



March 23, 2023

Mr. Mark Schwartz
Arlington County Manager
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 310
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear County Manager Schwartz,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce appreciates the significant efforts by County staff thus far for the proposed FY 2024 budget. We applaud you for presenting a budget that includes only minimal increases to the tax rate. It is important that the County is a good steward of taxpayer funds and makes sometimes tough choices in leaner times such as now. However, we request that the County restore the Assistant Director of Arlington Economic Development (AED) and Associate Planner in Community Planning and Housing Development (CPHD) positions. These positions are part of greater investments in the ability of the County government to accomplish policy goals. In addition, we were pleased by appropriations of funds allotted for AED and CPHD. However, we wish to remind the County to ensure that AED has the sufficient resources to attract businesses and investments in the County, which fuel the other budgets. We ask that the County should be mindful that Planning should have the adequate funding necessary to complete their current projects and obligations in a timely and efficient manner.

We request that the Assistant Director position Arlington Economic Development (AED) remain in the budget and avoid the proposed elimination. The Assistant Director is a vital administrative role for AED whose role allows the Director, Deputy Director, and other executives to fulfill their primary responsibilities and directives more successfully. We concur with both the Economic Development Commission and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Commission that losing the position would cause significant negative consequences. This would occur at a time when the County should be a strong supporter of AED's efforts to promote economic development, and both attract and retain businesses of all sizes.

In addition, the Chamber requests that the County avoid the elimination of the vacant Associate Planner role. As the Department of Community Planning & Housing Development moves ahead with significant projects such as Project Langston Boulevard, the Future of Outdoor Dining Study, and Missing Middle, it is essential that the Department has adequate resources and staff. We have previously urged the County to move ahead briskly, particularly on outdoor dining and Plan Langston Boulevard. We want Planners to be equipped to complete these projects in a timely manner, while also being able to attend to other planning work.

Furthermore, we were encouraged to hear that bringing a final Plan Langston Boulevard and providing implementation strategies is a major priority for this year. We also urge the Department to consider that a top priority alongside lower-hanging fruit such as the outdoor dining regulations. As the Department has been working on multiple major projects concurrently, we wish to ensure that they can complete and implement these projects concurrently as well.

We commend the County Staff for their efforts so far in the budget process. We understand that the County is facing tough budgetary decisions, but we strongly urge the County not to lose

sight of the necessity of providing important departments with the requisite resources to succeed in their projects and efforts to promote a better Arlington.

We look forward to continuing our engagement as the process continues over the next several months.

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: County Board Chair Christian Dorsey, Vice Chair Libby Garvey and Members Katie Cristol, Matt de Ferranti and Takis Karantonis; Budget Director Richard Stephenson; Assistant Budget Director Emily Hughes; Planning Director Anthony Fusarelli Jr.; Arlington Economic Development Director Ryan Touhill.