



Memo: Our Shared Priorities

Dear County Board Members,

Each year, Arlington's Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) including the Rosslyn, Crystal City and Ballston BIDs outline a full complement of activities, programs and initiatives to promote and improve our neighborhoods via annual Work Plans. As experts embedded in our neighborhoods, Arlington's BIDs are equipped with both the staff and knowledge to most effectively determine the right mix and tone of programmatic offerings that will be most advantageous to the Districts we represent. In addition, BIDs often provide particular insight into larger policies and activities across Arlington which align with, and are conducive to, the joint goals of economic sustainability and placemaking. As a public-private partnership between the County and property owners, Arlington's BIDs provide the unique perspective needed to successfully reposition our respective areas while supporting and protecting the interests of the community as a whole.

It is through this lens that the BIDs present not only our individual programs for FY2018, but also suggest a number of approaches to policies and processes to help make Arlington more competitive in its ability to decrease vacancy rates and improve the overall experience of our Districts for residents, workers and visitors. These are policies and processes that typically fall under the purview of staff, Commissions and elected officials, but whose outcomes and results are most felt by the property owners and tenants of the Districts. Additionally, these policies and processes often influence the BIDs abilities to be responsive to the needs of the Districts we support, and sometimes, prevent the BIDs from performing the very work we have been directed to perform by the service agreements we hold with the County, and the work plans approved by the County Board.

For FY2018, the BIDs request that the County Board direct staff to consider the following:

1. Commercial Signage – consider implementing more sign area allowance, or alternate ways of calculating sign area allowance within BID commercial areas, including within building sign plans and specifically for retail tenants. Adequate sign area and varying sign types are needed, particularly in unique situations including retail without street frontage (i.e. retail that faces plazas and access areas to internal mall retail); commercial/retail with more than one frontage; and subdivided space where each tenant requires signage. Additionally, the BIDs request that the County explore non-traditional, non-permanent and/or short-term creative signage which provides for visual interest and adds to the placemaking and unique character in each community
2. Non Commercial Signage (Wayfinding) – workers, residents and visitors who navigate Arlington's urban districts expect adequate signage that directs them to both the commercial amenities (retail, office, hotels) and non-commercial amenities (parks, plazas, pedestrian zones/streets, and public amenities) in a single, uniform set of signs. As such, the County's signage should allow for both temporary and permanent free standing signs, as well as additional signage types such as wall or projecting signs for "bread crumb" uses supporting wayfinding which combine both commercial and non-commercial speech for the purpose of direction, identity and wayfinding around and within a

District. Additionally, wayfinding sign programs should be readily updateable and expandable through an administrative approval process to adequately and quickly respond to changes within a District.

3. Events – Although the special events process is straightforward, challenges still exist for certain temporary pop-up events that take place in commercial spaces, mainly due to the time-consuming nature of the permit process. In addition, additional food and beverage pop-ups could activate vacant retail space if a more streamlined and specific path existed that allowed exceptions to permanent tenant requirements for food establishments.
4. Streetscape- and Lighting – As BIDs consider streetscape and lighting elements that are reflective of their neighborhood’s character and brand, a more streamlined process for implementation of those streetscape elements is necessary. We also suggest the ability to administratively approve individual streetscape elements in various locations once the overall plan has been approved.
5. Alcohol Consumption in Certain Public Spaces – For all our BIDs, events are at the core of our individual attraction strategies for our urban neighborhoods. As such, there are certain types of events that are ideally held in public spaces (i.e. certain urban parks and public plazas) which include the sale and/or consumption of alcohol. However, only one public park in all of our Districts (Gateway Park) allows for the consumption of beer and wine. We suggest that Arlington consider amending its Administrative Regulations to allow alcohol sales and/or consumption in certain urban public parks and plazas, located within BID boundaries, under certain conditions wherein the BIDs or Partnerships (i.e. Clarendon Alliance and the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization) are involved in the production or sponsorship of the event.

Arlington’s BIDs continue to enjoy a close partnership with Arlington County staff as we work collectively to improve the competitiveness – and ultimately ensure the success – of all of Arlington. We look forward to working with County staff on the items outlined above and stand ready to act as close partners as we find solutions that benefit all those who live or work in Arlington.



Tina Leone, Director
Ballston BID



Angie Fox, Director
Crystal City BID



Mary-Claire Burick, Director
Rosslyn BID