



April 17, 2019

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

Dear Chair Dorsey,

The Chamber supports the goals of the proposed update to the Bicycle Element of the Master Transportation Plan. However, we urge caution with regard to implementation actions which could create more burdens than benefits. We encourage the County Board to preserve the positive aspects of the plan, but to adjust the language of certain implementation actions to avoid negative consequences.

Improving the safety of roads and trails for cyclists makes them safer for all users. Widening trails and adding lighting will make trails more useable in general, and especially for commuters in winter months. The Chamber supports policies to allow e-bikes and scooters on trails, as these are important pathways for travel and commuters through Arlington. Deepening Arlington's connectivity with other jurisdictions will help cyclists to have a seamless journey through Arlington.

We appreciate the changes made by staff from their original draft update following our letter of February 15. In particular, the Chamber applauds the inclusion of the words "where appropriate" in implementation action 7c. This phrase should be a guide for the entire plan, as Arlington will only realize the positive intention of the Master Transportation Plan if it is implemented with designs appropriate to each specific circumstance. We remain concerned that the approach of implementation action 7b to pursue amending the zoning ordinance may preclude such context-sensitive planning.

Proposed implementation action 7b reads, "Pursue amending the County zoning ordinance to require all newly-constructed by-right commercial and multifamily residential buildings to provide ample, convenient and secure bicycle parking." Commercially zoned properties can be quite different from each other, and a single approach to serving bicyclists is unlikely to be appropriate for all by-right uses. Most by-right commercial facilities are small businesses such as convenience stores, and many by-right multifamily residences have a small number of units and target the missing middle of the housing market. The Chamber is concerned that the use of subjective terms like "ample, convenient, and secure" in the zoning code could require that these disparate uses all have the same bicycle storage solution. Moreover, mandating that each building or business provide its own bicycle parking could be inefficient when compared with a shared or community-based option.

The Chamber supports most of the proposed Bicycle Element's goals, and is encouraged by the changes made since the draft. However, the use of the zoning code to add mandates on by-right developments could have unintended consequences or create more burdens for business than benefits for cyclists. We encourage the Board to remove or amend this implementation action prior to adopting the proposed plan.

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; and Department of Environmental Services Director Greg Emanuel and Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs Manager Richard Viola