



Sidewalk Café Program

Town Council Regular Meeting

April 14, 2026

Overview

What is a Sidewalk Cafe?

- An outdoor or semi-enclosed dining area directly adjoining a restaurant, located on a public sidewalk, alley, or right-of-way within the Central Business District.

Purpose of This Presentation

- Present proposed updates to Town Code Sec. 14-1 governing sidewalk cafes, including new spatial requirements, cleanliness standards, and enforcement provisions.
- Applicable Area: Central Business District / Historic Downtown, Warrenton, Virginia

Proposed Code Changes

Key Updates to Sec. 14-1(c)

- Insurance: Aggregate coverage updated from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000 (matching per-occurrence limit)
- Spatial Requirements: Added explicit 8-ft max encroachment and 5-ft ADA pedestrian clear zone
- Entrance: Codified requirement for one well-marked entrance with 4-ft unobstructed aisle at all doorways/exits
- Maintenance: New detailed cleanliness obligations with explicit enforcement link to Section 5
- Enforcement: New subsection (c) – 1-year disqualification for operators whose permit is revoked

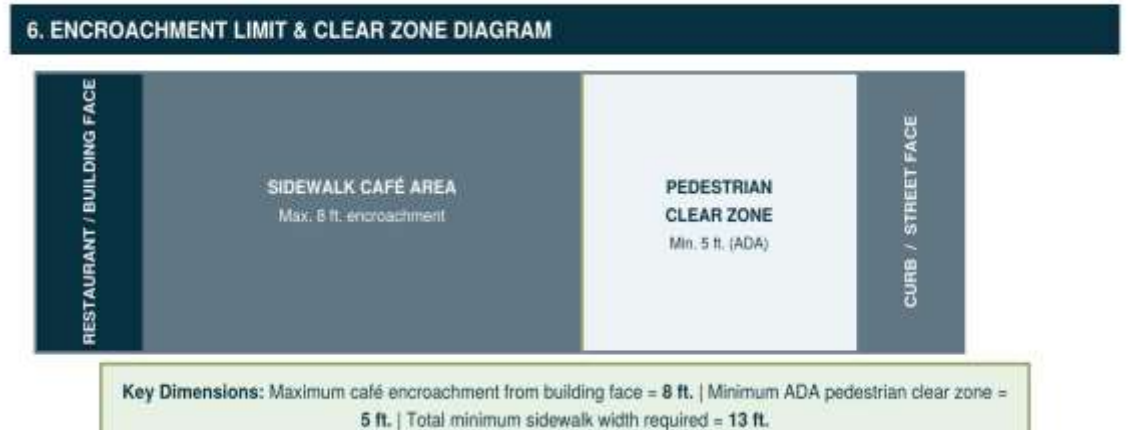
Spatial Requirements

Maximum Encroachment

- Cafe area may not extend more than 8 feet from the building face or property line (whichever is more restrictive) into the public right-of-way.

