Good afternoon,

My name is Bismah Ahmed, representing the Apartment and Office Building Association (AOBA), which represents a membership with over 25 million in commercial square footage and over 28 thousand residential multifamily units in Arlington. I’m sorry for getting comments about the proposed changes to the GLUP Study to you later than advertised, however I did want to express concerns that our members have.

The proposed, two-tiered application review process for a Special GLUP Study will significantly add to the time and costs of projects, leading to a negative impact on economic development in Arlington. Although the proposed process streamlines the workflow for planning staff, it is more onerous for applicants of the Special GLUP Study projects.

Under this proposal, a Special GLUP Study could potentially experience a two-year delay before starting the site plan process. This leaves the County virtually unable to respond to opportunities that merit immediate study throughout the year. Although Fairfax County implements a similar application process, it allows for its Board of Supervisors to hear motions for off-cycle projects, ensuring that vital projects stay in the County. Although the proposal creates workflow certainty for staff, it lacks a mechanism to respond to an opportunity that arises during the year that merits immediate study. Additionally, the proposal includes a separation of the Special GLUP Study and Site Plan Review, which makes it harder for participants during the application process.

This proposed change in process diminishes predictability to the Special GLUP Study process for the applicants and increases the difficulty that prospective developers would have in forecasting the market that their project would face with that timeline could have the unintended consequence of discouraging development.

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