

ARLINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

MAY 2024



ARLINGTON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ARLINGTON:
AN ALL-IN
DESTINATION
FOR JOB CREATORS,
THINKERS,
ENTREPRENEURS
AND CREATIVES.



MAY 2024

DEAR COMMUNITY MEMBERS,

It is with great enthusiasm that I share with you Arlington Economic Development's (AED) first strategic plan in over a decade.

This plan comes at a time when we are continuing to see strong economic performance in several areas – a 2.2% unemployment rate, 5,500 new jobs added in 2023, consumer and tourism spending on the rise, strong per capita household incomes and the landing of CoStar Group as a major corporate headquarters in Rosslyn in early 2024. We also have one of the strongest talent pools in the nation with 76% of our local workforce possessing a college degree or higher and a strong quality of life that continues to attract a diverse and dynamic population.

However, we still have work to do. The shift to virtual work following the pandemic has reduced demand for traditional office space. This is devaluing some of our commercial real estate and continues to impact those businesses that once thrived from a robust daytime population of workers in our commercial districts. High interest rates in 2023 have also slowed development – which means we are not seeing as strong a real estate sector as we have had in the past. Arlington is also home to high household incomes, but disparities in wealth creation still exist for our Black and Latino families. While the arrival of Amazon in 2019 catalyzed the growth of our tech economy, we still have a tech talent pipeline to fill. Finally, external forces such as automation, AI and further reductions in the federal workforce all indicate that we need to remain steadfast in building a diverse and resilient economy where all members of our community can thrive.



This strategic plan lays out a framework to do just that. It is organized around five major goals and includes a set of strategies and actions with measurable outcomes. It provides a strategic direction that will guide our team and decision-making for the next five years. We stand ready to deliver on the programs that are already successful and explore new ideas to meet the evolving needs and economic challenges of tomorrow.

This plan came together with the help of many community members, stakeholders and county staff during the fall and winter of 2023. We are grateful for the insights, support, and enthusiasm of all who participated. Here at Arlington Economic Development, we are all in on creating a more prosperous Arlington and look forward to partnering with you to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan W. Touhill". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ryan Touhill

DIRECTOR

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01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Arlington County is a vibrant, highly educated community with a rich history and a commitment to business. Business owners and talent – from multi-generational, immigrant – owned small businesses to large technology enterprises – have ample opportunity here. The County leverages its proximity to the nation’s capital; and yet, Arlington stands out as a destination in its own right: a place where residents, businesses and visitors can enjoy high-quality restaurants, outdoor activities, public art and entertainment and economic opportunities.

THE ECONOMY OF ARLINGTON ALSO REFLECTS OPPORTUNITY. THE COUNTY’S TARGET INDUSTRIES:

- are based in technology – Internet of Things (IoT); Fintech; and Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning.
- include government contractors – Aerospace and Defense – with proximity to Washington, D.C.
- provide an opportunity to leverage the intersection of the above. The Arlington tech sector may not be as dynamic as Silicon Valley, but the County’s tech talent is reliable and produces high-quality, compliant technology and tech products.
- are ripe with high-earning opportunities but need to close the education and pay gaps for Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) residents.

Arlington has access to higher education – Marymount University, George Mason University, Northern Virginia

Community College, University of Virginia, Virginia Tech and other satellite campuses – and the talent these nearby institutions produce.

Meanwhile, the pandemic has created a new reality of how communities live and work. Over the past few years, the rise of remote and hybrid work has impacted commercial corridors and how office space is being used. As a longstanding leader in the office real estate market, Arlington has an opportunity to leverage this moment and blaze trails for new, innovative solutions that support its target industries. Place and space still matter in a post-pandemic world but in new and different ways. While the County faces immediate challenges in commercial real estate and affordable housing, it has an immense opportunity to reimagine and innovate its economic development and redevelopment approach.

The following pages reflect the key findings from research and engagement conducted in support of creating Arlington Economic Development’s (AED) Strategic Plan. This included a comprehensive demographic and economic assessment that evaluated the County’s performance across a variety of metrics as compared to a set of benchmark communities. It also included a look at Arlington’s industry clusters to inform future business attraction and expansion initiatives and a review of the real estate market in the County’s commercial centers. These findings combined with insights from staff and stakeholders led to the creation of the five key goals and supporting strategies that will guide AED’s efforts over the next several years.

02

DISCOVERY AND ENGAGEMENT

THE FOLLOWING INSIGHTS HIGHLIGHT THE OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS IDENTIFIED THROUGH RESEARCH AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT.





STATE OF THE COUNTY

1. ARLINGTON IS THE NATION'S KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY, DRIVEN BY TECHNOLOGY, BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, ARTS AND CULTURE AND EDUCATION.

Arlington is well known for its high concentration of educated residents, garnering recognition as the “most educated city in the U.S.” by news sources like Axios. Nearly eight in ten adults, ages 25 and older, hold a bachelor’s degree. This is partly due to Arlington’s proximity to higher education institutions and Washington, D.C., which both produces and attracts talent.

These factors contribute to the County’s overall high household median income, high labor force participation rate and low unemployment rate. Additionally, they serve as a strong selling point for attracting other talent to the area and provide an incentive for businesses to relocate and expand into the region.

2. ARLINGTON’S GROWING POPULATION IS BECOMING MORE DIVERSE, BUT THE COUNTY IS LOSING ITS INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTS, AND EDUCATION AND INCOME GAPS PERSIST.

A community’s diversity contributes to its overall success. Stakeholders have explained that part of Arlington’s authenticity lies in its diversity – of people, businesses (both small and large) and experiences. But while Arlington’s population of residents of color continues to grow, the County’s high concentration of foreign-born residents has been declining. Additionally, race by race, income levels

and educational attainment lag behind White residents. Investments in and expansion of small business support, along with targeted sector-focused workforce development programs, could help improve these outcomes by providing attainable opportunities for wealth generation for all.

3. FLEXIBLE WORK OPTIONS HAVE SHAPED THE COUNTY’S NEW REALITY, FROM THE USE OF COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE TO WHO IS DRIVING FOOT TRAFFIC IN COMMERCIAL AREAS.

The flexibility of remote and hybrid work has changed the landscape of Arlington’s commercial centers and corridors. This creates both challenges and opportunities: challenges for the commercial real estate market and opportunities to reimagine how these areas can support the next generation of places to work, live, socialize and play.

Through stakeholder engagement, we learned that the visitor economy is still moving toward full pandemic recovery and Business Improvement Districts and neighborhood partnerships are the gateway to other attractions. Arlington’s BIDs comprise a unique collection of downtowns that attract visitors from all over the globe, country and region who stay overnight in hotels.

There is an opportunity to capitalize on placemaking efforts to continue increasing foot traffic to commercial districts through iconic art, events, cultural venues and festivals that draw visitation annually.

4. POLICY BARRIERS REGARDING REUSE AND REDEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTE TO ARLINGTON'S HIGH VACANCY RATES AND OUTDATED INVENTORY.

Arlington's economy has long prospered through its strong commercial real estate market, a key contributor to the municipality's tax revenue. Historically, the County has leveraged community benefit agreements with developers, directing funds toward investments in public art, affordable housing, public spaces and other initiatives.

However, the emergence of remote and hybrid work models has had a profound impact on the market, resulting in elevated office vacancy rates. These shifting dynamics present a fresh set of challenges for Arlington's commercial real estate and development sectors.

Presently, a 22% office vacancy rate underscores the evolving landscape and developers project that more than a quarter of the County's commercial real estate could become obsolete within the next five years.

Confronted with this formidable challenge, developers, policymakers, and the community must continue to explore innovative approaches and policies for development as called for in the Commercial Market Resiliency Initiative. Adapting existing inventory and creating new, contemporary multi-use spaces will be essential in navigating this transformative period.

5. AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE HOUSING IS NEEDED TO RETAIN EXISTING RESIDENTS AND ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES AND TALENT.

Like many communities across the U.S., Arlington is grappling with increasing housing prices. Presently, the County's typical home value stands at \$684,000, nearly six times the average household income and ranking 11th among peers. Additionally, the median rent in the County exceeds \$2,600, placing Arlington 10th among peers.

The percentage of cost-burdened households in Arlington is relatively low, but this is more a reflection of the overall higher average income in the County than of accessible housing and rental options.

To address this challenge, Arlington has undertaken various initiatives. A study on [missing middle housing](#) identified new housing types that could alleviate the County's supply shortage. Resources on [housing](#) and [rental](#) options, including a list of affordable units and County- and federally-funded housing grants, have been made available.

Furthermore, programs for homeowners – real estate tax relief, assistance with down payments and closing costs, and foreclosure counseling and legal aid, for example – are being facilitated.

Tackling affordability and accessibility issues in Arlington is not only a social imperative but also vital for strengthening the overall economy. Such efforts are a component of economic empowerment that can create pathways to stable rental housing options and homeownership for more Arlington households and serve as an incentive for businesses to expand or relocate to the County, knowing their employees will have access to affordable housing.

6. WITH TIES TO DEFENSE AND GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING, ARLINGTON'S TECH CLUSTER IS UNIQUE FROM OTHER MARKETS.

Three of Arlington's most competitive industries are directly tied to the development of technology products and services, with its strongest cluster in Aerospace and Defense.

This intersection of technology and government contracting is one of Arlington's major strengths and is a driver of the County's evolving identity as the place for advanced technology startups.

With proximity to the federal government and regulatory bodies, the County is advantageously positioned to attract tech investment. This strategic location facilitates collaboration between the public and private sectors, fostering innovation and technological advancements.



Roosevelt Memorial, Paul Manship

7. STRONG TALENT PIPELINES ARE BUILT THROUGH COLLABORATIONS AMONG ARLINGTON'S EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ANCHORS.

Arlington has access to higher education institutions, workforce development programs and training organizations that contribute to the strength of its talent pool.

However, stakeholder engagement revealed an opportunity for greater collaboration among these institutions and Arlington's target industries. Initiatives like Arlington's Talent Program show how workforce development can directly benefit the industries that power Arlington's economy.

Through this collaboration, employers' needs may be more adequately met and the County can connect both its traditional and nontraditional talent to career opportunities that retain them in the community.

8. A SECTOR-BASED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT APPROACH IS NECESSARY TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE CAREER PATHWAYS.

Workforce development that is centered on target industries offers a self-sustaining solution: As industries evolve, training does as well.

While AED has launched the Arlington Talent Program, which offers both traditional and nontraditional on-the-job training and apprenticeships, there is a need to expand the County's effort to support sector-focused workforce development so that talent pipelines are more sustainable.

Doing so will create greater opportunities for first-generation, international and underrepresented Arlington residents to gain the skills needed to participate in Arlington's growing technology industries.

