



April 19, 2019

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

Dear Chair Dorsey,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce thanks the County Board for its action in February not to impose a moratorium on Special GLUP Study applications as it considers revisions to the study process. The Chamber appreciates County staff's engagement with business stakeholders, but remains concerned with the absence of an explicit reference to County Board approval of study procedures in the proposed amendment to the GLUP Booklet in Attachment C of the staff report for Item 40 J on the Board's agenda for April 23. Furthermore, the recommended process refinements in Attachment D, and in the draft Special GLUP Study Administrative Guide which staff has circulated for comment, do not address the root concerns that we, and other stakeholders, have raised with prior proposals.

The Chamber requests that the County Board amend the resolution amending the GLUP Booklet to state explicitly that the County Board would approve the Special GLUP Study Administrative Guide and any subsequent changes thereto. Without such an explicit statement, there is a risk of administrative undoing in the future of processes agreed by stakeholders, approved by the Board, and put in place following this year's efforts. We further request that the Board direct staff to continue their engagement with business stakeholders and to refine the process recommendation prior to adoption of the Special GLUP Study Administrative Guide to mitigate the root concerns that the Chamber, and other stakeholders, continue to raise.

The proposal for a semiannual, two-stage review process does not address our concerns about the timeliness of application reviews. The proposal allows for as long as eight months between submission and review by the Long Range Planning Committee, and possibly more than a year before a full study. Moreover, the inclusion of "level of staff effort" as a criterion for acceptance could discourage applicants from submitting proposals with a broad scope, potentially inhibiting more comprehensive planning for Special GLUP Study sites. The proposed process is shorter than the initially-proposed annual review cycle, but does not eliminate the root concern about long delays adding a burden to applicants.

The recommendation also does not resolve the concern that the Initial Review phase will create winners and losers without a full study of all applications. The updated proposal provides relief channels for applications not recommended for a study, but does not ensure that an application ever receives full consideration. Without a mechanism that guarantees all applications a full study within a reasonable period of time, neighborhoods and communities whose applications are not recommended for review could be left behind indefinitely. As such, the proposed process does not resolve the root concern of ensuring that all projects get a full review.

Organizations with an interest in the Special GLUP Study process – the Chamber, our members, and others – have expressed a desire to work with County staff to determine a process that resolves staff's workload concerns while ensuring consideration for all Special GLUP Study applications. The current recommendation addresses several of the examples raised about issues with earlier proposals, but it does not resolve the core

of our concerns. We therefore request that the County Board amend the resolution in Attachment C to ensure that the Board will approve the adoption of and any subsequent changes to the Special GLUP Study Administrative Guide, and that it direct staff to continue working with business stakeholders on refinements to the 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 Tulloch Rhodes and Kelsey Steffen, CPHD – Planning Division