

**Fairfax City**  
**Economic Development Authority**

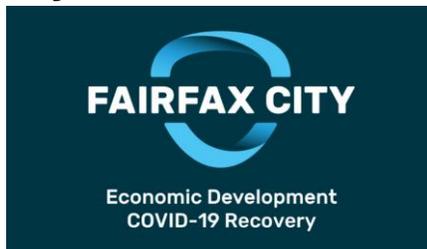
10455 Armstrong Street, Fairfax, VA 22030



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 27, 2020

## **Fairfax City *ReConnected* Outdoors**



### ***Emergency Ordinance to Facilitate the Fairfax City ReConnected Outdoors Program***

**Fairfax, VA** – To help support Fairfax City businesses and restaurants while following Forward Virginia’s Phase 1 guidelines, City Council approved two emergency ordinances to facilitate the Fairfax City ReConnected Outdoors Program by allowing temporary street and public right-of-way closings and to permit temporary waivers of zoning regulations and review requirements in connection with general outdoor commercial activity.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic challenges the city to envision different ways to provide economic opportunities to its business community — and to look beyond a business’ traditional and literal walls.

To help businesses meet Phase 1 guidelines, the city could temporarily close public right-of-ways, on a limited basis, so restaurants can offer outdoor dining options. The city manager could temporarily close areas on certain rights-of-way, including streets, to allow restaurants to expand — or initiate — outdoor dining to ensure restaurants have enough space for social distancing. The measure will remain valid for the duration of the city public health emergency.

Most businesses, however, are expected to use their own private property, like parking lots, to expand their area.

Prior to closing any city public right-of-way, the city manager would review the request and make sure there was no danger or excessive inconvenience to surrounding businesses or residences, and that any traffic detours are reasonable and meet transportation and life safety requirements and guidelines.

“During the COVID-19 pandemic, business owners have been creative and flexible,” said Danette Nguyen, assistant director of the Economic Development Office. “However, Phase 1 requires even more flexibility and creativity, and the city can help them by almost literally breaking down the walls.”

Christopher Bruno, EDO director, agreed. “By launching a short-term outdoor dining program, we give these business owners a chance to keep their doors open during what has become an international economic downturn.”

City Manager Rob Stalzer reiterated that road closures, and moving restaurant boundaries into traditional rights-of-way, would be implemented only when safe to do so.

Businesses can find comprehensive information on this program in a single location online: [fairfaxcityconnected.com/reconnected](http://fairfaxcityconnected.com/reconnected).

Information: [EconomicDevelopment@fairfaxva.gov](mailto:EconomicDevelopment@fairfaxva.gov), 703.385.7944

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