

# BALLSTON BID STRATEGIC PLAN

2022



## ABOUT THE BALLSTON BID

The Ballston Business Improvement District, or BID, is a 25-block area within the Ballston neighborhood comprised of both commercial and residential properties. The BID is funded by an assessment paid by commercial office and retail property owners within the BID boundaries. The assessment makes up the bulk of the Ballston BID budget, which in turn funds various projects to maintain Ballston as an ideal destination to work, shop, learn, live, and play.

## OUR VISION

We envision Ballston as one of the region's most exciting places for thriving business activity, a place where employers and workers choose to patronize local retailers and restaurants, and where their needs and expectations for a vibrant work environment are met and exceeded.

## OUR MISSION

The BID's Mission is to ensure Ballston develops and improves upon its status as a premier business district location where top companies and talent choose to locate and grow through a combination of public activation, marketing, and targeted economic development efforts in partnership with key public and private stakeholders.

## A LETTER FROM THE BOARD

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Dear Partners and Stakeholders,

Strategic planning in times of uncertainty can be challenging. The pandemic has created enormous obstacles for those who manage and support successful urban places. Unfortunately, there is no simple solution to many of the global trends faced by downtown districts. What we do know is that the best strategic plans are a heady mix of vision, ambition, and reality. They inspire both action and resources from partners and collaborators.

This plan acknowledges and describes the challenges we are facing, while offering a set of strategies that are simultaneously tactical and ambitious. While some of these elements can be tackled with existing resources, others may require additional budget or staffing that is unavailable at this time. However, as a Board, we see this strategy as a roadmap that can be implemented in phases over the coming years as resources and partnership opportunities allow. On behalf of the Ballston BID, we look forward to embracing these challenges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Simon Carney", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Simon Carney  
President  
Brookfield Property Partners  
Senior Vice President,  
Regional Counsel

# **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

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The 2022 Strategic Plan defines a clear path forward for the Ballston Business Improvement District, with an emphasis on the next 3-5 years. This is the fourth Strategic Plan in the organization's history, following three previous Strategic Plans in 2012, 2015, and 2018. Together with the Ballston BID's leadership, staff, and stakeholders, this plan represents a recalibration of the BID's mission and direction with an improved value proposition and a distinct focus on commercial BID rate payers. The BID's new mission statement is grounded firmly in the organization's core objective - to improve the business environment for employers and employees within the district.

Ballston has, in many ways, weathered the pandemic better than many other traditional submarkets. This is due, in large part, to the balanced customer base in Ballston, where the ratio of resident-to-employees is nearly 1:1. While Central Business Districts across the country have struggled to retain customers, Ballston businesses have benefited from a growing young, well-educated, and high-earning resident base, with an average age of 33 and average household income of \$148,500. Furthermore, the district's transit-oriented, compact development pattern provides for a year-round walkable and accessible destination. Notwithstanding these factors, the ramifications of a slow return-to-work environment, together with a permanent change in work habits, will pose significant challenges for the district.

This Plan is a unique opportunity to acknowledge these challenges and develop solutions and strategies to confront them. As we look towards the future, and the opportunities ahead, we have identified a comprehensive set of strategies that will future-proof Ballston and ensure that it maintains a strong competitive edge as a great place for both commercial and business activity.

# **STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

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In 2022 DC-based Streetsense, the “Consultant Team”, was engaged to lead a strategic planning process. The process included the following outreach and research intended to identify market opportunities and strategies to support a thriving business district.

### Individual Interviews

Approximately 30 individual interviews were conducted with BID staff, board members, property owners, business owners, real estate industry professionals, and Arlington County Economic Development staff to provide insight into the key areas of weaknesses and opportunity, including the organization itself, the physical conditions of the district, the overall business environment, and market conditions.

### Market Scan (Office & Retail)

A market scan was conducted which comprised an assessment of the office market, retail real estate market, and demographics of the local work force to assess the impact of COVID on return-to-office statistics.

The findings from the analysis were presented to the Executive Committee for feedback in early May 2022. In early June 2022, the board participated in a review and discussion of the findings and offered direction for final implementation recommendations. Following the workshop, the Consultant Team prepared a matrix of project strategies that were reviewed by the Executive Committee and informed the final plan outlined here.



