



November 9, 2022

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Cristol,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce enthusiastically supports the incorporation of flexible outdoor dining regulations, based on Temporary Outdoor Seating Area (TOSA) rules, into Arlington's permanent code. TOSAs have been one of the County's most successful policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and adapting their provisions into the permanent code would support a vital sector of Arlington's economy. The upcoming Draft Framework of the Future of Outdoor Dining (FOOD) Study should reflect these facts.

Flexible outdoor dining options help establish more vibrant streetscapes in Arlington, provide more enjoyable dining experiences for many customers, and serve as crucial sources of revenue for many Arlington restaurants. TOSAs helped many Arlington businesses remain in business during and after the pandemic. Having outdoor dining be subject to a simplified, permanent approval process would be beneficial to restaurants who rely on it financially.

The Chamber asks that new permanent outdoor dining rules may permit dining in as much of the existing TOSA spaces as reasonably possible. While some changes are certainly necessary for outdoor dining areas to better fit into their locations, we encourage the County not to let concerns about potential problems lead to the creation of inflexible, rigid, or one-size-fits-all restrictions. For instance, on-site parking options for customers are necessary and should be provided, but a slight reduction in the parking space requirement would provide restaurants with needed flexibility to keep much of their outdoor dining footprints.

The Chamber offers our input to assist in the creation of the Draft Framework of the FOOD Study. We look forward to engaging with County Staff on the Study as it moves to completion and implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: Vice Chair Christian Dorsey; Members Takis Karantonis, Libby Garvey and Matt de Ferranti; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Principal Planner Brett Wallace; Planning Director Anthony Fusarelli