

Mr. Mayor, we are writing to you as a consolidated front of independent restaurants in the great city of Richmond, Virginia. The last few weeks have been hard. In March, we closed our doors for the public good and laid off the vast majority of our staff. Those of us still operating are doing so at 15-20% of pre-COVID-19 revenue. Every day, we are faced with the question of whether the businesses and careers we have dedicated our lives to have a future in this city.

Now, with reopening on the horizon, we urgently need clear communication and leadership. **Following are the specific issues we need addressed so that Richmond Restaurants can reopen safe and strong.**

1. While we are eager—and in many cases desperate—to reopen, we support your decision to delay the city of Richmond's reopening for at least two weeks. The CDC and Governor Northam have both recommended that a region show a decrease in percent positivity rate for at least 14 days. Richmond clearly isn't there yet. Moving forward, we need to know what data is being used, how long it will take to interpret that data, and what criteria will enable each phase of reopening. We ask that you continue to demand timely and accurate testing data from the State and speak out when either our testing capacity or reporting fail to meet the standard.

2. We support that you are engaging restaurants to explore patio/outdoor space expansion through the city's RVAStrong website but we have to recognize that only a fraction of restaurants currently have patios or outdoor spaces. And expanding spaces could potentially create new risks to safety and sanitation while increasing operating cost. Therefore, it is in all of our best interests to develop a more detailed reopening plan that not only addresses patios, but also restrooms, trash, sanitation, and indoor dining rooms. We ask that you immediately form a working group of Richmond food and beverage operators to advise on this plan.

3. The State's delay in releasing final Phase 1 Guidelines and the subsequent delay in the City of Richmond has caused unnecessary anxiety and financial hardship on our businesses, as well as staff recalled to work, only to be let go again. Moving forward, we need more clarity on upcoming changes so that we can plan effectively. While we understand that the timeline for reopening will change with data, we ask that you engage the State to release draft Phase 2 and 3 guidelines immediately.

Richmond's restaurants acted quickly and decisively in closing to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community. Our businesses make a significant contribution to the city's finances and we are proud of our role as a leading industry here. We are doing our best now to ensure the safety of our staff and guests, while attempting to salvage our very existence. We ask that the City work with us as partners in creating a clear path to safely reopening.

Sincerely,



THE JASPER

Saison



LUNCH.
It doesn't matter when you get here

SUPPER!
It's always the best experience of the day



Belle

CASA BARCO



LAURA LEE'S

LONGOVEN

Helen's



TAZZA KITCHEN



BARRIO TAQUERIA + TEQUILA



RESTAURANT ADARRA



NOTA BENE



pomona



CROSSROADS

L'OPOSSUM
sur la Colline de l'Orégon



Max's
ON BROAD • RICHMOND

