



April 3, 2026

Chair Nia Bagley
Arlington County Planning Commission
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Bagley,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce acknowledges that the Fiscal Year 2027 budget process requires difficult choices. As the County navigates economic uncertainty, it is crucial that the final adopted budget reflects a commitment to fostering the investment and development activity on which Arlington depends. We thank the County Board, County Manager, and Staff for not proposing tax increases that specifically target businesses, including not increasing the meals tax, business tangible personal property tax, or the BPOL tax.

We ask the Planning Commission to build on this positive work by recommending that the County Board remove any proposed increases to Community Planning and Housing Development (CPHD) and Department of Environmental Services fees (in particular, the Adaptive Reuse Amendment and GLUP study fee increases).

With respect to fees, doubling the cost of a GLUP Study fee, after it tripled the previous year, will have a substantial impact upon the cost of development and make Arlington a less competitive location for investment. Given that most GLUP amendments in Arlington convert land from commercial use to mixed-use or residential use, this would have the contradictory effect of increasing the cost of projects that increase the County's housing supply.

Such increases would not solely affect major developments. For example, if a developer goes through a GLUP study, the new fee would be \$165,469, regardless of the size of the site or project. This increase of more than 500 percent over the fee amount two years ago is dramatic and will affect projects by big and small developers/nonprofit organizations alike.

In addition, nearly tripling the cost of Adaptive Reuse Amendments, as proposed in this fee schedule, would make Arlington less competitive for those projects, just as the County's Adaptive Reuse Policy is beginning to result in tangible benefits to the County's commercial vacancy rate.

The Chamber recognizes that this year's budget presents tough decisions, and we thank the County for avoiding tax increases that target businesses. We urge the Planning Commission to recommend that the County Board remove the proposed fee increases. 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 Commissioners.