

Executive Summary

North Highlands Citizens' Association (NHCA) Neighborhood Plan V.1.0

05/18/2025

Purpose: This Neighborhood Plan represents the North Highlands Citizens' Association's (NHCA) first comprehensive planning effort. Version 1.0 is a foundational document that captures a snapshot of our neighborhood as of Spring 2025, reflecting resident priorities and laying the groundwork for future planning, engagement, and investment. Developed through grassroots, volunteer-driven process, this plan is guided by four core goals:

Safe: Ensure streets, sidewalks, and public spaces are safe for all users.

Green: Preserve and enhance green spaces, tree canopy, and stormwater infrastructure.

Friendly: Build a strong sense of community identity and connection.

Smart Development: Promote neighborhood-informed, environmentally responsible growth.

Background: NHCA is a diverse neighborhood of more than 3,300 residents, over 70% of whom are renters. With a mix of high-rise apartments, condominiums, townhomes, and single-family homes, the community includes a wide range of experiences and needs. Since 2019, NHCA's boundaries have expanded, making the development of a cohesive neighborhood identity both a challenge and an opportunity.

Planning Process: Between Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, NHCA hosted multiple community dialogues, launched a neighborhood survey, conducted a streetlight and sidewalk inventory, and re-established civic participation through committees. The planning process was centered on listening to neighbors' issues and concerns.

Key Themes & Findings:

1. **Safety:** Residents cited inadequate lighting, missing sidewalks, and dangerous intersections as top concerns. Priorities include safer pedestrian crossings and better connectivity to Langston Boulevard and the Custis Trail.
2. **Green Infrastructure:** The community values its parks, forests, and natural beauty. Residents support tree preservation, removal of invasive plants, and robust stormwater management.
3. **Community Engagement:** Neighbors want more opportunities to connect, especially across housing types. Planned events, website outreach, signage, and partnerships with apartment managers are part of this strategy.
4. **Smart Development:** Residents want to shape the implementation of the Langston Boulevard Plan, advocating for walkability, environmental protections, and responsible redevelopment.

Next Steps: This Version 1.0 Plan will be submitted to the Arlington Neighborhoods Program for review. Future steps include:

- Proposing neighborhood signs through the County's Neighborhood Sign Program.
- Seeking investment through ANP, Vision Zero, Missing Links, and other funding mechanisms.
- Expanding the survey and outreach campaign, especially to large apartment complexes.
- Creating an Implementation Roadmap to track progress and refine priorities.

Conclusion: The NHCA Neighborhood Plan V.1.0 is a living document—one rooted in the voices of residents and the beauty of the neighborhood they cherish. It is both a celebration of what makes North Highlands special and a blueprint for building a more connected, safe, green, and vibrant community.