

**CHARGE ESTABLISHING A PLANNING STUDY FOR BALLSTON PARK AND BUCKINGHAM
COMMERCIAL AREA**
Adopted 5/19/2026

The Arlington County Board hereby charges the Arlington County Manager and staff with conducting a planning study of Ballston Park and the Buckingham Commercial Area informed by the area's historic significance, expiring affordability commitments, and County-wide housing and preservation goals.

Study Purpose

To objectively study and evaluate a full spectrum of preservation and redevelopment options, with the goal of identifying approaches that meaningfully extend housing affordability while protecting the historic and architectural significance of Ballston Park and the Buckingham Commercial Area (referred to as the study area, see Figure 2 for the study area map), both managed by Paradigm Property Management, LLC.

Site Background

Ballston Park is a 512-unit garden-style apartment community within Buckingham Village, about one mile from the Ballston Metro station in Arlington, Virginia. Built as part of a New Deal-era Federal Housing Administration project, the study area was designated historic in 1993 as part of the Buckingham Village Local Historic District (LHD) due to its Garden City planning and national historic

significance, including that it was designed by noted architects Henry Wright, Albert Lueders, and Allan Kamstra.

To preserve its historic character, the LHD currently protects the buildings within this historic district from demolition and certain exterior alterations and requires design review for

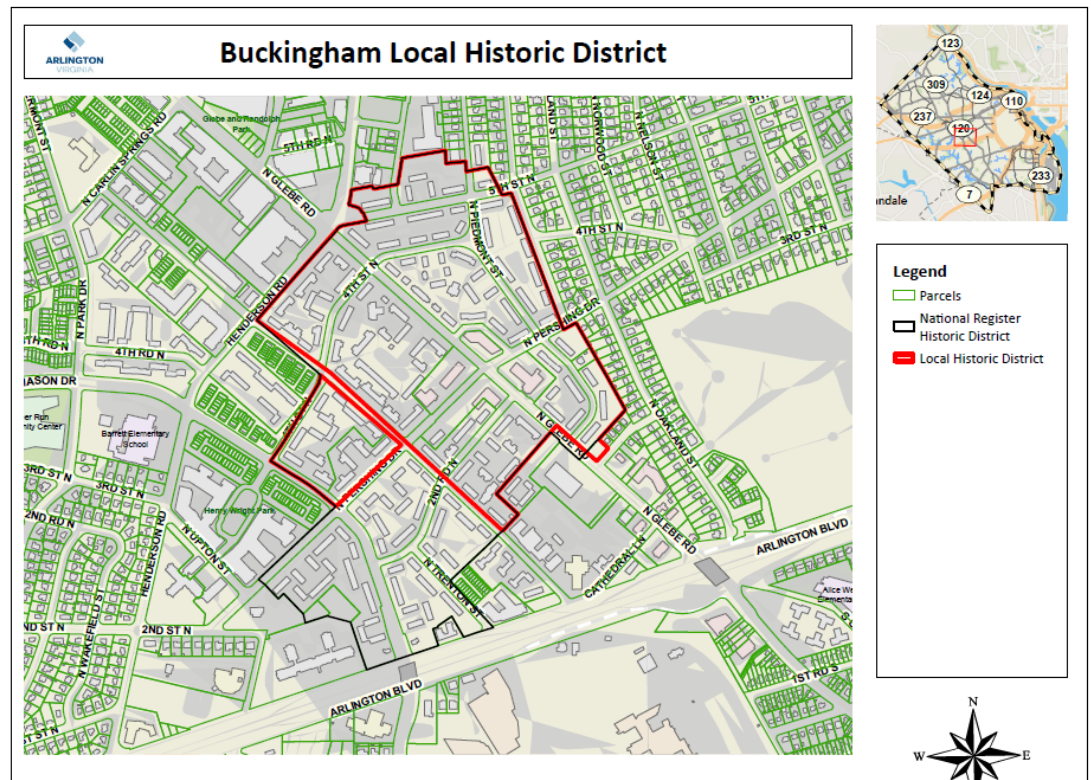


Figure 1 Buckingham Local Historic District Boundary

changes within the historic district.