9. MAJOR EMPLOYERS AND SMALL BUSINESSES CAN BENEFIT FROM ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE COUNTY.

AED's Business Investment Group (BIG) and BizLaunch currently serve as liaisons among the County, local businesses and major employers. Through stakeholder engagement, it became evident that more relationship building could help the private sector to better navigate public processes and strengthen opportunities for public-private partnering.

This type of engagement doesn't only benefit employers. Establishing stronger relationships with employers provides

the County with access to industry experts, who can help inform future economic development and planning decisions.

10. SMALL BUSINESSES WITHIN ARLINGTON CONTRIBUTE TO ITS IDENTITY AND OFFER A PATHWAY TO WEALTH GENERATION.

Arlington is home to more than 15,000 small businesses with 50 or fewer employees. These diverse and international small enterprises are what makes Arlington unique. In the County, 19% of businesses are owned by women and 22% of businesses are owned by residents of color.

Preserving and supporting these enterprises must be a key pillar of the County's economic development efforts, as they are high priorities for community stakeholders and policymakers alike.

Small businesses provide pathways for wealth generation and constitute the very fabric that attracts residents and visitors to experience Arlington.



11. ARLINGTON'S HOSPITALITY AND VISITOR ECONOMY IS IMPORTANT TO THE COUNTY'S IDENTITY AND FUTURE.

Arlington's tourism sector is a critical component of the County's economy. In 2022, Arlington welcomed visitors who spent more than \$3.9 billion. Tourism not only sustains more than 14,000 jobs but also contributes \$150 million in local tax receipts.

Beyond its economic impact, the County's destination development efforts play a pivotal role in enhancing quality of place and creating enjoyable experiences for residents and visitors alike.

As the County embarks on the journey to reimagine and redevelop underutilized spaces and districts, policies that support and foster hospitality, entertainment and visitor offerings become essential for shaping the future of its diverse districts.

12. ARTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN ARLINGTON, BUT MORE CAN BE DONE TO EXPAND THESE EFFORTS AS PART OF LARGER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.

For many Arlington stakeholders, the steadfast dedication to preserving and promoting art and culture as a public good remains a top priority.

Implementing placemaking and placekeeping activations across the community not only enhances the quality of life for current residents but also renders these spaces appealing to visitors and potential future inhabitants.

Despite the ongoing presence of art and cultural initiatives – public art, festivals and events and art services – many stakeholders voice a keen interest in leveraging the arts and creative industries within the County to propel economic development, foster new enterprises and establish fresh cultural venues and communal spaces.

13. ARLINGTON'S ECONOMIC AND DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT COULD BENEFIT FROM A FOCUSED STRATEGY THAT TELLS THE COUNTY'S STORY THROUGH MULTIPLE LENSES.

Arlington has long been recognized for its proximity to Washington, D.C. In the past, this has proven beneficial for the County: filling up hotels during congressional sessions, providing housing for families working in D.C. and attracting businesses desiring proximity to the federal government. However, because Arlington's online presence lags behind its peers, this advantage is not promoted widely enough.

With the introduction of the new "All in Arlington" destination brand, the County is showcasing its unique strengths. Expanding this message to include other aspects of the County – business retention and expansion efforts, talent attraction – could provide a cohesive narrative that sets Arlington apart.





ARLINGTON'S TARGET INDUSTRIES

The identification and evaluation of Arlington's target industries is the foundation for supporting future business attraction, expansion and relocation efforts. This process also informs the development of incentives, giving the County direction on which companies to prioritize. Ultimately, it helps to shape a narrative that resonates with new enterprises, site selectors and talent.

**It's important to note that due to technology's ever-evolving nature, the NAICS and SIC codes used to define the Internet of Things and Fintech clusters are not exact and serve as proxies to define the potential Arlington offers to companies within these sectors.*

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE KEY TARGET CLUSTERS FOR ARLINGTON:

INTERNET OF THINGS

The IoT cluster is Arlington's biggest, both in terms of employees (49,000) and GRP (\$9.6 billion). It has the lowest automation risk, with fewer than 7% of jobs at above-average risk.

Arlington's IoT earnings per job (\$167,376) are slightly higher than the nation's average IoT salary (\$130,883). The share of employment is 4.5 times higher than the national average. Arlington's IoT employment increased by 15% in the past five years, slightly lower than the national average of 21%. And the

retirement risk—the percent of employees 55 or older—is slightly lower in Arlington (20%) than across the nation (24%).

Major assets in this cluster include the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency, Deloitte Cyber IoT Studio and the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus. Additionally, there are plans to make Arlington's National Landing neighborhood the first 5G smart city. The IoT cluster is productive, with a GRP per worker of \$195,199.

CYBERSECURITY, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND MACHINE LEARNING

The Cybersecurity, AI and Machine Learning industries comprise Arlington's top-ranked cluster in terms of resilience: It is well-educated (77% with a bachelor's degree) and has a low retirement risk (20%).

Within this cluster, earnings per job in Arlington (\$166,803) are slightly higher than the national average (\$146,072) and the County's share of employment is more than four times greater than the nation's average. With just a 1% increase over the past five years, Arlington's employment growth is significantly lower than the national average of 18%. The retirement risk is slightly lower in Arlington (20%) than across the nation (21%).

Major companies include Accenture, Deepsig and Interos. The cluster's talent pool is bolstered by the National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense at George Mason University, Marymount University and Virginia Tech. The cluster has a GRP of \$5.3 billion and a GRP per worker of \$219,042.

CORPORATE AND REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Arlington's most equitable cluster is Corporate and Regional Headquarters, which has the highest share of female employment (54%) and the highest earnings per job (\$225,000).

In this cluster, Arlington's earnings per job (\$225,000) are significantly higher than the national average (\$158,900) and the County's share of employment is 7% higher than the national average. Employment increased by 8% in the past five years, which is slightly lower than the national average of 11%. The retirement risk (22%) is on par with the national average (23%).

Benefiting from a favorable business environment in Virginia, Arlington's proximity to Washington D.C. is an additional asset to the County, as it allows headquarters to be located close to the nation's policymaking center. Top companies such as Amazon, Bloomberg Industry Group, Deloitte and Nestle have located their headquarters in Arlington. The cluster has a GRP of \$1.2 billion and a GRP per worker of \$257,329.

AEROSPACE AND DEFENSE

Aerospace and Defense is Arlington's most competitive cluster. It has the highest location quotient, with a share of employment that is more than six times higher than the national average. It also has the highest share of exported sales (87%).

Arlington's earnings per job (\$134,951) are on par with the national average in this cluster (\$127,183) and employment increased by 13% in the past five years, significantly faster than the national average of 1%. The retirement risk is slightly higher in Arlington (34% of employees are 55 or older) compared to the national average for this cluster (31%).

Major Aerospace and Defense companies in Arlington include Boeing, Raytheon Technologies, Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics and Airbus. The cluster benefits from its proximity to the U.S. Department of Defense and the research and advocacy work done by the Aerospace Industries Association and the Aerospace Corporation. The cluster's GRP is \$2 billion and the GRP per worker is \$228,569.

MEDIA

Media is Arlington's most productive cluster, with a GRP per worker of \$337,094. It also has a low retirement risk, with just 20% of workers aged 55 years or older and one of the highest shares of employees with an associate's degree (3%).

In this cluster, earnings per job in Arlington (\$147,496) are slightly higher than the national average. (\$130,867). The share of employment is nearly three times higher than the national average.

Employment decreased by 5% in the past five years, slightly better than the rest of the nation, which experienced a 7% decrease over the past five years. Arlington's retirement risk (20%) is slightly lower than the national average (22%).

The Return on Creativity Initiative has focused on networking and business growth for media organizations in an effort to highlight and improve the Media cluster. The cluster has a GRP of \$1.3 billion.

FINTECH

Fintech is an emerging cluster in Arlington. It is Arlington's fastest-growing industry group, with 16% growth in the past five years and a forecasted 12% growth over the next five years. It is a well-educated cluster: 78% of employees have a bachelor's degree.

Earnings per job in this cluster are significantly higher in Arlington (\$225,680) than across the nation (\$177,125). The share of employment is 32% lower than the national average; however, the cluster is growing rapidly. Employment increased by 16% in the past five years, which is significantly higher than the national average of 4%. The retirement risk is higher in Arlington (with 27% of employees 55 or older) compared to the national average for this cluster (23%).

Arlington's strong startup environment has fostered growth in this cluster: the County has nearly 50 Fintech startups and has received \$7.1 billion in investments in venture capital and merger and acquisition deals since 2018. The cluster has a GRP of \$1.6 billion and a GRP per worker of \$289,510.



03

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Arlington is an inclusive and dynamic economic hub that has something for everyone. Home to first-rate educational institutions and the nation’s most educated workforce – in the heart of the Washington, D.C. metro region – the County boasts a talent pool that supports the technology companies and other businesses that come to Arlington to start up, locate and expand. And it’s a welcoming community, one of the most racially and ethnically diverse in the country. Arlington has everything that’s needed for long-term economic growth and success.

Economic conditions inevitably change and each shift brings new challenges and opportunities that test the resilience of Arlington’s economic development strategy. Long-term economic development efforts that are built on a foundation of the County’s core values and principles will position Arlington to be flexible in the face of these changing economic conditions, rather than simply reactive.

Arlington’s economic development strategy will help the County realize its vision and take control of its economic future. It will bring together community residents with private and public sectors and help all stakeholders direct their time and resources to drive better results. The strategy focuses on attracting and empowering people because the human resourcefulness that comes from the right mix of engaged people is what makes an

economy work. The strategy emphasizes placemaking because a vibrant place attracts and retains the best and brightest people. The strategy also incorporates the “All in Arlington” message, exploring how integrating this message into other aspects of the County–business attraction, retention, relocation efforts—could provide a cohesive narrative that distinguishes Arlington from Washington, D.C. and other jurisdictions.

Additionally, Arlington’s commitment to creating an inclusive community calls for the strategy to weave equity throughout the goals, strategies, actions and metrics. Planning for a prosperous future needs to include all residents and offer opportunities to close educational and wealth gaps that persist within the County.

The defined goals, objectives and tactics of the economic development strategy will enable stakeholders to understand their specific roles and encourage both cross-divisional (divisions within AED) and cross-departmental (departments within the County) collaboration. Collectively, these individual actions will create a prosperous and equitable future for Arlington.

This five-year plan is flexible. Arlington’s economic development priorities will evolve as the County grows and the economy changes. Community leaders should examine the strategy at least annually to identify deficiencies and opportunities and to update the plan to address changing needs.

THESE ARE THE FIVE GOALS OF THE ARLINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN:

GOAL 1: ALL IN ON BUSINESS INVESTMENT

We will build and promote a world-class business environment ready for investment.

GOAL 2: ALL IN ON THRIVING COMMERCIAL AREAS

We will reimagine and bolster the vitality of our commercial centers and corridors.

