



Arlington Chamber of Commerce
Opportunity. Leadership. Results.

**Arlington Chamber of Commerce
2019 General Assembly
Public Policy Positions**

2019 General Assembly Priorities

To the Virginia General Assembly,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is pleased to share with you our legislative priorities for the 2019 General Assembly session, slated to commence on January 9, 2019. The Chamber advocates for these policies in furtherance of our mission **to strengthen businesses and the economic environment for those who work, live, and do business in Arlington**, and throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

These 2019 recommendations come at a particularly exciting time for Arlington, the Commonwealth, and our entire region, as we prepare to leverage Amazon's new National Landing headquarters. The Chamber congratulates all of the stakeholders who made this deal possible, including the economic development offices for the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Arlington and Alexandria governments. The Chamber appreciates the positive impact that this development will have for Arlington, the region, and the Commonwealth.

The Chamber recommends all of the policies in this document, calling particular attention to these top priorities for Arlington and Virginia's economic wellbeing:

- **Economic development programs** to broaden and to diversify our economic base, including increased funding to market Virginia as a business destination and the enactment of the proposed investment and incentive package for Amazon's National Landing headquarters
- **Funding necessary improvements for transportation infrastructure**, including second entrances at the Crystal City and Ballston Metro stations, improvements to Memorial and Long Bridges, a new Rosslyn tunnel, and the development and maintenance of aviation, port, and highway facilities
- **Expanding and focusing workforce housing development resources** on areas of the Commonwealth where needs are greater, and the creation of a dedicated funding stream for the Virginia Housing Trust Fund

The Arlington Chamber's Board of Directors adopted these policy priorities, which the Chamber's Government Affairs & Economic Development Committee developed. In addition to the priorities outlined herein, the Chamber will respond separately to the legislative packages proposed by the County Board and School Board.

We thank the members of Arlington's General Assembly delegation for visiting with our Government Affairs & Economic Development Committee to discuss the upcoming session and their priorities; their support and insights were helpful in preparing this document.

We thank you for your consideration of these proposals and extend our best wishes for a productive 2019 General Assembly session.

Best Regards,



Lindsey Rheume
Chair



Greg Hamilton
Chair-Elect



Kate Bates
President & CEO

Economic Development

The Arlington Chamber supports economic development programs to broaden and to diversify our economic base. The Commonwealth Opportunity Fund and the Virginia Economic Development Initiative Grant are both crucial to Arlington being able reliably to bring businesses looking at the Washington D.C. area into Virginia. Development incentives are investments in our economic future, and Arlington and the Commonwealth of Virginia have realized the return on these investments through increased employment and tax revenues.

The Arlington Chamber supports appropriate incentives for businesses of all sizes, knowing that smaller businesses grow if supported. The Chamber additionally supports maintaining a range of economic development programs to include support both for new businesses and for businesses that relocate operations to Arlington and Virginia.

The Chamber encourages the General Assembly to support the Commonwealth's incentive proposal for Amazon's new headquarters, as it will have positive benefits for all Virginia businesses:

1. The tech talent investments will deliver a talent pipeline to support technology innovation and businesses beyond Amazon. The technology degree programs and research at George Mason University in Arlington and Virginia Tech in Alexandria will enhance our workforce, and cement the Commonwealth of Virginia as an innovation hub.
2. The commitment of up to \$195 million in transportation infrastructure investments, including second entrances at Crystal City and Potomac Yards Metro stations, Route 1 improvements, and a pedestrian connection to Ronald Reagan National Airport, supports the broader region, and funds several of the proposals in the infrastructure section of this document.
3. The post-performance incentives to Amazon tie directly to the creation of new jobs in Virginia. These high-wage, high-skill jobs will enhance the competitiveness of our business environment, and will help Virginia maintain the talent that our K-12 schools and universities develop.

Building and maintaining a positive environment for economic development includes more than direct incentives to businesses. The Arlington Chamber supports efforts by the Commonwealth to provide economic-development assistance and to mitigate the impact to localities that continue to lose jobs as a result of federal cuts while simultaneously diversifying Virginia's industry portfolio and planning for future federal actions. The Chamber further supports **increased funding to market Virginia as a business destination.**

Infrastructure and Transportation

A strong infrastructure, including a robust transportation network, is essential for businesses to grow. The Arlington Chamber supports investments to maintain and to improve Virginia's public infrastructure to sustain the Commonwealth's economic engine. The Chamber supports broad-based approaches to selecting and to funding infrastructure projects.

The Chamber applauds the Virginia General Assembly's action last year to establish a multi-year, stable revenue source for a Capital Trust Fund for WMATA. However, the Chamber calls for a restoration of local and regional funding sources for multi-modal transportation projects in Arlington and Northern Virginia. The Chamber additionally asks the General Assembly and Arlington County to **provide the funding necessary for improvements to address the current and forecasted need for mass-transit services** in the Rosslyn/Ballston, Crystal City/Potomac Yard, and Columbia Pike corridors, and ultimately into Shirlington. **These vital projects include second entrances at the Crystal City and Ballston Metro stations, and a new Rosslyn tunnel.**

In addition to mass transit, the **Arlington Chamber supports the development and maintenance of aviation, port, 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 further calls on the General Assembly and VDOT to remain at the forefront of innovation, embracing and leveraging new technological solutions to infrastructure and operational challenges.

