



***Text Amendment #2024-00006***  
***Minor Update -- Recreation and Entertainment Uses***

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<p><b>Issue:</b> (A) Initiation of a Text Amendment and (B) Public Hearing and consideration of a minor update to the Zoning Ordinance to Section 2-188.1 to add dog play area to the recreation and entertainment use definition; and to Sections 4-100 (CL/Commercial low), 4-200 (CC/Commercial community), 4-300 (CSL/Commercial service low), and 6-600 (Mount Vernon urban overlay) zone to add recreation and entertainment, indoor as a permitted use and recreation and entertainment, outdoor as a special use.</p>	<p>Planning Commission Hearing:</p>	<p>June 4, 2024</p>
	<p>City Council Hearing:</p>	<p>June 15, 2024</p>
<p><b>Staff:</b>  Ann Horowitz, Principal Planner, ann.horowitz@alexandriava.gov  Tony LaColla, AICP, Division Chief, anthony.lacolla@alexandriava.gov</p>		
<p><b>Staff recommendation:</b> Staff recommends that the Planning Commission INITIATE and recommend APPROVAL of the text amendment.</p>		

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, JUNE 4, 2024:**

On a motion by Commissioner Manor, seconded by Commissioner Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to initiate ZTA #2024-00006. The motion carried on a vote of 6-1, with Commissioner Lyle opposing. On a motion by Commissioner Manor, seconded by Commissioner Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of ZTA #2024-00006. The motion carried on a vote of 6-1, with Commissioner Lyle opposing.

**Reason:**

The Planning Commission generally agreed with the staff analysis.

**Discussion:**

Commissioner Lyle expressed that the zoning text amendment needed more work, citing as an example that child play area, one of the recreation and entertainment uses listed in the Zoning Ordinance, should be defined. She suggested SUP applications include questions related to types of recreation and entertainment uses so the public would clearly understand what is proposed at a site.

Director Karl Moritz clarified the recreation and entertainment use is not newly proposed as the definition has applied for several years in most commercial zones. As presently written, staff has had no difficulty interpreting the definition and amending the sample uses for added specificity was not necessary. He continued that the allowance of the recreation and entertainment use to include all commercial-oriented zones would expand business opportunities and access for residents. In addition, he mentioned the importance of adding

uses in the Zoning Ordinance, such as dog play area in this case, to respond to new business concepts as they arise.

Chair Macek noted his support for the text amendment, reiterating the existence of the use in several zones, the location of the added zones adjacent to other commercial zones, and the expanded business opportunities. He pointed to the three letters of support from the Del Ray community for the text amendment, all mentioning the changes would support vitality and neighborhood amenities along the Mount Vernon Avenue corridor.

Vice chair McMahon stated her support for applying the recreation and entertainment allowances and processes in more commercial zones. She believed in the importance of increasing areas for social space for residents and their families.

## **I. Summary**

Staff proposes expanding the opportunity for businesses to locate indoor and outdoor recreation and entertainment uses in all commercial zones in the City by allowing the indoor use as permitted and the outdoor use as a special use. In addition, staff proposes to add dog play areas to the list of defined recreation and entertainment uses.

## **II. Background**

Based on recent business inquiries, it has recently come to staff's attention that indoor and outdoor recreation and entertainment uses were not included in three of the 18 commercial and mixed-use zones. And the Mount Vernon Urban Overlay narrowly limits recreation and entertainment uses to live theater and music venues. Although the four zones – CL/Commercial low, CC/Commercial community, CSL/Commercial service low and the Mount Vernon Urban Overlay -- are located adjacent to residential neighborhoods, other zones such as CD/Commercial downtown, KR/King Street retail, NR/Neighborhood retail and the four CRMU/Commercial residential mixed-use zones are equally as proximate to residences and allow indoor and outdoor recreation and entertainment uses.

Recreation and entertainment use is defined in Section 2-188.1 of the Zoning Ordinance as:

Commercial uses for indoor or outdoor participation in or observation of games, arts, culture, recreation or similar activities. Recreation and entertainment uses include but are not limited to:

Amusement parks;

Athletic fields;

Billiard halls;

Bowling alleys;

Children's play areas;

Court game facilities;

Game rooms;

Golf courses, miniature or otherwise, and driving ranges;

Skating rinks;

Swimming pools;

Theaters;

Video arcades.

### **III. DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED TEXT CHANGES**

Comprehensively allowing indoor and outdoor recreation and entertainment uses in all commercial zones would not only attract new businesses to more areas of the City, but also expand access to enjoyable, community-building activities for more residents within walking distance of their homes. For the CL, CC, and CSL zones, as in the 14 commercial zones, where recreation and entertainment are included, the indoor use would be allowed as permitted or by-right given that any negative impact can be controlled when contained within a building. Outdoor uses would be subject to City Council approval of a special use permit, which would include conditions specific to the use and location to mitigate the potential for any negative impacts on the community. Sections 6-603(B) and (C) Mount Vernon Urban Overlay would be amended to allow all types of recreation and entertainment uses.

