

**City of Charlottesville**  
**Department of Neighborhood Development Services**

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October 7, 2024

Dear operator of a leased, City-owned café space:

At its meeting on **Tuesday, October 15, 5:30 pm at CitySpace, the City's Board of Architectural Review (BAR) will review proposed revisions to the ADC District Design Guidelines for outdoor cafes.** (Note: These guidelines apply only to cafés operated within the leased, City-owned spaces on the Downtown Mall and The Corner.)

Per the City Code, the BAR is required to periodically review the design guidelines and recommend to City Council any updates or revisions. The goal by mid-January, well ahead of March 1, 2025, when cafe leases are renewed, is to have Council's review and approval of the revised guidelines for cafés. (Note: Council's review will be during a regular, monthly public meeting.)

Attached are the current guidelines for outdoor cafes, adopted in 2012. The draft revisions will be posted on-line, ahead of the Oct. 15 meeting, at: [www.charlottesville.gov/1077/Agendas-Minutes](http://www.charlottesville.gov/1077/Agendas-Minutes).

The BAR meeting on Oct. 15 will be a Hybrid Public Meeting. People can attend in-person at CitySpace (100 5th Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902) or participate on-line by Zoom Webinar. (Link will be posted on the City Calendar--[www.charlottesville.gov](http://www.charlottesville.gov)--under the October 15 BAR meeting.) You are welcome to comment or ask questions during the meeting. You can also e-mail me prior to the meeting: [wernerjb@charlottesville.gov](mailto:wernerjb@charlottesville.gov).

The intent of this review is to better align the design guidelines with how the café spaces have evolved over time, including elements that are inadequately addressed (for ex, the 2012 guidelines do not address catenary lights) or, in some places, have been too rigid (for ex, the 2012 guidelines require planters be either terracotta or concrete). The revisions, as drafted, will *grandfather* existing, ADA-compliant metal railings and the overwhelming majority of the existing tables, chairs, and furniture. For new operators seeking to lease a café space or for proposed changes to existing cafés, the updated guidelines will fully apply.

Sincerely,

Jeff Werner, AICP  
Historic Preservation and Design Planner

**Current guidelines for café spaces**, adopted 2012.

ADC District Design Guidelines, Chapter V: Signs, Awnings, Vending & Cafes

E. OUTDOOR CAFES

All elements, including chains, bollards, tables, chairs, planters, and trash containers, should be the same color, materials, and design character. Black, being the dominant color of mall elements, or silvertone metal are preferred. The use of treated lumber or unfinished wood anywhere on the mall is not allowed.

1. Fences, Chains, and Bollards

- a. Should be wrought iron or black painted metal.
- b. Should be kept well-maintained.
- c. Chain-links shall be two inches in length or larger.
- d. Bollards shall be at least 3 inches in diameter.

2. Tables and Chairs

- a. Should be wrought iron, black painted or silvertone metal. Other materials or colors require BAR approval.
- b. Cloth tablecloths and removable seat cushions are permitted. Materials other than cloth, and color are subject to BAR approval.

3. Planters

- a. Should be compatible in terms of design, scale, and color with other elements of the café. The planter material shall be terra cotta or concrete. Other materials require BAR approval.

4. Umbrellas

- a. If used, may contain a maximum of one dark or neutral solid color that is compatible with the furniture.
- b. The size of the umbrella should be in scale with the table. Oversize umbrellas may be permitted, but all parts must be contained within the café space.
- c. No text is permitted on an outdoor café umbrella.

5. Trash Containers

- a. Black metal is preferred.
- b. Should be located within the café enclosure.



Dark painted metal is preferred for outdoor cafe furniture.



Silver tone metal furniture is an alternative to dark colors.



Planter boxes soften the simple design and subdued color of this fence.