Federally-owned facilities, such as Washington Ronald Reagan National and Dulles International Airports, the George Washington Memorial Parkway, and Potomac waterfront, contribute greatly to our region's economic vitality. The Chamber asks the Commonwealth to take a leading role in working with the District of Columbia and Federal infrastructure partners, including the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) and National Park Service. The Chamber applauds the significant improvements MWAA is planning for Washington Ronald Reagan National Airport and supports leveraging these investments to enhance multi-modal connections at the airport to the region and the Commonwealth. **Strategic investments that will help realize these connections include a new Long Bridge, improvements to Memorial Bridge, Amtrak regional service, cross river MARC/VRE operation, and pedestrian access to Crystal City.**

Housing Affordability and Workforce Housing

Growing and maintaining a diverse housing stock is critical for economic development. Businesses, especially in the service sectors, look for the availability of workforce housing in choosing where to locate, and rely on housing that their employees can afford to grow. The Arlington Chamber supports a regional approach to housing affordability, **focusing resources on areas of the state where needs are greater.**

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 Trust Fund** at a level to provide support to all parts of Virginia, including our higher cost region. The Chamber also encourages providing additional tools and local flexibility to address and incentivize affordable housing.

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 be ranked consistently 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. In particular, the Chamber calls on the General Assembly to **expedite business permitting processes and revise the definition of Small, Women-owned and Minority-owned Business** to target procurement and other business opportunities better.

The Chamber further highlights **the multitude of ABC laws as an example of where simplification and lessening of specific regulations may benefit the community.** Simplifying the process for securing special event licenses, for example, will help promote locally-produced beverages at community events, benefiting Virginia producers.

Education & Workforce Development

The Chamber of Commerce supports investment in all levels of quality education. Further, we support a forward-looking approach where innovation and creativity fosters better outcomes that benefit our community. Specifically, the Chamber advocates for:

- Advancing locally-flexible education and workforce development policy initiatives that position Virginia as a global leader in workforce readiness;
- Establishing consistent and ongoing communication and collaboration among all “pre-K through gray” education providers and the private sector;
- Promoting and supporting school divisions in offering universal quality pre-K, which is both important for learning development of our children and increasingly being used by states and localities as an enticement to businesses locating there;
- Establishing acceptance of technical and professional apprenticeship programs throughout the Commonwealth and providing incentives to the private sector to expand work-based learning programs;
- Establishing incentives to motivate employers to develop workplace learning opportunities for high school students to allow school systems to align with the new “Profile of Virginia Graduate”;
- Supporting and funding collaborative initiatives between Arlington Public Schools, Arlington County Government, and regional higher education partners. Specifically including expanded opportunities for dual enrollment college credits for all Arlington students, with credentialing of teachers to teach these courses, and continuing education for Arlington teachers as a part of their program of studies;
- Continuation of an appropriately funded GO Virginia Initiative that fosters collaborative innovations in technical and professional education and workforce initiatives;
- Supporting both public and private universities across the Commonwealth in partnerships for cyber, computer science, and technology education;
- Establishing collaborative initiatives to provide opportunities for adults seeking to enter or re-enter the workforce that support not only skills training and interview preparation, but also childcare support to allow for increased participation rates.
- Extending of non-traditional operating weekday/weekend hours for the Commonwealth’s public transportation systems to support the travel needs of the 24-hour workforce.

Finally, 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.

Governance

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.

The Chamber applauds the General Assembly's actions in 2018 to promote transparency in state government, including broadcasting and making accessible video of legislative Committee meetings. **The Chamber supports expanding the broadcasting and recording program to include legislative Subcommittee meetings.**

Zoning & Planning

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

Specifically the General Assembly should serve as a backstop and a safeguard against legislative overreach by local governments in their exercise of eminent domain authority and effective takings of private property rights through the limitation of development and redevelopment options via targeted downzoning.

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 acknowledges the need to invest in Virginia's energy system, particularly by modernizing its electric distribution infrastructure. The Chamber supports such investments as a means to improve system safety and reliability while also facilitating the expansion and diversification of Virginia's energy portfolio. While the Chamber welcomes efforts to develop more renewable resources, including those powered by solar or wind energy, it does not support a mandatory renewable portfolio standard that will unnecessarily restrict the flexibility of the state and its utility partners to keep energy affordable.

Assessment & Equalization

Fair and efficient access to justice for aggrieved taxpayers appealing erroneously high real estate tax assessments is an essential element of a strong local business climate. To this end, the Arlington Chamber asks the General Assembly to **clarify the role of the County Attorney in the real estate tax appeal process and sustain the existing burden of proof on appeal before a local Board of Equalization or Circuit Court** at a preponderance of the evidence standard.

Tourism

The Chamber applauds the General Assembly's vote last year to renew Arlington County's TOT surcharge through 2021. The Chamber further calls on the General Assembly to remove the sunset provision during future renewals to bring Arlington in line with other jurisdictions throughout the Commonwealth as no other locality's TOT surcharge has a sunset provision.

Chamber Contacts

President & CEO: Kate Bates

2018 Chair: Lindsey Rheaume, EagleBank

2019 Chair: Greg Hamilton, Arlington Magazine

Vice Chair - Business Advocacy: David Kinney, Clarendon, LLC

Government Affairs & Economic Development Committee Co-Chairs:

Brian Gordon, Apartment and Office Building Association, and Tad Lunger, McGuireWoods LLP

Government Affairs Manager: Scott Pedowitz



2009 14th Street, North, Suite 100
Arlington, Virginia 22201
(703) 525-2400
www.arlingtonchamber.org