Given an increased interest in commercial dog play areas, staff includes this term in the list of recreation and entertainment uses in Section 2-188.1 to affirm the staff determination defining a dog play area.

### **IV. Recommendation**

Staff recommends initiation and approval of the proposed text amendments on the attached document.

Staff: Tony LaColla, AICP, Division Chief  
Ann Horowitz, Principal Planner

**Attachment:** Proposed Zoning Text Amendments

2-188.1 – Recreation and entertainment use.

Commercial uses for indoor or outdoor participation in or observation of games, arts, culture, recreation or similar activities. Recreation uses in this definition are other than those listed in section 2-129.1 for congregate recreational facilities. Recreation and entertainment uses include but are not limited to:

- Amusement parks;
- Athletic fields;
- Billiard halls;
- Bowling alleys;
- Children's play areas;
- Court game facilities;
- Dog play area:
- Game rooms;
- Golf courses, miniature or otherwise, and driving ranges;
- Skating rinks;
- Swimming pools;
- Theaters;
- Video arcades.

Sec. 4-100 – CL/Commercial low zone.

4-102 – Permitted uses.

The following uses are permitted in the CL zone:

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(J.1) Recreation and entertainment use, indoor;

(J.42) Restaurant located within a commercial complex;

\*\*\*

4-103 – Special uses.

The following uses may be allowed in the CL zone pursuant to a special use permit:

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(L.1) Recreation and entertainment use, outdoor;

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Sec. 4-200 – CC/Commercial community zone.

4-202 – Permitted uses.

The following uses are permitted in the CC zone:

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(I.1) Recreation and entertainment use, indoor;

(I.42) Restaurant located within a commercial complex or hotel;

\*\*\*

4-203 – Special uses.

The following uses may be allowed in the CC zone pursuant to a special use permit:

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(Q.1) Recreation and entertainment use, outdoor;

\*\*\*

Sec. 4-300 – CSL/Commercial service low zone.

4-302 – Permitted uses.

The following uses are permitted in the CSL zone:

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(I.1) Recreation and entertainment use, indoor;

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4-303 – Special uses.

The following uses may be allowed in the CSL zone pursuant to a special use permit:

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(W.1) Recreation and entertainment use, outdoor;

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Sec. 6-600 – Mount Vernon Avenue urban overlay zone.

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6-603 – Uses.

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(B) ~~Reserved. *Special use additions.* The following uses are allowed by special use permit, in addition to those listed in the CL zone:~~

~~(1) Recreation and entertainment use, limited to live theater, music venues and similar entertainment opportunities.~~

(C) *Retail and neighborhood focus uses.* Within the retail focus area, uses occupying first floor space of a building shall be limited to the following:

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(3) Recreation and entertainment use, indoor, ~~as limited in section (B)(1) above.~~

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# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 4, 2024

TO: CHAIR NATHAN MACEK  
AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: KARL W. MORITZ, DIRECTOR  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

SUBJECT: DOCKET ITEM #2 – ZTA #2024-  
RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT USES

This memorandum includes a map identifying the locations of the CL, CC, CSL and Mount Vernon Urban Overlay zones (yellow) where the recreation and entertainment use would be added. The green areas indicate the 14 commercial-oriented zones where the use is presently allowed. Additionally, information that staff shared with Commissioner Lyle in response to her follow-up emailed questions on the recreation and entertainment use is included.





Staff wanted to share with the commission email discussions regarding recreation and entertainment uses we discussed over email with Commissioner Lyle.

As a basis for discussion, the present-day recreation and entertainment definition is:

Section 2-188.1. Commercial uses for indoor or outdoor participation in or observation of games, arts, culture, recreation or similar activities. Recreation uses in this definition are other than those listed in [section 2-129.1](#) for congregate recreational facilities [*referencing the POS zone*].

Recreation and entertainment uses include but are not limited to:

Amusement parks;

Athletic fields;

Billiard halls;

Bowling alleys;

Children's play areas;

Court game facilities;

Game rooms;

Golf courses, miniature or otherwise, and driving ranges;

Skating rinks;

Swimming pools;

Theaters;

Video arcades.

We have not separately defined each of the sample uses, like “child play area,” to not tie ourselves to any one specific type of play, given that that the names of popular activities come and go. This rationale follows for other sample generally termed uses, such as “athletic fields,” “court game facilities,” and the proposed “dog play area.” The list of examples simply reinforces the introductory statement in the recreation and entertainment use definition, providing staff with enough information to accurately define a use.

If an applicant would like the flexibility to have different types of outdoor recreation and entertainment uses considered in an SUP, we would ask that they include each in an application. The potential for varying levels of impacts exists and each would need to be evaluated separately with conditions included to offset impacts.

