

ORDINANCE NO. 5375

AN ORDINANCE Approving and Authorizing the Closure of the 100 Block of King Street to Vehicular Traffic.

WHEREAS, the 100 block of King Street, between Union Street and Lee Street, is a two-way street heading east towards the Potomac River and west toward the King Street Metro Station with several restaurants and retail establishments; 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 2015, the City completed the Lower King Street Multi-modal Feasibility Study, which included several design options for reconfiguring traffic, parking, and pedestrian space along the 100 block of King Street; 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 2020, a hybrid concept was proposed called King Street Place, but implementation was placed on hold with the onset of the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, as the City began the re-opening process, staff worked with the businesses to modify the King Street Place concept and temporarily close the 100 block to all vehicle traffic to allow for additional space for pedestrians and for businesses to expand their operations outdoors; and

WHEREAS, the 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, on September 27, 2021, the Traffic and Parking Board reviewed and made a recommendation to support the closure of the 100 block of King Street to vehicular traffic based on the reasons provided herein; and

WHEREAS, on October 5, 2021, the Planning Commission found that 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 close this block to vehicular traffic; and

WHEREAS, in consideration of the findings of the Planning Commission, Traffic and Parking Board, and the report of the staff, the City Council of the City of Alexandria, has determined that the closure of 100 block of King Street to vehicular traffic is desirable; and

WHEREAS, City staff will work together with the Old Town Business Association on the 100 block of King Street to develop a plan for short-term and non-permanent improvements and outdoor dining and retail guidelines that makes better use of the public space, meet public safety requirements, and provide opportunities for continued outdoor dining and retail activities; and

WHEREAS, if the City decides to invest in permanent improvements and permanent guidelines to this block, City staff will work with the Old Town Business Association, and general community to design and implement a plan that continues the goals for improved public space, meets public safety requirements, and provides areas for outdoor dining and retail activities; and 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, closure of the 100 block of King Street, located between Union and Lee Streets, to vehicular traffic 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 upon the date and at the time of its final passage.

JUSTIN M. WILSON
Mayor

Adopted: October 16, 2021