

ANNUAL CORPORATE SPONSORS



April 7, 2016

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



Dear Chairman Garvey:



The Chamber would like to take this opportunity to lend its support to two different funding proposals that would enhance economic development in Arlington, as expressed as testimony at the March 31 budget hearing by Chamber Director and Government Affairs Committee Co-Chair Brian Gordon. We would also like to support an additional request that was brought to our attention for additional resources for long term planning.



First, the Arlington Chamber strongly supports the Economic Development Incentive Fund included in the County Manager's proposed budget. This was a part of the Chamber's 2016 Local Policy Positions and will be invaluable to Arlington Economic Development as they attract and retain growing businesses. The program requirements and necessary thresholds prudently leverage County funds into a significantly higher expected return back to Arlington. We would like to specifically thank the County Manager proposing it as part of his budget.



Second, Arlington got its additional TOT surcharge back. Thank you to both the Board Members and Staff for your hard work, persistence, and partnership with the Chamber in this lengthy endeavor. For too long now, the Arlington Convention & Visitors Service (ACVS) had to hold down the proverbial fort with a dwindling budget. In addition to fully funding the ACVS portion of AED as proposed by the County Manager, the Chamber strongly encourages the County Board to re-implement a TOT Fund.



The Chamber is concerned that switching funds out of tourism promotion from this year's budget will not be perceived well in Richmond in two years, when the Chamber leads our advocacy efforts to try to remove the sunset provision. More importantly however, this level of funding would allow Arlington to catch up and market our County's tourism attractions and amenities in places we have not been able to in quite some time. ACVS will be able to explore new opportunities and expand our marketing reach in a way that just could not be done when funding remained significantly below FY2011 levels.



The Chamber has always appreciated the importance of comprehensive planning for Arlington County to strengthen our community. For this fiscal



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year, we express our support for the request from the Lee Highway Alliance to begin the full planning process immediately following pre-planning. Lee Highway is a key commercial district that requires an updated plan in order to evolve into a vibrant, walkable corridor. This additional funding would allow the County to continue the momentum for this important effort without impacting the scheduled Columbia Pike and Crystal City Plan Reviews or the planned Four Mile Run Initiative.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of the Chamber's requests.

Sincerely,

Kate Bates  
President & CEO

CC: Arlington County Board members Jay Fisette, John Vihstadt, Katie Cristol, Christian Dorsey and County Manager Mark Schwartz