Occasionally, you have seen SUP requests that included accessory outdoor games, although staff is not aware of any that have been installed. An outdoor recreation and entertainment use could be considered as accessory and not require SUP approval if, according to Section 2-200.2, it is “clearly subordinate to and serves a permitted principal use; and is subordinate in area, extent and purpose to the principal use served. An accessory use generally occupies less than one-third of the gross floor area of the principal use and does not change the character of the principal

**From:**  
**To:** [PlanComm](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Support the Text Amendment #2024-00006  
**Date:** Monday, June 3, 2024 6:42:50 PM

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Dear Planning Commission Members,

As a small business owner, Del Ray Business Association Board member and Del Ray resident, I am writing to express our support for the proposed Text Amendment #2024-00006 regarding recreation and entertainment uses in the City of Alexandria. This amendment will better enable our businesses to create unique spaces and experiences for our patrons, ultimately bettering the Del Ray community and the City of Alexandria.

The inclusion of indoor recreation and entertainment as permitted uses, along with outdoor recreation as special uses, in the CL, CC, CSL, and Mount Vernon Urban Overlay zones aligns with the needs and interests of Del Ray businesses and the residents we serve. Allowing these uses will provide residents with more accessible recreational options within walking distance of their homes, which is one of the main reasons my husband and I moved here 5 years ago. This amendment also includes adding dog play areas, which addresses the increasing demand for pet-friendly recreational spaces. As the owner of a pet care business, I am uniquely aware of this growing need. People only want to go where they can bring their dogs, and I believe that our business community is capable of adding this safely.

I commend the city's proactive steps in enhancing the zoning ordinance to reflect contemporary recreational needs and business opportunities. I urge the Planning Commission and City Council to approve this text amendment and support the continued development of a dynamic and inclusive community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Jenna Gotch

Jenna Gotch  
Owner  
Passionately Pets  
An In-Home Pet Sitting Company  
240-888-1134  
[jenna@passionatelypets.com](mailto:jenna@passionatelypets.com)  
[www.passionatelypets.com](http://www.passionatelypets.com)



June 3, 2024

Planning Commission  
City of Alexandria  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Planning Commission Members,

On behalf of the Del Ray Business Association, I am writing to express our support for the proposed Text Amendment #2024-00006 regarding recreation and entertainment uses in the City of Alexandria. This amendment will better enable our businesses to create unique spaces and experiences for our patrons, ultimately bettering the Del Ray community and the City of Alexandria.

The inclusion of indoor recreation and entertainment as permitted uses, along with outdoor recreation as special uses, in the CL, CC, CSL, and Mount Vernon Urban Overlay zones aligns with the needs and interests of Del Ray businesses and the residents we serve. Allowing these uses will provide residents with more accessible recreational options within walking distance of their homes. This amendment also includes adding dog play areas, which addresses the increasing demand for pet-friendly recreational spaces.

We commend the city's proactive steps in enhancing the zoning ordinance to reflect contemporary recreational needs and business opportunities. We urge the Planning Commission and City Council to approve this text amendment and support the continued development of a dynamic and inclusive community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniel Roth  
Government Relations Chair  
Del Ray Business Association

cc: Ann Horowitz, Principal Planner ([ann.horowitz@alexandriava.gov](mailto:ann.horowitz@alexandriava.gov))  
Tony LaColla, AICP, Division Chief ([anthony.lacolla@alexandriava.gov](mailto:anthony.lacolla@alexandriava.gov))

**From:** [Gayle Reuter](#)  
**To:** [PlanComm](#); [Ann Horowitz](#)  
**Cc:** [Duncan Blair](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Tonight's Docket - Zoning Text Amendment #2024-00006  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 4, 2024 2:28:12 PM

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Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

My apologies for this last minute email - I wanted to speak in strong support of the above Text Amendment that is currently on the consent calendar tonight.

As a homeowner in Del Ray for over 40 years, I was actually on the Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan that was adopted in 2005. We worked for close to two years on that plan with the hopes of Mt. Vernon Avenue developing into a vibrant business corridor that welcomed its neighbors and families. This amendment will help to continue the successful development of the Avenue and is strongly supported by the community. This will help to bring neighbors together and to support small mom and pop businesses on the Avenue.

I also can speak first hand on the impact such an amendment would have on neighbors. I live at 110 E Del Ray Avenue, which is directly next door to St. Elmo's, ROAM, Market to Market across the street from Del Ray Pizzeria and catty corner to Gustave's. I see everyday neighbors and families coming together and have seen no adverse impact either through noise, litter, traffic or anything but positive interactions.

I wish I could be there in person to speak and show my support but have a conflict with an ALIVE Board Meeting.

Thank you for your consideration,

Gayle Reuter  
110 E. Del Ray Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22301

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