November 12, 2015

Ms. Mary Hynes, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Ballston Quarter Site Plan #193 Amendments

Dear Chair Hynes,

I am writing to express the view of the Transportation Commission regarding the Ballston Quarter Site Plan redevelopment.

The Transportation Commission, by a vote of 11-0-1 recommends that the County Board approve the redevelopment as outlined in the County Manager’s recommendation.

The Commission recognizes the importance of pedestrian access to the sidewalks along Wilson Boulevard and Glebe Road to site navigation and the commission supports staff’s revision to maintain pedestrian circulation on these frontages during construction.

In addition, the Commission recommends that Staff and the applicant continue to work together to ensure we have sufficient sidewalk clear width on the Wilson Boulevard frontage.

The Commission heard this item at its meeting on Thursday October 29th. The Commission heard a presentation from the applicant and from staff. There was one public speaker from the ad-hoc Save the Bridge Coalition who supported the project. Commission discussion centered mainly on pedestrian circulation through and around the development.

I am happy to answer any questions at 571-482-8454 or chris@dodgersden.com.

Best,

Christopher Slatt,
Chairman
November 17, 2015

Mary Hynes, Arlington County Board Chair
2100 Clarendon Blvd
Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

RE: Ballston Quarter – Economic Development Commission Support for Approval of Site Plan Amendments and Letter of Intent (LOI) for a Public-Private Partnership

Dear Chairperson Hynes,

I am writing on behalf of the Arlington County Economic Development Commission (EDC) to express our strong support for the Ballston Quarter project, and the related public-private partnership as laid out in the LOI, that will be considered by the County Board at your November 17, 2015 meeting.

The EDC recognizes that this is a critical and precarious moment in time with regard to Ballston’s economic and fiscal health. The Ballston Common Mall site has long been the center of Ballston, but the positive impacts of the Mall as currently comprised have waned. The proposed Ballston Quarter project will reverse this downward trend and be an important catalyst for both short and long term investment in Ballston. The EDC recognizes the significant place making benefits the redeveloped site will garner, and the direct and indirect/induced fiscal benefits that will be generated through the County’s participation in the Ballston Quarter development. Thus, the EDC views the County’s participation in the Ballston development as an essential strategic investment opportunity, and one that the County cannot afford to miss.

The EDC recognizes that the proposed financial partnership, particularly the use of a Community Development Authority, is new to Arlington. The EDC also recognizes that the use of such a tool is relatively unique to the Ballston Quarter project, which is a development opportunity that will promote regional economic significance and one that is critically important to the future of Ballston as a commercial center in the County. The EDC further supports the low risk that the CDA finance tool represents to the County’s balance sheet. This approach represents the kind of innovation that the EDC recommended in the Innovation Economy Strategy provided to the County Board in 2014. In the future, the EDC encourages the Board to review other requests for CDA partnerships with the same critical eye along with other innovative partnership tools that can create impactful economic development opportunities.

The EDC approved Guiding Principles for advising the County Board at the November 10, 2015 meeting. The Ballston Quarter project and public-private partnership directly relates to many of these Guiding Principles, including:

- *Business Growth and Retention:* Provides a retail and mixed-use environment that can attract and retain unique, high-quality retailers and vastly improve the options for rebuilding commercial office occupancy.
Arlington Economic Development Commission

- **Economic Sustainability**: Creates a more resilient and sustainable mix of uses and retailers that is reflective of the marketplace of today and in the future and provides an attractive destination that will attract and retain a diverse and talented workforce.

- **Comparative Context**: Reflects the reality that Ballston is no longer unique, and that continued reinvestments are required to recreate and maintain a competitive market advantage.

- **Fiscal and Economic Analysis**: Results from a sound and thorough analysis of the fiscal impact on the County, and provides net tax benefit with limited County risk, including the use of incremental tax dollars that would not be available but for the investment to finance the public investment.

- **Partnerships**: Shows the potential power of strategic partnership with private entities on projects that are transformative and affect the broader public good.

- **Community Appeal to Business**: Provides the facilities and services that will be a key marketing edge for Ballston when looking to attract and retain businesses, workers, residents and visitors.

- **Infrastructure**: Incudes significant investments in infrastructure, most notably to the County-owned public garage, that will provide a long-term benefit.

- **Corridor Vitality**: Intervenes in Ballston’s course of history at the right time by providing the catalyst for future, dynamic growth.

In conclusion, the EDC finds that the proposed project and public-private partnership is in line with our Guiding Principles and representative of sound economic development practices. It represents a strategic investment with broad impacts and little fiscal risk. The EDC strongly supports the approval of the proposed Ballston Quarter site plan amendments and the terms of the proposed LOI to support the revitalization of the Ballston Quarter project. The proposed Ballston Quarter project and related infrastructure investments will provide near- and long-term benefits to Ballston, and the associated fiscal gain justifies the bold and innovative financial partnership.

The EDC would like to commend the staff, stakeholders and County Board on the time and effort and resources that have been devoted to developing an innovative vision and strategy for redeveloping Ballston that will create an exciting and attractive destination for residents, businesses and tourists and provide important long term economic benefits to the County.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our advice and express our strong support for approval of the Site Plan Amendments and Letter of Intent (LOI) for a Public-Private Partnership.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Sally J Durán
Chair,
Economic Development Commission