Healthy Business Streets Guide



Guidance for temporary changes to business district street design and use for economic and public health

Washington State Department of Health

Environmental Health Services Division
Public Health
Seattle & King County

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Document may be updated as conditions and information change.

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The Healthy Business Streets Guide was developed as a collaborative effort among many civic, public, and private actors who participated in reviewing and shaping the content. Updates are primarily coordinated by the Environmental Health Services Division of Public Health, Seattle & King County, and is co-published with the Washington State Department of Health.

Agencies

- Everett Public Works
- King County Metro
- King County Office of Equity & Social Justice
- Public Health, Seattle & King County
- Puget Sound Regional Council
- Seattle Department of Transportation
- Seattle Office of Economic Development
- Seattle Office of Planning & Community Development
- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
- Washington State Department of Health
- Washington State Department of Transportation

Organizations

- Downtown on the Go! (Tacoma)
- Downtown Seattle Association
- Everett Station District Alliance
- Feet First
- Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association
- Seattle Neighborhood Greenways
- Seattle Restaurant Alliance
- Seattle Restaurants United
- Snohomish County Transportation Coalition
- Washington Bikes / Cascade Bicycle Club

Special thanks to Brock Howell for helping to spearhead the development of this guide and to Jennifer Cao for the illustrations of physical distancing on sidewalks. We are also indebted to the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) for the use of the content and illustrations from its *Streets For Pandemic Response and Recovery*.

With questions suggestions, or for more information, visit this link or scan the QR code:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=mgXluvB210mZlnLf6V1pxzH8uNvzL5REtO8rzBGSO5UQlJDUE9aUFoyRlFZMDJVNFRUNUxTRjZBOS4u

March 11, 2021

Dear reader,

In Public Health, we recognize the importance of supporting our community businesses while keeping people safe and healthy. While moving business activities outdoors can be challenging, it presents a critical opportunity to sustain vulnerable local businesses and keep people safer.

Community and business activities, including restaurant dining, are safer outdoors during this COVID-19 pandemic. This Healthy Business Street Guide presents configurations of streets and rights-of-way that allow neighborhoods to move essential business activities outdoors to minimize transmission risks.

Healthy, economically active, and equitable communities are possible now. These temporary strategies can be implemented by neighborhood business associations, community champions, and city leaders who embrace the call for adaptive responses to current community challenges.

Our team will continue to update this guide in response to the latest guidance around the COVID-19 pandemic, and in response to the changing priorities of cities, neighborhood business associations, and civic champions who are implementing these adaptive tactics.

Please contact us with suggested improvements. Thank you for helping support the economic vitality of our communities while keeping our communities safe and healthy.

Introduction

Community goals for public health and economic resilience are achieved when cities and business district organizations structure public space to allow for appropriate physical distancing at outdoor dining and markets.

This resource:

- **Guides cities and business districts on collaboratively modifying street uses.**
- **Illustrates several possible temporary street design modifications.**
- **Explores and provides resources for additional considerations.**

This Healthy Business Streets Guide aims to:

1. Protect public health.
2. Promote use of outdoor spaces for local small business functions.
3. Shape business districts as destinations for safe and healthy activities.

To achieve these goals, the Guide:

- Identifies problematic streetscapes — where it's hard to maintain safe physical distances, and
- Illustrates redesigned spaces — where required physical distancing is routine.

The Guide is does not present a one-size fits all approach. Neighborhood settings vary — cities, businesses, and business districts should apply this Guide to their circumstances.

This Guide is based on general distancing recommendations, and is not specific to the COVID-19 evidence base.

Reprioritize public space

Virus transmission is less common outdoors, so restaurants and other businesses can use exterior spaces to compensate for Washington State COVID-19 Restaurant Seating Guidance limitations.

On-street parking can be oriented for short-term takeout/delivery rather than longer-term dine-in customers.

Existing city programs, permitting processes, and traffic plans for past street fairs, farmers markets, and block parties can be retooled to open streets to pedestrians.

All partners are responsible to ensure that street closures are programmed for adequate physical distancing and not intended to draw large crowds.

The street designs illustrated in this Guide are intended as temporary solutions to the pandemic. However, as the economy recovers, new priorities for how to best use streets and sidewalks may emerge.

