

ANNUAL CORPORATE SPONSORS

May 25, 2017

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd.
Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chairman Fisetto:

I write to you on behalf of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce regarding the Four Mile Run Valley Initiative (“the initiative”). Our members have been following the initiative since June 2016 when the formal process began, and have hosted planning staff at our Government Affairs & Economic Development Committee to present the initiative to our membership.

The S. Four Mile Run Business Association and our individual member businesses located inside the initiative’s study area have expressed concern over the draft plans presented at the S. Four Mile Run Business Association meeting on April 12, 2017. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce supports the following narrative with regards to the initiative:

- In order to successfully serve its citizens, Arlington will always need an area for light service industrial. Over 90% of the businesses operating inside the study area require the current zoning and land use to operate. The areas around S. Four Mile Run Drive and Shirlington Road are the largest remaining light industrial zoned areas in the County and demand for industrial space continues to be high. In fact many of the property owners in the study area report occupancy rates of 100%. There is nowhere left in Arlington for these small businesses to go should this land be subsumed by park land.
- Arlington County needs all forms of economic opportunity at every level. The study area represents one of the few areas for skilled labor jobs that may not require a college degree. Additionally the area provides a space for entrepreneurial ventures such as a brewery and the various pet service businesses to launch. Including private property within the Park Boundary Study Area has caused many businesses in the area to have reservations about remaining in their space and may dissuade potential businesses from locating to the area. Because the study area is the only area zoned light industrial or service industrial, the business turnover is much lower than in the mixed use areas of the County, many times representing generations of common ownership, representing a stable tax base for Arlington.
- Finally, similarly to our commercial districts, the study area represents a critical contribution to the community in the form of tax collection, employment, affordable services, and groceries for Arlington residents.

While we believe that planning staff is committed to continuing to work with the business community to address concerns about the impact of the initiative on the businesses in the area, the Arlington Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests that planning staff remove the existing businesses from the Park Boundary Study Area and that planning staff illustrate how the County facilities located in the Park Boundary Study Area can heighten the businesses currently located in the area. It is the Arlington Chamber’s firm belief that including the existing businesses inside the Park Boundary Study Area will be detrimental to the businesses’ and property owners’ long term viability.



ANNUAL CORPORATE SPONSORS



The Chamber appreciates the significant time and effort expended by staff and the working group in working on the Initiative, and the Chamber applauds this continued collaboration and recognizes it will be critical to successful implementation of the plan once approved.

Sincerely,

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: Arlington County Board Members Katie Cristol, Christian Dorsey, Libby Garvey, John Vihstadt; Arlington County Manager; Mark Schwartz; Director Arlington Economic Development; Victor Hoskins; Principal Planner, CPHD; Richard Tucker; Director, Department of Parks & Recreation, Jane Rudolph