



February 15, 2019

Richard Viola  
Bicycle & Pedestrian Programs Manager  
Arlington County Department of Environmental Services  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Viola,

The Chamber supports many aspects of the draft update to the Bicycle Element of the Master Transportation Plan, particularly the goals and policies related to safety, but has reservations about several proposed policies which could have unintended consequences or create more burden for business than benefits to cyclists.

Specially, the Chamber supports the proposed policies within Goal A, "Provide an environment in which people of all ages and abilities can get places by bicycle safely and comfortably," and Goal D, "Provide an excellent multi-use trail system that serves the needs of people walking and bicycling for transportation and for recreation." Improving the safety of roads and trails for one mode makes them safer for all users. Widening trails and adding lighting will make trails more safely accessible in general, and especially for commuters in winter months. We are encouraged by Arlington's desire to deepen its cooperation with other jurisdictions in the region so that cyclists have a seamless journey into and out of Arlington. The Chamber strongly supports policies to allow e-bikes and scooters on trails, as these are important pathways for travel and commuting through Arlington.

The Chamber supports the broad aim of proposed Policy 5, "Accommodate bicycle infrastructure as part of all street improvement projects and provide the highest-quality on-street bikeway possible." However, in implementing this policy, we caution that it is essential to look at all proposed changes to a streetscape holistically. On-street parking is vital for retail and other community uses, and sidewalk cafes contribute to the vibrancy of our urban neighborhoods. It is essential that these amenities be considered when making changes to facilitate bicycle lanes and other street infrastructure.

The Chamber is opposed to the implementation of proposed Policy 7, as currently stated, "Encourage and support provision of facilities to support bicycling, including showers, lockers, and adequate bicycle parking throughout the County." Many of the amenities listed in the implementation actions for this policy are already standard conditions in site plan projects. The inclusion of "all commercial and multifamily residential buildings," however, extends these requirements to all by-right projects. This is a concern as most by-right commercial facilities are small businesses, for example, convenience stores. The proposed policy would require each store to maintain its own bicycle parking, when a shared or community-based solution may be more efficient. We also have concerns about the use of subjective terms like "ample, convenient, and secure bicycle parking" as there is a risk that these policies will become requirements whose costs outweigh their benefits. Such costly requirements could become an impediment to commercial and multifamily residential projects moving forward.

The Chamber thanks the staff of the Department of Environmental Services for presenting at our Government Affairs and Economic Development Committee and for engaging with us on the update to the Master Transportation Plan's Bicycle Element. We appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on the proposal as we

support many of its aspects and seek changes to those elements which could have unintended consequences or create more burden for business than benefits for cyclists.

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, Katie Cristol, Matt de Ferranti, and Erik Gutshall; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Department of Environmental Services Director Greg Emanuel; Transportation Commission and Master Transportation Plan Bicycle Element Working Group Chair Chris Slatt; Bicycle Advisory Committee Chair Gillian Burgess