



April 1, 2021

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

Dear Chair de Ferranti,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce requests that the County Board restore the Principle Planner position in the Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development proposed to be frozen in Fiscal Year 2022. The proposed budget says, "This reduction will result in professional planning services being reassigned; delayed in terms of scheduled completion dates; reassessed in terms of supporting processes, procedures, and products; or postponed in order to address other Planning work program priorities."

Arlington County has sought to apply a cost-recovery model to more development processes. For example, the Special GLUP Study application fee was added in 2019 with this intent, though study applications continue to be queued for multiple years. Eliminating this position could lead to such studies or other planning applications – which are not necessarily the Planning Division's priorities – being delayed further. As such, without a fully staffed Planning Division, applicants are likely to face additional delays in receiving services for which they are paying the cost.

Restoring the Planning Division's capacity is also an investment in Arlington's future tax revenues. Prompt review of development projects, or the planning studies that are prerequisites for their review, will speed their completion and thus Arlington County's receipt of the taxes that they are expected to deliver. As such, this position will contribute to Arlington's recovery from the pandemic and Arlington County will realize the return on investment in this position not just in Fiscal Year 2022, but across the coming decade.

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 Vice Chair Katie Cristol, and members Christian Dorsey, Libby Garvey, and Takis Karantonis; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Deputy County Manager Shannon Flanagan Watson, CFO Maria Meredith and Budget Director Richard Stephenson, Department of Management and Finance; Director Claude Williamson and Interim Planning Director Jennifer Smith, Development of Community Planning, Housing, and Development