Figure 1 depicts the Buckingham Village LHD boundaries, which include the Ballston Park site east of North Glebe Road and the Buckingham commercial area south of Glebe Road. Ballston Park is owned by Pershing Drive Associates, LP (managed by Paradigm Property Management, LLC), and the Buckingham Commercial Area is owned by Ballston Retail LLC (also managed by Paradigm Property Management, LLC).

The Ballston Park site was originally acquired in 1996 by Pershing Drive Associates, LP, a limited partnership between Pershing Drive Associates and Villages at Buckingham Housing Corporation (VBHC), an AHC Inc. affiliate, using Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs), historic tax credits, and \$5 million in combined loans from the County and Pershing Drive Associates, LP. As a result, 233 units are income-restricted for households earning up to 60 percent of the area median income (AMI), and 279 units are Market-Rate Affordable (MARK) units, generally serving households earning 55 percent to 70 percent of the AMI.

Under the LIHTC program, administered by the state housing finance agency Virginia Housing, affordability restrictions for the 233 income-restricted units will expire on December 31, 2027. This will be followed by a three-year Decontrol Period, ending in 2030, which will provide additional protections for existing residents as the LIHTC program winds down.

The Decontrol Period includes the following protections:

- a) Tenants living in low-income units before the period begins cannot be required to move out or denied lease renewal unless they seriously or repeatedly violate lease terms.
- b) Rents cannot exceed the maximum allowed under federal affordable housing rules (Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code).
- c) The property owner, Pershing Drive Associates, LP (managed by Paradigm Property Management, LLC), must comply with these requirements while Virginia Housing continues to monitor rents, unit conditions, and tenant protections.

What's at Stake

The convergence of expiring affordability commitments and the site's designation as a Local Historic District creates a complex policy moment that warrants a comprehensive County-led planning study. In addition to the expiration of affordability for the 233 committed affordable LIHTC units, the 279 MARK units at Ballston Park may lose affordability over time without an intentional strategy.

This risk is heightened by the property owner's ability—through an extensive process under §15.7.11 of the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance—to seek demolition of the structures comprising the LHD. If Pershing Drive Associates, LP and Ballston Retail LLC pursue and are successful in the demolition of any or all the buildings within this section of the LHD through this process, the Ballston Park's existing RA8-18 zoning would permit townhouse and multifamily development by right, potentially resulting in substantial loss of affordable housing and historic resources. Pershing Drive Associates, LP and Ballston Retail LLC indicated a commitment to working with Arlington County and the community to evaluate a range of redevelopment options that would extend affordability for residents and balance the County's affordable housing, historic preservation, and planning goals for the study area.

Future Vision and Goals

Any future vision for Ballston Park must be evaluated within the context of existing County-wide housing, historic preservation, and planning goals, including:

- a) Achieving an adequate supply of housing for the community's needs, ensuring that all segments of the community have access to housing and that housing efforts contribute to a sustainable community, as outlined in the Affordable Housing Master Plan.
- b) Prioritizing the preservation of the LHD because the area is protected by the historic preservation overlay as specified in §11.3.1 of the ACZO. These local historic buildings, sites, and neighborhoods enhance the understanding of Arlington's history, architectural character, and cultural heritage.
- c) Elevating and incorporating smart growth and thoughtful urban design, especially in transit-accessible areas, as the population continues to grow.

While this Charge is primarily motivated by expiring affordability at the Ballston Park, a study of the entire study area including the Buckingham Commercial Area will allow the County and Pershing Drive Associates, LP and Ballston Retail LLC to explore how to balance these goals to identify the most appropriate use and physical form.

Proposed Charge

The County Board directs the County Manager and staff to conduct a planning study of the study area, as shown in Figure 2 in yellow and blue, and present a spectrum of redevelopment and preservation options to the County Board. The study should:

- Incorporate robust and inclusive community engagement, including with current Ballston Park residents and impacted business owners, in coordination with the property owners, Pershing Drive Associates, LP and Ballston Retail LLC, and property managers Paradigm Property Management, LLC.
- Evaluate and compare options that balance extending affordability commitments for Ballston Park units, continuing to preserve the historic and architectural character of the LHD, and achieving County-wide goals.
- Explore potential modifications to the LHD boundaries if necessary to allow for a mix of historic preservation and redevelopment opportunities at the Ballston Park site.
- Prioritize equity for existing residents and the preservation of at-risk housing affordability.
- Provide preferred scenario(s) and recommendations for a Policy Framework to guide future development for County Board consideration.

