



February 22, 2019

Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard  
Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Dorsey,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce to express concern with the County staff's recommendation for Item 27 I on the County Board's agenda for February 23, the request to advertise hearings to consider modification of the Special GLUP Study Process and the adoption of new and revised fees for Special GLUP Studies. Although the staff recommendation addresses some of the concerns we raised in our letter of January 18 to the Long Range Planning Committee, other concerns remain and the current proposal introduces a new issue.

We appreciate the goal of County staff to balance their workload and to recover costs of plan studies. However, we are concerned about the imposition of a moratorium on Special GLUP Study applications during the process and fee review period. The Chamber requests that the County Board not direct the County Manager to cease accepting applications for Special GLUP Studies, and that it retain the current practice of queueing all Special GLUP Study applications for full review in the order submitted.

The recommendation that the Board direct the County Manager to cease accepting applications for Special GLUP Studies amounts to the imposition of a moratorium on such projects in Arlington. Additionally, the proposed directive to return any applications already submitted on which work has not started is unfair to those applications already properly queued for review. This is especially true when the process by which these studies are queued and accepted has not even been finalized. The Chamber believes the proposed moratorium is unnecessary.

While only referred to in the RTA, the Chamber still has concerns with the proposal for a two-stage review process, most notably that there will be gatekeepers preventing Special GLUP Studies from full, proper hearings. We have been told that an application can proceed to the study process regardless of the staff recommendation, but projects not recommended for Special GLUP Studies could be buried in work plans. Moreover, even projects deemed appropriate for Special GLUP Studies could be irreparably harmed by being placed at the end of the staff work plan. A prioritization for simple projects with a lighter staff workload could lead to more complex applications becoming perennially buried in the project queue, or even lead to worse planning outcomes if sites in close proximity to one another decide to file individually rather than collaboratively. Maintaining the current practice of queueing applications in the order received ensures that every applicant receives a full, public hearing process.

The Chamber appreciated the changes that staff has made to the proposal since it was first introduced at Long Range Planning Commission in November, and is especially grateful for the participation of Planners Margaret Rhodes and Kelsey Steffen from the Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development in our Government Affairs & Economic Development Committee meeting on this topic on February 21. Although the current proposal addresses some of the issues that we have raised in the past, we remain concerned about the economic development consequences of a moratorium on Special GLUP Study applications and the two-stage

process. As such, we request that the County Board not direct the County Manager to cease accepting applications for Special GLUP Studies, and that it retain the existing Special GLUP Study process.

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 Libby Garvey, Katie Cristol, Matt de Ferranti, and Erik Gutshall; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Planning Director Robert Duffy and Planners Margaret Rhodes and Kelsey Steffen, CPHD – Planning Division