



Arlington Chamber of Commerce  
Opportunity. Leadership. Results.

**Arlington Chamber of Commerce  
2017 General Assembly  
Public Policy Positions**

## 2017 General Assembly Priorities

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce annually presents its legislative priorities to the county's legislative delegation, and other lawmakers, prior to the start of each General Assembly session. The 2017 session is slated to run from January 11 to February 25.

The priorities below are developed through the Arlington Chamber's Government Affairs & Economic Development Committee, are refined by the Chamber's Executive Committee and are modified and adopted by the Chamber's Board of Directors.

The Arlington Chamber would like to thank the members of the Arlington delegation to the General Assembly for their time in discussing the upcoming session and their own priorities with the Arlington Chamber's Government Affairs & Economic Development Committee.

In addition to the specific priorities outlined below, the Arlington Chamber also will respond separately to the legislative packages proposed by the County Board and School Board.

### Tourism

The restoration of Arlington County's 0.25% Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) surcharge for funding tourism promotion served as the cornerstone of the business community's legislative agenda for 2016. As anticipated, the reinstatement of a predictable stream of revenue to support the promotion of tourism has made an immediate impact for Arlington businesses. Especially aiding our hospitality and retail members as they compete for tourists and business travelers with Washington, DC and Maryland. The surcharge has allowed Arlington to generate over one million dollars in promotional spending this fiscal year, translating into roughly five million dollars in tax revenue alone to the Commonwealth.

The Chamber calls on the General Assembly to renew the County's TOT surcharge and remove the sunset provision. This would bring Arlington in line with other jurisdictions throughout the Commonwealth as no other locality's TOT surcharge has a sunset provision.

### Assessment & Equalization

The Arlington Chamber also would encourage the General Assembly to consider requiring that members of local Boards of Equalization be appointed by the Circuit Court, as is the case with members of Boards of Zoning Appeals, rather than by elected officials. This would ensure that Boards of Equalization could maintain independence in their deliberations and decision-making and remove any perception of a conflict of interest.

The Arlington Chamber also asks the General Assembly to clarify the role of the County Attorney in the real estate tax appeal process. The Chamber further supports reforms to level the playing field for taxpayers appealing assessments at the Circuit Court level of appeal.

### Economic Development

The Arlington Chamber supports additional funds being appropriated for the Commonwealth Opportunity Fund and the Virginia Economic Development Initiative Grant. Both of these incentives are crucial to Arlington being able to reliably bring businesses looking at the Washington D.C. area into Virginia.

The Arlington Chamber supports efforts by the Commonwealth to provide economic-development assistance and mitigate the impact to localities that continue to lose jobs as a result of sequestration and continued cuts in the Federal Government.

The Arlington Chamber further urges the expeditious formation of a Regional Council to identify and champion multi-jurisdictional economic development projects to compete for statewide funding under the adopted Go Virginia program. The Chamber calls on the General Assembly to fund the program to maximize the benefits of synergistic regional collaboration and lessen competition between Virginia localities.

## Transportation

The Arlington Chamber supports the development and maintenance of a safe, convenient, efficient, cost-effective multi-modal transportation network – including aviation, port, rail, public transit, and highway facilities – that will promote and enhance domestic and international commerce, encourage tourism and facilitate the movement of Virginians to work, school, recreation and other activities.

The Chamber urges that investments of limited transportation resources be made judiciously, based on sound data and populations estimates, and that regional funding sources and project selection be designated in such a manner as to prioritize congestion relief and economic development. The Chamber would like to specifically highlight the problems with the Weldon Cooper population projections with regards to Arlington County. The Chamber continues to call on the General Assembly and VDOT to remain at the forefront of innovation, embracing and leveraging new technological solutions to infrastructure and operational challenges.

The Arlington Chamber supports the approval and expedited construction of the proposed public/private partnership to achieve the conversion and extension of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes along the I-95 corridor. The Chamber additionally calls on the General Assembly and Arlington County to provide the funding necessary to address the current and forecasted need for mass-transit services in the Crystal City/Potomac Yard and Columbia Pike corridors, and ultimately into Shirlington. The Arlington Chamber also urges Virginia to work with the District of Columbia to advance improvements to the Memorial and Long Bridges and a new Rosslyn tunnel.

The Arlington Chamber also supports fully funding the Metro system, as it is a crucial component of both Arlington's transportation management and the County's economic development. The Chamber supports the growth and sustainability of Metro as envisioned in WMATA's Momentum plan and in Metro 2025. The Chamber supports a dedicated, stable and predictable revenue stream for WMATA funding. The Chamber further calls on WMATA to work with the affected jurisdictions to minimize the economic and logistical impacts of services affected by the ongoing Safe Track program and to continue serving Northern Virginia's 24/7 workforce and economy.

Given the regional economic importance of both Reagan National and Dulles International Airports, the Chamber asks that the General Assembly work with the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) as they strengthen both airports. The Chamber applauds the significant improvements MWAA is planning for Reagan National Airport and supports leveraging these investments to further enhance multi-modal connections at the airport to the region and the Commonwealth through other strategic investments in a new Long Bridge, Amtrak regional service, cross river MARC/VRE operation, and pedestrian access to Crystal City.

## Taxation & Regulation

The Arlington Chamber supports a comprehensive examination and modernization of the Commonwealth's tax structure that recognizes changes in Virginia's economy and promotes prosperity and job creation. The Chamber believes this can be accomplished while maintaining the rational balance of the tax burden in Virginia among businesses, residents and users of services that has led Virginia to consistently be ranked as one of the top business-friendly states in the nation.

The Arlington Chamber supports the Commonwealth simplifying the regulatory process by frequently assessing the need for existing regulations, and only imposing new regulations that achieve a specific need or goal for the community without imposing an undue burden. The Chamber would highlight the multitude of ABC laws as an example where simplification and even a slight lessening of specific regulations might be beneficial to the community.