GOAL 3: ALL IN ON TECH JOBS

We will attract and retain tech businesses and develop our talent pipeline to cement our position in the tech economy.

GOAL 4: ALL IN ON OUR SMALL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

We will support the small businesses that make Arlington unique and inclusive.

GOAL 5: ALL IN ON GLOBAL ARTS, CULTURE AND TOURISM

We will invest in arts and culture while bolstering our creative and tourism industries.



GOAL 1: ALL IN ON BUSINESS INVESTMENT

**WE WILL BUILD AND
PROMOTE A WORLD-CLASS
BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT
READY FOR INVESTMENT.**



GOAL 1: ALL IN ON BUSINESS INVESTMENT

WE WILL BUILD AND PROMOTE A WORLD-CLASS BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT READY FOR INVESTMENT.

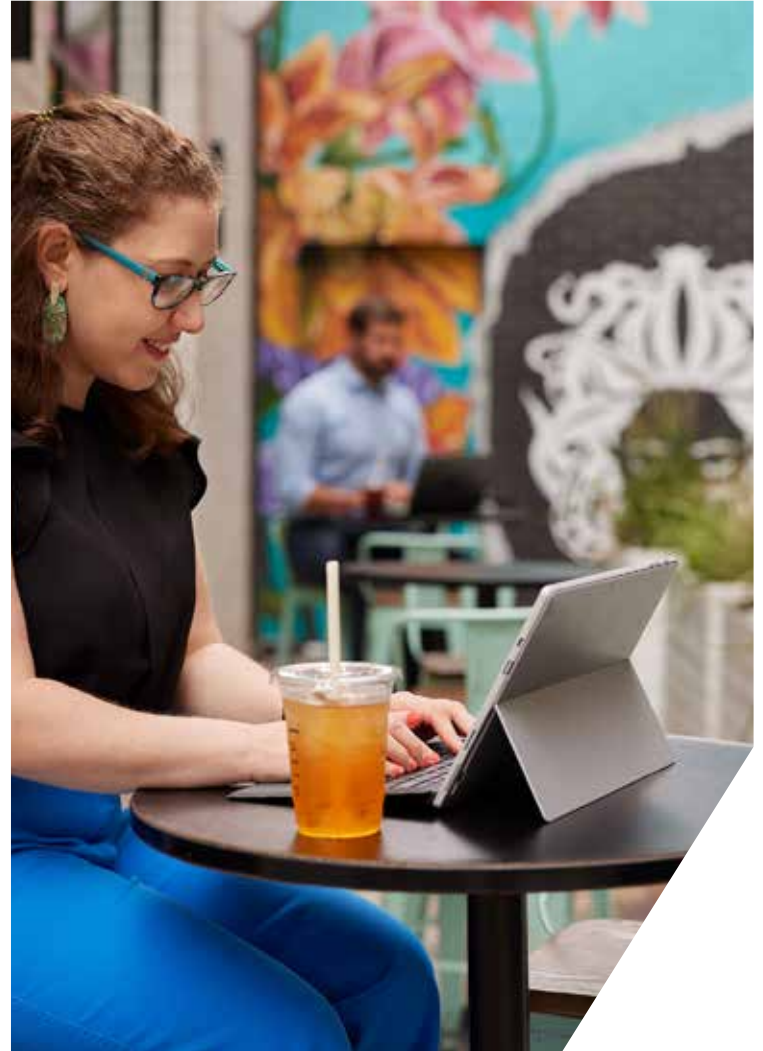
WHY IT MATTERS

A supportive business environment is fundamental to economic development. By actively engaging with Arlington's current employers and prospective stakeholders, the County can fortify existing relationships and effectively communicate the advantages of conducting business in Arlington. This approach will enhance lead generation, garner interest from site selectors and further distinguish the County on the international stage. Additionally, Arlington can leverage its "All in" brand and messaging platform to convey its openness for investment.



THE EVIDENCE

- Arlington needs a strong business engagement strategy to attract and retain its major employers. Stakeholder engagement revealed that more relationship-building could position the private sector to better navigate public processes and strengthen opportunities for public-private partnering. AED's Business Investment Group and BizLaunch should continue to serve as liaisons among the County, major employers and local businesses.
- Virginia is a good place to do business. The Commonwealth's corporate tax rate of 6% is lower than the 6.8% national average. And conditions both local and statewide fuel a pro-business climate that should appeal to existing and potential businesses.
- Arlington attracts – and retains – some of the nation's most educated talent. More than 80% of people moving to Arlington and 80% of current residents hold at least a bachelor's degree, making it the most educated County in the nation.
- Arlington is near many anchor institutions, ranging from major corporations to higher education. Anchors play a significant role in the County's success: they attract businesses, develop talent, drive research and innovation and add to the quality of life through real estate development.
- Arlington's proximity to the federal government enhances its appeal to residents and visitors alike. Businesses enjoy next-door access to the regulatory seats of power in Washington, D.C. And the tourism and hospitality industry welcomes and serves visitors to Arlington as well as those exploring the nation's capital.



THE FOLLOWING METRICS SHOULD BE TRACKED TO ASSESS IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT.

- **BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT**
Tracking the support given to major employers through roundtable discussions, site visitations and speaking engagements
- **LEAD GENERATION**
Tracking Arlington's outreach efforts through trade shows, site selector and industry-specific conferences and virtual meetings
- **CONFERENCE ATTRACTION**
Counting the number of conferences hosted in Arlington related to the County's target clusters
- **ONLINE PRESENCE**
Tracking "All in Arlington" engagement marketing efforts
- **NEW BUSINESSES**
Tracking the number of new businesses and whether they align with target clusters
- **EMPLOYMENT (TOTAL, BY CLUSTER AND BY ATTRACTION PROJECT)**
Counting total jobs generated and whether they are in the County's target clusters

STRATEGY

1.1

EXECUTE A BUSINESS EXPANSION AND RETENTION INITIATIVE TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH MAJOR EMPLOYERS AND NONPROFITS AND INFORM POLICY

Through the development of a systematic, tailored business expansion and visitation initiative, Arlington can better support its existing businesses. Visitation initiatives help give a better understanding of the business ecosystem and reveal both success stories and major issues while improving the relationship between the County and its businesses. By focusing on clusters, Arlington will be able to keep its finger on the pulse of its most important industries and determine which businesses are most equipped for expansion.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 Host annual roundtables with industry clusters to identify specific needs and growth opportunities	X		
 Conduct a formal business visitation plan for Arlington’s businesses, interviewing at least 60 employers annually	X		
 Utilize these and other engagement tools to identify opportunities and needs and report key findings systematically		X	

STRATEGY

1.2

DEVELOP INDUSTRY-FOCUSED EXPERTISE AMONG AED STAFF FOR ARLINGTON'S TARGET SECTORS

The AED team has already developed a deep understanding of the target industries within its community. Formalizing this practice will help ensure that as industries grow and evolve, staff stay up-to-date to provide focused and personalized services for existing employers as well as those that they intend to attract.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Reorganize economic development staffing around target sectors</p>	X		
 <p>Utilizing a consultant, build competitiveness assessments for clusters, understanding competitive advantages, competitors, cluster needs and gaps in offerings</p>		X	
 <p>Identify and prioritize appropriate conferences, trade shows and gatherings for clusters, attending both as speakers/panelists and trade show participants</p>		X	




STRATEGY

1.3

STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS COUNTY DEPARTMENTS TO ENHANCE BUSINESS-FOCUSED NAVIGATION OF PROCESSES AND SERVICES

Navigating policies and services can be a difficult process, especially for businesses that are new to the County. AED has an opportunity to strengthen its relationships with other departments and act as a liaison or concierge for these businesses. Rather than providing all services, AED can guide businesses to the correct County department.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Evaluate and improve the small business journey/pathway through County services: economic/business development, real estate services, permitting/development, health/fire inspections and more</p>	X		
 <p>Develop an Arlington “How to Open a Business” guide; make it available in multiple languages and formats (print/electronic)</p>		X	
 <p>Host an annual workshop and training session with County and AED staff to refine and evaluate the process</p>		X	

STRATEGY

1.4

COLLABORATE WITH REGIONAL PARTNERS TO BUILD A RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE THAT LEVERAGES REGIONAL ASSETS

As a part of Northern Virginia, Arlington has the opportunity to develop a regional strategy around aligned target industries. By leveraging region-wide assets – such as state economic development organizations, large employers and universities – the County can incentivize both employers and talent to relocate and expand.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Strengthen internal processes (staffing, information flow and packaging), regional partner strategy (Northern Virginia Economic Development Alliance) and Virginia Economic Development Partnership for responding to incoming Requests for Information/ Proposals (RFIs/RFPs)</p>	X		
 <p>In coordination with NOVA EDA, refine and build a target site-selection list and conduct community outreach at least biannually</p>		X	
 <p>Host appropriate inbound County visits, tours and trade missions with target companies, investment representatives and site selectors</p>		X	
 <p>Attend commercial development trade shows to increase exposure for Arlington’s business attraction efforts (e.g., CoreNet, CoreNet Global, NAIOP, Site Selectors Guild, ULI, ICSC, Select USA and more)</p>		X	
 <p>Create cluster marketing and attraction materials; profiles should be made available in print, presentation and web/electronic formats and should include materials designed for the County and partner websites</p>		X	

STRATEGY

1.5

EXPLORE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT INITIATIVE

By exploring the development of an international business investment initiative, AED could attract and support foreign direct investment in the County. This would involve assessing opportunities and challenges, designing and implementing effective strategies and measures, monitoring and evaluating the impact and outcomes and fostering cooperation and coordination among different stakeholders. The initiative would ideally align with Arlington’s target industries and promote green technologies within the County.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Identify and develop relationships with foreign country representatives (e.g., embassies, chambers of commerce, trade offices, etc.) to promote international trade and exchange</p>		X	
 <p>Develop a Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) assessment and strategy to guide all international lead generation activities, marketing efforts and sales missions</p>			X

STRATEGY




1.6

ACTIVATE A TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE MEETING AND CONFERENCE FACILITIES TO ARLINGTON BUSINESSES

Meeting and conference facilities are essential for the tourism and hospitality industry, as they provide space, equipment and services for hosting events such as trade shows, seminars and workshops. These events can help businesses network, learn new skills, showcase their products or services and expand their markets. When AED staff meet with employers and businesses throughout the County, a member of the Arlington Convention and Visitors Service (ACVS) should join to market hotels and venues for future conferences and meetings.



