

Summary

Project:	Arlington County Biosolids Upgrade
Subject:	Biosolids Advisory Panel
Date:	Thursday, December 04, 2025
Location:	MS Teams
Attendees:	<p>Sandra Borden, Crystal City Civic Association Steve Young, Joint Facilities Advisory Commission Joan McIntyre, Eco Action Arlington Lauren Bailey, Arlington Ridge Civic Association</p> <p>Antron Sutton, Arlington County Water Pollution Control Plant Mary Strawn, Arlington County Water Pollution Control Plant Lisa Racey, Arlington County Water Pollution Control Plant Fasil Haile, Arlington County Water Pollution Control Plant Brian Balchunas, HDR Emily Tuttle, HDR Tucker Cotter, HDR Dan Stromberg, PC Construction Laura Simmers, PC Construction</p>

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. General Updates
3. Open House Recap
4. Odor Control Testing
5. Early Work Package
6. What to Expect During Construction
7. Updated Renderings
8. CIP Update
9. Open Discussion

Welcome and Introductions (Antron Sutton and Emily Tuttle)

Antron Sutton welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Emily Tuttle shared how to use the Teams meeting platform. She also reviewed the meeting agenda.

Emily opened the meeting with introductions of staff from the Water Pollution Control Plant, HDR, and PC Construction, as well as the Biosolids Advisory Panel members.

General Project Updates (Mary Strawn)

Mary Strawn provided an update on project components, including gravity thickeners, the Early Work Package, Main Work Package, and general program management. Mary shared an updated near-term project schedule covering the status of each component until March 2027.

Mary explained that construction planning, final price development, final design, and permitting have been completed for the Early Work Package. Construction is anticipated to begin in December.

Mary explained that the intermediate (65%) design will be submitted by the end of the year for the Main Work Package. The project team has also developed various construction management documents, including the commissioning approach, performance requirements, and plans to maintain plant operations. The project team will review the intermediate design submittal and prepare work packages and pricing for Board approval in late 2026.

Mary explained that the project team has already implemented the Envision plan for the Early Work Package and has begun preparing the documentation needed to secure credits for the full project. The team will register the project for Envision verification, finalize the document collection framework, and start gathering Early Work Package materials.

Open House Recap (Mary Strawn)

Mary Strawn provided a recap of the October 2025 Open House.

The project team hosted around 100 people, with multiple partner booths also providing information to the community about other County initiatives. Tours and activities for guest of all ages were available, including the 'Let It Flow' bean bag toss game, which recently won a NACWA National Environmental Achievement Award.

Feedback during and after the open house was positive, including from families with children too young for standard plant tours during regular operations. Attendees also raised questions about plant odor, potential construction-related noise, and emerging contaminants such as PFAS and microplastics.

Odor Control Testing (Mary Strawn)

Mary Strawn provided an update about the Plant's upcoming odor control testing.

Mary explained that in addition to concerns raised by nearby residents at the open house, odor control was also brought up as a topic for discussion at a recent Aurora Highlands Civic Association meeting.

The County has asked HDR to draft a scope of work to assess onsite odors and determine next steps.

Early Work Package (Dan Stromberg)

Dan Stromberg provided an update on the Early Work Package construction scheduled to begin in December 2025.

Early work will include site preparation, utility and pipe relocations, selective demolition, establishing staging areas, and constructing foundations for the new facilities. Dan also shared a construction schedule extending through Fall 2026, noting that activities will start soon and gradually ramp up over the course of 2026.

What to Expect During Construction (Dan Stromberg)

Dan Stromberg shared the overall project construction schedule through 2031 and outlined the primary community impacts expected during the Early Work Package, which will take place during daytime hours within the Plant's footprint. He noted that noise and vibration monitors are being installed to alert the team if levels approach ordinance thresholds. Dust will be controlled using an on-call vacuum sweeper and a water-based suppression system to protect both workers and the surrounding community.

Traffic impacts are expected to be minimal and limited to construction trucks entering and exiting the Plant. Staff parking will shift to the County's 31st Street lot, ensuring neighborhood parking remains unaffected.

Emily Tuttle shared that refrigerator magnets with project contact information are available for free for panel members to share with their organizations. Panel members can reach out to Emily to request magnets for distribution.

Updated Renderings (Brian Balchunas)

Brian Balchunas shared the updated future site layout along with new renderings developed as the design has progressed. The updated visuals illustrate how the new infrastructure will appear from Eads Street and 31st Street outside the Plant.

Brian noted that the final piping and gas flare infrastructure will likely feature neutral colors rather than the blue and green depicted in the current renderings. Renderings will continue to be updated to be more realistic as the design progresses.

CIP Update (Mary Strawn)

Mary Strawn provided an update on the County's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which is refreshed every two years. She noted that the County is currently in the process of developing the next CIP and evaluating all capital needs for the Plant, including projects beyond the Re-Gen program. The Plant has submitted its draft for internal review.

The next step is for a draft to be submitted to the County Manager. Changes to the Re-Gen program's CIP are anticipated, and the team is assessing how those adjustments will influence the Plant's overall capital plan. Mary also emphasized that tariffs and rising labor costs remain challenges that will affect the overall Re-Gen budget.

Open Discussion

Question	Response
<p>Steve Young: On the odor control point: has the Plant considered using infrared imaging to find fugitive emissions or unexpected plumes?</p>	<p>Brian Balchunas: I'm not aware of infrared imaging being used to identify odor sources at wastewater facilities. I believe the technology is typically applied in the petroleum industry to detect fugitive carbon-based emissions.</p> <p>Infrared tools may become relevant once the Plant begins producing methane gas in the future.</p> <p>For current odor concerns, the team is focused on reviewing and monitoring existing odor-control systems to ensure they are functioning as intended. The Plant will also install fence-line monitors to confirm that their readings align with data from internal monitoring systems or to identify potential fugitive emissions.</p>
<p>Steve Young: Lighting has come up on other projects I've followed as a late breaking issue. Considering the elevated buildings in the new renderings, light escaping through windows could be an issue for neighbors.</p> <p>Also, bird-friendly windows are a standard now that I would encourage. They are inexpensive and reduce the likelihood of birds flying into buildings.</p> <p>Infrastructure security is also a potential concern, especially ensuring that sensitive areas are not highly visible from the street.</p>	<p>Mary Strawn: We are looking into installing screening around the gas equipment adjacent to Eads Road. Existing vegetation along the fence line on the 31st Street side of the Plant already provides a natural screening to infrastructure in that area.</p> <p>Thanks for bringing up potential light pollution and bird-friendly windows. Those are items we haven't really discussed yet but can consider.</p>