



May 13, 2024

Chair Leonardo Sarli  
Zoning Committee  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 700  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Sarli and Members of the Zoning Committee,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce supports the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that would permit additional density above a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 10.0 for existing and unbuilt site plan developments in the Rosslyn zoning district. The Chamber has been a steadfast supporter in providing businesses, property owners and site plan developers with greater flexibility to meet market needs. Providing flexibility in the floor-area ratio of site plan developments can bolster the commercial resiliency of Rosslyn's existing and future buildings.

Arlington is contending with a historically high commercial vacancy rate of 22.1% that is already creating constraints on the County's ability to collect tax revenue. Arlington Economic Development estimated that a typical building with a 50% occupancy rate generates 58% of the total local tax revenue of a 100% occupied building. Losing this revenue limits Arlington County's capacity to provide public services. It is crucial for the County to implement policies to sustain occupancy, activate Arlington's office market, and reposition nonperforming commercial buildings where necessary.

Currently, the maximum FAR in the Rosslyn zoning district is set at 10.0, and there are very limited circumstances by which the County Board may permit a greater FAR for a certain project. Enabling increased density above 10.0 FAR under site plan would provide an avenue for businesses and property owners to activate the Rosslyn commercial market and incentivize the creation of more projects that may better serve the needs of Rosslyn businesses and those wishing to locate to Rosslyn.

We look forward to continuing our engagement as the conversation surrounding these Zoning Ordinances continues before the Planning Commission and the County Board. 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: Planning Commission; CPHD Director Samia Byrd; Planning Director Anthony Fusarelli Jr.; Arlington Economic Development Director Ryan Touhill.