



ANCC FOUNDATION Did You Know?



Southside Freeway

An existential threat to the Arlington campus emerged in early 1960 in the form of the proposed Southside Freeway which would have bisected the Arlington campus. The Club got wind of an Arlington County “thoroughfare plan” via various newspaper articles. The subsequent investigation and lobbying efforts, led by of Rear Admiral Paul B. Nibecker, the Planning Committee Chairman, were successful in squelching the plan. To learn more about the Southside Freeway, [CLICK HERE](#).

Southside Freeway

An existential threat to the Arlington campus emerged in early 1960 in the form of the proposed Southside Freeway which would have bisected the Arlington campus. In the late 1950’s there were references to an Arlington County “thoroughfare plan” in various local newspapers. What got the attention of Rear Admiral Paul B. Nibecker, the Planning Committee Chairman, was the mention that this plan included roads that would bisect the Army Navy Country Club’s Arlington campus. The Club sent a letter to the County Planning Commission expressing our concerns and asking for an opportunity to respond at the appropriate time.

In response the Arlington County planning staff provided the Club access to a “book” that described all of the throughfares the County was contemplating to address the anticipated “population explosion through 1980”. Among these proposed thoroughfares was the “Southside Freeway” which would bisect the Arlington campus. The following description of the impact of this thoroughfare on ANCC is from RADM Nibecker’s presentation at the February 16, 1960, Annual Membership meeting:

The particular road we have an interest in is one called the Southside Freeway, and it would be a freeway with approximately a 300-foot-wide right of way, starting down at Route 7 at the south Walter Reed Drive. It comes up Walter Reed Drive across Glebe Road right where we come in, across 18th Street, right across our property, swings down and parallels 15th Street down to Pentagon City area. Another arm swings to the left and goes [to] the other side of the Navy Annex. I will tell you what it would do if it goes through. **It would knock out our practice range and golf shop and at least 12 holes of golf. It would eliminate the entire 11 tennis courts and, not that it means much to us, but it is a historical point, the remains of Fort Richardson.**

In the end it would not only claim a significant part of our facilities but would leave the northern 80 acres of the campus isolated from the remainder of the campus south of the freeway (see the map below) and, looking forward, would have taken the site of the current Clubhouse.

Working in conjunction with the Nauck Citizen's Association, whose overwhelmingly black membership would lose 43 houses to the freeway, the Club lobbied against the freeway at the Arlington County Planning Commission at a February 23, 1960, hearing.

Washington Evening Star on March 1, 1960, reported the result of this effort:

The Arlington County Planning Commission, caught in a crossfire between Negro residents and the Army Navy Country Club, has dropped plans for the controversial Southside freeway.

However, the controversy was not totally put to rest at that time due to the continued efforts of one of the commissioners. In the end things worked out for the Club as reported eight months later by the *Sunday Star*:

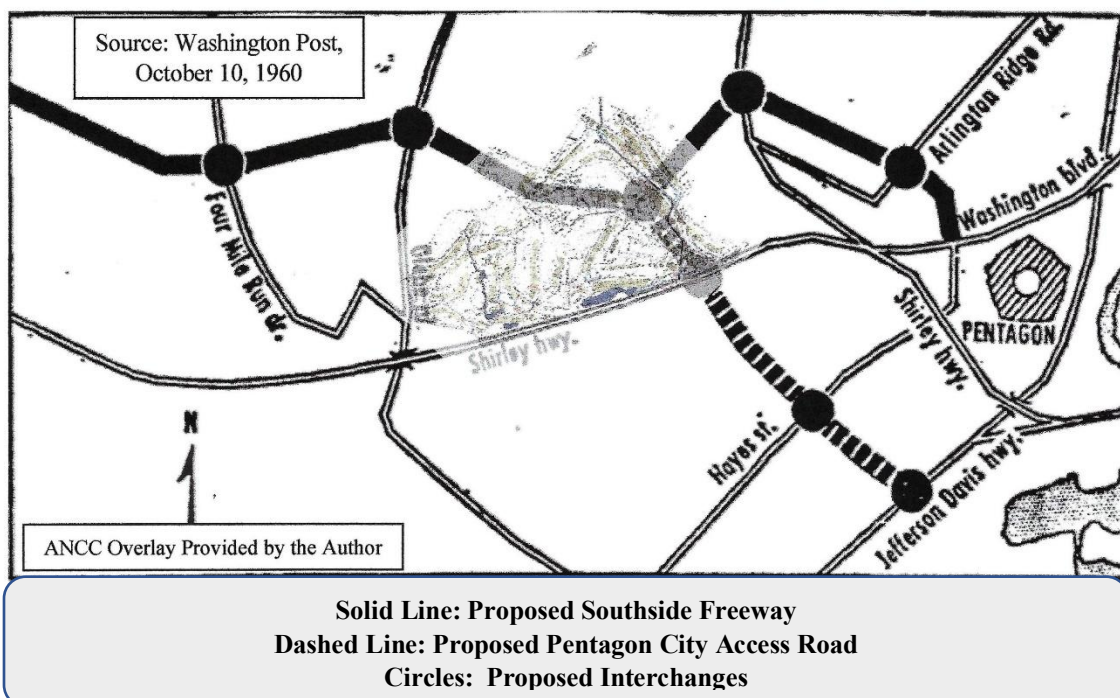
Arlington Board Kills Freeway Plan Army Navy Club Slicing Avoided in Angry Fight

The Arlington County Board yesterday buried a proposal to build a highway through Army Navy Country Club but indicated it may bring it up again in a few years.

The controversial southside freeway plan again fell before a barrage of citizen protests during a hearing in which two board members angrily denounced a campaign by some of its proponents as disgraceful. However, after rejecting the \$7 million thoroughfare for the second time in four months, the board agreed to try to buy a 2.3-acre track to keep open the projected right of way.

Door Left Open

"We're leaving the door open, and we'll be in a better position to make a decision four or five years from now when this thing doubtless comes back to haunt us," Chairman Herbert Brown said.



Proposed Southside Freeway Route with ANCC Overlay

What is not mentioned in the above discussion is the proposed Pentagon City Access Road which starts with an intersection in the vicinity of the Red #4 green and proceeds under the Shirley Highway, leaving Red #5 essentially isolated from the rest of the Club. It is quite possible that the wide Memorial Drive Shirley Highway underpass was the result of a collaboration between Arlington County and the Bureau of Public Roads in anticipation of the approval of the Southside Freeway and the Pentagon City Access Road.