



March 17, 2023

Christian Dorsey  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Dorsey,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce supports Item 33 on the March 18 County Board Agenda: Adoption of the Expanded Housing Option (Missing Middle) Ordinance. Allowing for more density and a greater diversity of housing types in Arlington's single-family neighborhoods is an important component of ensuring that Arlington is a welcoming place to residents across all income levels, which is important to our workforce as well as to our community.

We are concerned that a cap on permits will minimize the positive effects that this ordinance could bring on housing affordability and attainability. For this reason, we urge the County Board to adopt the ordinance with Option 7B, which would not include an annual cap on permits. Given the nature of permitting in Arlington and the costs of building, it is unlikely that builders would go through the trouble of applying to build expanded housing options when they can build more expensive homes by-right without additional hassle. The Chamber is also concerned that with the County handling distribution of permits, any process would inadvertently result in the County determining who can build and who cannot.

The Chamber urges the County Board to adopt the Ordinance with Option 7B, and with other options that ensure the greatest flexibility for expanding the supply and diversity of housing within Arlington. We appreciate the extent to which the County has engaged with the public on this matter. Also, we hope that the County remain mindful that reimagining the county's housing policies will extend beyond the contents of this Ordinance and the County's existing efforts.

We thank you for your consideration of our comments, and for all the hard work on this ordinance from the County Board and from Staff leading up to this point.

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 Libby Garvey, and members Matt de Ferranti, Katie Cristol, and Takis Karantonis; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Planning Director Anthony Fusarelli; Principal Planner Matthew Ladd.