

ORDINANCE NO. 5425

AN ORDINANCE Approving and Authorizing the Temporary Closure of the Unit Block of King Street and the Northern Portion of the Strand to Vehicular Traffic

WHEREAS, the unit block of King Street, between Union Street and the Strand, is a one-way street heading west toward the King Street Metro Station with several restaurants; and

WHEREAS, the northern portion of the Strand, between Wales Alley and King Street, is a two-way street heading north towards the Marina and south towards Jones Point Park; and

WHEREAS, prior to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic (“the pandemic”), many of the restaurants participated in the City’s outdoor dining program that allowed restaurant seating on the sidewalk; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, the City Council adopted the [Waterfront Small Area Plan](#), which recommends closing the unit block and the Strand north of the parking garage entrance to traffic (except EMS, fire, police, etc.) to make a pedestrian plaza; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the City Council directed staff to develop a pilot program to test closing the 100 block of King Street to vehicular traffic; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, the City Council approved the permanent closure of the 100 block of King Street to vehicular traffic to allow for additional space for pedestrians and for businesses to expand their operations outdoors; and

WHEREAS, the 100 block closure provides additional pedestrian space and outdoor dining area that is beneficial to the waterfront area, while the traffic circulation in this area is not dependent on keeping this block open to vehicles; and

WHEREAS, City staff will work together with the Old Town Business Association on the unit block of King Street and the northern portion of the Strand to make better use of the public space, meet public safety requirements, and provide opportunities for continued outdoor dining and retail activities; and

WHEREAS, City Staff will evaluate the benefits and impacts of this temporary closure and will return to City Council in the Fall of 2022 with a recommendation to make this closure permanent if deemed desirable; and

WHEREAS, on February 15, 2022, the Waterfront Commission endorsed the temporary closure of the unit block of King Street and the northern portion of the Strand to vehicular traffic as consistent with the Waterfront Small Area Plan; and

WHEREAS, on February 28, 2022, the Traffic and Parking Board reviewed and made a recommendation to support the temporary closure of the unit block of King Street and the northern portion of the Strand to vehicular traffic based on the reasons provided herein; and

WHEREAS, on April 7, 2022, the Planning Commission found that temporary closure of the block to vehicular traffic was consistent with the City of Alexandria Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to City Charter § 2.03(a) and Code of Virginia § 15.2-2006, the City has the authority to close streets and alleys; and

WHEREAS, the City has complied with the legal requirements in order to temporarily close this block to vehicular traffic; and

WHEREAS, in consideration of the findings of Waterfront Commission, Planning Commission, Traffic and Parking Board, and the report of the staff, the City Council of the City of Alexandria, has determined that the temporary closure of unit block of King Street and the northern portion of the Strand to vehicular traffic is desirable; therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. That, pursuant to City Charter § 2.03(a) and Code of Virginia § 15.2-2006, temporary closure of the unit block of King Street, located between Union Street and the Strand, and the northern portion of the Strand, located between Wales Alley and King Street to vehicular traffic through November 20 to conduct a pilot project is approved.

Section 2. That the city manager be, and hereby is, authorized to do on behalf of the City of Alexandria all things necessary or desirable to carry into effect this closure, including the execution of documents.

Section 3. That the city clerk be, and hereby is, authorized to attest the execution by the city manager of all documents necessary or desirable to carry into effect this closure, and to affix thereon the official seal of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

Section 4. That this ordinance shall be effective at the time of its final passage and shall expire on October 4, 2022.



