximity to Metro (which was still in the planning stages in 1970) makes Aurora Highlands a desirable location for residents who wish to use public transportation. It's also a desirable destination for visitors who stay in our hotels and for workers who occupy our office spaces.

Easy walking access to Metro means that residents of Aurora Highlands can readily access workplaces and activities throughout the metropolitan area. Our community is a stand-out in the percentage of population that walks to work or to Metro.

Yet there are areas of community life where Aurora Highlands is still striving to meet the standards that all Arlingtonians have come to expect.

Our neighborhood infrastructure has several significant shortcomings, with incomplete sidewalks, inadequate street lighting and deficient street tree cover.

Our residential area is troubled by speeding cut-through traffic in some places and some complex, congested intersections in others.

The influx of young families into the neighborhood has called attention to the fact that we are deficient in providing the caliber of recreational and educational services that residents of Arlington receive in other neighborhoods.

Some facilities and services are clearly inadequate for the twenty-first century:

There is no health-care facility in our community.

There is no hardware store.

There are insufficient small-scale neighborhood parks and playgrounds.

There is no elementary school.

Our community center offers no programs for children.

As residents seeking to conserve and improve our neighborhood, we must sort through an array of overlapping programs in Arlington County which perform many functions.

Do you get a new sidewalk through public works, or the Neighborhood Conservation program, or the walk-to-school program?

Do you get a new street tree from the Urban Forester, or the Arbor Day Foundation, or the NC program?

Does your park get a summer spray feature from a special parks grant, or the dept of Parks and Recreation?

We can articulate our goals but reaching them will require County guidance.

We can articulate our concerns, but resolving them will require County support.

## **Our Neighborhood Conservation Plan**

Aurora Highlands published its Neighborhood Conservation Plan in February 1970, becoming the sixth Arlington neighborhood to have a plan approved.

From the 1970 plan:

"In recent years speculative ownership of some properties has visibly changed the character of the area. The impact of high density development in the Jefferson Davis Corridor has been severe, and the threat of commercial encroachment into the residential area hangs over the head of every homeowner".

Now, as Aurora Highlands approaches its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the neighborhood has applied for designation on the National Register of Historic Places, administered by the National Park Service.

After years of preparation, the community is now ready to publish the first revision of our NC plan in 38 years. Our community is changing, yet many of the issues that affected us in 1970 are still with us in 2008.

## **Conserving our neighborhood -Highlights of Major GOALS**

- Making our community center into the cultural "center" of our community.
- Bringing our infrastructure up to Arlington County standards, especially sidewalks and street lighting.
- Fighting encroachment by development; preserving the predominantly single-family neighborhood.
- Adapting our community to the changing population; making streets safe for pedestrians especially children and providing expanded services for children and families. We want to become a family-friendly neighborhood.
- Working to reverse the environmental deterioration of our neighborhood including controlling noise and air pollution, and reversing the loss of tree canopy.

The Aurora Highlands Civic Association will continue to provide a voice for the neighborhood to address the issues of the day, working with the County government in the coming years to meet a broad range of goals.