Queen City, Nekisha Durrett

ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Refresh inventory of conference and meeting room venues in Arlington, documenting available services such as audiovisual equipment, catering and accommodation options</p>	X		
 <p>Establish an online platform or directory for businesses to easily access information about available venues and services</p>		X	
 <p>Create and implement a communications plan building awareness of Arlington venues and ACVS services for local businesses</p>		X	




STRATEGY

1.7

LEVERAGE THE “ALL IN ARLINGTON” MESSAGING FOR INVESTMENT, TALENT AND VISITOR ATTRACTION

As part of its destination brand development, ACVS leads the “All in Arlington” message. The “All in” message is a new tourism brand that aims to inspire awareness and enthusiasm about Arlington among travelers and professionals located outside the National Capital Region. AED can potentially expand the “All in Arlington” message to talent and business attraction and retention efforts by communicating to audiences what they can expect from the County. By doing so, ACVS could attract more people to live, work, learn, play, and grow in Arlington.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Convene an “All in Arlington” steering committee to guide the integration of a messaging platform aimed at supporting comprehensive destination development</p>	X		
 <p>Develop a marketing and communications plan to bolster place branding and integration efforts</p>	X		
 <p>Incorporate the “All in Arlington” positioning and messaging into AED’s business investment marketing materials (collateral, social media, and more)</p>		X	

GOAL 2: ALL IN ON THRIVING COMMERCIAL AREAS

**WE WILL REIMAGINE
AND BOLSTER THE VITALITY
OF OUR COMMERCIAL
CENTERS AND CORRIDORS.**

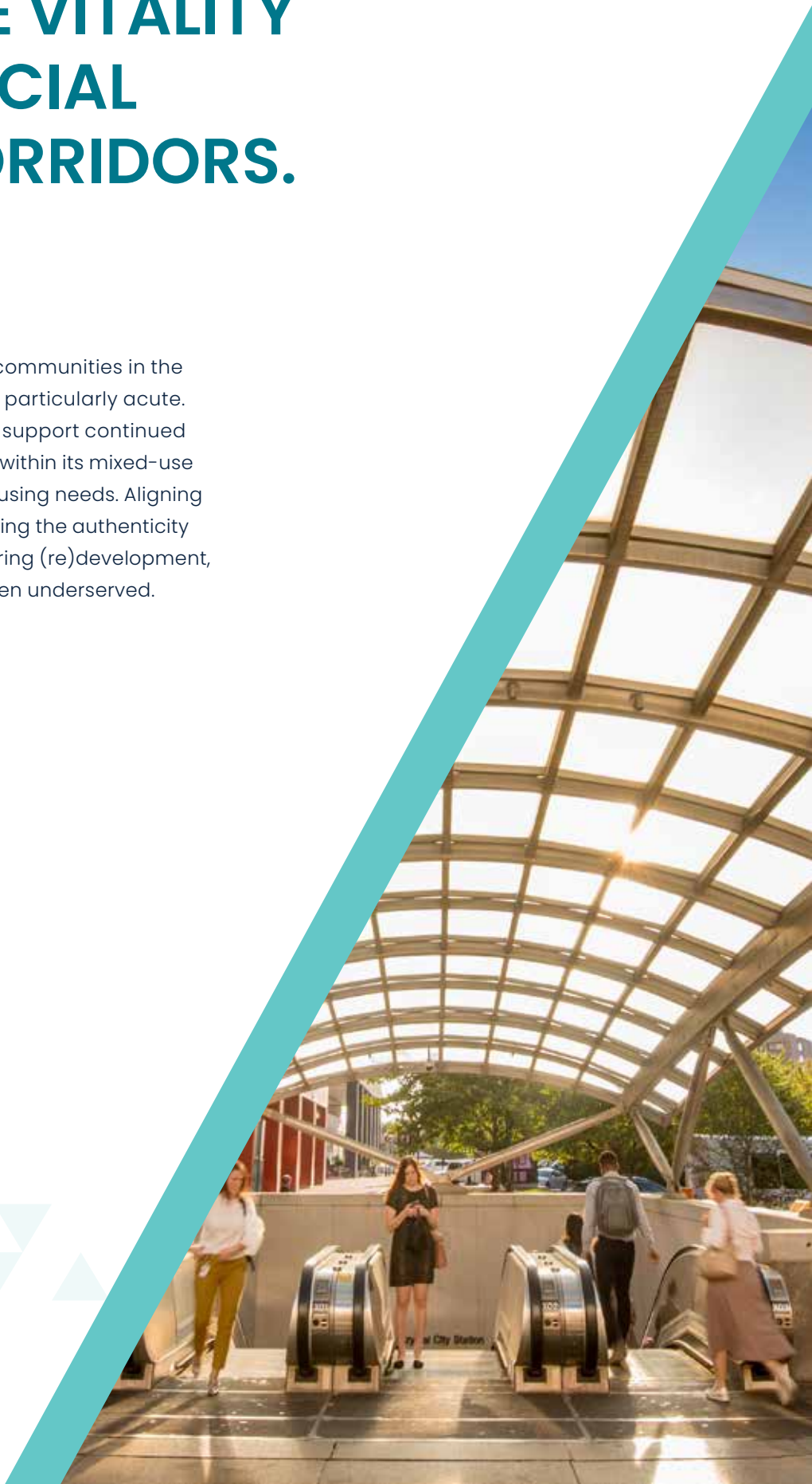


GOAL 2: ALL IN ON THRIVING COMMERCIAL AREAS

WE WILL REIMAGINE AND BOLSTER THE VITALITY OF OUR COMMERCIAL CENTERS AND CORRIDORS.

WHY IT MATTERS

While office vacancy has posed challenges for many communities in the post-pandemic era, the impact on Arlington has been particularly acute. However, the County finds itself in a unique position to support continued placemaking and usher in the workplaces of tomorrow within its mixed-use commercial areas while also addressing affordable housing needs. Aligning these shifts in building forms and uses – while maintaining the authenticity and diversity of Arlington’s corridors – will be crucial during (re)development, with special attention to areas that historically have been underserved.



THE EVIDENCE

- Arlington needs thriving commercial spaces to attract and retain talent and businesses. Such spaces are essential for increasing foot traffic, driving consumer spending, and maintaining the County's reputation as a great, sustainable place.
- The County's office vacancy rate is projected to worsen, and the decline in revenues from commercial property taxes will impact programs that benefit businesses and residents alike. Removing regulatory barriers to support market solutions as described in CMRI can pave the way for repositioning and converting obsolete inventory.
- Arlington has a history of being a leader in office space. The County now has the opportunity to serve as a testing ground for innovative solutions that can be applied across the nation to address the office crisis.



THE FOLLOWING METRICS SHOULD BE TRACKED TO ASSESS IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT.

- **RATE OF (RE)DEVELOPMENT**
Tracking the square footage in Arlington that is (re)developed and the average time to completion
- **VACANCY RATE AND OFFICE VALUATIONS**
Tracking the County's overall vacancy rate and changes in the capital markets that affect valuations for its office inventory
- **SUMMIT IMPACT**
Publishing thought leadership insights after the summit and tracking online engagement
- **PLACEMAKING ACTIVATIONS**
Tracking the number and geography of placemaking and placekeeping activations in districts
- **FOOT TRAFFIC**
Tracking the foot traffic in commercial and residential districts after development and/or placemaking initiatives

STRATEGY

2.1

UTILIZE THE COMMERCIAL MARKET RESILIENCY INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS IMMEDIATE CONVERSION, REPOSITIONING AND REDEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES RELATED TO REGULATORY PROCESSES

Given the ongoing effects of the pandemic on commercial space vacancies, it is more important than ever for communities to reduce barriers to making the best use of a space. County-wide efforts in Arlington have been focused on Commercial Market Resiliency Initiative 2.0 with five strategic areas: office conversion, repositioning, redevelopment, tenant support, and placemaking. Continuing to address these and other emerging issues will be imperative for the County to continue (re)developing its existing real estate.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 Host a quarterly roundtable session with real estate professionals and developers to understand short-term and long-term policy needs and changes	X		
 Convene County department representatives monthly to discuss long-term and short-term policy advancements	X		
 Develop a policy toolkit/roadmap for improving policies for the redevelopment, repositioning and conversion of obsolete office buildings	X		
 Add and clarify allowable uses in the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO) for the purpose of filling vacant office spaces and enhancing placemaking	X		
 Create a communications plan to share updates and advancements with the real estate development community	X		

STRATEGY

2.2

CONVENE A THOUGHT LEADERSHIP SUMMIT TO POSITION ARLINGTON AS A LEADER IN REIMAGINING OFFICE SPACE AND DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Arlington is in a unique position to be the nation’s thought leader in the reimagination of office space and destination development. As the County continues to address its office vacancy challenges, Arlington can host an annual thought leadership summit that convenes the nation’s leading practitioners on the subject and highlights the innovative work taking place in the County.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Convene a working group to provide guidance on conference development that encompasses programming, sponsorships and other essential aspects</p>		X	
 <p>Develop a comprehensive conference program outlining key objectives, identifying speakers and formulating a strategic marketing and funding plan</p>		X	
 <p>Host the conference, disseminating insights and lessons learned to diverse audiences; subsequently, conduct a thorough evaluation to measure the impact of the event</p>		X	

STRATEGY

2.3

ESTABLISH CROSS-SECTOR AND CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUPS TO ADDRESS LONG-TERM REDEVELOPMENT AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY CHALLENGES AND ADVANCE PLACEMAKING INITIATIVES

Accessible and affordable housing is a nationwide issue that many communities are working to figure out, as employers and talent consider where to call home. Cross-departmental collaboration and strategic planning help ensure that duplicative efforts are reduced, promote County-wide cohesion in a strategic direction and empower key stakeholders.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
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Convene County department representatives monthly to advance and evolve CMRI work streams and support housing and placemaking discussions

X

STRATEGY




2.4

LEVERAGE EXPERTISE TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF ADDITIONAL HOUSING OPTIONS IN COMMERCIAL CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

The development of vibrant and healthy commercial centers and corridors can improve the lives of existing residents, who either live or commute there, as well as visitors. AED has the resources and expertise in public finance and real estate economics that can guide the development of housing in these areas, which can encourage the evolution of 24/7 mixed-use districts.