Temporarily reconfigured streets may serve as pilot projects for lasting changes to our streets that benefit our communities' public and economic health in new ways.

Audience

The primary audience for this Guide is cities and business district associations, though it may be useful for restaurants, retail stores, and community organizations to organize either individual curbside dining or markets or larger block-long efforts with their neighbors.

Principles

1. Center the interests, priorities, and perspectives of people, businesses, and communities most impacted by COVID-19.
2. Through environmental design, enable people to adhere to public health guidance.
3. Support local small business resilience and economic recovery.

Involving those most affected, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color who own and work in small businesses, can help improve equitable stewardship of public spaces.

Regular dialogue with businesses, neighborhood organizations, residential neighbors, customers, and safe street advocacy groups can provide essential on-the-ground information about how efforts are working and what should be modified over time.

The collaborative development model on page 5 presents an approach that allows community values and priorities to inform the characteristics of healthy business streets.

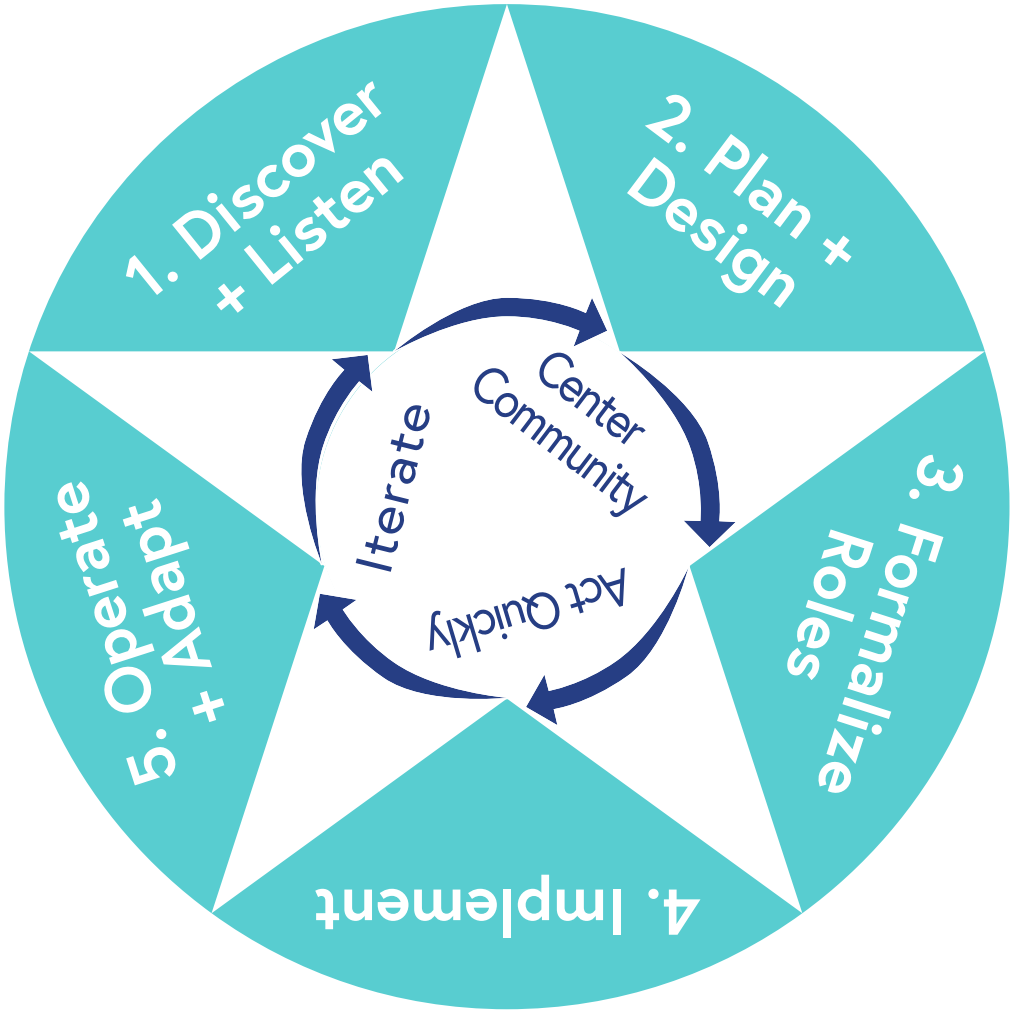
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Collaborative Development Model

Organizers should invite all perspectives to inform the approach, assess concerns, evaluate impacts, and modify as necessary.

