

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH**  
**CITY COUNCIL POLICY No. 2012-02**

**POLICY REGARDING USE OF CITY PROPERTY FOR SIDEWALK CAFE'S**  
**PROVIDING ALCOHOL SERVICE**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council allowed the pilot use of City property by two sidewalk cafe's providing alcohol service during the 2011 summer season; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council recognizes the benefit to residents, businesses, visitors and the City's economic vitality of allowing sidewalk cafe's with alcohol service on City property; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council desires to balance said benefits of sidewalk cafe's with the safety, desires, and convenience of the public at large; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council also recognizes that the City has the inherent authority to regulate any obstructions on City sidewalks and any intrusions into City sidewalks; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council recognizes the authority of the State to regulate alcohol service.

**NOW THEREFORE**, the City Council adopts the following policies, criteria and standards with regard to the use of City property for sidewalk cafe's providing alcohol service:

1. Requests for use of City property for sidewalk cafe's providing alcohol service shall be made in writing to the City Council on an annual basis by May 1<sup>st</sup> with no expectation of continued year-to-year use of the sidewalk area on a continuing basis.
2. Such requests shall include a dimensioned site plan of the existing conditions, including a depiction of public infrastructure such as curb lines, light poles, bike racks, street trees, tree grates, manhole covers, meters, licensed A-frame signs, adjacent on-street parking and loading zones, adjacent accessible sidewalk curb cuts and the like. Such requests shall also include a dimensioned site plan depicting the proposed table/chair layout plan for the sidewalk café, dimensioned routes of travel within the sidewalk café area and on the adjoining public sidewalk, as well as detail sheets for the proposed enclosure system, tables, chairs, lighting, trash receptacles, and the like.
3. The terms and conditions of any such requests that are approved by the City Council in any given year shall be described in an annual Area Service Agreement, which includes a clear depiction of the area approved for sidewalk café use, with said Area Service Agreement to be signed by the City Manager and the party or parties making the request.
4. The term of the Area Service Agreement should be for no more than six (6) months and shall typically run mid-April thru mid-October.
5. Area Service Agreements shall not be assignable to other parties.
6. Use of the Area subject to the Area Service Agreement (the "Area") may be precluded, modified or made subject to any such terms and conditions as may be determined by the City in order to accommodate special municipal events.

7. A ten dollar (\$10.00) per square foot fee will be charged for the Area subject to the Area Service Agreement and the fee shall be for the entire 6 month season with no proration of the fee. The minimum fee for the season shall be \$2,000 even if the size of the Area subject to the Agreement is less than 200 square feet. The fee shall be due and payable to the City of Portsmouth prior to authorization to use the Area.
8. The Area specified for sidewalk café use in the Area Service Agreement shall be restored upon termination of the Area Service Agreement at season's end. Specifically, at season's end, the enclosure system, tables, chairs and all other materials in their entirety shall be removed from the City-owned area with the area left in an unobstructed, undamaged, clean and sanitary condition at no cost to the City.
9. Sidewalk cafés on City property shall indemnify and hold harmless the City of Portsmouth and shall maintain and provide insurance of the types and amounts specified by the City's Legal Department.
10. Sidewalk cafe's shall not damage sidewalks, curbing, bike racks, street trees, light poles, trash containers, utilities or any other City amenities or infrastructure, or make same inaccessible for public use or maintenance purposes.
11. Sidewalk cafe's may utilize the Area for authorized purposes during their normal business hours, except that all tables within the Area shall be cleared of all food and alcoholic beverages by 10:30 p.m. 7 days a week with no alcohol served within the Area subsequent to one-half hour before the foregoing closure times.
12. Sidewalk café operators shall agree at all times to comply with all laws, rules and regulations of the NH State Liquor Commission and all other local, state and federal laws. Approval of the Area Service Agreement by the State Liquor Commission is required. Alcoholic beverage violations shall be self-reported to the State Liquor Commission.
13. Sidewalk cafe's shall only serve alcoholic beverages to patrons who are seated at a table and who are ordering a substantial meal with service at tables conducted by wait staff only.
14. Sidewalk café operators will agree that they shall be solely responsible for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
15. The Area Service Agreement may be suspended at the sole discretion of the City on an administrative basis.
16. The Area Service Agreement may be revoked in its entirety, excepting for indemnity provisions, by the City by vote of the City Council.

