



## Legislation Text

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Authorizing Philadelphia City Council to conduct hearings to investigate the efficiency, implementation, and enhancement of the outdoor dining program and improve opportunities for restaurants to operate streeteries and sidewalk cafes.

WHEREAS, During the Covid-19 pandemic, City Council recognized the need for temporary legislation to allow restaurants to open outdoor dining spaces on city streets and sidewalks, to enable Philadelphia restaurants to safely serve customers and drive business; and

WHEREAS, In June of 2020, Council passed two bills to address outdoor dining, creating emergency outdoor dining allowances that expired December 31, 2021, which enabled outdoor dining spaces subject to permitting and inspection rules to ensure safety, and which helped more than 800 restaurants earn much needed revenue and retain jobs during a time of crisis; and

WHEREAS, December of 2021, City Council extended the pandemic-era regulations enabling sidewalk cafes to December 31, 2022, and since has considered but not passed legislation to allow Sidewalk Cafes to operate more broadly; and

WHEREAS, In December of 2021, City Council passed legislation to create a section in the Philadelphia Code entitled "Streeteries" to allow for outdoor dining in portions of the public right-of-way, under certain terms and conditions; and

WHEREAS, This legislation defined geographic boundaries where Streeteries would be allowed; required the creation of regulations, standards, and procedures for the issuance and enforcement of Streeteries licenses, and established guidelines for safety and accessibility of Streeteries; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia launched the permanent Outdoor Dining Program in January 2023, enabled by the above referenced legislation, which encompass regulations for Streeteries and Sidewalk Cafes, and which promote goals of public safety and accessibility; and

WHEREAS, In contrast to the success of the temporary outdoor dining program implemented during the pandemic, which allowed restaurants to safely serve customers and sustain their businesses; in February 2024 there are now just 13 active Streeteries licenses, and only two restaurants have renewed their licenses for 2024 to date; and

WHEREAS, Operators in the industry cite a challenging application process, and there has not been comprehensive exploration of the transparency, inclusivity, and efficiency of that process; and

WHEREAS, The outdoor dining options expanded during the pandemic added vibrancy to Philadelphia's streets and sidewalks and promoted public health and safety for Philadelphia residents, while enhancing revenue opportunities for local businesses, and expanding our renowned culinary scene, and attracting new visitors to the city; and

WHEREAS, After one year of the Outdoor Dining Program, review is needed to evaluate the effect of these regulations for public health, safety, and accessibility as well as economic and cultural opportunities for restaurants, commercial corridors, and Philadelphia residents; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, by the City Council of Philadelphia, that the Philadelphia City Council is authorized to hold hearings to investigate the implementation of the outdoor dining program and improve opportunities for restaurants to operate streeteries and sidewalk cafes.