Steps to build an inclusive approach:

1. Discover and listen to understand the modifications that are needed.
2. Plan and design modifications based on design tools and approaches.
3. Formalize roles and responsibilities.
4. Prepare and implement.
5. Operate, monitor, and adapt.



1. Discover & Listen

Local governments have a lead role in protecting public health by managing public space and supporting local small businesses upon whom communities depend.

With indoor occupancy restrictions, a business may need to expand its footprint into the public right-of-way to remain financially viable.

Creating supportive programs to repurpose streets for dining and merchandise sales is an important way to support local small businesses during this challenging time.

To discover where street modifications are necessary, local governments and business district organizations should both look at the physical conditions on the ground and listen to the needs of the stakeholders of the block.

Key Steps

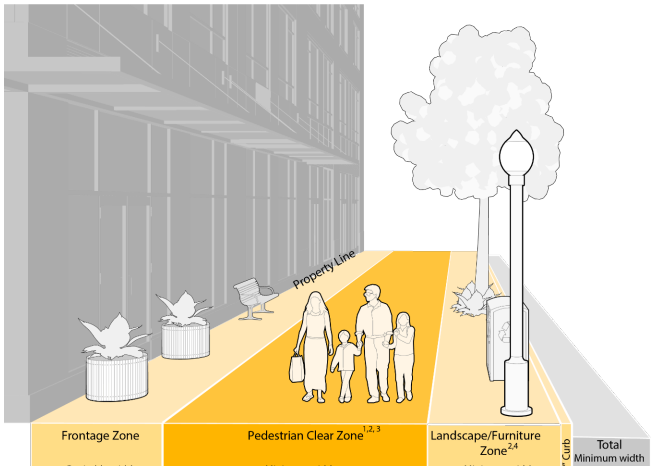
- Evaluate the physical conditions on a street, including sidewalk widths, number of businesses, and pedestrian volumes.
- Identify key obstacles or issues affecting design or segment length.
- Gauge the types of businesses nearby and their needs, including additional seating or retail space and parking zones for delivery.
- Seek input and learn about interests and concerns of adjacent businesses and other potentially affected parties.
- Listen and respond to the most impacted, including Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and those with mobility impairments.
- Seek to partner with an existing organization or form a working group to plan and manage larger street modifications.
- Identify funding and staff resources that can be leveraged for the effort.

Explore Site Considerations

Identifying appropriate street/sidewalk modification locations may hinge on:

- Whether there is enough space on the sidewalk for people to safely physically distance while walking and standing on the sidewalk, factoring in:
  - Street furniture and landscaping that constrict movement of people.
  - Number of people who walk and stand on the sidewalk during peak hours is too great to maintain safe physical distances.
  - Queue lines outside of businesses to get food or services.
- Whether interior capacity of adjacent restaurants is full.
- Whether people with mobility impairments have difficulty navigating the sidewalk or keeping physical distant.
- Whether an adjacent parking or travel lane can be converted to another use.
- Whether the city can provide additional staff time (to ease permit process) and other public works and transportation support (traffic barriers, tables, ramps, decking) in selected neighborhoods to advance equitable access citywide.
  - Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities have experienced much more significant negative impacts of COVID-19.
  - Small businesses may have less experience working with city permitting processes.