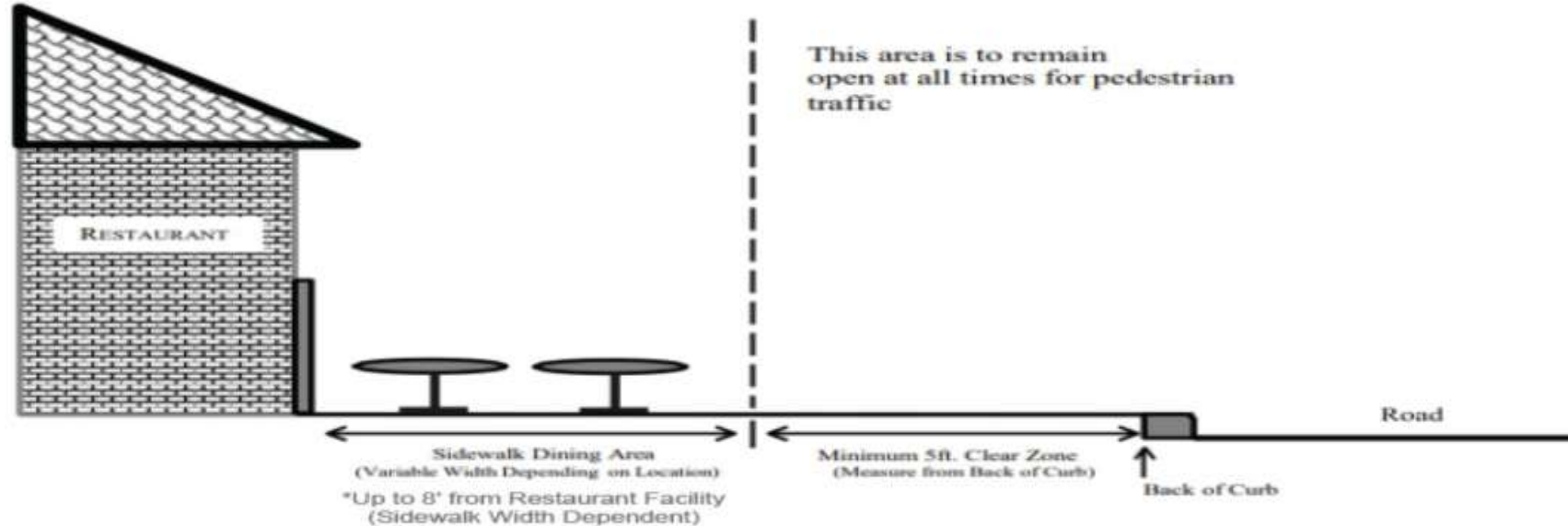
Minimum Pedestrian Clear Zone

- A 5-foot unobstructed clear zone must be maintained between the cafe edge and back of curb at all times (ADA requirement). A 4-foot clear zone is required around trees, light fixtures, and signs.
- Note: Where sidewalk width cannot accommodate both requirements, the pedestrian clear zone takes precedence. Total minimum sidewalk width required: 13 feet.



Spatial Requirements – Clear Zone Diagram

Diagram showing Minimum Clear Zone Requirements



Application Process

Step 1 – Submit Application

- File with Dept. of Public Works (in person, mail, or email: permitted@warrentonva.gov). Include 3 copies of a scaled cafe plan/drawing.

Step 2 – Staff Review (~10 Business Days)

- Town Manager reviews and recommends approval, modification, or denial. ARB review required if structural alterations are involved.

Step 3 – Pre-Approval Requirements

- Applicant must certify Health Dept. and ABC Board approvals (if serving alcohol). Zoning Administrator inspects before operations begin.

Step 4 – Permit Issued

- Initial permit valid 1 year. Renewals may be issued for up to 3 years. Permit must be kept on-premises at all times.

Required Attachments

All applications must include:

- Three (3) copies of the Sidewalk Cafe Plan/Drawing (boundaries, furniture placement, entrance, pedestrian clear zone, north arrow, and scale)
- Certificate of Insurance – General Liability: \$1,000,000 per occurrence / \$2,000,000 aggregate; Town named as additional insured with 30-day cancellation notice
- Health Department Approval / Permit
- ABC License or Authorization (if alcoholic beverages will be served)
- Written consent from adjoining property owner(s) if cafe extends beyond applicant's frontage
- ARB Application (if renewal involves exterior alterations to the building)

Operational Standards

- **Dates of Operation:** March 1 through November 30 (seasonal permits only)
- **Hours of Operation:** 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. daily
- **Furniture Design:** Metal, wood, or fiberglass in compatible colors. No logos or advertising on furnishings. Umbrellas: min. 7-ft overhead clearance, max. 2 colors.
- **Prohibited Items:** Planters, trash containers, and serving stations within the cafe area.
- **Alcohol Service:** If served, an ABC-approved barrier is required around the perimeter.
- **Winter / Non-Business Hours:** All movable equipment must be removed from the cafe area and stored out of public view.
- **Outdoor Heaters:** Permitted if compliant with fire codes. Town electrical outlets may not be used.

Maintenance & Cleanliness

Operator Responsibilities

- Maintain an attractive, clean, and safe cafe area before, during, and after all periods of operation.
- Remove all debris, food residue, spilled beverages, packaging, and signage at the close of each business day.
- Do not sweep or rinse waste into the street, gutter, or storm sewer system.
- All furnishings must remain within the permitted cafe boundary, including umbrella spread.
- **Failure to maintain the cafe area constitutes a violation subject to enforcement under Section 5.**

Enforcement

Notice of Violation

- Town Manager may inspect at any time. Written notice issued with a minimum 48-hour grace period.

