



December 16, 2022

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

Dear Chair Cristol,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce strongly supports Item 28 on the County Board Agenda for December 17: Request to Advertise public hearings for the County Board to consider proposed amendments to the County's Continuity of Government Ordinance (the "Ordinance") related to the period for which the measures instituted by the ordinance shall be in effect from the end of the COVID-19 disaster.

The Chamber recognizes that the proposed amendment to the Ordinance will allow for the County to continue the Temporary Outdoor Seating Area (TOSA) regulations past their original sunset date of February 15. An extension to the sunset date is vital to Arlington restaurants to operate their outdoor dining spaces until permanent regulations can be enacted. We hope that the County Board passes the Request to Advertise on the Consent Agenda, and votes to adopt the proposed amendment at their January 2023 meeting.

We appreciate Staff's efforts on outdoor dining, including the Future of Outdoor Dining (FOOD) study, and the proposed Ordinance amendment that recognizes the importance of regulatory continuity. Despite this, however, we are concerned about the delays in the completion of the study, and therefore the implementation of permanent changes to outdoor dining. Outdoor dining serves as a crucial source of revenue for Arlington restaurants, and we hear from many restaurants who have been waiting for several years that the completion of permanent changes would allow them to plan and invest for the future. We encourage the County to enact permanent rules that permit dining in as many of the existing TOSA spaces as feasible and do so as quickly as reasonably possible. Arlington's local restaurants contribute to the quality of life that we all enjoy, and codifying existing regulations is an easy step to help these businesses thrive.

TOSAs have been one of the County's most successful policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and adapting TOSA provisions into the permanent code will support a vital sector of Arlington's economy. The Chamber supports this Ordinance amendment, as we believe it will assist the County in finalizing permanent outdoor dining rules while minimizing disruption to our County's restaurants. The Chamber looks forward to continuing engagement with County Staff on the FOOD Study as it moves quickly to completion and into implementation.

Thank you for your consideration of our 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: Vice Chair Christian Dorsey; Board Members Libby Garvey, Matt de Ferranti, and Takis Karantonis; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Planning Director Anthony Fusarelli; Principal Planner Brett Wallace