Illustrating physical distancing challenges

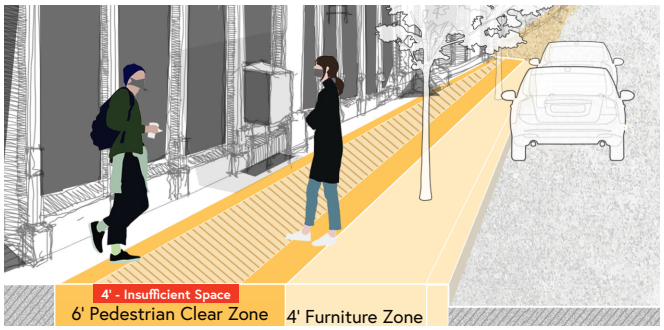


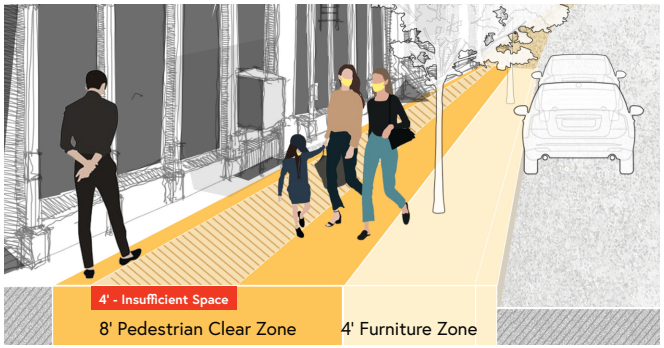
Sidewalk Layout Terminology and Requirements

Sidewalks have a "frontage zone," "pedestrian clear zone," and "landscape or furniture zone," as shown in the illustration above.

The pedestrian clear zone is the most important as it's the traditional area of the sidewalk that is specifically reserved for pedestrian travel. The 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and local municipal streetscape guidelines govern the design.

The pedestrian clear zone must be unobstructed in a straight line for the length of a block so people with no or low vision can safely walk unimpeded, and the minimum width must be wide enough so a person using a wheelchair can pass another person. In Seattle, the width of the pedestrian clear zone is 8 feet for downtown sidewalks and 6 feet for all other areas.





Challenge: Sidewalks Are Too Narrow

A 6-foot wide pedestrian clear zone would be too small for individuals from different households to pass at least 6 feet from one another without one person walking outside the clear zone.

In some situations when people are walking in a group, even an 8-foot wide sidewalk will be too narrow for adequate physical distancing.

Some locations, such as grocery stores and parks, have overcome problematic passing distances by making pathways one-way. This may not be practical for some public sidewalks.