# **OVERVIEW OF DIAGNOSTIC FINDINGS**

## OVERVIEW OF DIAGNOSTIC FINDINGS

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*An overview of diagnostic findings offers the reader insight into key findings and market conditions that inform the tactics and strategies outlined in the final Plan.*

Ballston is an important neighborhood and office market destination in the Northern Virginia region, contributing to the region's overall economic health and offering one of the most robust downtown environments outside of Washington D.C. Despite this success as a growing mixed-use community, BID revenue has been on the decline owing to a variety of factors. First and foremost, the BID is funded solely by commercial office property assessments. Commercial residential (multi-family) properties may contribute, but only on a voluntary basis. Additionally, the district has witnessed a decline in the value of office buildings for several reasons, including lower demand, increased regional competition, decreased federal contracting, and the growth in work-from-home. Current and anticipated office-to-residential conversions may further result in additional decline in BID revenue in the coming years.

In addition to revenue generated by obligatory assessments, many BIDs also rely on donations and sponsorships to supplement assessment revenue. Unfortunately, owing in part to the pandemic, the Ballston BID has seen a decline in supplemental revenue from both events and in-kind donations. The Taste of Arlington, a popular regional event, was discontinued in favor of more neighborhood-focused events and The BallstonConnect club, a successful sponsorship program, was also paused during the pandemic. **Unless there is a BID expansion which adds commercial residential properties to the assessment role, the portion of the BID budget generated through assessments will likely continue to decline.**

It should be noted that other BIDs in the region, notably National Landing and the Rosslyn BID, assess commercial residential properties and therefore have more robust budgets (explored later in this report) which allows for greater programming that additionally meets the needs of residents and residential property owners.



## Internal Analysis

### Administrative Capacity

The Ballston BID's current staff of three lead a set of programs with an emphasis on marketing and place-based activation of targeted areas within the district. During the pandemic, these efforts grew to provide additional support for local businesses as they attempted to weather the loss of local office workers. Additionally, the BID has historically led regular engagement activities with stakeholders, including one-on-one meetings with partners at Arlington County and local divisions, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Small Business Division, the Arlington County Economic Development Business Investment Group, and the Cultural Affairs Division, to support collaboration and coordination. Additionally, a bi-monthly newsletter is distributed to a mailing list of over 11,000 individuals.

## External Analysis

### Physical Environment

Overall, Ballston's public realm is in very good condition. East of Glebe and South of Fairfax, the district is highly walkable and features strong wayfinding and median beautification efforts that improve the district's "sense of place". The diagnostic identified opportunities to raise the awareness of unique pedestrian pathways, including additional street furniture and wayfinding, particularly on Wilson Blvd.

One of the most significant issues impeding accessibility is the traffic volumes and scale of Fairfax Drive and Glebe Road. Crossing these streets to patronize the bulk of businesses west of Glebe Road is challenging. There is potential to expand amenities for workers and residents, especially those working or living on the west side of the neighborhood through improved bike facilities and the construction of the approved gateway improvements at the Metro station west entrance, which remains a BID priority.

### Business Environment and Market Conditions

When comparing the office, retail, and residential environments in Ballston, residential is dominating the market with more than a third of residential stock built in the last decade and continued growth in office-to-residential conversions. Ballston's proximity to major employment centers (Tyson's and Washington D.C.) is a draw for high-income renters. Because of this, rents continue to rise with 1-bedroom rents in excess of \$2,500 for four to five-star buildings (11.7% growth over previous year) and a 90% occupancy rate among residential properties. The strength of the residential market is a powerful differentiator in Ballston, particularly as it relates to other submarkets in the DC area.

Office and retail remain weak and challenged as Ballston recovers from the pandemic, mainly due to major tenants adopting hybrid return-to-office strategies. With fewer workers in Ballston during the day, Ballston Quarter and other retail properties are seeing higher vacancy rates for traditional retail uses. Ballston Quarter is approaching full lease-up but with a line-up of non-traditional retail tenants such as a 25,000 SF church and a 40,000 SF medical center.



## Competitive District Analysis

Ballston is part of a competitive Northern Virginia submarket which includes Tysons, Reston, and the entire DC region. The Consultant Team identified two nearby Business Improvement Districts, Rosslyn BID and Crystal City/National Landing BID, for points of comparison because they share similar mixed-use characteristics and are often in direct competition for tenants.

