

Assistant Commissioner Craven -

I am a New Yorker who has relied on robust outdoor dining structures for the past few years to stay healthy, patronize restaurants I love, and be safely social. I am immunocompromised and have long Covid symptoms, so I am very careful when gathering with others and when eating. I have avoided dining indoors since March 2020, but I have made extensive use of our city's expanded curbside dining.

The proposed changes to curbside dining structures would be detrimental to the health of New Yorkers and the business of our food sector. We need to make outdoor dining less expensive and more possible, rather than undo its expansion, one of the silver linings that has emerged in the past few years.

Requiring structures to not have sturdy roofs will ensure they are less useful in a world of more and more extreme weather. The two months of rainy Saturdays that we are currently going through is a great reminder of how detrimental flimsier structures will be to the chance of socializing outdoors.

With the high cost of commercial rent and ingredients, NYC restaurants deserve every help they can get to continue to exist today, and expanded seating is a boon to that end. Elderly and immunocompromised New Yorkers deserve safe ways to interact with what our city has to offer, and if outdoor dining structures are reduced, we will not move indoors, we will simply disappear from public life. That is unacceptable.

I urge you to continue to allow robust structures at low cost moving forward. There are so many reasons why it is a benefit to our city.

Sincerely,  
Dave Ruder  
Brooklyn, NY