

Docket Item #8
Text Amendment #2014-0004
Outdoor Food and Craft Markets in Multi-Family Residential Zones

Issue: A) Initiation of a Text Amendment; and B) public hearing and consideration of a request for a Text Amendment to allow an outdoor food and craft market with a special use permit in the RCX/Medium Density Apartment Zone, RC/High Density Apartment Zone, RA/Multifamily Zone, and the RD/High Density Apartment Zone.	Planning Commission Hearing:	September 4, 2014
	City Council Hearing:	September 13, 2014
Staff: Alex Dambach, AICP, Division Chief for Land Use, alex.dambach@alexandriava.gov		

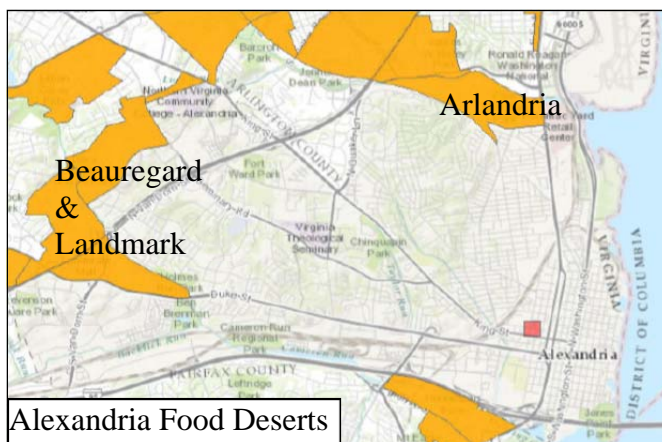
I. Issue

Outdoor food and craft markets (farmer's markets) are permitted by special use permit (SUP) in nearly all commercial, office, industrial, mixed use, and special purpose zoning districts, and several of them now successfully operate throughout Alexandria. Farmer's markets generally have a positive effect on their surrounding communities. Currently, however, they are not permitted in any high-density residential areas where residents would benefit greatly from their addition to their larger apartment complexes. Proposed is a text amendment to permit Outdoor Food and Craft Markets as a special use in the high density residential, RA, RC, RCX, and RD, zones.

II. Background

In 1994, City Council approved a text amendment to allow farmer's markets in many zoning districts by either administrative or full-hearing SUP. Since that time, popular farmer's markets have been established in areas such as Del Ray, Four Mile Run Park, and other locations. These markets have added a new form of economic activity and improved resident access to healthy, locally grown food, but these markets have also served a valuable social and community-building function.

Certain residential areas have high population densities, but their residents have low automobile ownership rates. These communities are typically beyond a reasonable walking distance to viable food shopping facilities and are often referred to as "food deserts." The Food and Drug Administration has designated a few areas of Alexandria as food deserts, particularly in the Arlandria, Landmark, and Beauregard areas, as shown on the map below. Additional multi-family areas, however, are surrounded by highways or high-speed roadways or are physically distant from full service grocery stores making walking to healthy food sources difficult. Many of these "food desert" and difficult access areas are zoned RA, RC, RCX, and RD, which are the zoning districts for Alexandria's large, high density apartment complexes. Residents there would benefit from the opportunity to have farmer's markets in their communities, and staff recommends this proposed text amendment accordingly. It is further recommended that farmer's markets in these zones be required to obtain full SUP approval to ensure that they would be suitably sited, managed, maintained, and reviewed.