	BALLSTON	CRYSTAL CITY/NATIONAL LANDING	ROSSLYN
TOTAL BUSINESSES	942	1,389	1,090
TOTAL EMPLOYEES	20,000	26,000	21,000
TOTAL RETAIL BIZ	114	415	125
TOTAL RESIDENTS	15,000	27,000	15,000
EMPLOYEE:RESIDENT RATIO	1.4:1	1:1	1.35:1
TOTAL EVENTS/YEAR	200	300	120

*\*\*Pre-COVID*

According to CoStar, Ballston's direct office vacancy rate in Q2 2022 ranges from 22.4% to 27.4%. In comparison, vacancy rates across the Northern Virginia submarkets range between 21.5% to 23%.



2021 ANNUAL REPORTS	BALLSTON	ROSSLYN	CRYSTAL CITY/NATIONAL LANDING
COUNTY TAX ASSESSMENT FUNDS	1,569,935	3,922,300	4,527,000
COUNTY RETAINED FUNDS	—	131,100	—
INTEREST AND OTHER INCOME	732	13,000	50,000
PROGRAM REVENUE	21,718	—	—
MEMBERSHIP DUES	65	—	—
TOTAL	1,592,450	4,066,400	4,577,000
RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT	NO	YES	YES
# OF BLOCKS	25	17	60
ACRES	118	73	440
SERVICE AREA SF (UNOFFICIAL ESTIMATE)	5,140,080	3,179,880	19,166,400
ASSESSMENT OF PSF OF SERVICE AREA	0.31	1.23	0.24

### Comparative Analysis

Rosslyn and Ballston share significant similarities in terms of the number of businesses, employees, and residents served. Despite these similarities, the Rosslyn BID has an assessment 2.5x greater than that of the Ballston BID, enabling the Rosslyn BID to support more robust activation and programming, including branded ambassadors who are highly visible uniformed workers within the district. The disparity is further highlighted by the fact that for every square foot within the BID, Ballston has .31 cents available for service delivery in comparison to Rosslyn, which has \$1.23 available for service delivery. These additional services and amenities put Ballston at a significant competitive disadvantage.

Additionally, the budgets for both Rosslyn and Crystal City/National Landing are bolstered by the inclusion of commercial residential property owner assessments. Unfortunately, the Ballston BID's efforts to expand assessments to commercial residential property owners have been unsuccessful to date.

While the Ballston BID does not assess commercial residential properties, and the long-term trend towards declining revenue remains an issue of concern, we do not believe that this is an insurmountable impediment to successful and impactful BID activity.

The Consultant Team also conducted an analysis of BIDs of similar sizes and budgets to offer the Board additional insight into how a reallocation of their existing budget might be accomplished. Comparisons were made with three competitive sets. The Downtown Ithaca Alliance was selected because the organization has a budget of similar size and has developed programming with a strong emphasis on economic development initiatives.

New York City BIDs were also used because business districts in New York, much like Ballston, are also facing many of the same pandemic-related challenges. Moreover, the availability of a robust and diverse data set with detailed budget information is unavailable anywhere else in the nation. The Consultant Team selected New York City BIDs with budgets between \$500k - \$1 million and between \$1 million and \$2.5 million, given the fact that Ballston BID's budget could reasonably be compared against both smaller and slightly larger BIDs.

While differences in budget categorization make direct comparisons difficult (notably the fact that some BIDs allocate staff salaries and benefits to program areas, as in New York and Ballston) there are a number of insights to be gleaned from a comparison of both staffing and budgets.

With respect to staffing, the Ithaca BID depends heavily on its staff of ten to support economic development services and event coordination. New York City BIDs also rely heavily on staffing to support service delivery. In contrast, the Ballston BID has a staff of three currently focused on programmatic activities including community events, marketing & promotion, beautification efforts and economic development.

With respect to budget allocations, the Ballston BID allocates robust resources towards a host of beautification efforts that improve the experience for district employees and visitors, including but not limited public art, Wi-Fi, and landscaping. New York BIDs with budgets of similar size, on the other hand, allocate more of their budgets towards basic sanitation and public safety. In most cases an outside vendor is used for this purpose.

