



May 8, 2020

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

Dear Chair Garvey,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce supports the recommendations made by the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO) in its Form Based Code Position Paper. Creating the flexibility to allow for activity that is economically feasible on Columbia Pike today has the potential to seed further development in the future.

Retail-equivalent uses at the street level will help create the sidewalk experience that the Form Based Code is designed to engineer. The Form Based Code seeks to provide a thriving, main-street feeling, which requires considerable foot traffic day and evening, seven days a week. Allowing non-retail uses will bring employees and customers to Columbia Pike, who will then provide business for the ground-floor uses that the code currently permits. Flexibility for a mix of street-level uses will further the code's goal.

The Form Base Code creates a monoculture of design and use. Zoning proscribes many businesses that could drive foot traffic to Columbia Pike. The Form Based Code's restrictions on aesthetic and structural diversity also limit businesses that can thrive on the Pike. Flexibility of design will help to promote a more diverse economic ecosystem.

As with the rest of Arlington, Columbia Pike contends with challenges from limitations on signage. As we noted in our December 2019 letter, having a more flexible approach to signage will help businesses to attract customers and will also help businesses, property owners, and CPRO to develop a stronger sense of place on the Pike. Flexibility in signage will help Columbia Pike to market itself as a thriving community.

In attempting to simplify the process for development along Columbia Pike, the Form Based Code eliminated much of the flexibility necessary to create a thriving community. Adopting the recommendations that CPRO developed with insights from its constituents will improve the Form Based Code supporting the development it seeks to promote.

We 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 Katie Cristol, Matt de Ferranti, and Christian Dorsey; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Deputy County Manager Shannon Flanagan-Watson; Principal Planner Matt Mattauszek