



November 12, 2025

The Honorable Takis P. Karantonis, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Karantonis,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce encourages the County Board to convene a stakeholders group and develop a specific policy proposal prior to advocating for any amendments to Commonwealth law concerning affordable housing contribution requirements from developers.

Proposing any statutory change prior to fully evaluating and vetting the underlying issue of housing affordability would be premature. It is important to ensure that all potential implications, stakeholder perspectives, and legal considerations are carefully reviewed before advancing a specific policy proposal. Moving forward too quickly could create reputational concerns or the perception that the proposal was submitted without sufficient due diligence.

A more deliberate approach will allow for a comprehensive analysis and a stronger, well-supported recommendation. To that end, the Chamber encourages Arlington County to build upon the progress of the Affordable Housing Ordinance Working Group by convening a broad coalition, including the Chamber, the development industry, housing advocates, and community members. A collaborative process with such a group should identify specific, impactful housing policies and potential statutory changes.

The County successfully utilized this collaborative approach in 2005 when it convened the Affordable Housing Roundtable. Arlington's County Board, legislative delegation, development industry and the business community produced a policy framework that worked for all interests in order to jointly ensure the ability for Arlington County to receive affordable housing contributions. That framework was ultimately enacted into law without significant opposition.

The Chamber believes in the need to address our shortage of housing units at all price points, and we encourage the County to focus on policies that enable and incentivize the production of new housing units.

Private development is the primary driver of new housing supply in Arlington; however, private development activity is slowing due to rising costs and less favorable financing conditions. With profit margins for many projects already thin, imposing additional requirements such as increases in cash contributions risks further discouraging development or passing costs along to homebuyers and tenants, thus driving up housing costs.

If Arlington County seeks to review or alter existing housing development contributions, new policies must align with the realities of development economics. There is also a need for Arlington to remain a competitive place of choice for new private investment and to avoid the unintended consequence of discouraging new housing.

To that end, we urge the County Board to focus on strategies that expand supply, strengthen Arlington's competitiveness, and ensure long-term housing affordability for all residents.

The Chamber appreciates the hard work that went into the proposed legislative package and will share a full set of responses to the agenda following its final adoption. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Kate" and "Bates" being capitalized and prominent.

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: Arlington County Board Vice-Chair Matt de Ferranti; County Board Members Maureen Coffey, Susan Cunningham, and Julius D. "JD" Spain, Sr.; Arlington County Manager Mark Schwartz; CPHD Director Samia Byrd; Legislative & Policy Analyst Bryan Estey.