



**NATIONAL
LANDING**

PENTAGON CITY

CRYSTAL CITY

POTOMAC YARD

January 19, 2022

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

Re: Item 15 - Future of Outdoor Dining Study

Dear Chair Dorsey and Members of the County Board:

On behalf of the Crystal City, Pentagon City, and Potomac Yard business community, the National Landing Business Improvement District (BID) would like to express its **support for Item #15 on the January County Board Consent Agenda** to amend the Continuity of Government Ordinance.

This amendment provides County staff additional time to complete the Future of Outdoor Dining (FOOD) Study and prevents the expiration of temporary rules enabled by this ordinance that allow for temporary outdoor seating areas (TOSAs) at restaurants.

The National Landing BID commends the County's quick action in creating processes and approaches to Pick-up/Drop-off Zones and Temporary Outdoor Seating Areas (TOSAs), providing needed flexibility and support during a very difficult time for area restaurants. In National Landing, TOSAs have enabled existing businesses to respond to customer demand for more outdoor seating, especially along 23rd Street Restaurant Row.

As the world transitions into a "new normal" post-pandemic, the restaurant community has clearly communicated that major challenges and obstacles to success remain including low office occupancy due to hybrid work, supply chain issues, rising prices, and a shortage of labor. These challenges demonstrate the need to maintain the County's flexible approach to outdoor dining.

We encourage the County to finalize the FOOD Study as quickly as possible and consider the following suggestions/comments for consideration in a permanent regulatory approach to outdoor dining throughout the County:

- Consider regulatory framework that enables TOSAs located on private parking that previously needed to meet parking minimums to become permanent in metro corridors;
- Allow establishments to seek live entertainment and music use permits within the TOSAs to support street activation goals; and
- Relax total restaurant capacity restrictions that require one-for-one reductions in indoor seating for each additional outdoor seat to be more consistent with industry standards and practices in neighboring jurisdictions.

Unique outdoor dining spaces enabled by the County's TOSA regulatory approach are important tools to support local and small businesses, meet our collective goals for vibrant streetscape, and facilitate talent attraction efforts in today's economic development environment. We look forward to continued partnership in ensuring a flexible regulatory environment to support small businesses.

Sincerely,

Tracy Sayegh Gabriel
President & Executive Director
National Landing Business Improvement District

**NATIONAL LANDING
BUSINESS
IMPROVEMENT
DISTRICT**

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