



Department of Economic Development
City of Manassas
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Manassas Helps Businesses Meet New Phase One Guidelines

Manassas, VA – May 21, 2020 – As Northern Virginia waits to move into Phase 1 of reopening, Manassas has made it easier for retailers and restaurants to safely comply with the social distancing requirement. The reopening requirements impose restrictions on a businesses' capacity by limiting the number of people who can occupy a space and requiring separation between customers and tables. In Phase 1 restaurants can only accommodate 50% of their normal customers and must serve them outside. Because most restaurants have limited (or no) outdoor seating, City Council has amended an Ordinance governing the use of public streets and sidewalks and the City's Department of Community Development has taken administrative action to make it easier for businesses to operate in the common areas on private property. The two actions collectively will allow restaurants, and retailers if they wish, to establish outdoor dining and service areas for their customers. The City will begin working immediately with restaurants in the Historic Downtown on potential street closures and expanding sidewalk dining as well as opening up publicly owned property for table seating.

Restaurants that operate on their own private property, or have access to common areas in retail centers, can also easily expand outdoor dining areas or establish new ones. For those that operate on private property and do not intend to use public sidewalks and streets, they should contact the property owner or manager to get permission first. Filling out an application is simple and there is no fee for this permit. Interested businesses should email permitstatus@manassasva.gov with a request to setup an outdoor area and include the following information:

1. Property address
2. Seating capacity and copy of existing certificate of occupancy (jpeg or pdf file). If a business does not have a copy please indicate in the email.
3. Hours of operation
4. Proposed safety measures to delineate the area (fence, cones, etc.)
5. Drawing/map of outdoor area footprint (can be drawn on a google aerial map, section of site plan, etc.)
6. Proof of property owner approval in writing (letter or email)

If a business has questions regarding this information they can email permitstatus@manassasva.gov or call the permit office at 703-257-8278. **Businesses that want to use public streets and sidewalks should contact the permit office first.** Any restaurant that serves alcohol and intends to do so outside of a previously approved footprint must also contact the VA ABC to obtain permission for extending the limits of an existing ABC permit. VA ABC has already issued guidelines for these uses and is making it easy for businesses to comply with the law.



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Manassas is committed to helping its businesses be successful and is also committed to public safety. During the pandemic businesses and customers should always be aware of the guidelines issued to protect public health and should also be mindful that these guidelines are a minimum standard. Some businesses may choose to impose stricter requirements and some customers may be uncomfortable regardless. For those individuals who have underlying health conditions or are not comfortable being in public settings, the City urges them to exercise their own best judgement. The City of Manassas continues to operate under a State of Emergency. #ManassasStrongerTogether.

About the City of Manassas Department of Economic Development

The City of Manassas fosters economic development through collaborative partnerships, sustainable fiscal management and supportive City services. The Department of Economic Development (DED) is directly responsible for business attraction, retention, expansion and tourism initiatives in the City. As a resourceful and collaborative organization, we work in partnership with our key stakeholders to ensure that we have what businesses need; including a highly educated and technical workforce with access to major universities and first-class training providers. We take an active leadership role in all that we do, serving as a community builder, collaborator and agent of economic growth. For help with your business needs please visit: <https://choosemanassas.org/> or call 703.257.8882.

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