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July 22, 2015



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



Dear Chairman Hynes:



The Arlington Chamber of Commerce appreciates the changes that have been made to the draft Realize Rosslyn Sector Plan (the "Plan") in response to concerns raised by the Chamber (in our June 12 letter), the Rosslyn BID, the Economic Development Commission and other stakeholders. Furthermore, we support the language in the proposed resolution which clarifies the role of the Plan as a guiding document and not a regulatory document. Unfortunately, the Plan in its current form has not yet addressed key aspects of the Chamber's concerns and those of other business stakeholders for us to be able to support the Plan.



Our members continue to actively follow the development of the Plan, and have done so since its inception as participants in the public portion of the process. The Chamber appreciates the significant time and effort expended by staff and the community in creating this Plan. The Chamber continues to endorse the Realize Rosslyn Framework and guiding principles adopted in April 2014 that delineate the worthy goals the plan is attempting to achieve. However, the Chamber is gravely concerned that the Plan as currently crafted will lead to stagnation rather than implementation because it fails to adequately incentivize property owners to redevelop their properties.



The Chamber's remaining concerns include:



**Economic Impact** - As the Economic Development Commission July 21 letter states, any new development will be driven by market demand and the Plan needs to take that into consideration. The Chamber believes that density maximums should not be imposed in a sector plan on a site by site basis as the current Plan contemplates. The Chamber would specifically like to highlight and appreciate the addition of the statement on page 154, "The Plan recommends that the County Board



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should have the ability to consider, in specific instances, additional density above 10.0 FAR, where it could be consistent with the overall vision of the sector plan and where modifications could be granted by the County Board where: 1) Major Plan goals are advanced; and/or 2) Transfer of Development Rights are applied; and 3) Additional density is consistent within form-based building height and form guidelines.” Such language is a welcome step in the right direction. However, the Chamber continues to believe that on many important sites the Plan currently does not allow the incentive required to encourage redevelopment.

**Community Benefits** - The Plan needs to responsibly balance community benefits. Specifically of concern is balance between the views from the Observation Deck with the cornucopia of community benefits addressed in the Plan and facilitated through site plan process. The Chamber is excited about many of the planned improvements throughout Rosslyn.

Additionally, strong direction from the Board in support of the critical role that developer contributions and improvements will play in the Plan is crucial. The Chamber is encouraged by the additional language that provides that actions and improvements that further one or more goals of the Plan be eligible for community benefit credit through the establishes processes. But without additional encouragement, this will probably be the first Sector Plan in Arlington history that would effectively remove planned density. Thus as it stands, the Chamber believes that an economic analysis of the implications of this Plan on the County’s future revenue remains imperative.

**Building Height** - The Chamber’s concerns about the hyper-specific height recommendations contained in the Plan remain unaddressed. We believe the best way to achieve the vision and goals in the Plan are to encourage and allow architects to design buildings that will create world class architecture and a varied skyline. The SPRC process should provide the opportunity for property owners to work with County staff to achieve the Plan’s goals. Maximum heights should be determined by plan goals and FAA regulations rather than by the proposed building heights (page 169).

Of most concern is the language protecting the view of the Potomac River Gorge which seems overly prescriptive and not significant enough

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to warrant a specific height restriction. This is especially true given that the main view of the Gorge is considered unlikely to be redeveloped during the next 20 years (Map 2.6, Figure 2.1). In addition, we have significant concerns that the Planning Commission recommendation of protecting views from Rosslyn to the west through Court House is economically untenable. We worry that such a proposal would further and significantly hinder the necessary redevelopment that would allow the Plan to come to fruition.

We appreciate the opportunity to voice our concerns on behalf of the business community.

Sincerely,

Kevin Shooshan  
Chair

Kate Roche  
President & CEO

CC: Arlington County Board members Jay Fisette, Libby Garvey, Walter Tejada, John Vihstadt