



May 14, 2026

Chair Matt de Ferranti  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair de Ferranti,

On behalf of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, I write to request that the County Board adopt Item 33 on the County Board agenda, the adaptive reuse site plan amendment to convert 1800 and 1901 S. Bell Street into residential use. This project would advance the goals of the County's Adaptive Reuse policy and continue the transformation of Crystal City into a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood.

This proposal would transform two obsolete, mostly vacant office buildings into more than 310 residential units in a transit-rich neighborhood. It promotes the core goals of the Commercial Market Resiliency Initiative by removing obsolete office buildings from the market and replacing them with new uses in line with market demand. Notably, this project includes larger residential units with more bedrooms, helping to alleviate the shortage of family-sized housing units in the metro corridors in Arlington.

The project reflects the modern Crystal City neighborhood. As seen with the adoption of the Crystal Drive projects last year, Crystal City has grown to meet rising residential demand and has been evolving into a vibrant community for both workers and a growing number of residents.

The Chamber reiterates our strong support for the County's focused efforts to combat office vacancy challenges facing Arlington's commercial real estate market. The streamlined process for adaptive reuse projects encourages the timely activation of building currently hosting obsolete office space. It is crucial that the County Board and Staff continue to recognize the strong community benefits that adaptive reuse projects generate solely by removing office space from the market and by activating new multifamily housing or hotel uses.

We request that the County Board adopt this project, and we look forward to seeing these buildings become key components of a more vibrant and thriving Crystal City neighborhood. Thank you for your consideration of our 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: Vice-Chair Maureen Coffey; County Board Members Susan Cunningham, Takis Karantonis, and Julius D. "JD" Spain, Sr.; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Project Planner Courtney Badger.