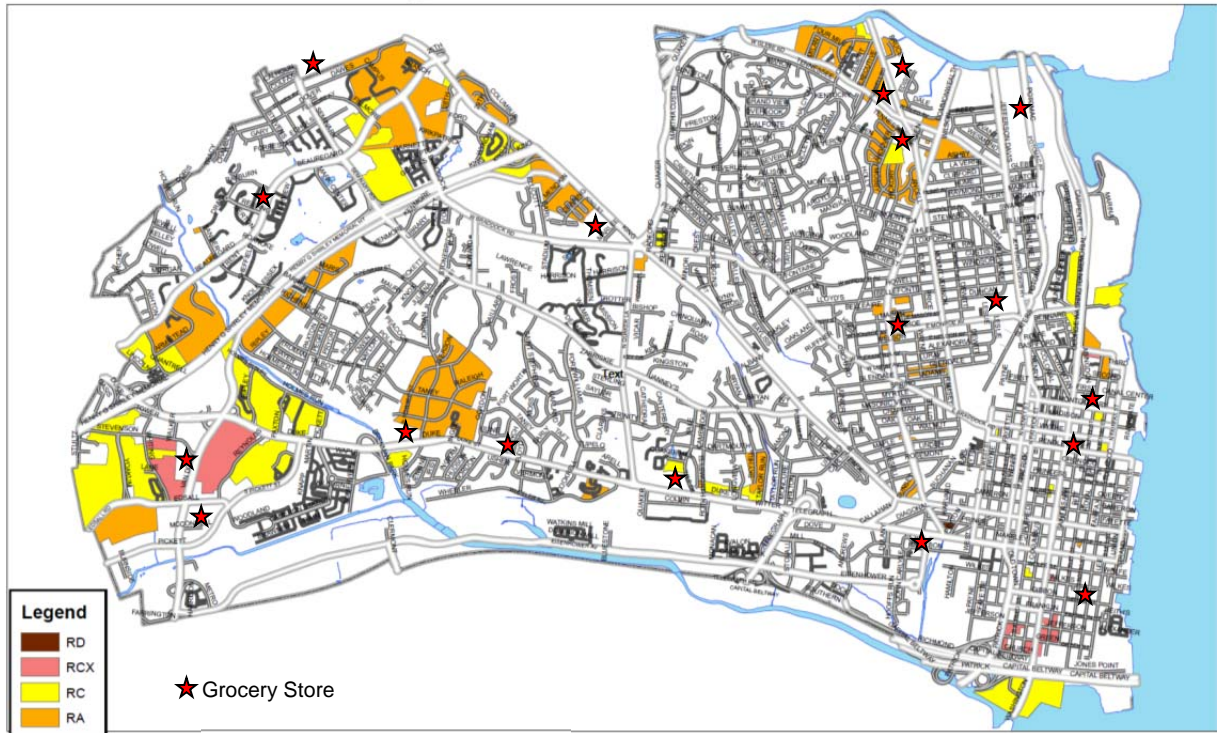


The RA, RC, RCX, and RD zones are scattered throughout the City, and as the map below shows, many are relatively distant from grocery stores.

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The allowance of farmer's markets by SUP in these zones would enable fresh food offerings to become conveniently available in large complexes found in these zones. It would also help support community development in these areas. Other cities around the nation such as Wheat Ridge, Colorado and Portland, Oregon have adopted zoning laws permitting farmer's markets in residential zones. The Los Angeles, California Planning Commission has recommended that its city council adopt an ordinance to similarly permit farmer's markets there.

Zoning Districts: RA, RC, RCX, & RD



III. Discussion of Proposed Text Changes

Farmer's markets are a popular and beneficial way to build a sense of community, stimulate outdoor pedestrian activity, and improve access to healthy and fresh food. Alexandria has several farmer's markets operating in parks and commercial areas. These add to the richness of the urban environment giving residents the opportunity to choose from a variety of products. They also give farmers and craftspersons an opportunity to sell their goods, thus stimulating the regional economy.

Currently farmer's markets are permitted by administrative or full SUP in most of Alexandria's commercial zones, but there has been growing interest in permitting these activities at larger apartment complexes. Currently the Zoning Ordinance does not accommodate this use at these types of complexes, which are on properties zoned RA, RCX, RC, or RD. Given that many of these large complexes often have limited pedestrian access to full-service supermarkets but often instead have convenience stores on site selling mostly processed foods, there is a public benefit to accommodating

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farmers markets with fresh, higher quality foods to cater to the dietary needs of residents at these complexes. Many residents of these complexes also do not own cars, so their access to healthy and fresh food is further limited. Proposed is a text amendment for the allowance of Outdoor Food and Craft Markets in the RA, RCX, RC, and RD zones only with a full SUP in order to assure that the layout, hours of operation, and management of these markets would be fully appropriate for a residential setting. Adding farmer's markets as a special use to higher density residential zones provides several benefits to those areas' residents. Negative effects from this proposed text amendment are expected to be minimal, and the requirement of SUP review at these zoning districts can help prevent any possible negative effects arising from poor market management such as litter accumulation or parking problems from occurring. The community building and nutritional benefits of farmer's markets make them a desirable use in high-density residential areas.

IV. Recommendation

Staff recommends that this text amendment be approved in order to allow for residents of large apartment complexes to have walking-distance access to healthy foods typically sold at farmer's markets with the provision that a special use permit be required to ensure that there be a thorough public review process for the establishment of these markets and ongoing monitoring by the City to ensure that they would be well managed.

Staff: Alex Dambach, AICP, Division Chief – Land Use

Attachments: 1. Proposed Zoning Text Changes

PROPOSED ZONING TEXT CHANGES

Sec. 3-600 RA/Multifamily zone.

3-602.1 Administrative special uses.

The following uses may be allowed in the RA zone with administrative approval pursuant to section 11-513 of this ordinance:

- (A) Day care center within a church or school building.

3-603 Special uses.