JUSTIN M. WILSON
Mayor

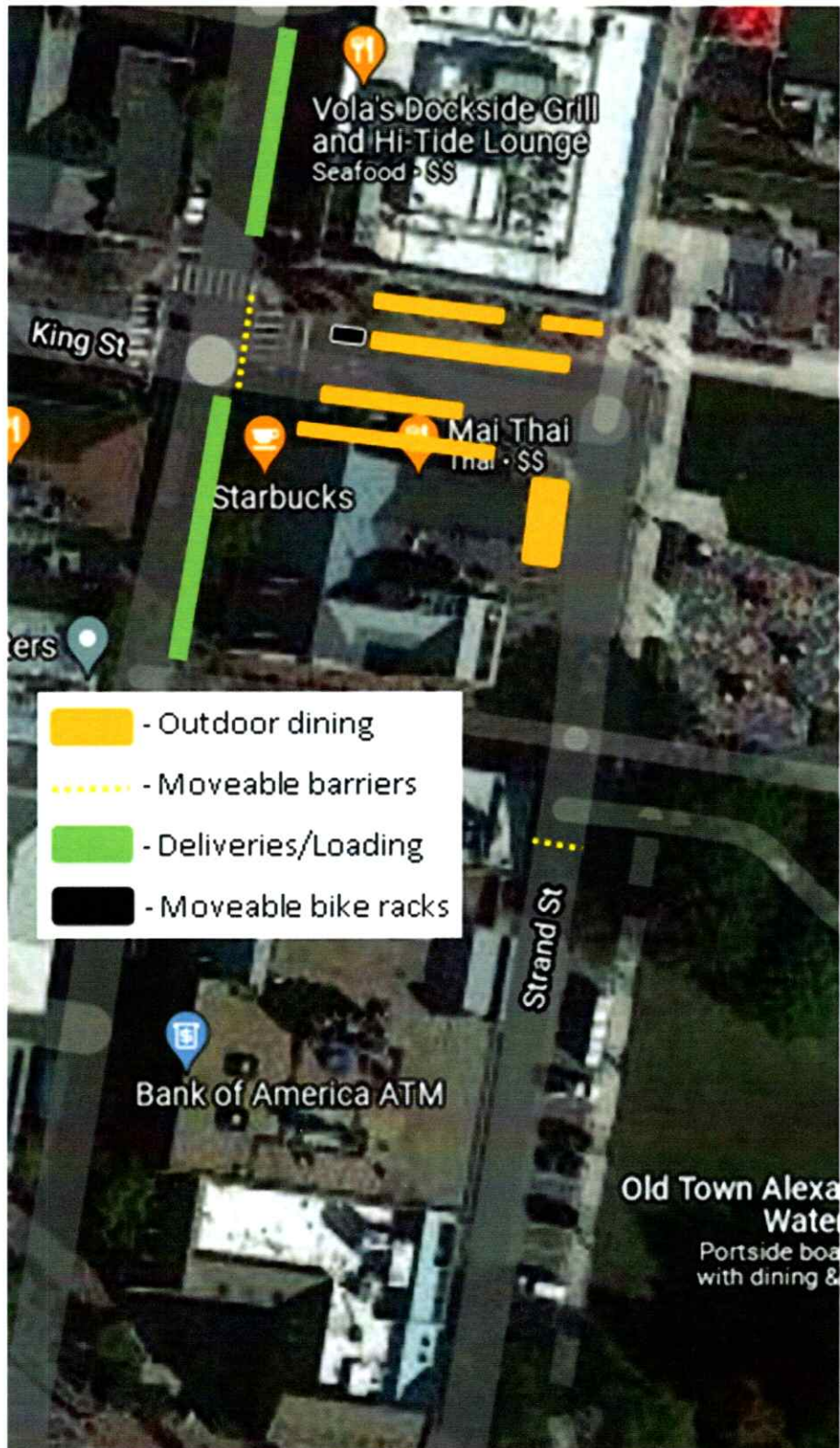
ATTEST:



Gloria A. Sitton, CMC City Clerk

Final Passage: April 23, 2022

ATTACHMENT 3: Draft Concept Plan for Closed Blocks



Attachment 4 –DRAFT operation and details of the Pilot Project for the Temporary Closure Unit Block of King Street and the Northern Portion of the Strand.

Duration: the pilot project is intended to last for approximately three months (Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend). The Traffic and Parking Board has recommended closure be allowed between April 1 and November 20 to coincide with the King Street Outdoor Dining regulations. This larger timeframe allows staff flexibility to close early if necessary for setting up (striping, signage, etc.), and to extend the pilot if it proves successful.

Traffic: The unit block would be closed to all traffic full time. Fire, EMS, APD, and service vehicles would maintain access. Moveable barriers, like those on the 100 block of King Street would be used to block traffic but allow necessary service vehicles. Adequate signage, especially at the intersection of Prince Street and the Strand, will be posted to alert drivers that there would be not through traffic allowed.

Parking: There are currently two metered parking spaces on King Street that are proposed to be temporarily removed. In addition, staff is proposing to temporarily eliminate two pull-in metered parking spaces along the Strand that currently serve the Old Town Waterfront Park to allow space for vehicle turnaround. This will also require moving the one handicap parking space to one of the other spaces further south. There are currently four bicycle racks that are proposed to be replaced with a moveable bicycle rack, ideally close to Union Street.