Anna and David, Miriam Shapiro

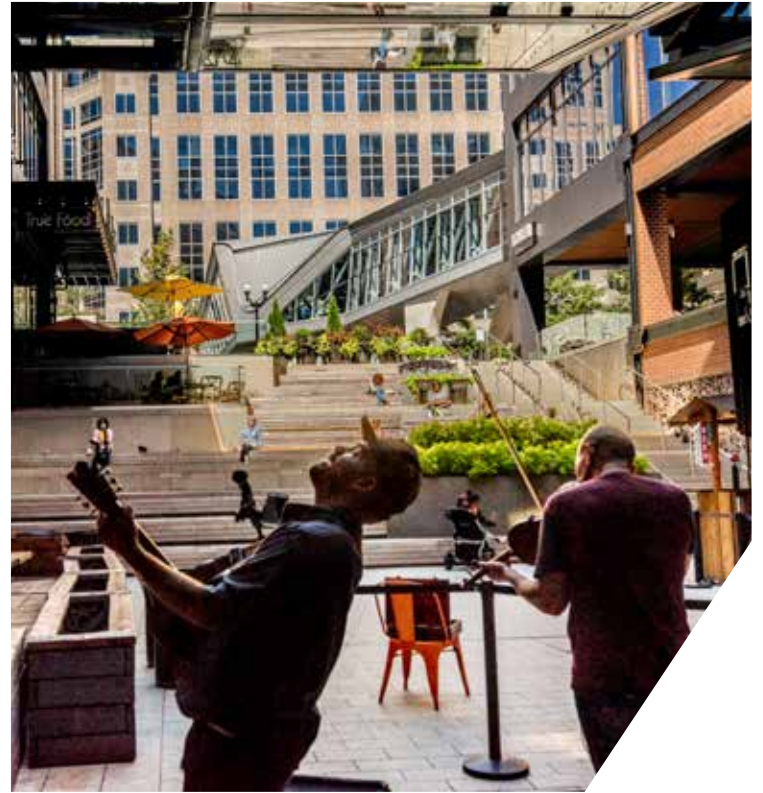
ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Participate in various affordable housing discussions and events throughout the County and region</p>		X	
 <p>Provide public finance and real estate economics expertise in support of CPHD Housing</p>		X	
 <p>Advocate, in collaboration with major employers, for additional housing development throughout the County to support workforce attraction and retention</p>		X	





STRATEGY

2.5

COLLABORATE WITH NEIGHBORHOOD BIDS AND PARTNERSHIPS, AS WELL THE ARTS SECTORS, TO ACTIVATE A COUNTY-WIDE PLACEMAKING AND PLACEKEEPING STRATEGY THAT IS GROUNDED IN ARLINGTON’S ECLECTIC, GLOBAL CULTURE

By capitalizing on Arlington’s history, culture and proximity to Washington, D.C., the County can create a placemaking strategy that attracts a diverse range of target audiences to neighborhoods and BIDs in the County. This work will require collaboration with Arlington’s three BIDs and three neighborhood partnerships to identify strategic placemaking activation locations, design pillars that tie the various experiences together and reduce competition and plan for a variety of events and activities to execute. By offering fresh, affordable and unique experiences – ranging from new dining options that capture the heart of Arlington to nightly shows and events – the County can enhance the well-being of its residents while fostering the connections that bolster a strong economy.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Convene a working group of BID and neighborhood partners to drive placemaking collaboration throughout the County</p>		X	
 <p>Catalog underutilized spaces throughout the County to understand potential placemaking uses and limitations</p>		X	
 <p>Develop a County-wide placemaking and placekeeping framework</p>	X		
 <p>Focus annual workplan reviews of the BIDs on strategic placemaking elements</p>		X	




STRATEGY

2.6

ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE SIGNATURE DESTINATION HOTEL PROJECTS

With an intentional branding message comes a greater need for hotels to drive overnight stays, particularly during large events and conventions. Hotels – essential for housing visitors, hosting social events and providing entry-level jobs – are a vital part of any community’s economy. While Arlington can meet its current demand for hotel rooms, there is an opportunity to attract one or more new, signature hotels to increase the number of luxury rooms in the County, the number of high-profile events and conferences and the number of procurement opportunities available for local businesses.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Create/update Arlington’s investment portfolio/pitch for hospitality brands</p>			X
 <p>Develop relationships with site selectors representing entertainment and hospitality/hotel enterprises and brands</p>			X
 <p>Maintain and prepare development sites within the County to support hospitality expansion goals</p>			X

GOAL 3: ALL IN ON TECH JOBS

**WE WILL ATTRACT AND
RETAIN TECH BUSINESSES
AND DEVELOP OUR TALENT
PIPELINE TO CEMENT OUR
POSITION IN THE TECH
ECONOMY.**



GOAL 3: ALL IN ON TECH JOBS

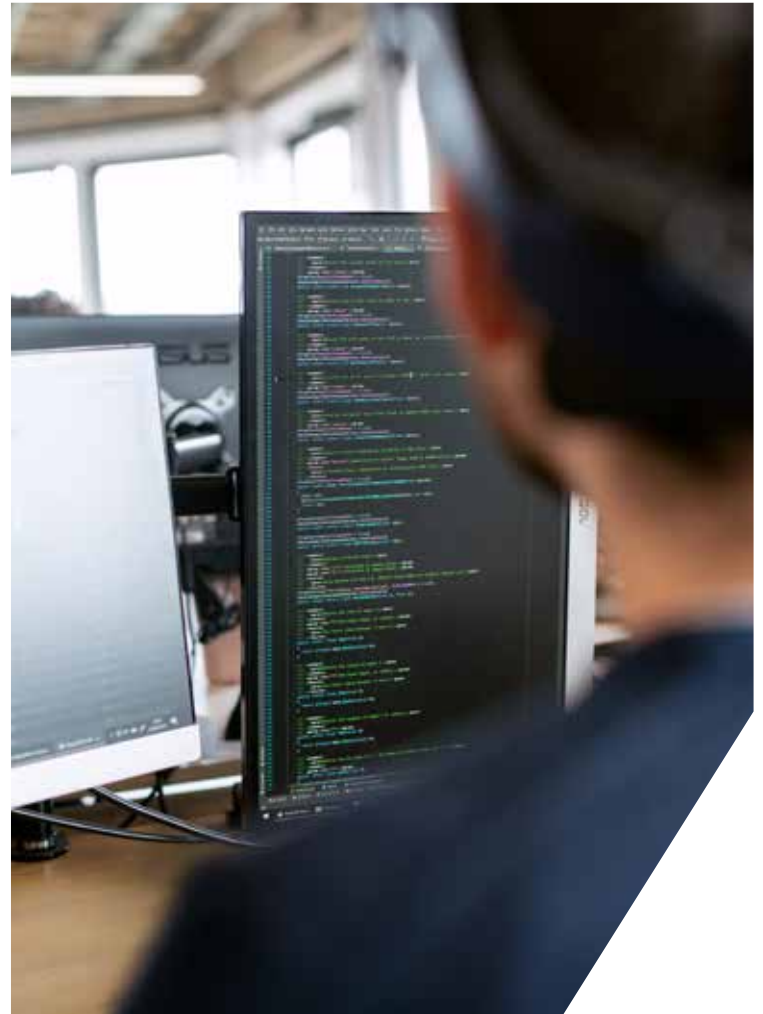
WE WILL ATTRACT AND RETAIN TECH BUSINESSES AND DEVELOP OUR TALENT PIPELINE TO CEMENT OUR POSITION IN THE TECH ECONOMY.

WHY IT MATTERS

Arlington boasts a vibrant cluster of technology firms and robust anchor institutions. Renowned for its abundant pool of highly-educated professionals, the County is poised to redefine and solidify its startup identity by fostering a new generation of entrepreneurs. In formulating a startup and enhanced technology growth strategy, Arlington can attract and retain the employers, investors and skilled talent essential for solidifying its position as a leader in the tech economy.

THE EVIDENCE

- Arlington's target industries – Internet of Things; Fintech; Aerospace and Defense; and Cybersecurity, AI and Machine Learning – are already concentrated in technology. They are the County's largest, fastest-growing, most resilient and most competitive clusters.
- Tech jobs – with average salaries ranging from \$134,000 to \$182,000 – are high-wage careers, on par with or exceeding the national average. And they're accessible, thanks to technology certificate and training programs that lower the barrier to educational entry to these clusters.
- There are more tech jobs than workers in Arlington and the surrounding region. Stakeholder engagement revealed more than 100,000 tech job vacancies that need to be filled. And that need will only increase, as tech clusters are expected to grow at a rate of 6%–12% through 2028.
- Tech clusters add the most – more than \$10 billion – to Arlington's GRP. These industries also have the highest share of the County's exported sales and thus import more money. Altogether, the tech clusters export 40% of their sales; Aerospace and Defense exports more than 85%.
- Arlington's universities, community colleges and career and technical education (CTE) programs are already providing in-demand tech training. Connecting education with employers in the County will bolster the tech pipeline and help Arlington retain its homegrown talent and its reputation as the nation's most-educated city.



THE FOLLOWING METRICS SHOULD BE TRACKED TO ASSESS IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT.

- **ANCHOR INVENTORY**
Evaluating the capacity and success of Arlington's anchors
- **STARTUPS, ACCELERATORS AND INCUBATORS**
Tracking the startups that receive Arlington Innovation Fund support and how they can scale
- **NEW TALENT**
Tracking residents engaged in sector-specific workforce development programs and where they are employed
- **CONFERENCE ATTRACTION**
Counting the number of conferences hosted in Arlington related to the County's tech verticals




STRATEGY

3.1

DEVELOP AN ANCHOR INSTITUTION STRATEGY TO DRIVE COLLABORATION AND FOSTER TECH SECTOR GROWTH

Developing a strategy that connects tech employers and university anchors benefits many – from new and nontraditional talent seeking career opportunities to employers looking to meet their labor needs to entrepreneurs launching their innovation. These partners can work toward a common vision, improve technology commercialization, make workforce training more efficient and effective and help cement the County’s industry identity. Ultimately, creating this collaborative foundation will drive investment as enterprises and talent see what their role is in the ecosystem.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Engage representatives from local anchor institutions to inform and advise the development of AED’s anchor institution engagement strategy</p>		X	
 <p>Review best practices for other anchor collaborations across the country; consider a possible best practices trip</p>		X	
 <p>Develop and implement an anchor institution engagement strategy and framework; evaluate impact annually and scale efforts</p>		X	





STRATEGY

3.2

UTILIZE THE ARLINGTON INNOVATION FUND TO FOSTER ECOSYSTEM CONDITIONS THAT WILL HELP ENTREPRENEURS LAUNCH AND SCALE TECH ENTERPRISES IN ARLINGTON

Arlington is a hub for entrepreneurs and innovators and their growth and scale need continuous support to sustain this ecosystem. AED should prioritize enterprises within its target industries, building on the solid base of Arlington’s Innovation Fund Catalyst Grant.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 Continuously engage key stakeholder groups (e.g., IDA, EDC, VIPC) to provide guidance and evaluation on programming	X		
 Assess the impact of previous years’ companies and sponsorships in the Arlington Innovation Fund	X		
 Reassess Fund criteria to ensure alignment with target sectors and define necessary wrap-around services	X		
 Annually market the program, make selections, and evaluate its impact	X		

STRATEGY

3.3

EXECUTE A TECH-FOCUSED (BY VERTICALS: AI, CYBER, AEROSPACE, ETC.) WORKFORCE INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT CAREER PATHWAYS FOR NONTRADITIONAL TALENT