Permit Revocation

- If the violation is not corrected, the permit may be revoked after an administrative hearing (min. 2 weeks prior written notice). The decision is final.

Disqualification (New Provision)

- Operator whose permit is revoked is disqualified for 1 year or the remainder of the season (whichever is greater). Prior revocation may be considered in future applications.

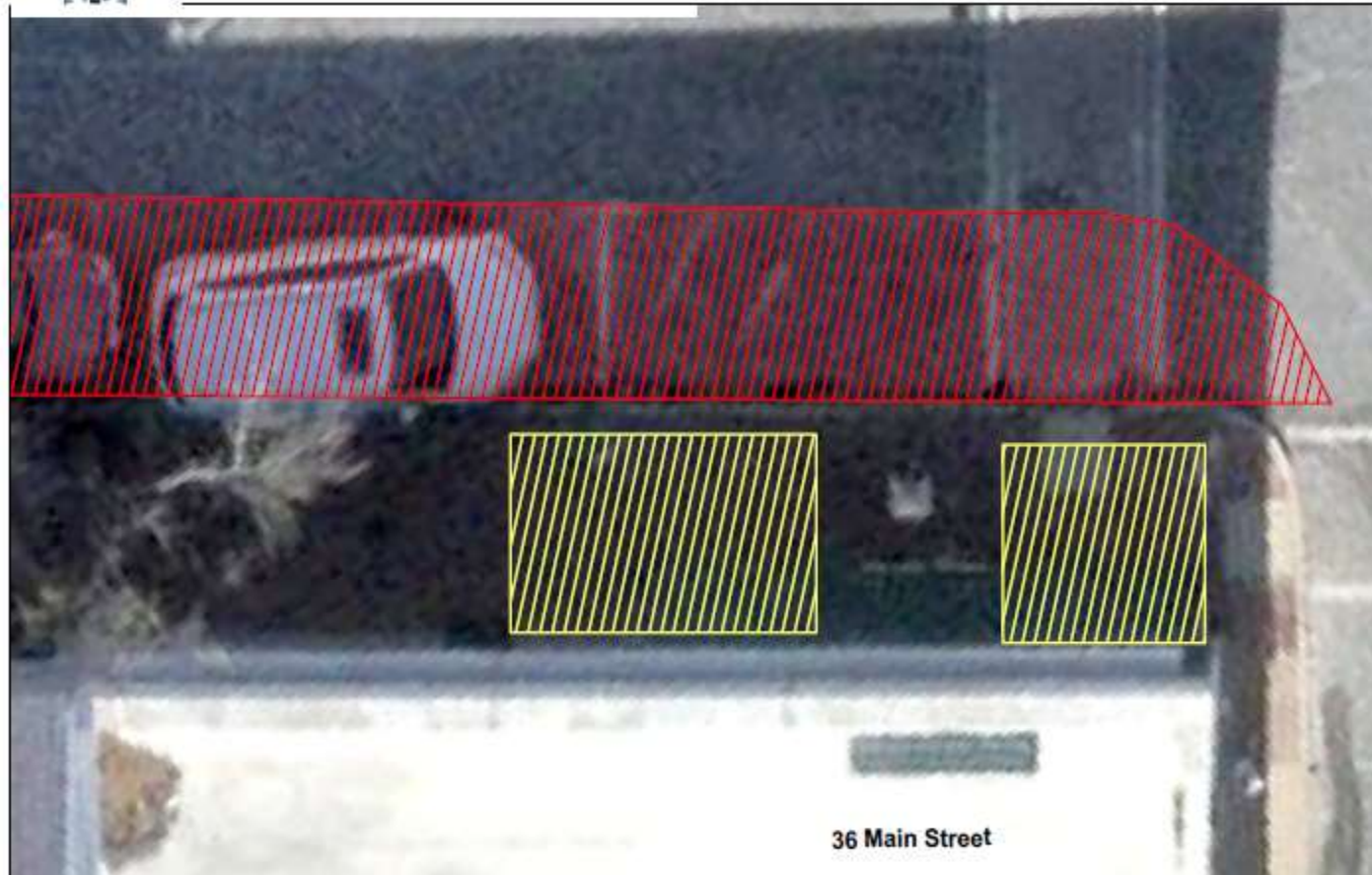
Town-Initiated Termination

- Town may terminate any permit for convenience with 90 days' written notice, or immediately in an emergency.