Fire: Staff recommends maintaining the existing 22-foot Emergency Vehicle Easement down the center of the street for pedestrians only and adding 5-foot wide pedestrian paths along both sidewalks. In addition, there will be a 15-foot clearance on each side of the fire hydrant.

Stormwater services: Because this area floods more often and because of the stormwater infrastructure underneath King Street, there will be nothing semi-permanent (such as tables and chairs) allowed over manholes or close to storm drains.

Outdoor Dining: The unrestricted space along King Street would be available to businesses through a permitting process for outdoor dining.

Deliveries and loading/unloading: The Traffic and Parking Board, at its February 28th meeting, approved replacing the parking along the 100 blocks of North and South Union Street with loading zones for deliveries and drop off/pick up zones.

Monitoring and Evaluation: During the closure, the advisory group will meet regularly to address any concerns that arise. The Director of Transportation and Environmental Services also has the authority to temporarily implement traffic controls, such as truck restrictions, per section 10-2-24. After the pilot, staff will gather input, similar to the process of the 100 block closure, including online feedback, and input from businesses and residents. If the closure proves unsuccessful, the street can be opened up at any point.

Motorcoach parking: There is currently motorcoach parking allowed along the unit block of King Street that would be suspended. Staff would direct motorcoach drivers to park along Market Square. This also occurred during the construction of the Waterfront Park, and staff anticipates no issues. In addition, these spaces have become less useful with the closure of the 100 block.



Alexandria Waterfront Commission

Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

1108 Jefferson Street

Alexandria, Virginia 22314

February 18, 2022

Honorable Mayor and members of City Council:

Re: City's Proposal to Pilot the Closure of the Unit Block of King Street

The Waterfront Commission offers this letter of endorsement for a pilot program to open the unit block of King Street to pedestrians, as well as establishment of permanent curbside pickup/loading zones in the 100 blocks of North and South Union Street. This letter describes specific suggestions for improving proposed concepts to implement each proposal.

The Waterfront Commission supports the proposed temporary closure to traffic of the unit block of King Street and the northern portion of the strand. Opening these streets to pedestrian traffic will better link Waterfront Park to the existing pedestrian zone in the 100 block of King Street. This proposal is consistent with the Waterfront Small Area Plan, which included three separate recommendations to increase pedestrian access between the Waterfront and King Street.

We offer the following specific recommendations to improve this proposal:

- Center crosswalks and reconsider placement of barricades to facilitate pedestrian access to cross Union Street in the middle of King Street.
- Reconsider the placement of bicycle parking, to ensure it is sufficient and appropriately positioned to maximize access to the waterfront.
- Facilitate access by delivery vehicles servicing adjacent businesses by designating delivery hours and parking locations with a commitment by the City to enforce established regulations and pick-up/loading zone parking limits.

We encourage study of the pilot to inform a proposal to permanently open the unit block of King Street to pedestrians.

The Waterfront Commission also supports approval of permanent curbside pickup/loading zones in the 100 blocks of North and South Union Street. However, we encourage the City to adjust the boundaries of the parking zone to prohibit vehicle parking at existing spaces immediately adjacent to the intersection with King Street. This, coupled with refinement of crosswalks as described above, will provide for greater visibility of and for pedestrians crossing Union Street.

The Waterfront Commission is generally supportive of proposed refinements to the 100 block of King Street and appreciates continued efforts to optimize the features of this block.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

Sincerely,



Stephen Thayer, Chair
Alexandria Waterfront Commission

cc: Traffic & Parking Board
Alexandria Waterfront Commission
James F. Parajon, City Manager
Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager
Debra Collins, Deputy City Manager
Yon Lambert, Director, Transportation & Environmental Services
Karl Moritz, Director, Planning & Zoning
James Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities
Don Hayes, Acting Police Chief, Alexandria Police Department
Jack Browand, Staff Liaison, Alexandria Waterfront Commission



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City Council

April 23, 2022



Background

- 2012 Waterfront Small Area Plan
- 2019-2021 – Successful Closure of 100 block of King Street to all car traffic
 - Businesses permitted to use parking lane and sidewalk for restaurant or retail use
- Advisory Group
 - November 2021-February
 - Agencies and OTBA