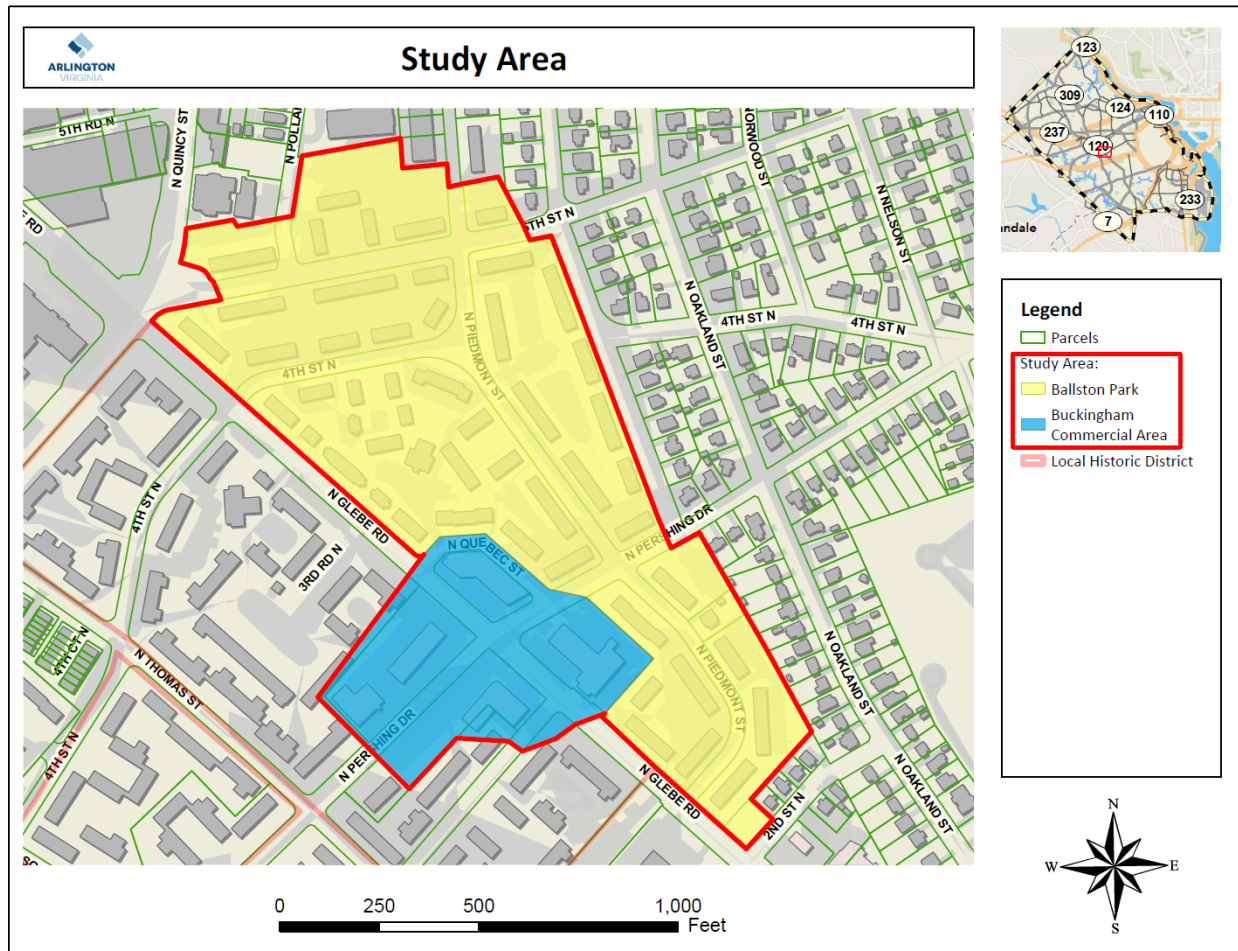


Figure 2 Study Site Area in Yellow (Ballston Park) with an underlying zoning of RA8-18, and a GLUP designation of Low-Medium Residential and Blue (Commercial) with an underlying zoning of C-2, and a GLUP designation of Service Commercial.

The County Board intends that this study objectively evaluates a spectrum of preservation and redevelopment options, with the goal of identifying approaches that meaningfully extend housing affordability while protecting the historic and architectural significance of the site. The study will not presume a specific development outcome.

