



May 21, 2024

Chair Libby Garvey
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Garvey,

On behalf of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, I wish to express our strong support for Item 39 on the May 21 County Board agenda, the Special GLUP Study for the Melwood property at 750 South 23rd Street. We ask that the County Board adopt the GLUP Study document and advertise public hearings for the adoption of the GLUP amendments.

Melwood's request to change the GLUP designation of their property from "Public" to "Low-Medium Residential" is part of their proposal to transform their existing workforce development center into a mixed-use space. As noted in the Study Document, the new facility will house Melwood's workforce development services and programs on the ground floor, while the upper floors would include approximately 100 affordable housing units through their partnership with Welsey Housing, a leading nonprofit affordable housing provider. 30 percent of these affordable units would be set aside for people with disabilities.

Arlington and Northern Virginia at large are facing a shortage of affordable housing for our residents. Finding an affordable place to live independently in the Northern Virginia region is already difficult, and the barriers are greater for people with disabilities. This project would help alleviate the shortage of affordable housing, and further the goal of the Livability 22202 Action Plan of providing "a balanced diversity of housing types, from single family homes to townhouses, condominiums, and apartments."

Melwood is a longstanding member of the Arlington community, and this project will positively impact the Aurora Highlands neighborhood, where Melwood has had a presence for many years. We are encouraged that the redevelopment of this property will provide affordable housing for some of most vulnerable residents, while maintaining a commitment to Melwood's existing on-site workforce development programs and additional services.

We encourage the Board to recommend the adoption of the GLUP Study document and support the Melwood redevelopment as it goes through the 4.1 Site Plan process. We thank you for your consideration of our 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: Vice-Chair Takis Karantonis; County Board Members Maureen Coffey, Susan Cunningham, and Matt De Ferranti; CPHD Director Samia Byrd; County Manager Mark Schwartz.