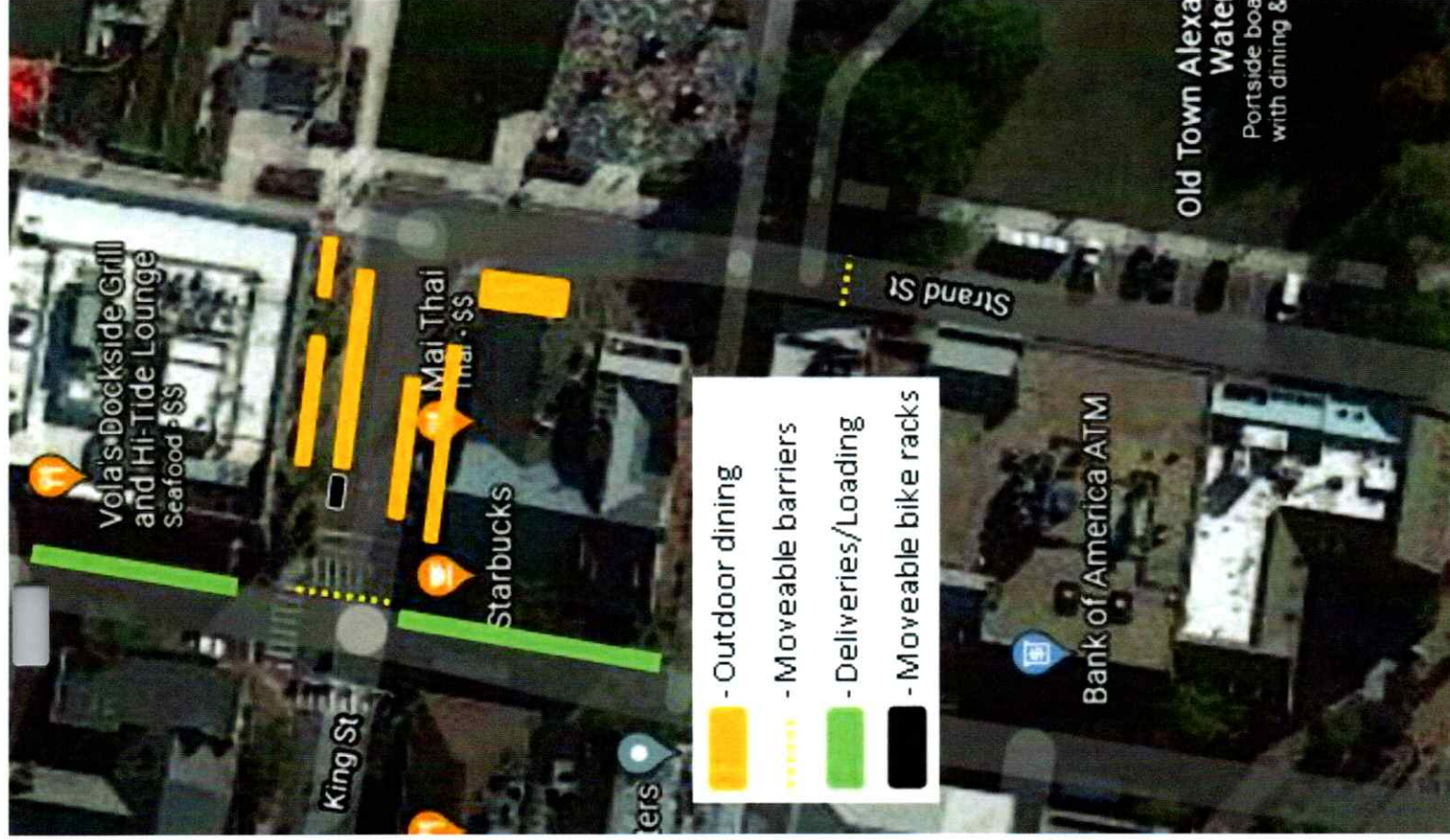
Pilot Program

- Approximately three-month closure
 - Memorial Day through Labor Day
- Monitoring
 - Regular check-ins
- Evaluation
 - Resident/Business input
 - On-line feedback
- Proper signage



Design Concept

- Outdoor dining in street, sidewalk, and parking
- 22' ROW for fire
- Clearance for stormwater maintenance
- Deliveries/loading
 - Union Street
- Union Street
- Moveable barriers
- Moveable bike racks
- Proper Signage



Example Renderings



Planning Commission recommendation

- On a motion by Vice Chair McMahon, seconded by Commissioner Lyle, the Planning Commission voted to find the proposed temporary closure of the unit block of King Street and the northern portion of the Strand to vehicular traffic consistent with the City of Alexandria Master Plan pursuant to Section 9.06 of the City Charter. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0, with Commissioner Manor recusing himself.





Recommendation

- Hold the public hearing on Saturday, April 23, 2022
- Approve the Ordinance after public hearing