CATEGORIES	ITHACA	BALLSTON	AVG. NYC BID (500K-1M)	AVG. NYC BID (1M-2.5M)
SANITATION	—	—	\$233,901	\$448,539
PUBLIC SAFETY	—	—	\$58,317	\$399,484
COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES	\$170,000	\$276,939	\$62,474	\$164,377
MARKETING & PROMOTION	\$110,300	\$338,197	—	—
BEAUTIFICATION	\$194,500	\$479,837	\$50,609	\$86,848
MANAGEMENT & GENERAL TRANSPORTATION	\$874,069 \$50,000	\$383,052 \$16,195	\$283,383	\$471,336
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	\$79,700	\$38,218	—	—
TOTAL	\$1,478,569	\$1,532,438	\$688,684	\$1,122,045

*Note: In NYC and Ballston, staffing allocations are often budgeted under individual programs rather than under "Management and General". Ballston BID allocates staff salaries and benefits amongst all program categories.*

*Source: NYC Business Improvement District Trends Report FY21,  
Ballston BID Budget 2019, Downtown Ithaca Alliance Budget 2021*

## Stakeholder Feedback






Approximately 30 individual interviews with Board members and local stakeholders helped identify a number of shared themes and directives, which included the following:

1. A need to **shift direction and narrow the focus on commercial rate payers**. This includes expanding relationships with businesses and office tenants and supporting activity that makes Ballston a premier commercial district in the region.
2. A desire to continue to **offer enhanced activation with a focus on activities that align with the needs of businesses and commercial tenants**. When activations are residential in focus, these should only be supported by sponsorship.
3. A focus on **encouraging people back to the office and creating an environment where workers want to return**. This includes working closely with commercial tenants and focusing on interventions that turn the public realm and the business offerings into a valuable and robust worker amenity.
4. In coordination with Arlington County and Arlington Economic Development, **serve as a more active economic development intermediary and source of district level information**. This includes a focus on telling a market-informed story of Ballston's assets and serving the commercial brokerage community more effectively.

# **STRATEGIC PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

## STRATEGIC PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

At-a-Glance summary of the Strategic Plan Vision, Mission, Strategies and Actions.

<b>VISION</b>	We envision Ballston as one of the region's most exciting places for thriving business activity, a place where employers and workers choose to patronize local retailers and restaurants, and where their needs and expectations for a vibrant work environment are met and exceeded.				
<b>MISSION</b>	The BID's Mission is to ensure Ballston develops and improves upon its status as a premier business district location where top companies and talent choose to locate and grow through a combination of public activation, marketing, and targeted economic development in partnership with key public and private stakeholders.				
	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL			
	 <b>1. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE</b>	 <b>2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	 <b>3. PLACEMAKING</b>	 <b>4. ADVOCACY</b>	 <b>5. OUTREACH</b>
<b>STRATEGIES</b>	<i>Align staff, skill sets and organizational structure with vision and mission</i>	<i>Support targeted economic development &amp; recruitment efforts</i>	<i>Advance the amenitization and activation of the public realm</i>	<i>Continue advocacy that helps advance important initiatives, policies and investments</i>	<i>Hone and elevate the BID's outreach &amp; messaging to companies and employees</i>
<b>ACTIONS</b>	1.1 Expand and diversify board members	2.1 Support Tenant Recruitment	3.1 Turn public space into an amenity for employers and employees	4.1 Continue advocacy for improvements to the public realm	5.1 Build staff outreach capacity
	1.2 Improve board accountability	2.2 Re-organize and update BID website to include a focus on commercial broker/tenant audience	3.2 Enhance walkable connections	4.2 Continue to advocate for zoning/regulatory flexibility as Real Estate market fluctuates	5.2 Develop tools that raise awareness of the BID among new entrants into market
	1.3 Continue to use creative methods for contributions and sponsorship				



## 1. Organizational Structure

As the Ballston BID works to maintain and/or upgrade its service offerings in light of declining revenue, the BID's focus will be on improving engagement with Board members, identifying and pursuing new revenue streams, and building staff capacity to support a strong pivot towards economic development strategies that focus on the companies and their employees.

### ACTION 1.1

#### EXPAND AND DIVERSIFY BOARD MEMBERS

<b>1.1.1 ACTION</b>	Continue to expand board members to include major office tenants, retail tenants selling various products, and restaurant tenants
<b>PARTNER</b>	Board Members
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	New: Board Engagement Committee
<b>TIMING</b>	Immediate (1 year)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$ - Below \$50K

<b>1.1.2 ACTION</b>	Feature board members in BID PR efforts to highlight their contributions to Ballston and the business community
<b>PARTNER</b>	Board Members
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	New: Board Engagement Committee
<b>TIMING</b>	Immediate (1 year)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$ - Below \$50K