In 2022, AED launched its pilot Arlington Talent Program to provide emerging engineers and tech talent with the work experience necessary to launch their careers. This program is a great foundation to build from. Incorporating Arlington’s target industries (e.g., AI, Machine Learning, Cybersecurity, Aerospace) as verticals for participants to feed into could bolster the talent pipeline and continue building the strengths of these industry clusters. Additionally, it can expand higher-paying career opportunities for nontraditional talent, such as adult learners and people looking to re- or up-skill.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Establish a working group comprising job creators, skill trainers and community-based organizations to champion sector-led workforce development in the County</p>		X	
 <p>Create a survey targeting tech employers to gain insights into skill and training requirements; assess the training capacity within the County to provide adaptable and responsive tech training programs and certificates</p>		X	
 <p>Formulate and initiate a pilot program in collaboration with the steering committee and other training partners</p>		X	
 <p>Conduct an evaluation and determine the scalability of the program</p>		X	




STRATEGY

3.4

CONNECT CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROGRAMS AND PARTICIPANTS TO EMPLOYERS

Career and technical education, along with community college programs, are often the lowest barrier to educational entry for people and offer specialized training and certifications that enable participants to curate their learning experience directly to the type of job they are looking for. Connecting these programs to employers within the County helps ensure that the training and certifications are up-to-date, aligns programs to employer needs and informs employers where they can source future talent.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Catalog and inventory various tech-focused CTE and community college programs in the County</p>		X	
 <p>Visit training providers to better understand programming and capacity</p>		X	
 <p>Utilize Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) visits (Strategy 1.1) to learn more about employer training needs and make appropriate connections to technology companies</p>		X	





STRATEGY

3.5

EXPLORE AN INNOVATION DISTRICT APPROACH AROUND KEY TECH AND UNIVERSITY ANCHORS

An innovation district is an urban model that focuses on the critical role new business plays in sustainable economic development. Innovation districts are, as the City of Glasgow has called them, “the ultimate mash-up of entrepreneurs and educational institutes.” The talent and innovation from the university in an innovation district fuels progress and expansion in the business sector, which in turn fuels talent attraction to the university. With the potential of an innovation district in National Landing, one of Arlington’s Business Improvement Districts, the County has the opportunity to provide a strong foundation for the creation and expansion of businesses across the target sectors by connecting startups and entrepreneurs with the businesses, universities and investors that only Arlington can offer.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 Complete the scoping study for the National Landing Innovation District (RFP issued in December 2023) and disseminate the findings	X		
 Review best practices of urban innovation districts across the country, including programming and governance	X		
 Support the establishment of a third-party organization to spearhead innovation district planning and development		X	
 Attract additional tech-focused accelerators and incubators aligned with target industries to provide programming, technical support and networking assistance (Strategy 3.7)			X




STRATEGY

3.6

IMPLEMENT AN ATTRACTION STRATEGY FOR CONFERENCES AND EVENTS THAT ENHANCES ARLINGTON'S TECH IDENTITY

Conferences and meetings are designed to bring people together, generating new connections and new ideas. That alone can benefit Arlington's business community and workforce, but there is also more that conferences can do for the County. Bringing conferences and large meetings to Arlington will establish it as a regional hub of innovation, foster the development of target clusters, promote tourism and encourage corporate investment and expansion. Attracting more conferences to Arlington will also position the County to develop a cohesive brand of innovation around its top clusters.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Build an inventory of major tech conferences, both nationally and internationally and identify key meeting planners</p>		X	
 <p>Refresh the inventory of conference and meeting room venues in Arlington, documenting available services such as audiovisual equipment, catering and accommodation options (Strategy 1.6)</p>	X		
 <p>Develop outreach plans to establish and nurture relationships with meeting planners</p>		X	

STRATEGY

3.7

ATTRACT AND SUPPORT ADDITIONAL TECH-FOCUSED ACCELERATORS AND INCUBATORS ALIGNED WITH TARGET INDUSTRIES

Incubators, as the name suggests, are a great way to foster the growth of young businesses. Incubators protect firms from competition during the time that they are vulnerable due to space constraints and they connect emerging innovators to the resources they need. Accelerators can often be the next step for firms that start with an incubator. As these small firms begin to grow and prepare to scale, accelerators can provide the necessary focused guidance, resources and network opportunities.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Collaborate with key technology leaders to understand the accelerator and incubator ecosystem for respective target sectors</p>			X
 <p>Establish incentive initiatives to attract established accelerators and incubators to the County, including possible financial support, real estate/space and technical assistance</p>			X
 <p>Similar to a traditional business attraction program, develop an initiative for attracting technology support organizations, generating awareness and creating a potential lead pipeline for the County</p>			X

GOAL 4: ALL IN ON OUR SMALL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

**WE WILL SUPPORT
THE SMALL BUSINESSES
THAT MAKE ARLINGTON
UNIQUE AND INCLUSIVE.**



GOAL 4: ALL IN ON OUR SMALL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

WE WILL SUPPORT THE SMALL BUSINESSES THAT MAKE ARLINGTON UNIQUE AND INCLUSIVE.

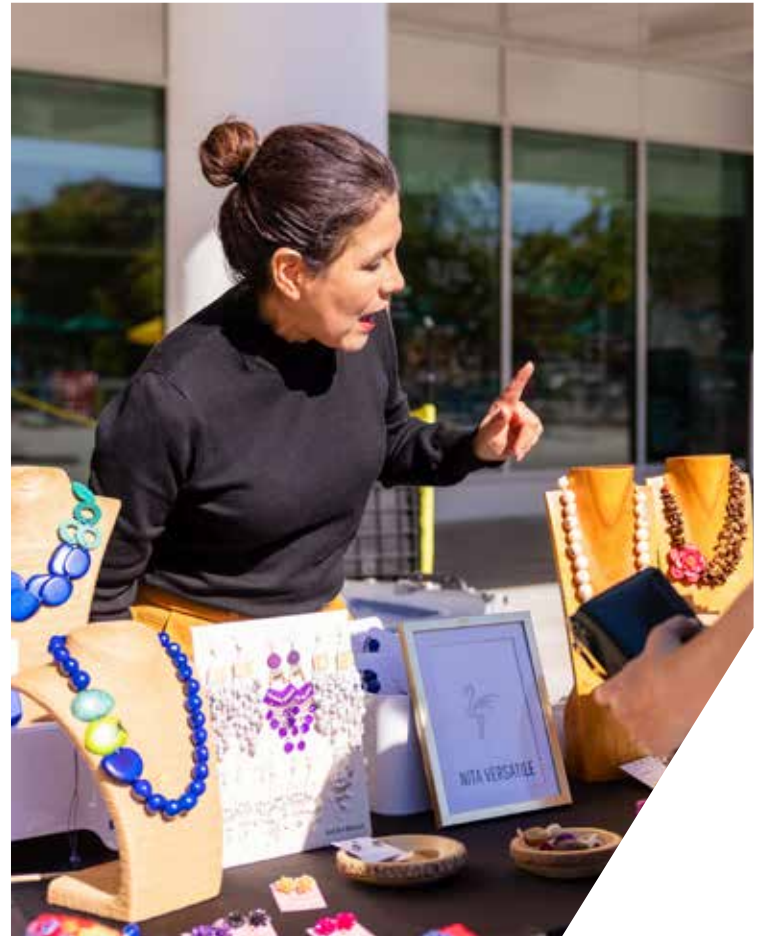
WHY IT MATTERS

Small businesses not only contribute to the distinctive character of a community but also serve as a crucial avenue for wealth generation, especially in communities that have historically faced marginalization. In Arlington, a noteworthy 19% and 22% of businesses are owned by women and residents of color, respectively. Establishing an ecosystem that nurtures small businesses – supporting them from inception to expansion – reduces entry barriers for new ventures and provides residents of color and individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds with increased access to opportunities. Thriving small businesses in Arlington also contribute to a strong commercial tax base and job opportunities for all.



THE EVIDENCE

- Home grown small businesses supported by the community are more likely to set down roots and stay in the community – whether they stay small or grow into larger business. Small businesses can provide pathways to wealth generation and are part of the character that contributes to a strong sense of place. They also provide jobs and generate tax revenues.
- There are more than 15,000 small businesses in Arlington, and many are owned by BIPOC, women, and immigrant entrepreneurs. These small local businesses contribute to Arlington’s uniquely global culture and provide pathways to economic prosperity. Having a strong small business ecosystem is critical to helping the inventor turn an idea into a thriving enterprise or helping the successful legacy restaurant owner pass on their business to their children or sell it to another aspiring entrepreneur. Supporting small businesses in Arlington with tools and resources can also mitigate the potential loss of legacy businesses and help retain our international culture.
- Small businesses also benefit from proximity to anchor institutions. Arlington has several large companies and a notable presence of the federal government. By connecting with large employers, hotels and educational institutions within the County, small businesses can boost their visibility, increase their capital, and be introduced to new models for running their organizations.
- Arlington Economic Development is a resource for major employers and small businesses alike. Small business owners often need help navigating the startup process, permitting, or getting access to capital. They might also need help building resiliency, succession planning or figuring out how to scale and grow. Businesses of all sizes benefit from convenings that connect people and spark new relationships. These needs can be served by AED’s various divisions, other county departments and the strong local network of other organizations focused on helping small businesses thrive.



THE FOLLOWING METRICS SHOULD BE TRACKED TO ASSESS IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT.