## Housing Affordability and Workforce Housing

The Arlington Chamber supports a regional approach to housing affordability. The stock, price, and type of affordable housing varies greatly within the Commonwealth and it makes sense to acknowledge that reality. The Arlington Chamber asks for the creation of a dedicated funding stream for the Virginia Housing Affordability Trust Fund at a level to provide support to all parts of Virginia, including our higher cost region.

## Health Care

The Arlington Chamber supports Medicaid reform efforts and coverage expansion that takes full advantage of available federal funding. Closing the coverage gap is critical to ensuring Arlington residents have access to quality healthcare coverage while protecting Arlington businesses from the burdensome increases in healthcare costs. For the Commonwealth to achieve this in a fiscally sensible way it is important that coverage expansion be paired with some private-sector style reforms.

## K-12 Education

The Arlington Chamber supports a comprehensive review of the Local Composite Index formula as it currently places Arlington County at a disadvantage by not taking into account important factors such as the differential between county and city taxing authority, the impact of cost of living on a locality's ability to pay staff, and the increased costs associated with providing services to growing limited English proficiency and special education populations.

The Arlington Chamber supports expanding technical options to third and fourth year World Language requirements for high school graduation with an Advanced Diploma as approved by the Board of Education. This provision would help more students meet Advanced Studies Diploma requirements and increase Virginia students' readiness for a rapidly evolving, global technology workforce. This provision would also foster relationships between schools and the technology business community.

## Higher Education & Workforce Development

The Chamber of Commerce supports expanding technical options, like technical programming languages, to third and fourth year World Language requirements for high school graduation with an Advanced Diploma as approved by the Board of Education. This provision would help more students meet Advanced Studies Diploma requirements and increase Virginia students' readiness for a rapidly evolving, global technology workforce. This provision would also foster relationships between schools and the technology business community.

The Chamber supports competitive compensation for educators at all levels of the public-education spectrum, and supports the continued investment of public dollars into publicly supported regional institutions represented in Arlington.

The Chamber supports legislative priorities of regional public institutions of higher education to accommodate expected growth, and supports focusing state tax support on enrollment growth in high-need academic areas, such as information technology and cyber security, healthcare and health informatics, teacher training, and STEM initiatives relevant to initiatives throughout the Commonwealth.

The Chamber supports flexibility for public school initiatives to develop students for postsecondary education and training, and to meet the needs of our members in an increasingly technical and technology-based workforce.

The Chamber supports expanding work-based learning opportunities and continuing collaborative initiatives between local high schools, Northern Virginia Community College, the Commonwealth's four-year institutions of higher learning, and the region's employers.

The Chamber supports flexibility for allowing school districts to set their own academic calendars to better align with the academic calendars of the community college and other higher education partners, maximizing opportunities for shared faculty and Arlington high school students participating in courses for college credit.

The Chamber supports continuing, collaborative initiatives between Northern Virginia Community College and regional higher education partners with public schools, to include expanded opportunities for dual enrollment college credits for all Arlington students as a part of their high school program of studies.

The Chamber supports the extension of non-traditional operating weekday/weekend hours for the Commonwealth's public transportation systems to support the travel needs of the 24-hour workforce.

The Chamber supports the continued presence of a Regional Workforce Council dedicated to Arlington County and Alexandria City, distinct from other regions of Northern Virginia.

## Dillon Rule

The Arlington Chamber supports maintaining the integrity of the Dillon Rule.

Specifically, county governments should not have authority to coerce businesses, of any size, to provide specific wage levels, benefits, or working conditions, outside the framework of applicable federal and state labor law.

## Zoning & Planning

The Arlington Chamber urges the General Assembly to study the impact of outdated locality zoning plans on economic development, to determine if rewrites to such plans should be required on a regular basis.

While the Arlington Chamber supports localities working with the building industry to develop and adopt reasonable conditions for a transportation-demand management plan, we ask the General Assembly to keep a careful watch on localities to ensure they do not violate the authority delegated to them on this issue.

The Arlington Chamber also urge the General Assembly to maintain its restrictions on fees associated with zoning appeals to a level that does not adversely impact those who wish to appeal rulings, or dissuade them from doing so based on the cost involved. Virginia property owners should not find themselves unfairly restricted from appealing zoning, building-code, property-maintenance and similar rulings by local governments.

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce supports the adoption of a statewide policy to allow for short-term residential lodging while ensuring a level playing field for traditional as well as emerging, innovative business models and empowering local governments with the tools necessary to minimize the impacts on existing businesses and ensure compliance with pertinent zoning, nuisance and tax laws.

## Energy

The Arlington Chamber recognizes the vital importance of abundant, affordable energy supply to maintain and grow Virginia's economy. To this end, the Chamber supports statewide energy-efficiency objectives and policies, but does not support the delegation of that authority to localities, especially as it applies to the adoption of "green" construction codes. The Chamber believes adoption of "green" construction codes should occur at the state level and be applied in a uniform manner in all localities. Additionally, localities should not be delegated the authority to regulate energy consumption and usage, either through local building and zoning codes or through restrictions on the transferability of interests in real estate or to compel private building owners to make public proprietary and confidential data regarding building energy usage. The Chamber instead supports voluntary, incentive-based programs to measure and achieve shared energy efficiency goals.

The Arlington Chamber also supports the expansion and diversification of Virginia's energy portfolio.

## Parking

The Arlington Chamber urges the General Assembly to oppose any effort that would impede property owners from safely managing the parking on their property. In a community such as Arlington, where space is at a premium, responsible parking management is a vital component of private-property rights.

## Chamber Contacts

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