



Office of the Town Manager
Frank Cassidy

STAFF REPORT

Warrenton Town Council

Carter Nevill, Mayor
Heather Sutphin, Ward 1
William Semple, Ward 2
Brett Hamby, Ward 3
James Hartman, Ward 4 Vice Mayor
Eric Gagnon, Ward 5
Paul Mooney, At Large
David McGuire, At Large

Council Meeting Date:	November 12, 2024
Agenda Title:	RollOutWarrenton! Discussion- Transition to Year Round
Requested Action:	Information/Discussion
Department / Agency Lead:	Town Manager
Staff Lead:	Frank Cassidy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff has been asked to look at a way to make the “parklet” program a yearlong/permanent program. The first thing to clarify is we don’t have a “parklet” program, we have a RollOutWarrenton! Program. Next, we ask us all to remember our objective is to develop and provide a consistent, equitable, and predictable program. Then, we must remember that as we develop a walk able environment, this environment must be supplemented by a “sitable” aspect while providing public spaces for public use. These are fundamental aspects of good community developments and supported by entities like Strong Towns.

RollOutWarrenton! Is a program adopted by Council to effectively address the challenges of economic sustainability during the pandemic. This program is also known as “The Parklet Program.” It has proven successful, and it provides the springboard to discuss a longer term program. This long term, annual program is already outlined in the Town Code under Section 14-1. A copy of the text is included.

In short, we can transition from the RollOutProgram! To the “Sidewalk Café” model with little effort. The ordinance exists, is in line with the continuing efforts of the RollOutWarrenton! Program, and it provides a flexible, workable procedure to move forward. The “Sidewalk Café” approach involves:

- Providing an equitable, consistent program for all businesses.
- An annual right of way use permit based on the requirements of the ordinance:
 - Space must be adjacent to, and in front of or along side their business.
 - Must be within a designated space as outlined in the permit application. No use of rails, fences, or other materials meant to limit access to space.
 - Must have proper insurance with the Town named.
 - Must maintain the space and will be responsible for any damage and cleaning.
 - Must remove furniture when closed for business.
 - Must be removed during “off season” identified as Mid November to April. Will provide an opportunity to use space during off season weather permitting.
- Require opportunities for continued public use when the business is closed and during off season.
- Require participating businesses to comply with all permitting requirements including historic preservation.
- Continue to provide flexibility along with collaboration between the Town and businesses to ensure success.

Since the pandemic, the success of the program has been continuing. Although few businesses are taking advantage of the program currently, they report an increase of customers and traffic on Main St. We believe this program has provided an economic benefit to the businesses. However, given the temporary aspect of the program, it is time to develop a long-term approach.

We have identified a section in our Town Code, Section 14-1, Obstructions generally, Sidewalk Cafes as the opportunity to continue this program. Section 14-1 maintains the objective of RollOutWarrenton! As well as flexibility. It solves the problem of consistency, equitability, And addressing all of the requirements for ADA, Building, fire, and maintenance. It is an "all year" section and builds upon the success of the RollOutWarrenton! Project.

Staff has presented and reviewed the concepts in this presentation with EOTW Board Members, the owners of the Businesses affected, and other interested parties. This has been received favorably as a way to move forward.

BACKGROUND

RollOutWarrenton! is a Town-wide economic development initiative to assist all businesses in recovering from the economic impact of COVID-19. The program is based on the following:

1. Create an environment that will encourage and promote recovery.
2. Find ways to allow businesses to be creative.
3. Government as a partner to support the businesses during recovery.

RollOutWarrenton! is based on encouraging businesses to move outside and create additional space for their customers; provide opportunities for other temporary signage and enhance the sense of community by promoting a walking atmosphere.

Town Council implemented the following:

- Adopted a resolution suspending zoning regulations that would hinder recovery efforts.
- Provide space for businesses to expand:
 - Closed Main Street ~~streets downtown~~ to provide seating and display areas.
 - Allowed businesses to use parking areas for seating and display.
 - Allowed businesses to expand onto sidewalks but preserve safe access.
 - Created additional space for their customers to meet minimum State- mandated separation.
- Provided resources to assist businesses:
 - On-site consultations to discuss the business plan and layout of space.
 - Supplied PPE as needed during shortages.
 - Cones or other devices to be used as parameters to define outside spaces.
 - Provided additional directional signage.
 - Provided promotions via social media.
 - Provided fliers and handouts defining requirements and expectations.
- Monitoring and being flexible to adjust to any new orders or phased restrictions from the Governor serving as a resource on compliance questions.

The success of this program is the flexibility and collaboration throughout the community.

Council Actions on RollOutWarrenton!:

- May 12, 2020 – Regular Meeting - it was introduced and had Council support to move forward. The program was implemented Town-wide.
- August 6, 2020 – Work Session – Staff provided an update, and Council discussion continued with interest in how the program would move through fall and winter implications.
- December 8, 2020 – Regular Meeting – Staff provided an update. Some parklets were removed due to non-use during the winter months. A discussion was held to continue the program into Spring with a reevaluation after understanding the VDOT Grant award.
- December 2020 WarmUpWarrenton! was established to assist businesses with changes for inclement weather. This is a grant program to complement existing provisions for the businesses.
- April 13, 2021 – Work Session – Staff provided an update of the program. Discussion included a survey conducted by Experience Old Town Warrenton (EOTW) illustrating the overall support of continuing the program, introduction of a parklet program, associated documents, and the recommendation to continue the program for another year. Council voted to continue the program and implement the parklet program.
- February 8, 2022, Town Council Work Session discussion to continue the program while working on a more permanent program. This was based on the overall economic and community-oriented success of the original program.
- April 2023 and 2024- Council approved continuing the program as outlined.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Allow the current permitted parklets (RollOutWarrenton!) to expire and be removed at the date set on the permit. Develop an application for the “Sidewalk Café” program. Process the applications and transition into this model. Provide outreach to all businesses and apply the provisions equally, consistently, and uniformly.

Additionally, the Town will continue the Main St. improvements to encourage additional space for the sidewalk cafes. This will include the design and construction of a “bump out” area along Main St. from Culpeper to 2nd St. If construction is not started or completed by April, businesses will be allowed to use parking spaces during the transition with a required permit.

Service Level/Collaborative Impact

Continuing collaboration with businesses and managing a right of way use permit for the “Sidewalk Café” program.

Policy Direction/Warrenton Plan 2040

Economic and Fiscal Resilience Goals

E-1: Grow a strong, diversified, and resilient economy that supports residents and businesses alike.

E-3: Promote Warrenton as a cultural, entertainment, and arts center.

E-5: Be proactive in the Town's economic development.

Transportation and Circulation Goals

T-2: Enhance the traveling experience by creating great streets.

T-3: Promote livability in the Town by creating great places where residents and visitors feel welcome and safe.

Fiscal Impact

Costs are already absorbed in daily operations for the RollOutWarrenton! Program. No additional costs will be incurred by implementing the "Sidewalk Café" program.

Legal Impact

Required insurance forms required by applicants and legal review of the drafted application.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Text copy of Town Code Section 14-1
2. Leesburg Sidewalk Café application for reference