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For Immediate Release

Birmingham Seeks Feedback on Eased Year-Round Outdoor Dining Regulations

BIRMINGHAM, MI, July 13, 2021 – The outdoor dining scene may be changing in Birmingham as the city prepares to consider adjusted year-round outdoor dining regulations later this year. A new project on the city’s public engagement platform, [Engage Birmingham](https://engage.bhamgov.org) (engage.bhamgov.org), offers the community an opportunity to share feedback regarding the topic.

Greenhouses, igloos, tents and all kinds of outdoor structures popped up across the country during the COVID-19 pandemic. As interest in eating outdoors during all seasons increases, the City Commission has directed the Planning Board to study the topic and provide a recommendation for revised ordinances, which may allow for additional outdoor dining opportunities throughout the year. The board plans to seek feedback from Birmingham restaurants, other communities and members of the public prior to making a recommendation.



The city’s current regulations prohibit all outdoor dining enclosures, regardless of the time of year. Unenclosed outdoor dining (meaning no roof with walls) is currently permitted all year. During the off-season (November 16 through March 31), unenclosed outdoor dining is not permitted in the street to allow for snow removal, but it is permitted off-street on public and private property provided that chairs, heaters and tables are brought in each evening so that sidewalks may be cleared of snow and ice.

As the city gauges interest in eased year-round outdoor dining regulations, other changes are in the works pertaining to expanded outdoor dining platforms. Part of the city’s relief efforts during the pandemic included approving a temporary resolution to respond to health and safety concerns, which allowed restaurants to expand outdoor dining platforms and enabled greater outdoor dining capacity. With the removal of health and safety orders and indoor capacity limits lifted, restaurants have now returned to their pre-COVID outdoor dining areas. Several restaurants expressed an interest in retaining their expanded platforms and have already submitted plans to the city to begin the process with a Site Plan Review, Design Review and/or Special Land Use Permit review required per the Zoning Ordinance.

“We are currently working with several restaurants who wish to permanently expand their outdoor dining areas,” said Birmingham Planning Director, Jana Ecker. “There are abundant outdoor dining options available in Birmingham, and soon we may see a return of some of the expanded dining areas offered during the pandemic, in addition to the potential easing of year-round outdoor dining regulations.”

The community is encouraged to learn more about outdoor dining in Birmingham with frequently asked questions at bit.ly/bhamdiningfaq, and share feedback about potential new regulations for year-round outdoor dining by September 6, 2021 on Engage Birmingham at engage.bhamgov.org.

City of Birmingham – A Walkable Community. Visit the city’s web site at www.bhamgov.org.

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