- **ENTREPRENEURIAL IMPACT**
Tracking the business success and revenue impact of entrepreneurs who interact with Arlington’s small business programs and ecosystems
- **LOCATION ASSISTANCE**
Tracking the needs and partnering with the development community to help provide access to smaller-footprint workplaces
- **ENTREPRENEURS PROMOTED**
Tracking storytelling and success stories through newsletters, social media and other publications
- **BUSINESS FORMATION BY BACKGROUND**
Tracking and publishing the number of new businesses in Arlington by ownership (residents of color, LGBTQIA+, women and veterans)





STRATEGY

4.1

EXPAND THE AED'S BIZLAUNCH TO SCALE AND RETAIN SMALL BUSINESSES IN THE COUNTY

Arlington’s small businesses have voiced their need for support in a community full of powerhouse corporations and industries. The County has the opportunity to provide that support through BizLaunch and continue developing its technical training, networking and mentorship programs. By assisting with growth and scale, Arlington can bolster its small-business ecosystem, helping the people that give the County its culture.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Enhance AED’s small business staffing capabilities to provide concierge services, guiding customers to resources throughout the County</p>	X		
 <p>Refine the ReLaunch program to align with the post-pandemic small business environment, assessing AED’s specific offerings and capabilities</p>	X		
 <p>Collaborate with partners to develop the ReLocate initiative, assisting businesses in growing and thriving during the redevelopment of Arlington’s corridors</p>	X		
 <p>Create and promote a comprehensive inventory of training, networking and technical services provided by County partners</p>	X		



STRATEGY

4.2

CONVENE SMALL BUSINESS CAPITAL PROVIDERS TO IDENTIFY FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND ESTABLISH A PROCESS FOR MATCHING SMALL BUSINESSES WITH THEM

Whether for capital improvements, leasing, or payroll, securing funding for small businesses can be one of their largest hurdles. By acting as a liaison, Arlington can connect small businesses to community financial institutions that offer specialized financial guidance.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Host quarterly working group sessions with small business capital providers in the County, understanding their offerings and capacity</p>	X		
 <p>Survey the small business capital providers' landscape to understand strengths and identify missing needs</p>	X		
 <p>Actively promote financial business resources through the AED BizLaunch website, newsletter and other channels</p>	X		
 <p>Through AED small business concierge services, connect small businesses with appropriate capital providers and technical support services</p>	X		




STRATEGY

4.3

INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF UNDERSERVED ENTERPRISES IN PROCUREMENT AND PURCHASING PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY, AS WELL AS THOSE OF MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Anchor institutions can be corporations, nonprofits, or other entities – such as hospitals, major employers and higher education institutions – that are “anchored” in their communities. They often are a community’s largest employer, wielding substantial local influence and possessing significant assets, such as real estate. Similar to cities’ and counties’ procurement dollars available to open bids to advance projects, anchor institutions have significant purchasing power. Arlington has an opportunity to better connect minority- and women-owned businesses to anchor institutions’ procurement processes to increase the share of underserved enterprises’ participation.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Disseminate results from Arlington’s Disparity Study (FY2025) and implement recommendations</p>	X		
 <p>As part of AED’s small business concierge services, promote county-wide procurement opportunities</p>		X	
 <p>Develop a plan to formalize a training initiative aimed at certifying underserved enterprises for procurement opportunities throughout the County</p>		X	



STRATEGY

4.4

ACTIVATE A POP-UP INITIATIVE THAT BRINGS SMALL BUSINESSES INTO HOTELS AND OTHER FACILITIES

Pop-ups and similar initiatives can play a crucial role in the growth and success of small businesses. Firstly, they offer a unique platform for small businesses to showcase their products or services to a diverse and often international clientele, thereby expanding their customer base. Secondly, they enable these businesses to operate in prime locations they might not otherwise be able to afford, increasing their visibility and brand recognition. Thirdly, the transient nature of pop-ups can create a sense of urgency among customers and encourage immediate purchases. Lastly, partnerships with established facilities like hotels can enhance the reputation of these small businesses, providing a credibility boost.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Develop a pop-up initiative framework and value proposition for both small businesses and Arlington hospitality enterprises</p>		X	
 <p>Invite hoteliers and event facility managers to informational sessions to discuss the value propositions</p>		X	
 <p>Identify potential locations, establish formal agreements and match with interested small businesses</p>		X	
 <p>Evaluate the program and its impact annually</p>		X	



STRATEGY

4.5

MARKET THE DIVERSITY OF ARLINGTON'S ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITY

Thriving communities celebrate their businesses – and Arlington has much to celebrate. The County boasts great diversity among the entrepreneurs and innovative startups that make their home here, including a growing BIPOC community. Arlington and its economic development partners should shout this success and diversity from the rooftops. By showcasing businesses of all sectors, types and sizes, Arlington will entice a new array of enterprises and small business owners. This approach motivates people to contribute to local economic development and changes their understanding of what is possible.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Develop a systematic approach for identifying diverse small businesses and startups in Arlington to profile</p>	X		
 <p>Promote Arlington's successes across multiple communication platforms: County websites, blogs, social media, direct emails and more</p>	X		




STRATEGY

4.6

CURATE DESTINATION EXPERIENCES THAT DRIVE TRAFFIC TO ARLINGTON'S SMALL, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESSES

Arlington's diversity and inclusivity are reflected in its international residents and businesses. To support these vital community members, AED can create tailored destination experiences that showcase the restaurants and small businesses run by people from different cultures and backgrounds.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Support the creation of an inventory of Arlington's international destination assets, including music, art, food, breweries and more</p>	X		
 <p>Expand collaboration with destination partners to package and promote the County as a destination</p>	X		
 <p>Develop curated destination experiences for Arlington residents and visitors; test ideas on social media</p>		X	

GOAL 5: ALL IN ON ARTS, CULTURE AND TOURISM

**WE WILL INVEST IN
ARTS AND CULTURE WHILE
BOLSTERING OUR CREATIVE
AND TOURISM INDUSTRIES.**



GOAL 5: ALL IN ON ARTS, CULTURE AND TOURISM

WE WILL INVEST IN ARTS AND CULTURE WHILE BOLSTERING OUR CREATIVE AND TOURISM INDUSTRIES.

WHY IT MATTERS

Investments in and support of arts, culture, placemaking and entertainment are key in protecting and elevating Arlington's unique global identity. Communities that integrate these creative aspects into their economy and destination marketing are equipped to build an ecosystem that supports all levels of creatives – from novices and hobbyists to those who wish to pursue a career – and enriches the community as a whole. Doing so will also strengthen Arlington's image as a destination for job creators, thinkers, entrepreneurs, creatives, and visitors alike.



THE EVIDENCE

- Arlington already boasts a strong arts and culture foundation which is part of the larger Washington region that is also home to notable cultural assets. People living, working, and visiting Arlington have access to more than 150 high-quality local arts and culture activities. The County also has a concentration of arts-related jobs that is 42% higher than the national average. One of Arlington’s high performing targeted industry clusters is Media – which is part of the creative economy.
- Arlington’s arts and cultural ecosystem is a contributor to Arlington’s identity. The County’s diverse and welcoming population, which hails from 149 different countries and speaks 88 different languages, also influences its distinctive sense of place. These aspects of the community contribute to the rich culture and help attract and retain talent. Arlington’s high quality of life, ripe with activities to do and ways to get involved in the community is important to residents and visitors alike.
- The Washington region also remains one of the top tourist destinations in the country and Arlington captures a strong share of tourists to the County. This equated to \$3.9 billion in visitor spending in Arlington in FY 2022. Arlington’s recent investments in destination marketing and the All in Arlington brand are demonstrating tangible results in attracting people to stay and play in Arlington. Investing in tourism supports local arts and culture and delivers on the bottom line with hospitality related local tax revenue generation.
- However, making arts and culture a significant economic pillar to fuel the local economy means doing more to



Arlington Boulevard Bridge, Vicki Scuri

promote and support experiences in theaters, parks, plazas, museums, galleries, and other community gathering places. Existing artists and organizations within Arlington that garner national and international recognition still struggle to cement their place within the County. Emerging arts groups and art entrepreneurs need support to launch and grow in Arlington. Sustained county investments, philanthropy and engaged community members will be critical to fostering this segment of the economy.

THE FOLLOWING METRICS SHOULD BE TRACKED TO ASSESS IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT.

- **CREATIVE SUCCESS**
The number of artists and creative enterprises operating in the County, measured through number of business licenses issued, public art commissions, artist residencies, museum and gallery exhibits, performances, festivals, community-initiated projects, and philanthropic giving
- **PROMOTION OF CULTURAL EXPERIENCES AND EVENTS**
Measuring the reach of newsletters, social media, and other promotional activities as well as attendance and associated revenue generation for cultural destinations and events
- **CULTURAL ASSETS INVENTORY AND PLACEMAKING**
Categorizing and tracking the preservation and creation of spaces for Arlington’s arts and cultural activities
- **TOURISM INDUSTRY PROMOTION AND GROWTH**
Continuing to track key metrics for ACVS including hotel occupancy, group room bookings, internet visits to ACVS, arts and culture events promoted, and tourism related revenue generation

STRATEGY

5.1

CONDUCT A CREATIVE INDUSTRY STUDY TO BETTER UNDERSTAND ARLINGTON'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

A study in the creative industry involves examining the economic development opportunities of the creative sector, which includes fields like advertising, architecture, arts, crafts, design, film, music, publishing, television and radio. With Arlington's industry strength in media and its world-renowned arts organizations, there is an opportunity for AED to better understand how it can support the growth and resiliency of this sector.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the study's development and select a consulting firm to deliver the required services</p>	X		
 <p>Conduct the study, disseminate the results and implement recommendations to influence business attraction and expansion efforts</p>	X		

STRATEGY





5.2

UTILIZE ARLINGTON CULTURAL AFFAIRS DIVISION (CAD) OFFERINGS TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING GRANT POLICIES, SELECTION CRITERIA AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Creative industries – such as visual art, craft, media, film and performing arts – can be more than just a public good or benefit. They can actively strengthen and diversify a community’s economy. By performing a review of CAD’s current grant policies, selection criteria and support services, AED has an opportunity to develop a strong creative industries economic pillar.



Luminous Bodies, Clif Garten

ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Organize an advisory group, including representatives from the Arts Commission, to support the review of arts programs across County agencies</p>	X		
 <p>Examine the best practices of other communities that have transitioned from amateur art support to professional art maker support services</p>	X		
 <p>Evaluate opportunities for iconic public art installations (ongoing)</p>	X	X	X
 <p>Develop, socialize and adopt a new programming plan</p>		X	

STRATEGY

5.3

STRENGTHEN CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMS TO FOSTER THE GROWTH OF EMERGING CREATIVE ENTERPRISES

Creatives are often passionate about their work but may not have the skills or knowledge needed to turn their ideas into profitable ventures. That’s why it’s important for them to access business resources that can help them develop and grow their creative businesses. AED is in a unique position to not only support their creative endeavors through CAD but also to offer them a suite of services and connect them to organizations that could promote their individual success, resiliency and sustainability.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
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Promote CAD small business concierge services and technical resources to creative enterprises

X

STRATEGY





5.4

EXPLORE PUBLIC-PRIVATE MODELS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION, ACQUISITION AND/OR PRESERVATION OF CREATIVE SPACES

Creative spaces within a community promote interaction in public spaces, which can improve social cohesion, diversity and inclusion. They can also increase civic participation through celebrations, events and projects that involve the community in decision-making and problem-solving. Ultimately, they promote the power and preservation of place, highlighting the unique history, culture and character of a community.