17. Sidewalk cafe's with alcohol service should meet the following site design standards:

- Be separated from the public pedestrian space on the adjacent municipal sidewalk by an enclosure system consisting of heavy duty black decorative metal materials or equivalent as approved by the City Manager or his designee; special attention shall be paid to the method used to support the enclosure system in order to avoid damage to public property and insure public safety; the minimum height of the enclosure system shall be 30 inches and the maximum height shall be 36 inches.
- Sidewalk cafe's shall have no audio or visual or entertainment of any type located outside, and no visual entertainment shall be situated on the inside of the building in such a manner that it is directed to patrons in the sidewalk café.
- Sidewalk café seating shall be appurtenant and contiguous to a doorway accessing the main restaurant facility with service provided within the Area approved by the City, and the adjacent public pedestrian way shall not be crossed in order to provide alcohol or food service to additional areas.
- The internal dimensions and table/chair layout of the sidewalk café Area must allow for the passage of customers and wait staff and shall, in any event, meet ADA requirements.
- Sidewalk cafe's must provide a 5-foot radius clearance from the center of restaurant doorways (exterior) and doorways shall be kept clear at all times and a 5-foot minimum clear pedestrian path in front of restaurant doorways (exterior) shall be maintained at all times.
- The enclosure system, tables and chairs shall be movable/non-permanent.
- In Market Square the minimum width for the pedestrian way adjacent to the Area shall be 10-feet to 12-feet depending on site conditions. In all other areas where sidewalk cafe's are allowed the width for the pedestrian way adjacent to the Area shall, at a minimum, be 5-feet and, in any event, meet ADA, but will depend on site conditions. The pedestrian way in both instances shall allow for and provide clear unimpeded passage and access along the Area. The pedestrian way shall be located entirely on the public sidewalk and shall meet criteria that ensure pedestrian safety, usability and ADA compliance. In no event shall the Area interfere with accessibility or public safety, including safe lines of sight for drivers.
- Canopies over the sidewalk café shall not be allowed unless they are completely supported by hardware on the building structure, that is, there shall be no vertical supports in or around the sidewalk café; table umbrellas without logos are allowed, but must not extend beyond the Area.
- No advertising of any kind shall be allowed in the Area.
- No improvements or personal property located within the Area shall extend on or over any municipal property located outside the Area.

18. Smoking should not be allowed in the sidewalk café Area.

19. Sidewalk café operators shall agree at all times to comply with all local laws, rules, regulations and orders including, but not limited to the following:
- Health Department to approve outdoor food service operations and cleaning operations, with the Area to be left in a clean and sanitary condition at all times and garbage contained at all times in covered receptacles. The Area shall be left in clean condition at close of business with all garbage removed in its entirety from the Area, and any ground debris swept up, at close of daily business. No food prep, grilling, service windows, service counters, wait stations, or bus buckets shall be allowed in the Area and no condiments, paper products or the like shall be stored on the tables in the Area. Health Department shall review/approve that kitchen facilities are sufficient to support additional seating.
  - Inspections Department shall review/approve that bathroom facilities are sufficient to support outdoor sidewalk café seating. Permits shall be sought from the Inspections Department for any proposed Area lighting.
  - A Place of Assembly inspection and updated Place of Assembly permit shall be required from the Fire Department and the Fire Department shall review/approve means of egress.
20. No Area Service Agreement should be approved by the City except in conformance with the foregoing.
21. The above are policy guidelines that will serve as the basis for Area Service Agreements, which may include other terms and conditions deemed by the City to be in the public interest.
22. The number and location of sidewalk cafe's on City sidewalks shall be at the sole unfettered discretion of the City Council acting in the public interest and no entitlement is created by this policy for any party to have a sidewalk café at any location.

**This policy shall take effect upon the passage by the City Council.**

Adopted by the Portsmouth City Council on **March 19, 2012**.  
Ratified by the Portsmouth City Council on January 13, 2014.  
Ratified by the Portsmouth City Council on January 11, 2016.  
Amended by the Portsmouth City Council on February 21, 2017.  
Ratified by the Portsmouth City Council on January 16, 2018.  
Ratified by the Portsmouth City Council on January 8, 2020.

---

Kelli L. Barnaby, MMC, CMC, CNHMC  
City Clerk