



July 17, 2020

Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Garvey,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce supports the request by the applicant, and others, for more flexibility in the height plan for the Shirlington Special General Land Use Plan Study Plus and Concept Plan. We believe that given flexibility, stakeholders can agree on designs that will meet the Special GLUP Study's goals of an economically feasible project that connects Shirlington with its surrounding neighborhoods. The Chamber thus encourages the County Board either to amend the staff proposal to include flexibility for evaluating heights through the site planning process or to defer consideration to allow the applicant and its neighbors to collaborate on a revised height plan.

The rigidity of the proposed height map will inhibit the plan's goals and may lead to the outcomes that it seeks to prevent. Ideally, the GLUP should grant height flexibility and include language that preserves the balance and the openness that the applicant and community are seeking. The proposed heights are justified as a guard against creating a curtain on the perimeter of Shirlington. However, the lower heights may necessitate building to the full building envelope to achieve the project's goals, creating the curtain effect. Height flexibility would allow for sculpting and tailoring to the community's needs.

Any building that will be constructed will go through the site planning process. There will be Long Range Planning Committee meetings to review changes to the phased development site plan and Site Plan Review Committees for each individual site. The community and the developer will be able to work on designing the structures to ensure that they create the welcoming environment that all envision today. Granting height flexibility allows these processes to reach creative solutions; limiting permissible heights inhibits their ability to find designs that serve all parties' interests.

There is potential for fruitful and collaborative community discussions to create a shared vision for Shirlington's development. We ask the County Board to give space for these conversations. Thank you for your consideration of these 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: Arlington County Board members Katie Cristol, Matt de Ferranti, Christian Dorsey, and Takis Karantonis; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Margaret Tulloch Rhodes, Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development