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

- (A) Cemetery;
- (A.1) Day care center.
- (B) Reserved;
- (C) Home for the elderly;
- (D) Noncommercial, not-for-profit facilities, including indoor and outdoor recreational facilities and community centers, designed to serve the neighborhood;
- (E) Nursery school;
- (F) Nursing or convalescent home or hospice;
- (F.1) **Outdoor food and crafts market;**
- (G) Private school;
- (H) Rooming house;
- (I) Seminary, convent and monastery;

(J) Any church or school parking added after October 1, 1996 which exceeds the number of spaces required by this ordinance; provided, however, that no special use permit for such excess parking shall regulate or substantially burden any religious practice or belief.

Sec. 3-800 RCX/Medium density apartment zone.

3-802.1 Administrative special uses.

The following uses may be allowed in the RCX zone with administrative approval pursuant to section 11-513 of this ordinance:

(A) Day care center within a church or school building;

3-803 Special uses.

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

(A) Apartment hotel;

(B) Cemetery;

(C) Day care center;

(D) Home for the elderly;

(E) Nursery school;

(F) Nursing or convalescent home or hospice;

(F.1) **Outdoor food and crafts market;**

(G) Private school;

(H) Rooming house;

(I) Seminary, convent and monastery;

(J) The following commercial uses in a multifamily building of four or more stories in height if limited to an area the size of the first floor or a floor below it, whichever is less, and located on the first floor or any floor below the first floor of the building:

- (1) Bank, saving and loan bank or association, and similar financial institution;
 - (2) Barber shop or beauty shop;
 - (3) Cleaning, laundry or pressing agency with no actual operations on premises;
 - (4) Convenience store;
 - (4.1) Day care center;
 - (5) Drugstore;
 - (6) Gift shop;
 - (7) Grocery store, where products are not prepared or consumed on premises;
 - (8) Health and athletic club;
 - (9) Professional and business office, provided that no inventory, stock-in-trade, materials or supplies other than general office supplies are stored on site and that no trucks, vans or similar vehicles are parked on site outside of business hours;
 - (10) Restaurant.
- (K) Any church or school parking added after October 1, 1996 which exceeds the number of spaces required by this ordinance; provided, however, that no special use permit for such excess parking shall regulate or substantially burden any religious practice or belief.

Sec. 3-900 RC/High density apartment zone.

3-902.1 Administrative special uses.

The following uses may be allowed in the RC zone with administrative approval pursuant to section 11-513 of this ordinance:

- (A) Day care center within a church or school building;

3-903 Special uses.

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

- (A) Apartment hotel;

- (B) Cemetery;
- (C) Day care center;
- (D) Freestanding commercial buildings for office or retail use where clearly designed as part of and to serve a residential development of at least 2,000 dwelling units and where no such building exceeds 10,000 square feet;
- (E) Home for the elderly;
- (F) Reserved;
- (G) Nursing or convalescent home or hospice;

(G.1) Outdoor food and crafts market;

- (H) Private school;
- (I) Rooming house;
- (J) Seminary, convent and monastery;
- (K) The following commercial uses in a multifamily building of four or more stories in height if limited to an area the size of the first floor or a floor below it, whichever is less, and located on the first floor or any floor below the first floor of the building:
 - (1) Bank, saving and loan bank or association, and similar financial institution;
 - (2) Barber shop or beauty shop;
 - (3) Cleaning, laundry or pressing agency with no actual operations on premises;
 - (4) Convenience store;
 - (4.1) Day care center;
 - (5) Drugstore;
 - (6) Gift shop;
 - (7) Grocery store, where products are not prepared or consumed on premises;
 - (8) Health and athletic club;

- (9) Professional and business office, provided that no inventory, stock-in-trade, materials or supplies other than general office supplies are stored on site and that no trucks, vans or similar vehicles are parked on site outside of business hours; and
- (10) Restaurants and, in the case of a building which is seven or more stories, the restaurant may be located on the top floor or the roof of the building.
- (L) Any church or school parking added after October 1, 1996 which exceeds the number of spaces required by this ordinance; provided, however, that no special use permit for such excess parking shall regulate or substantially burden any religious practice or belief.

Sec. 3-1000 RD/High density apartment zone.

3-1002 Special uses.

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

- (A) Apartment hotel;
- (B) Cemetery;
- (C) Nursing or convalescent home or hospice;
- (C.1) **Outdoor food and crafts market;**
- (D) Rooming house;
- (E) Seminary, convent and monastery;
- (F) The following uses in a multifamily building or apartment hotel provided they occupy no more than an aggregate measure of five percent of the gross floor area of the building:
 - (1) Private or fraternal club;
 - (2) Restaurant.
- (G) Any church or school parking added after October 1, 1996 which exceeds the number of spaces required by this ordinance; provided, however, that no special use permit for such excess parking shall regulate or substantially burden any religious practice or belief.