Shhh, Aurora Robson

ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Convene a working group of arts organizations to offer insights into space needs and challenges; utilize the group to provide advice on policy and programming</p>	X		
 <p>Explore the best practices of other cultural trusts across North America</p>	X		
 <p>Establish policies and best practices for the County Board to consider</p>		X	
 <p>Develop a pilot program, evaluate its impact, and then expand accordingly</p>	X		




STRATEGY

5.5

ENHANCE AND INNOVATE CORE DESTINATION SALES, MARKETING AND VISITOR SERVICES PROGRAMS TO DRIVE INCREASED OVERNIGHT HOTEL STAYS, LOCAL VISITOR SPENDING, AND COUNTY REVENUES

Attracting visitors to Arlington is enhanced by investing in and promoting its strong place-based arts and cultural assets. A strong and dynamic hospitality ecosystem is an essential element in the success of Arlington’s broader economy. The Arlington Convention and Visitors Service (ACVS) engages with and promotes the County’s full array of public and private tourism partners to bring to life the authentic and compelling stories that show it is *All in Arlington*. Continuing these efforts and extending ACVS’s destination content and messaging to additional AED audiences will help AED further elevate Arlington on the national stage.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 Broaden and deepen local hospitality stakeholder engagement in support of destination sales, marketing, and visitor services	X		
 Collaborate across AED divisions to replicate and expand use of ACVS marketing approaches, content, digital assets, and analytical tools	X	X	
 Continually assess destination management best practices and implement innovations that support long-term strategic goals		X	

STRATEGY

5.6

DEVELOP A STRATEGY TO ATTRACT AN ADDITIONAL SIGNATURE DESTINATION ENTERTAINMENT AND HOSPITALITY ANCHOR

By attracting a new destination entertainment and hospitality anchor, Arlington can build on its existing creative anchors and benefit the community in multiple ways. It can boost the local economy by drawing tourists and creating jobs; increase the community's appeal and recognition as a place to live, work and invest; offer residents more choices for high-quality entertainment and hospitality; and strengthen the community's pride and identity. Such a strategy can have a positive impact on the community's social, economic and cultural development.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Attend national trade shows that feature entertainment, hospitality and retail brands</p>		X	
 <p>Annually update Arlington's investment portfolio/ pitch for entertainment and hospitality brands</p>		X	
 <p>Continue to develop relationships with site selectors who represent entertainment and hospitality enterprises and brands</p>		X	
 <p>Target and support real estate redevelopment that encourages spaces and venues for entertainment and hospitality businesses</p>		X	



STRATEGY

5.7

INCREASE THE MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF ARTS AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCES IN ARLINGTON AS A PART OF THE COUNTY'S DESTINATION TOURISM EFFORT

By marketing and promoting arts and cultural experiences in the County, ACVS helps attract more visitors, generate more revenue, create more jobs, support the local artists and organizations, enhance the County's image and identity, increase its competitiveness and appeal, foster a sense of community and pride, and benefit both tourism and economic development.



ACTIONS	SHORT-TERM (1-18 MONTHS)	MID-TERM (18 MONTHS -3.5 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (3.5-5 YEARS)
 <p>Support the creation of an inventory of Arlington's arts and cultural experiences</p>		X	
 <p>Expand collaboration with destination partners to package and promote the County as a destination</p>		X	

04

APPENDICES

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Throughout this process, AED had a Steering Committee of 13 members to help guide the development of the strategy. These members were selected to represent the Arlington community and provide their expertise, both within their respective industries and their deep knowledge about the County.

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Kate Bates	Arlington Chamber Of Commerce
Maggie Boland	Signature Theatre
Mary-Claire Burick	Rosslyn BID
Bill Dunn	Wells Fargo Advisors
Shavini Fernando	Oxiwear
Molly Fogarty	Nestlé
Michael Garcia	State Farm Insurance
Scott Love	Lovelytics
Dana Fallon	Northern Virginia Community College
Ryan Pierce	Fresh Impact Farms
Leticia Proctor	Donohoe Hospitality Services
Carmen Romero	Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing
Robert Swennes	Brookfield Properties

Luminous Bodies, Clif Garten

METHODOLOGY

The foundation of this report includes five main inputs: a Competitive Benchmarking Analysis, a Target Sector Cluster Analysis, an Occupational Workforce Analysis, a Real Estate and Placemaking Analysis and Stakeholder Engagement. The following section briefly describes the methodology of each input, as well as its importance to the report.

For more information, a technical appendix containing the research that Resonance conducted to support the development of this report is available upon request and includes the Competitive Benchmarking Assessment (Appendix A), the Target Cluster Analysis (Appendix B), the Real Estate Market and Placemaking Analysis (Appendix C), and the Stakeholder Engagement Summary (Appendix D).

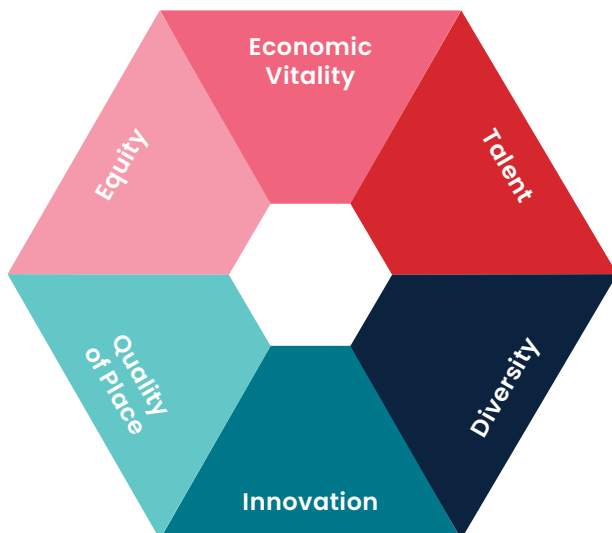
PEER COMMUNITIES

Alexandria, VA	Jersey City, NJ
Atlanta, GA	Montgomery County, MD
Austin, TX	Nashville, TN
Boston, MA	Raleigh, NC
Cambridge, MA	Salt Lake City, UT
Denver, CO	San Jose, CA
Fairfax County, VA	Washington, DC

COMPETITIVE BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS

The Competitive Benchmarking Assessment synthesizes the demographic and economic trends that are impacting the County. The analysis compared Arlington to 14 of its peer communities across six categories: Economic Vitality, Innovation, Talent, Diversity, Equity and Quality of Place. This part of the research includes data for more than 50 metrics, grouped into key categories that provide a holistic view of the County's comparative advantages.

BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS MODEL



TARGET SECTOR CLUSTER ANALYSIS

The Target Sector Cluster Analysis acts as the primary and essential foundation for supporting all future business attraction, expansion efforts and incentives and for helping to shape a narrative that resonates with new enterprises, site selectors and talent.

This analysis assesses traded clusters from a comprehensive lens of competitiveness, equity and resilience, as opposed to an evaluation that relies solely on economic growth factors. It also focuses on traded instead of local clusters, as traded clusters tend to have higher wages and higher levels of innovation, in addition to being more resilient and durable.



OCCUPATIONAL WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The Occupational Workforce Analysis provides a detailed understanding of talent in Arlington. This includes an overview of the top occupations in Arlington and the long-term occupational outlook of careers, trends based on what employers in Arlington are looking for, employment distribution across occupation clusters and an analysis of the geographic distribution of workforce supply. The analysis identifies educational programs and the skill sets required to fill the workforce gaps identified in the County to support and develop workforce skills and ensure a healthy talent pipeline.

REAL ESTATE AND PLACEMAKING ANALYSIS

The Real Estate and Placemaking Analysis benchmarks the performance of Arlington’s Business Development Districts in multi-family, residential, office and retail markets and compares placemaking initiatives and efforts – public events, programming and brand activations – against metro and national peers. The real estate benchmarking also provides the team with a sensibility regarding development potential and the strengths of Arlington’s built environment versus its peers. In addition, a combination of desktop research and national industry engagements with representatives from the architecture, design and real estate industries identifies key regional and national trends in commercial office and mixed-use neighborhood development, as well as placemaking, that will likely influence the success and vibrancy of districts and neighborhoods across Arlington.

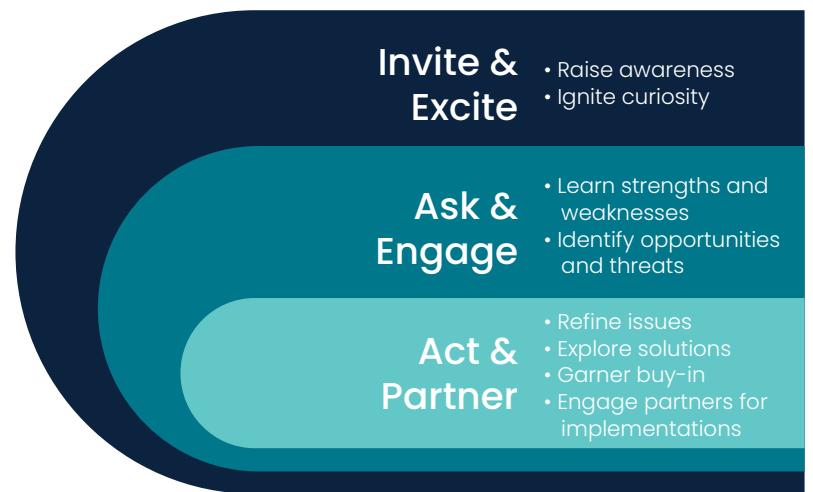
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Targeted outreach to key stakeholders enables input to be gathered on strategic priorities, develops a broad sense of plan ownership and collaboration and creates advocates for the plan’s goals. Discussions addressed an array of issues: placemaking and brand creation, growing an entrepreneurial ecosystem, promoting the County’s quality of place, engaging local anchor institutions to drive development, positioning Arlington as a leader in commercial real estate and more.

The Stakeholder Engagement complemented the research and provided thoughtful guidance for developing the Economic Development Strategic Plan. More than 70 Arlington business owners, elected officials, economic development partners, university leaders and others participated in a series of roundtable discussions.

The results of these discussions demonstrate the County’s commitment to equitable community and stakeholder engagement and an inclusive, accessible process for reimagining Arlington.

From these discussions, we learned about Arlington’s real estate market, people and culture, small business ecosystem, location advantage, placemaking initiatives and the community’s desire for change and social equity. We also heard about workforce development and talent attraction needs, the continued promotion of equity and inclusion and thoughts about future growth.



NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS	10 total
ROUNDTABLES	11 total Economic Development Commission Executive Committee, Commercial Real Estate, Arts, Hospitality and Tourism, Workforce and Higher Education, Neighborhood and Small Businesses, Funders and Financing, Major Employers, Technology, AED Staff

Arlington Economic Development (AED) retained Resonance Consultancy to help develop the strategic plan. Resonance is a leading advisor in tourism, real estate, and economic development. Resonance produces the annual World’s Best Cities rankings which quantifies and benchmarks the relative quality of place, reputation, and competitive identity for the planet’s urban centers.

CONTACT US

ARLINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1100 N. Glebe Road, Suite 1500, Arlington, VA 22201

Phone: 703-228-0808

Email: aed@arlingtonva.us

Website: arlingtoneconomicdevelopment.com

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/arlington-economic-development](https://www.linkedin.com/company/arlington-economic-development)

Facebook: [facebook.com/ArlingtonEconomicDevelopment](https://www.facebook.com/ArlingtonEconomicDevelopment)

Twitter/X: twitter.com/AEDBizInvest



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