### ACTION 1.2

#### IMPROVE BOARD ACCOUNTABILITY

<b>1.2.1 ACTION</b>	Develop a written and agreed upon set of guidelines and expectations that outline board responsibilities and commitments, including attendance at a minimum number of board meetings, participation in committees, etc.
<b>PARTNER</b>	Board Members
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Executive Committee
<b>TIMING</b>	Immediate (1 year)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$ - Below \$50K

<b>1.2.2 ACTION</b>	Add additional standing committees focused on Business Engagement and an ad hoc committee on Board Engagement. <i>(Current Existing Committees include: Finance, Strategic Planning, Marketing and Branding, Placemaking, Retail, and Property Managers Group).</i>
<b>PARTNER</b>	Board Members
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Executive Committee
<b>TIMING</b>	Immediate (1 year)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$ - Below \$50K

**ACTION 1.3****CONTINUE TO USE CREATIVE METHODS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS AND SPONSORSHIP**

<b>1.3.1 ACTION</b>	Continue to use non-assessment revenue streams, including bundled sponsorship opportunities or 1-on-1 multi-year agreements
<b>PARTNER</b>	Board Members
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Marketing & Branding
<b>TIMING</b>	Short Term (1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$\$\$ - Above \$150K

<b>1.3.2 ACTION</b>	Connect residential property owner sponsorship to activation of public space (Welburn Square, Wilson Blvd., and the Ellipse)
<b>PARTNER</b>	Board Members
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Marketing & Branding
<b>TIMING</b>	Short Term (1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$\$\$ - Above \$150K

<b>1.3.3 ACTION</b>	Continue to engage with commercial residential property owners on a bi-annual basis to explore partnership and sponsorships
<b>PARTNER</b>	Residential Property Owners
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Finance
<b>TIMING</b>	Long Term (3+ years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$ - Below \$50K


**2. Economic Development**

The Plan envisions a pivot towards economic development with a focus on the needs of commercial tenants and the employees they serve. The Ballston BID aims to serve as the convener, local expert, and cheerleader for the district, complimenting existing efforts by the County to fill any gaps in recruitment, service delivery, and needs of both prospects and tenants.

**ACTION 2.1****SUPPORT TENANT RECRUITMENT**

<b>2.1.1 ACTION</b>	In coordination with Arlington County Economic Development, conduct an assessment of gaps in current economic development service delivery mechanisms to inform what activities are needed and where the Ballston BID should focus its complimentary efforts. This might include a focus on enhanced district marketing tools, smaller businesses, primary data collection, case management support, etc.
<b>PARTNER</b>	Arlington Economic Development
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	New: Economic Development
<b>TIMING</b>	Short Term (1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$\$ - Between \$50k - \$150k

<b>2.1.2 ACTION</b>	Assess staff skill set and build staff business engagement proficiency to create and grow touchpoints with businesses. Refer businesses to AED for knowledge of zoning, overlays, parking, entitlement, incentives, etc.
<b>PARTNER</b>	—
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	New: Economic Development
<b>TIMING</b>	Short Term (1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$\$ - Between \$50k - \$150k

<b>2.1.3 ACTION</b>	Develop enhanced broker engagement strategy through 1-on-1 meetings, quarterly round tables, an industry newsletter, and targeted events
<b>PARTNER</b>	Brokers, Commercial Real Estate Industry
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	New: Economic Development
<b>TIMING</b>	Immediate (1 year)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$ - Below \$50k

<b>2.1.4 ACTION</b>	In partnership with Arlington Economic Development, support current Economic Development re-branding and website, including multi-media tools (video, photography) that market the Ballston sub-market.
<b>PARTNER</b>	Board Members
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	New: Economic Development + Marketing & Branding
<b>TIMING</b>	Short Term (1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$ - Below \$50k

<b>2.1.5 ACTION</b>	Prepare a Ballston amenity marketing deck for easy distribution and download to showcase local market assets and information.
<b>PARTNER</b>	—
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	New: Economic Development
<b>TIMING</b>	Short Term (1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$ - Below \$50k

<b>2.1.6 ACTION</b>	Engage with Arlington Economic Development and determine how to improve collaboration. Meet with County Economic Development partners at least quarterly to discuss leads and opportunities for business outreach to support AED recruitment efforts.
<b>PARTNER</b>	County
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	New: Economic Development
<b>TIMING</b>	Short Term (1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$ - Below \$50k

