



December 2, 2020

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

Dear Chair Garvey,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce enthusiastically supports the proposed amendment to the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance to permit the establishment of outdoor cafes in the R-C zoning district. Outdoor cafes will enhance these locations and contribute to Arlington's vibrancy, as this year has demonstrated. We encourage the County Board to adopt the amendment.

The locations of R-C zoned parcels lend themselves well to al fresco dining. The sites in question are along or adjacent to main thoroughfares, Fairfax Drive, N Glebe Road, and Wilson Boulevard, which generally feature relatively wide sidewalks and host a variety of commercial, pedestrian, and vehicular activity. They are in neighborhoods which already host outdoor cafes on nearby sites. Moreover, outdoor cafes will enhance the vibrancy and streetscape near the Ballston, Virginia Square, and Courthouse Metro stations.

Our experience with Temporary Outdoor Seating Areas has demonstrated the benefit to the community from expanding outdoor dining. The pandemic's unique circumstances and need to establish TOSAs quickly created a natural test of expanded outdoor cafes. TOSAs have generally shared the sidewalks effectively and have shown promise for a broader expansion of sidewalk seating in Arlington. Amending the zoning ordinance to permit outdoor dining in R-C districts is a positive step in that direction.

We thank you for your consideration of these comments.

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: Arlington County Board members Katie Cristol, Matt de Ferranti, Christian Dorsey, and Takis Karantonis; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Nick Rogers, Planning Division