



April 21, 2023

Christian Dorsey
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Dorsey,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce strongly supports the continued works on the Commercial Market Resiliency Initiative. As a result, we support Items 13 and 28 on the April 22 County Board Agenda; the ordinance adopting amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to allow for indoor recreation, and the Request to Advertise other amendments allowing for ghost kitchens, by-right food delivery services and large-scale catering establishments. We commend the County and Staff for their hard work on every phase of the Initiative. The Initiative is a much-needed change that will enable Arlington to attract more businesses that are uncertain about their ability to operate. We are pleased to see that both the ordinance and the Request to Advertise are on the Consent Agenda, and we hope that the Board adopts both items without controversy.

As we have stated in our previous letters, these items are part of a necessary long-term reimagining of the Zoning Ordinance and how Arlington can develop regulations that promote the attraction of new and emerging business sectors. We applaud the County for encouraging continued zoning adaptability as one tool among many to combat the 23% commercial vacancy rate, a historic high for Arlington.

We are also excited by the opportunities that the Request for Advertise would provide to our restaurants. Permitting restaurants to have food delivery services by right will allow for restaurants to retain more of their revenue compared to the use of third-party delivery services.

We hope that the Initiative continues to develop modern regulations to better promote the modern Arlington economy. We further suggest that the County consider increased adaptability for new uses and expedited timeframes for approval of these new uses. We also encourage the County to consider a more adaptable zoning text that can accommodate more business sectors that cannot be foreseen as of now.

We appreciate this step forward, and we encourage continued work beyond the proposed amendments that provides innovative use applicants the certainty and structure they need in a timelier manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: Vice-Chair Libby Garvey, Members Matt de Ferranti, Katie Cristol, and Takis Karantonis, Arlington County Board; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Planning Director Anthony Fusarelli; Marc McCauley, Arlington Economic Development; Jill Hunger, Arlington County Planning Division.