**ACTION 2.2****RE-ORGANIZE AND UPDATE BID WEBSITE TO INCLUDE A FOCUS ON COMMERCIAL BROKER/TENANT AUDIENCE**

<b>2.2.1 ACTION</b>	Improve website to focus on commercial/broker audience, including local commercial property showcase/case study highlights to celebrate tenancing & property development successes
<b>PARTNER</b>	New: Economic Development
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	New: Economic Development + Marketing & Branding
<b>TIMING</b>	Short Term (1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$\$ - Between \$50k - \$150k

<b>2.2.2 ACTION</b>	Establish an on-line resource hub on labor force and other market data, including updated district demographics, employment data, return to work metrics, traffic and pedestrian counts, and market trends
<b>PARTNER</b>	Brokers, Commercial Real Estate Industry
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	New: Economic Development
<b>TIMING</b>	Short Term (1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$\$ - Below \$50k - \$150k

**3. Placemaking**

The BID currently has a strong set of programs aimed at activating and improving the public realm. The Strategic Plan envisions the refinement of programs that meet the needs of the workforce and commercial tenants, particularly during working hours. Efforts also include collaboration with public entities to encourage and support traditional investments in the public realm over time.

**ACTION 3.1****TURN PUBLIC SPACE INTO AN AMENITY FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES**

<b>3.1.1 ACTION</b>	Continue outreach and gather feedback from employers and employees through surveys and focus groups to further refine resources spent on activation and determine the success of current efforts to support mid-course corrections and/or the termination of less impactful events.
<b>PARTNER</b>	Employers
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Marketing
<b>TIMING</b>	Short Term (1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$ - Below \$50K

<b>3.1.2 ACTION</b>	Continue expansion of and promote awareness of Public Wi-Fi (currently covers 70% of BID - currently working to cover 90%) and working spaces. This might include temporary signs (A-Frame or other) in areas where co-working is encouraged. Particular attention might be given to The Ellipse.
<b>PARTNER</b>	Board Members
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Marketing
<b>TIMING</b>	Short Term (1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$-\$\$ - Below \$50k or Between \$50k - \$150k

<b>3.1.3 ACTION</b>	Explore options to create spaces for outdoor collaboration, meetings, and co-working, including the addition of movable chairs and tables
<b>PARTNER</b>	—
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Placemaking
<b>TIMING</b>	Immediate (1 year)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$-\$\$\$ - Highly dependent on selected intervention

### ACTION 3.2

### ENHANCE WALKABLE CONNECTIONS

<b>3.2.1 ACTION</b>	Improve the mid-block crossing at N Vermont Street and the Westin to further improve visibility and usage of a pedestrian path through The Ellipse and Welburn Square. This might include an upgraded pedestrian refuge, pedestrian crossing signage (aka R1-6 signs), raised crosswalks and other creative, low-cost crosswalk art (that could also reinforce district branding)
<b>PARTNER</b>	Arlington Department of Community, Planning, Housing and Development; Virginia Department of Transportation
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Placemaking
<b>TIMING</b>	Short Term (1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$\$\$ - Above \$150K
<b>CASE STUDY</b>	National Landing BID is proposing Route 1 pedestrian enhancements that are currently under consideration by VDOT. These should be tracked and replicated if possible - this area is on private property

<b>3.2.2 ACTION</b>	Continue to advocate for and work with public sector partners on targeted placemaking and pedestrian enhancements along North Glebe Road to improve East/West connectivity, ability to cross, and overall walkability
<b>PARTNER</b>	Arlington Department of Community, Planning, Housing and Development; Virginia Department of Transportation
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Placemaking
<b>TIMING</b>	Long Term (3+ years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$\$\$ - Above \$150K



#### 4. Advocacy

BIDs are mechanisms that offer property owners a powerful voice for advocacy, and the Strategic Plan envisions the Ballston BID claiming its rightful role as the most significant intermediary representing commercial property owners in the area. The BID will continue to work closely with partners to encourage new investment and ensure that the existing investments, policies, and programs led by public, private, and non-profit sector partners are aligned with the needs of its core constituency.