Tasks and Methodology

A. Scenario Development and Policy Framework

Develop a spectrum of scenarios and a Policy Framework that address the County's affordable housing, historic preservation, and planning goals, based on study area-specific priorities for the study area such as:

- a) Retention of as many of the existing committed affordable and MARK units currently on the property as feasible, expanding affordability options when financially feasible based on study outcomes and recommendations. This includes avoiding as much resident

displacement as possible.

- b) Respect, to the greatest degree possible, the overall importance and physical integrity of the site's historic and cultural resources. This approach is reinforced by the existing LHD, the site's listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and its ranking of Essential in the Historic Resources Inventory.
- c) Consideration of land uses and density; building form/scale, height, and transitions; urban design; public space and open areas; transportation, connectivity and access, and parking; cultural resources; and tree canopy, environmental and sustainable features that support the physical demands of the site, support cohesiveness with surrounding neighborhoods, and reinforce the County's high-level planning and development policies in the Comprehensive Plan.
- d) Consideration and study of the tradeoffs between modifying the scope of an LHD boundary and meeting affordable housing priorities.

B. Create and Enact an Engagement Framework for the Study

Conduct community engagement by exploring potential land use changes to the study area, guided by the overall housing, historic preservation, and planning goals, while balancing financial feasibility:

Key audiences may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Ballston Park residents
- BU-GATA
- Paradigm Property Management, LLC
- Pershing Drive Associates, LP
- Ballston Retail LLC
- Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board
- Housing Commission
- Planning Commission
- Transportation Commission
- Ashton Heights and Buckingham Civic Associations
- Affordable Homes and Communities
- Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing Organizations
- Disability Advisory Commission
- Forestry and Natural Resources Commission
- Tenant-landlord Commission
- Broader Arlington community and County Departments

Broad and equitable community engagement will help the County identify affordable housing, historic preservation, and planning priorities for the future vision of the study area. The community will review and share input on development scenarios in the context of the goals set out in this Charge.

C. Provide ongoing support for and communication with existing Ballston Park residents.

Staff will provide ongoing communication and support to existing Ballston Park residents. This includes access to information about the study, County resources, and assistance in understanding how potential outcomes may affect housing options. Recognizing their critical perspective, residents will also have opportunities to share input on existing conditions, needs, and desired amenities.

D. Prepare deliverables for County Board Direction and Consideration

- a) Develop and present a range of redevelopment and preservation scenarios to the County Board.
- b) If directed, provide a Policy Framework report that would guide the future of the study area through a vision and recommendations that balance affordability, historic preservation, planning objectives, and financial feasibility.

Key Milestones and Timelines

Pre-Kickoff: May 2026 to September 2026

- CPHD Housing and Communications staff will continue to work with Ballston Park residents, impacted businesses, and Pershing Drive Associates, LP and Ballston Retail LLC to communicate next steps and answer questions.
- Housing staff will work with Pershing Drive Associates, LP and Ballston Retail LLC to scope out financial feasibility scenarios.
- Planning and Communications staff will prepare study materials, conduct initial analysis, and create a communications and engagement plan for study kick-off.
- Historic Preservation Program (HPP) staff will utilize a consultant to evaluate the historic and architectural significance of Ballston Park to prioritize areas that best maintain character-defining aspects of the site and ensure compatibility throughout the site within each scenario.

Kick-off: September 2026

Study Phase: September 2026 – Fall 2027

Milestones listed below are identified generally to arrive at the preferred scenario and Policy Framework deliverables, subject to further refinement as more detailed scoping occurs and development of a communication and engagement plan is prepared.

1. Site Orientation and Community Visioning and Priorities
 - a) Housing Affordability and Financial Feasibility Analysis
 - b) Historic Preservation
 - c) Public Realm: Multi-Modal Transportation Network & Parking
 - d) Public Realm: Public Spaces and Natural Areas/Conservation
 - e) Urban Design: Building Heights/Form/Transitions & Other Guidance
2. Scenarios & Analysis
 - a) Scenarios Testing & Analysis

- b) Forming a Draft Vision
- 3. Scenario Refinement and Preferred Scenario(s) Selection
- 4. County Board Input and Direction
- 5. Policy Framework Recommendations