

Ballston Park & Buckingham Commercial Area Planning Study Working Group Charge

September 2026

Background

On May 19, 2026, the Arlington County Board charged the Arlington County Manager and staff to conduct a planning study for Ballston Park and the Buckingham commercial area. The study aims to address expiring affordability commitments, the presence of a Local Historic District (LHD), and County-wide housing, preservation, and planning goals. The study will evaluate a range of preservation and redevelopment scenarios. Additional information on the charge, planning study scope of work, process, and timeline can be found on the [Ballston Park project webpage](#).

To support the planning study, the County Manager will appoint a Working Group to provide input on staff analysis, scenarios, and recommendations including a Policy Framework.

Working Group Charge

The Ballston Park and Buckingham Commercial Area Planning Study Working Group is charged by the County Manager to collaborate with County staff and provide community, commission, resident, business, housing, historic preservation, and planning perspectives throughout the planning study process.

More specifically, the objectives for the Working Group are to:

- Review and provide feedback on technical analyses, community engagement results, and planning concepts developed during the study.
- Seek approaches that balance:
 - Extension of existing housing affordability;
 - Minimization of resident displacement;
 - Preservation of the historic and architectural significance of Buckingham Village;
 - Countywide housing, transportation, environmental, and planning goals; and
 - Financial feasibility and implementation considerations.
- Provide input on potential modifications to Local Historic District boundaries and associated preservation and redevelopment tradeoffs.
- Help identify community priorities, concerns, opportunities, and challenges throughout the planning process.
- Provide input on alternative scenarios, preferred concept(s), and recommendations for a Policy Framework that may guide future planning, historic preservation, housing, and redevelopment decisions within the study area.
- Serve as a consistent advisory body throughout the study process and provide feedback at key project milestones.
- Act as liaisons to their respective groups and commissions, sharing information and gathering feedback for discussion with the Working Group.

Working Group Structure

The Working Group is a limited-term advisory body, consisting of representatives from the groups and commissions listed below. The County Manager may appoint additional members as needed to ensure broad representation and expertise.

- Ballston Park Residents
- Buckingham Commercial Area Businesses
- BU-GATA
- Planning Commission
- Housing Commission
- Tenant-Landlord Commission
- Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB)
- Transportation Commission
- Forestry and Natural Resources Commission
- Park and Recreation Commission
- Disability Advisory Commission
- Economic Development Commission
- Ashton Heights Civic Association
- Buckingham Community Civic Association

Each participating group/commission may designate one primary representative and one alternate representative. The primary representative is the main person designated to represent the group/commission, and the alternate representative is the backup or substitute for the primary representative in the event the primary is not able to participate. The County expects at least one representative from each group or organization to be present at all meetings. Only one representative for each group/commission will be permitted to participate in the Working Group meeting discussions. Representatives are expected to coordinate their participation and provide a single coordinated perspective during Working Group deliberations.

There will be multiple opportunities for other interested audiences to share their input as part of the planning study engagement process.

Working Group Roles and Responsibilities

- Working Group Chair

A member of the Planning Commission will serve as Chair of the Working Group. The Chair will:

- Coordinate with County staff on meeting agendas and schedules.
- Facilitate Working Group meetings.
- Guide discussion and review of study materials.
- Ensure meetings remain focused on the objectives identified in this Charge.

- Working Group Members

The Working Group as a whole will provide feedback to staff on its analysis, scenarios and recommendations that will inform a Policy Framework and ultimately the County Manager's recommendations to the County Board.

Time Commitment

The Working Group will meet a minimum of four times at major project milestones throughout the planning study over the course of a 12-18 month timeline and may meet more frequently as

necessary to support the study schedule. The first kick-off Working Group meeting is anticipated to be scheduled in Fall 2026. The plan is for Working Group meetings to take place before each engagement period with the broader community.

County Staff Support

With guidance from the County Manager, County staff from the Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development (CPHD) and other County departments, as appropriate, will provide support to the Working Group. Staff will coordinate technical analysis, meeting facilitation, communicate findings, opportunities, and issues raised at Working Group meetings with the County Manager and County Board in consultation with the Working Group Chair, and develop study materials and recommendations. In addition to Working Group meetings, County staff will conduct broad community engagement throughout each phase of the planning study.