



July 5, 2023

Devanshi Patel
Arlington County Planning Commission
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Patel,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce strongly supports Item 6 on the Planning Commission agenda, the package of permanent amendments to the Zoning Ordinance concerning outdoor dining and seating spaces.

The Chamber has advocated over the past three years for the permanence of expanded outdoor dining including simplifying the process for restaurants to retain their seating areas, comparable to the process for Temporary Outdoor Seating Areas, or TOSAs. We greatly appreciate Staff's efforts on outdoor dining, and we urge the Planning Commission to recommend the adoption of the permanent rules.

The Chamber finds the regulations proposed to be a reasonable process for both operators of existing TOSAs and for operators who wish to submit permits for outdoor dining areas in the future. We are pleased that Staff will be available to work with applicants to address questions and provide information, as they prepare necessary materials for submission and review. We encourage Staff to prioritize communications with restaurants throughout the process, and to simplify the customer experience to the greatest degree possible. The Chamber is ready and willing to assist with disseminating information to our member restaurants, and we look forward to continued partnership with Staff on this effort.

Arlington restaurants have heavily relied on revenue from outdoor dining over the past three years. We consistently hear from numerous restaurants who have been waiting for the completion of permanent changes, as it would allow them to plan and invest for the future. Arlington's local restaurants contribute to the quality of life that we all enjoy, and we strongly encourage the Planning Commission and County Board to adopt these regulations to help these businesses thrive.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates".

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: Vice-Chair Sara Steinberger; Planning Commission Members Nia Bagley, Eric Berkey, Elizabeth Gearin, Karen Guevara, Jim Lantelme, Tenley Peterson, Peter Robertson, Leonardo Sarli, Tony Striner and Daniel Weir; County Manager Mark Schwartz; CPHD Director Claude Williamson; Planning Director Anthony Fusarelli, Principal Planner Brett Wallace.