##### ACTION 4.1

##### CONTINUE ADVOCACY FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PUBLIC REALM

<b>4.1.1 ACTION</b>	Continue to participate in and support advocacy efforts that encourage the implementation of the Ballston West Metro Entrance
<b>PARTNER</b>	WMATA
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Placemaking
<b>TIMING</b>	Immediate/Short Term (1 year or 1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$ - Below \$50K

<b>4.1.2 ACTION</b>	Support continued advocacy efforts for alternative funding sources of gateway improvements as outlined in the Ballston BID Placemaking Plan
<b>PARTNER</b>	—
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Placemaking
<b>TIMING</b>	Long Term (3+ years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$ - Below \$50K

##### ACTION 4.2

##### CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE FOR ZONING/REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY AS REAL ESTATE MARKET FLUCTUATES

<b>4.2.1 ACTION</b>	Support County efforts to make changes in permitted use requirements in commercial properties (county study slated for 2022)
<b>PARTNER</b>	County
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	New: Economic Development
<b>TIMING</b>	Long Term (3+ years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$ - Below \$50K

<b>4.2.2 ACTION</b>	Conduct interviews and/or survey of commercial brokers to determine new uses for vacant office/retail spaces and discuss with Arlington Economic Development
<b>PARTNER</b>	County
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	New: Economic Development
<b>TIMING</b>	Immediate/Short Term (1 year or 1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$ - Below \$50K



## 5. Outreach

The Ballston BID will work to ensure that its overall value proposition is communicated in new, more effective ways with its core constituency, local businesses and the employees they serve.

ACTION 5.1 BUILD STAFF CAPACITY TO SUPPORT THE PLAN	
5.1.1 ACTION	Explore strategies to improve staff capacity to support the economic development strategies outlined in this proposal. This might include the reallocation of staff time, a new staff position, or the replacement of an existing staff position.
PARTNER	Executive Committee
COMMITTEE	New: Economic Development
TIMING	Short Term (1-2 years)
ESTIMATED COST	\$\$\$ - Above \$150K
5.1.2 ACTION	Evaluate strategic plan human resource talent requirements for business advocacy and outreach and compare to existing staff skill sets
PARTNER	Executive Committee
COMMITTEE	New: Economic Development
TIMING	Short Term (1-2 years)
ESTIMATED COST	\$ - Below \$50K
5.1.3 ACTION	Discuss strategic plan and professional goals with each staff member and determine opportunities for development that align.
PARTNER	Staff
COMMITTEE	Committee: Executive Committee
TIMING	Immediate (1 year)
ESTIMATED COST	\$ - Below \$50K
5.1.4 ACTION	Update the staff professional development program with new priorities and allocate funds in the annual budget for staff professional development
PARTNER	Staff
COMMITTEE	Committee: Executive Committee
TIMING	Immediate (1 year)
ESTIMATED COST	\$ - Below \$50K

**ACTION 5.2****DEVELOP TOOLS THAT RAISE AWARENESS OF THE BID AMONG  
NEW ENTRANTS INTO MARKET**

<b>5.2.1 ACTION</b>	Prepare “Welcome to the Neighborhood” packets or guides for new businesses and employees that outline ways to engage and introduce them to the BID, its amenities, and services.
<b>PARTNER</b>	Employers
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Marketing & Branding
<b>TIMING</b>	Short Term (1-2 years)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$\$ - Between \$50k - \$150k

<b>5.2.2 ACTION</b>	Feature Ballston businesses in BID PR efforts to highlight their work and employees
<b>PARTNER</b>	Local Businesses
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Marketing & Branding
<b>TIMING</b>	Immediate (1 year)
<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>	\$\$ - Between \$50k - \$150k

**Conclusion**

As the nation emerges from the pandemic and the office sector undergoes a fundamental evolution, one in which commercial tenants are increasingly in competition for high-quality talent in tight labor markets, the BID is eager to embrace its role as the leading spokesperson and advocate on behalf of its core constituents - the commercial property and business owners who have felt the brunt of these pandemic-related macro-economic trends. The Strategic Plan outlined here acknowledges these shifts, including changes in work habits that will likely result in some degree of decline in office demand, as well as the “flight to quality” that is underway within the office sector as tenants find their way towards higher quality locations. It is within this context that this Plan seeks to set the stage for a strong and continued demand of commercial properties by offering a suite of programming, placemaking strategies, and advocacy efforts that will position Ballston as the best location in the region for businesses and their employees. We also know that we cannot let our work go undetected - we must continue to make sure that our constituents see and recognize the value of our work and witness first-hand the tangible impact of our efforts.

While a strategic shift towards our commercial office ratepayers is both a recognition of budgetary constraints and changing market dynamics, we have not abandoned our role as champion of a great “live, work, play” community. We will continue to embrace collaboration with our commercial residential property owners and believe that our success will engender future support for the inclusion of mixed-use and commercial residential properties to the BID over time. At this juncture, however, our objective is to define what we do in a more targeted fashion and do only what we can do best with the available resources at hand. Our success will serve as a powerful rationale for more resources and the partnerships necessary to complete both the tactical and more ambitious elements of this Strategic Plan.

# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

### A. Stakeholder Interview List

ORGANIZATION/INTEREST GROUP	NAME OF INDIVIDUAL
ARLINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Telly Tucker
ARLINGTON COUNTY	Takis Karatonis
ARLINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / BID BOARD MEMBER	Kate Paine
AVISON YOUNG	Dave Millard
JLL	David Goldstein
RAPPAPORT	Michael Howard
TRANSWESTERN	Bernie McKeever Jr
INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE	Meghan O'Hair
JLL (MASTERCARD REP)	Staci Martin
KNLB	Kim Stein
DITTMAR COMPANY	Gregory C. Raines
AVALONBAY COMMUNITIES, INC.	Latasha Edwards
BID BOARD MEMBER	Dustin Young
BID BOARD MEMBER	David Kinney
BID BOARD MEMBER	Bob Wiberg
BID BOARD MEMBER	Greg Geisler
BID BOARD MEMBER	Nick Stone
BID BOARD MEMBER	Kevin Shooshan
BID BOARD MEMBER	Jillian Donatelli
BID BOARD MEMBER	Simon Carney
BID BOARD MEMBER	Tim Friemel
BID BOARD MEMBER	Dave Tran
BID BOARD MEMBER	Shannon Flanagan-Watson
BID BOARD MEMBER	Marcus Robinson
BID BOARD MEMBER	Upendra Malani
BID BOARD MEMBER	Mark Zetlin
BID BOARD MEMBER	Roberto Perez
BID BOARD MEMBER	Brad Smith
BID BOARD MEMBER	Larry Smith
BID BOARD MEMBER	Amanda Tischler
BID BOARD MEMBER	Allyson Ugarte
BID BOARD MEMBER	Mustafa Saiffee

## APPENDIX

### B. Case Studies

## 1. Build Staff Economic Development Capacity

### The Ithaca Alliance, Interview with Gary Ferguson

*As Ballston pivots towards engaging in more robust economic development efforts, the Downtown Ithaca Alliance offers an instructive example of a BID that has had success leading economic development efforts with a budget of similar size.*

The Downtown Ithaca Alliance, with a budget of \$1.4 million, has two staff people dedicated to economic development. As Executive Director, Gary brought a strong background in economic development to the position. At the beginning of Gary's tenure, he was the only staff person focused on Economic Development, having come from Dayton, OH where he led an award-winning office recruitment program. The Downtown Alliance now has a full time Business Development Director who is focused exclusively on recruitment and retention. The Alliance's budget is further augmented by grants and contracts, including a \$500k grant from the New York State Main Street program that is distributed to businesses for facade improvements.

### Lessons Learned

- Coordinate in advance with Arlington County, including Arlington Economic Development. Start with an assessment of the gaps in current economic development service delivery mechanisms. Define all the players as well as their roles and offerings to identify service gaps that might inform what activities are needed and where the BID should focus its efforts. This might mean focusing on smaller businesses, primary data collection, case management support, etc.
- Consider a case management system where you track and follow deals, this will allow you to engage when there is a need for troubleshooting, such as when a potential tenant gets stuck and needs an advocate or more information on issues like signage, parking, zoning, etc.
- An excellent project manager is critical, but this person need not be an ex-broker. In fact, an ex-broker might be perceived as a competitor to brokers in the community.
- Focus on offering primary data for the district as a whole. This will make the BID a more valuable partner to commercial real estate stakeholders.

## 2. Brokerage Community and Arlington Economic Development in Tenant Recruitment

### Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

To offer business owners and brokers information on trends in the market, the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation published their Marketing Statistics on their website. These statistics provide in depth research on workforce revenue, population, yearly spending potential, annual supply and demand for retail goods and services, and new development.



*Credit: Greater Jamaica Development Corporation*

### 3. Develop Tools that Raise Awareness of the BID Among New Entrants into the Market

#### Old Strathcona Business Association

The Old Strathcona Business Association in Edmonton, Alberta Canada provides a welcoming set of guidelines and incentives for business owners to locate there, free of charge. The “See Yourself in Old Strathcona” information package includes user friendly data around the district and portrays Old Strathcona’s welcoming personality, incentivizing tenants.



*Credit: Old Strathcona Business Association*