Café Zone Examples



TOWN OF WARRENTON
36 Main Street



Sidewalk Cafe Permit Program

Café Zone Examples



TOWN OF WARRENTON
78, 79, & 80 Main Street



Café Zone Examples



Café Zone Examples

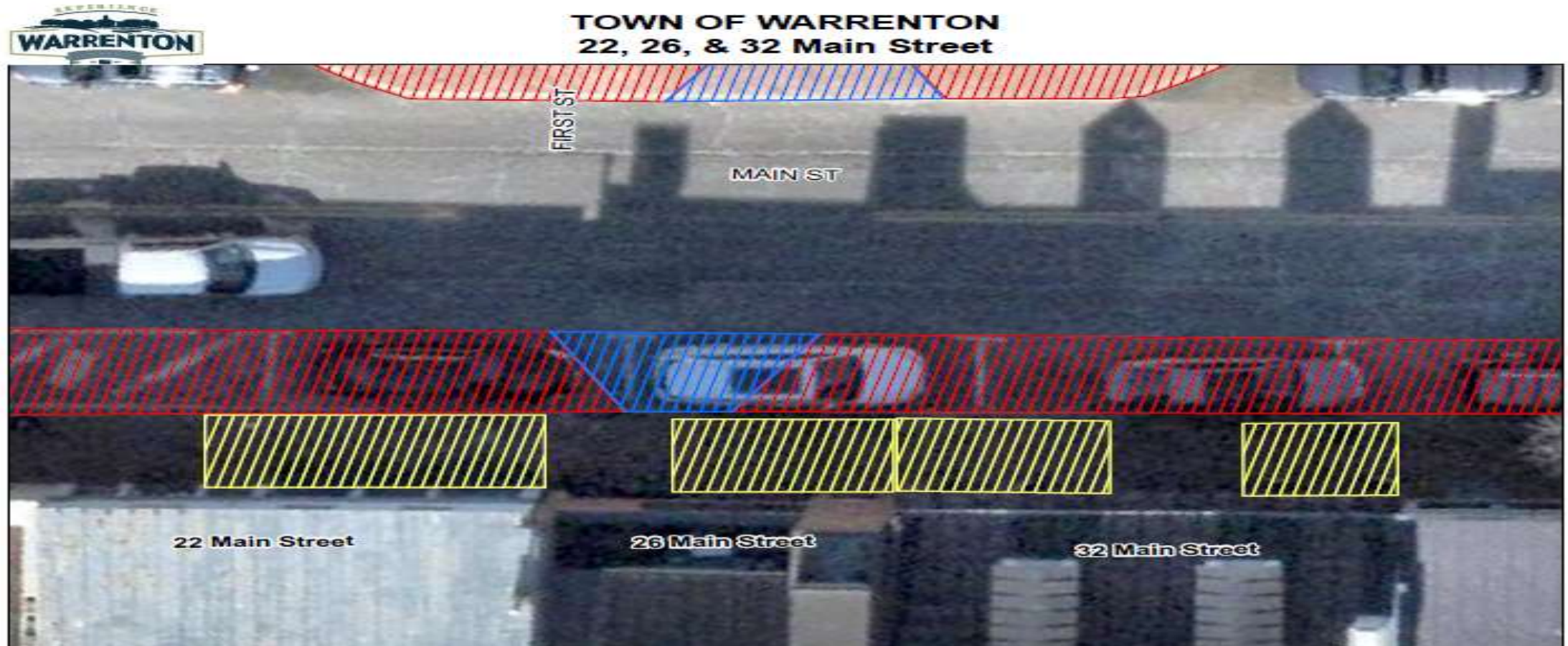


TOWN OF WARRENTON
11 Main Street



Sidewalk Cafe Permit Program

Café Zone Examples



Café Zone Examples



TOWN OF WARRENTON
29 Main Street



Sidewalk Cafe Permit Program

The background image is a faded photograph of a street scene. On the left, there are multi-story brick buildings with many windows. A red car and a silver car are parked on the street. In the center, a large, leafless tree stands prominently. To the right, there is a building with several arched windows, each containing a colorful stained-glass style artwork. In front of this building, there is a statue on a pedestal. The overall scene is bright and clear, but the image is intentionally faded to serve as a background for the text.

Questions?