

Appendix B:

Chamber Strategic Actions

To assist with the retention and expansion of existing local businesses, and to ensure a strong membership base, the Chamber will consider the following projects, programs, and services to assist local businesses, particularly with regards to displacement:

- 1) Annual City Legislative Package:** The Chamber, through its Board and Legislative Committee, will publish an annual legislative program which will be used to set forth Chamber policies and priorities on local businesses and will be used to educate City officials.
- 2) Establish A Mentor/Protégé Program:** The Chamber will develop a mentor/protégé program to partner new and potentially displaced local businesses with established community business leaders. The program will be used as a way for the mentor and protégé to discuss opportunities for business planning, relocation, and challenges the protégé may be facing. It is anticipated that protégé candidates for the program will: (a) be an established business for three years or have ten years expertise in their field; (b) agree to Chamber membership for three years; (c) provide clear, measurable goals with the assistance of a mentor; (d) be willing to take instruction from others; and (e) commit to one face-to-face meeting per quarter.
- 3) Establish A Local Business Roundtable:** Local businesses often benefit when they meet with each other to discuss ideas, share leads on services, and simply by getting to know each other better. The Chamber has the ability to bring local businesses together in informal settings. To create stronger, more vibrant local business communities, the Chamber will develop a quarterly Local business Roundtable as a peer support group to provide an important educational opportunity to smaller businesses. Topics of discussion will vary, allowing attendees to learn how to enhance their business and increase their success.

With sufficient interest, the roundtable could help establish economic self-sufficiency and stimulate entrepreneurship amongst local business owners. It could also address and tackle issues of interest, such as displacement, tax rates, human resources, and marketing strategies, and ensuring the City cuts red tape and provides the services that local businesses need. The roundtable would mainly function as a voluntary organization of individuals and businesses working together to promote the commercial, financial, economic, and civic interests of the City's local businesses.

- 4) Conduct A Displacement Study:** The Chamber, working with the Falls Church Economic Development Office, will conduct a citywide analysis of retail and local business displacement that has occurred as a result of new development. The results of the study will help the Chamber identify members who are potentially vulnerable to redevelopment

efforts, and will help direct the Chamber's outreach to those members and apprise them of the potential for redevelopment and of this document.

- 5) **Local Business Survey:** The Chamber will conduct a survey to assess the impacts of recent development in the City from the perspective of local business owners and managers. Issues covered by the survey will include whether increased development has been positive or negative (and why), transparency of the development process, how the development process could be improved, and what, if any, educational assistance a business owner desires.
- 6) **Comprehensive Space Inventory:** Building upon the Economic Development Office's list of available office and retail spaces, the Chamber will work to expand the list to include available office and retail space within the vicinity of the City's corporate limits including, but not limited to, the East Falls Church, West Falls Church/Lee Highway, Annandale Road, Seven Corners, and Idylwood areas.
- 7) **Business Retention Outreach Team:** The Chamber will advocate for the creation of a team comprised of City staff, local business representatives, and Chamber officials to meet and conduct site visits, as needed, with existing merchants and local businesses to help ascertain and respond to problems that emerge with redevelopment projects. Additionally, the team will conduct a series of outreach visits to listen to existing businesses, learn more about the issues and opportunities they face in the City, and apprise them of public incentive programs.
- 8) **Development Evaluation Process Criteria:** The Chamber will revise its established criteria for review of proposed real estate development projects to include a new criterion addressing whether the project considers the needs of existing commercial tenants in a meaningful way. Before determining whether the Chamber will support a project in which local business tenants may be potentially displaced, the Chamber's Legislative Committee will facilitate at least one meeting with any interested local business owners.
- 9) **Broker Encouragement:** Matching existing local businesses in Falls Church with existing small spaces in the City is a top priority. The Chamber will establish an award program to recognize and reward those brokers who successfully provide pro bono support to merchants and other small enterprises in need of relocation assistance.
- 10) **Lower Chamber Membership Dues:** The Chamber will consider waived or discounted fees for members for one year which are displaced due to redevelopment activities.
- 11) **Potential City Initiatives:** To create a business-friendly environment that encourages local business growth, particularly for displaced companies that wish to remain in the City, the Chamber will consider advocating for adoption of the following legislative initiatives by the Falls Church City Council:

- a. Citywide Local Business Retention Initiative:** The Chamber will advocate for the creation of a citywide retail retention and relocation policy geared towards encouraging existing City businesses to relocate within the City's corporate limits.
- b. Bonus Density:** The Chamber will advocate for the inclusion of density bonuses in the City Code for redevelopment projects where applicants agree to facilitate affordable local business space. Under such a scenario, the City would permit bonus density in exchange for meeting a designated percentage of affordable rental space.
- c. Waiver of Fees For Relocation:** The Chamber will advocate for an amendment to Section 15-20 of the City Code to reduce or eliminate fees for local businesses relocating within the City due to redevelopment displacement.
- d. Lower Fees At City Events:** The Chamber will advocate for waived or discounted fees for eligible local businesses which exhibit at City Events in which vendors and exhibitors participate including booths at the Fall Festival, Memorial Day Parade, Farmers Market, and more.
- e. Fast-Track Permitting:** The Chamber will advocate for a streamlined fast-track permitting process for local businesses wishing to relocate within the City. The process would streamline review and approval of all construction-related permits to allow businesses to locate to new space quickly. The Chamber will work with the City Planning Department to ensure that the policy on expedited permitting for City businesses is followed.
- f. Relocation Fund:** The Chamber will advocate for the establishment of a fund to provide relocation assistance for qualifying displaced businesses that relocate to another City location. Such fund would be established by the City, be subject to evaluation criteria, and used for relocation expenses including reprinting business cards, telephone installation, and other moving-related expenses.
- g. Application Notification:** The Chamber will advocate for establishment of a timely notification letter to be distributed to known business tenants whenever a site plan, rezoning, special exception, or variance application is submitted for their building.
- h. Lower BPOL Taxes For Displaced Businesses:** The Chamber will advocate for lowering the effective rate of the business, professional, and occupational license tax for a set period for displaced businesses which relocate within the City.
- i. Lower Exhibitor/Sponsorship Fees At City Events:** The Chamber will advocate for waived or discounted fees for displaced local businesses to exhibit at, or sponsor, City events such as the Fall Festival, Memorial Day Parade, and Farmers Market.



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