



July 20, 2020

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

Dear Chair Garvey,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce opposes the proposed amendment to the Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Form Base Code (N-FBC) to add a cash contribution to the Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) for commercial uses in N-FBC districts. The Chamber supports creating more affordable housing in Arlington. Moreover, the Chamber agrees with the direction adopted as part of the Affordable Housing Master Plan and Implementation Framework that providing developers and property owners with incentives is the best way to obtain substantial additional units that are affordable to a broad part of the community. By contrast, requiring an AHIF contribution for commercial uses in N-FBC districts risks disincentivizing needed development along Columbia Pike.

The Form Based Codes seek to encourage development along Columbia Pike, and were instituted out of a recognition that Columbia Pike has different needs than Arlington's higher density planning corridors. The N-FBC districts have a very limited commercial footprint, which is distinct from the mix of uses found elsewhere in Arlington. More balanced development, including commercial uses in N-FBC districts, will support amenities that benefit those who live, work, and visit along Columbia Pike. The proposed amendment, however, could inhibit such development by raising the cost of commercial uses in N-FBC districts, running counter to the Form Based Code's goals.

In May, writing in support of proposed changes to the Commercial Form Based Code, we encouraged Arlington County "to allow for activity that is economically feasible on Columbia Pike today [which] has the potential to seed further development in the future." In the same spirit, we ask you not to take an action in the Neighborhoods Form Based Code which may have the effect of inhibiting development and the potential future benefits that it could bring.

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, Christian Dorsey, and Takis Karantonis; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Melissa Danowski, Housing Division, and Matt Mattauszek, Planning Division, Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development