



February 16, 2018

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

Dear Chairman Cristol:

I write to you on behalf of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce once again regarding the Four Mile Run Valley Initiative (“the Initiative”). We 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 as well as the Vice Chair of the Four Mile Run Working Group.

Member businesses located within the study area have once again become distressed over the direction of the Initiative has taken. Some of these concerns were voiced directly from business representatives recently at our Government Affairs & Economic Development Committee held on February 7, 2018 that featured Arlington County Manager, Mark Schwartz. The Arlington Chamber of Commerce is concerned about the direction the Initiative has taken and would like to reiterate several key points from our previous letter dated May 25, 2017, prior to the Board’s last work session on the Initiative.

- 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 has the potential to dissuade new businesses from locating in the Valley. What may seem like a simple illustration has a real economic impact. One building owner in the Valley was approached by a potential buyer; however, once the potential buyer learned of the initiative was dissuaded from moving forward with the transaction. 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.
- Arlington County needs 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.
- In order to successfully serve its citizens, Arlington will always have a need 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 last 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 businesses to go should this land be subsumed by park land.

- Businesses within the Valley have also expressed concern over the County's resolution to allow for the use of eminent domain as a negotiation tactic with Arcland Property Company to acquire land for a bus maintenance facility. Businesses worry that being included within the park boundary could set precedent for the use of similar tactics in the future.

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 again 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.

Again, 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. The Chamber appreciates the significant time and effort expended by staff and the working group in working on the Initiative as well as the opportunity for the Chamber to provide input.

Sincerely,



Kate Bates
President & CEO

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