

## **Meeting summary for Arl FSS February Meeting (02/12/2025)**

### **Quick recap**

The team expressed concerns regarding the removal of a pedestrian bridge and emphasized the importance of community involvement in decision-making processes, especially concerning safety measures. They explored strategies for engaging with board members of a community group and addressed safety issues at a hazardous intersection, considering potential improvements and the involvement of additional stakeholders. Finally, they discussed the progress of various bills and grants and the potential for collaboration with other community associations to enhance pedestrian safety.

### **Next steps**

- Aaron will draft an initial note requesting a meeting with Arlington County Board members regarding the pedestrian bridge issue.
  - Mike will review and co-sign the meeting request note drafted by Aaron.
  - Aaron will reach out to North Rosslyn Civic Association and Helen regarding their potential involvement in the pedestrian bridge issue.
  - Mike will follow up with the Waycroft Woodlawn community representative about organizing a community walk audit of dangerous intersections.
  - Mike will contact Georgia Tech grad students to connect them with volunteers for the near-miss survey feedback.
  - All members should consider and suggest ideas for future guest speakers.
  - Mike will follow up on potentially inviting Clark Mercer from WMATA as a guest speaker.
  - Ruth will look for near-miss survey posters on ART buses.
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## **Summary**

### **Pedestrian Bridge Removal and Community Involvement**

Ruth expresses concern about the county's decision to remove a pedestrian bridge as part of a park development project. She suggests that instead of trying to reverse the decision, the Civic Association and condo boards should insist on being part of the ongoing design process. Ruth believes this approach will be more productive in influencing the project's outcome, including safety measures. Aaron points out that the county board's decision is based on incorrect information about a site plan expiration, but Ruth maintains that pressuring the board to admit error is unlikely to succeed. The group discusses the possibility of advocating for community involvement in the project's development, with Ruth emphasizing the importance of resident input in Arlington's governance model.

### **Community Involvement and Road Safety**

Ruth and Roberts discussed the significance of community involvement in decision-making processes, particularly regarding a recent design decision. Roberts clarified that although there had been a public engagement process, the community's feedback was ultimately ignored. Ruth suggested that holding individual meetings with County Board members could be an effective way to share their concerns. Mike raised a point about a speed camera bill that had passed in the House and was now progressing through the Senate. He expressed concern that the bill's focus on generating revenue might undermine its effectiveness in improving road safety. The group agreed to bring these issues to the attention of the County Board and to emphasize the importance of pedestrian safety.

### **Addressing Intersection Safety Concerns**

The team discussed the serious dangers of a specific intersection, where a woman lost a leg, a child nearly died, and another person had to be hospitalized. They agreed that the situation was more than unfortunate; it was a potential catastrophe. The conversation also included the role of the board and local civic associations in addressing the issue. The team decided to form a coalition to advocate for changes at the intersection to improve safety, particularly for pedestrians. They emphasized the importance of applying pressure on the board to act.

### **Intersection Safety and Bridge Removal**

In the meeting, Robert, Mike, Ruth, and Ben discussed the safety concerns at a particular intersection and the potential removal of a pedestrian bridge. They agreed that the bridge, while likely safer, might not be the only solution to the problem. They suggested exploring other safety improvements, such as reducing lanes, incorporating bike usage, and widening sidewalks. They also discussed the issue of drivers racing to make lights, which they attributed to the streets being designed to accommodate high motor vehicle capacity. The group decided to use the

bridge removal as a leverage to encourage Arlington County to prioritize traffic beyond just cars and make the streets safer.

### **Engaging Board Members in Private Meetings**

Robert, Ruth, and Mike discussed strategies for engaging with the board members of a community group. They agreed private meetings with board members would be more effective than public shaming. Robert suggested that the board members are well-intentioned but busy and reliant on their staff and that an administrative error might have led to the current issue. Ruth agreed with this assessment and suggested that presenting the issue in a non-threatening way, possibly with pictures and a clear sequence of events, could be effective. They also discussed the possibility of involving Mark Schwartz, the county manager, in these meetings. Mike proposed inviting one or two board members to a social gathering to discuss the issue. The group agreed to work on setting up these private meetings with the board members.

### **Addressing Bridge Project Concerns**

Mike, Roberts, and Ruth discussed strategies for addressing concerns about a bridge project. They agreed to target Susan and Pakis, and to involve community members in the discussion. Roberts expressed concerns about the approach of some involved parties, while Ruth emphasized the importance of a positive attitude and a proactive approach. They also discussed the potential involvement of the North Rosslyn Civic Association and the need for diplomatic residents to join the coalition effort. The conversation ended with Mike leaving the matter in their hands to determine the involvement of additional parties.

### **Addressing Intersection Safety Concerns**

Mike proposed that Helen, Takus, and Susan should join the initial meeting to discuss the safety concerns at a dangerous intersection. He suggested that Aaron should draft the first note, and the group should collectively agree on it before sending it out. Roberts expressed some reservations about involving Helen but agreed to consider it. Mike also mentioned that they are making progress in some areas, but the situation in Richmond remains uncertain. The team agreed to continue working on the issue and to draft a note to be sent out.

### **Bill on Speed Assistance Progress**

Mike discussed the progress of the Bill on speed assistance, which has successfully passed both the House and Senate and is likely to be sent to the governor's desk. He also mentioned the stop sign camera bill, which he believes will not advance significantly, and the speed camera bill, which has passed the House and is set to be discussed in the Senate. Mike expressed concern about certain jurisdictions opposing the speed camera bill due to concerns about where the allocation of the fines collected. Additionally, he mentioned working on a resubmission of a DMV

grant and a grant for the Community Foundation. Lastly, Mike discussed a potential partnership with Woodhaven School, which is currently being explored by Kevin Trickle.

### **Addressing Intersection Safety Concerns**

The team discussed a problematic intersection near the hospital, specifically at the crosswalk between Buchanan and Washington streets. They considered reconnecting with a concerned citizen who had previously raised this issue and suggested organizing a community road audit to identify specific safety concerns. The idea was to present their findings to the Arlington County Board and potentially build relationships with the community and the board. The team also considered the possibility of other nearby intersections facing similar issues.

### **Improving Near Miss Survey and Safety**

Mike led the discussion, focusing on improving the near miss survey and its effectiveness. He mentioned that two Georgia Tech grad students are working on the survey and are looking for feedback from users. Mike also discussed the possibility of inviting Clark Mercer, CEO of Walda, as a guest speaker to discuss pedestrian safety. Robert shared his observations about bus stops in Arlington and Fairfax, highlighting the lack of proper crosswalks and traffic signals. Mike suggested that these issues could be addressed by raising awareness and possibly installing signage. The team also discussed the potential of collaborating with the Waycroft Woodland Community Association. The conversation ended with Mike thanking everyone for their contributions and Robert expressing optimism about setting up his new laptop with a camera by the next month.