



November 26, 2018

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Dear Chair Cristol:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce to reiterate the Chamber's encouragement, first articulated in our letter dated July 23 and reaffirmed in our letter of September 18 and testimony of September 22, that the Board approve the Virginia Hospital Center (VHC) site plan application under consideration at the meeting on November 27.

Although the Chamber advocated for the Board's approval of the site plan application as submitted in September, we appreciate the constructive approach of the Board's decision then – to offer the opportunity to amend, rather than rejecting outright, and to set explicit requests of VHC as a way to focus the path forward. The Chamber commends the Board for pursuing this approach, and for not requiring VHC to restart its application from scratch.

Now that VHC has made the improvements requested, or demonstrated their technical infeasibility, it is time to allow the hospital to move forward with its expansion for the benefit of our entire community. VHC's amendments to its application include nearly all of the specific changes that the Board requested in its September motion. Moreover, where VHC has not made a requested change, that determination was the result of careful study finding that it was not possible within the structural constraints of the designed buildings. Notwithstanding, VHC has made its best efforts for their proposed designs to comply as much as possible with the Board's requests, deviating only as necessary to accommodate structures integral to the best achievement of the gross floor area required to meet the hospital's programmatic needs.

Along with addressing the Board's specific requests related to its site plan, VHC has also continued to demonstrate its true compassion for and service to our community by pledging \$500,000 over five years for "Diversion First: A Pilot to Divert Arlington Youth with Behavioral Health Crises from Hospitalization," in partnership with the Department of Human Services, following discussions with the Community Services Board and Arlington Mental Health Alliance that the public engagement on the hospital expansion sparked.

We now find ourselves at the culmination of several rounds of review and hours of public testimony at Commission and Board hearings, and continued engagement by VHC with the neighboring civic associations since the September Board meeting. VHC has designed an expanded facility that best will provide for Arlington's healthcare needs and fit into its surrounding community, subject to the space constraints that are all too familiar within our 26 square miles. The Chamber therefore respectfully requests that the Board approve the amended VHC site plan application at its November 27 meeting, in order to allow this important project to proceed.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

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: Arlington County Board members Christian Dorsey, Libby Garvey, John Vihstadt, and Erik Gutshall; and County Manager Mark Schwartz