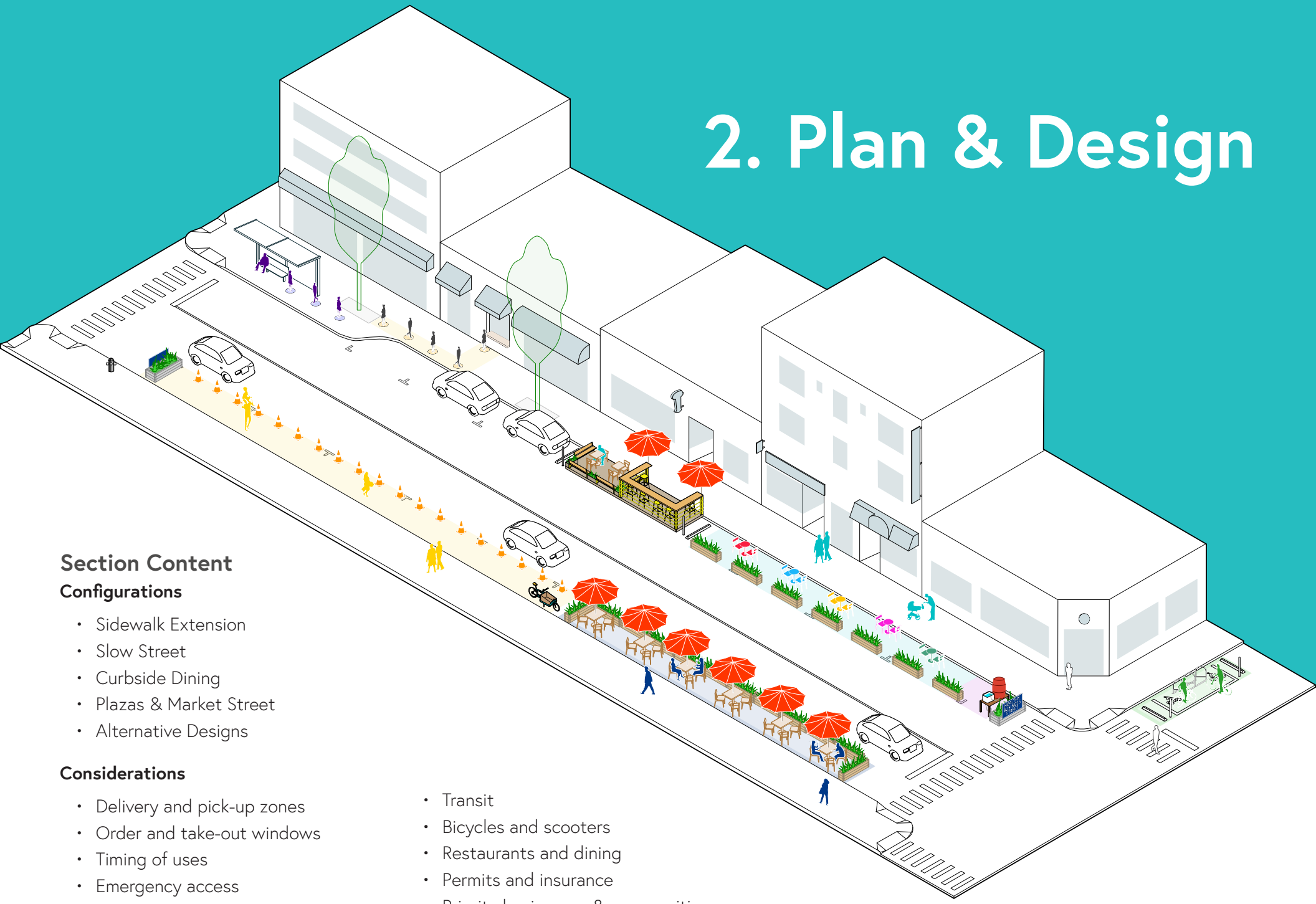


Challenge: Obstacles & Intrusions

Retail props along the sidewalk adjacent to a business, A-frame signs, and other sidewalk furniture may significantly impact the ability for people to maintain a 6-foot physical distance. The obstacles can be especially difficult for people with limited mobility or vision impairments to navigate.

In constrained sidewalk environments, sandwich board signs and similar obstructions should be discouraged, even when located in the furniture zone.

2. Plan & Design



Section Content

Configurations

- Sidewalk Extension
- Slow Street
- Curbside Dining
- Plazas & Market Street
- Alternative Designs

Considerations

- Delivery and pick-up zones
- Order and take-out windows
- Timing of uses
- Emergency access
- ADA design and universal design
- Weather protection
- Transit
- Bicycles and scooters
- Restaurants and dining
- Permits and insurance
- Priority businesses & communities

Configurations

Initial parameters and process

Engage businesses and community stakeholders to explore context-appropriate street modification proposals that:

- Meet physical distancing, health, street use, and ADA guidelines and requirements.
- Can be implemented quickly and iterated upon.
- Reflects priorities and needs of businesses and civic stakeholders.
- Advances racial equity in configuration and operation.

In exploring public space modifications, communicate and refine proposals in dialogue with:

- Community and affected parties, including businesses and residents.
- Transportation and land use authorities.
- Permitting and safety authorities.

Note to cities:
"Low barrier" street modification programs should have low costs, light paperwork, and quick decision-making timelines.

Planning

When planning any street modification:

- Investigate the physical layout and current conditions of the street.
  - Make an early determination of need for the modification due to the inability for pedestrians to safely physically distance without leaving the pedestrian clear zone or due to restaurant and retail businesses that need additional outdoor space.
  - Evaluate the sidewalk's physical layout, including widths of the sidewalks and pedestrian clear zones, locations of curb ramps and utilities, locations of landscaping and furniture, number and types of storefront businesses, and the activity levels throughout the day and week.
  - Evaluate the street characteristics, including the the on-street parking configuration and designations, the number of lanes, traffic speeds, presence of signals or other controls, and pedestrian crossing facilities.
- Learn from the storefront businesses what their operational needs are.
- Determine which solutions are best suited for the street based on the evaluation and conversations with businesses and stakeholders.
- Commit to an initial duration for how long the modified street design will remain in-place.
- Facilitate ongoing iteration to the design by maintaining active dialogue with adjacent businesses.

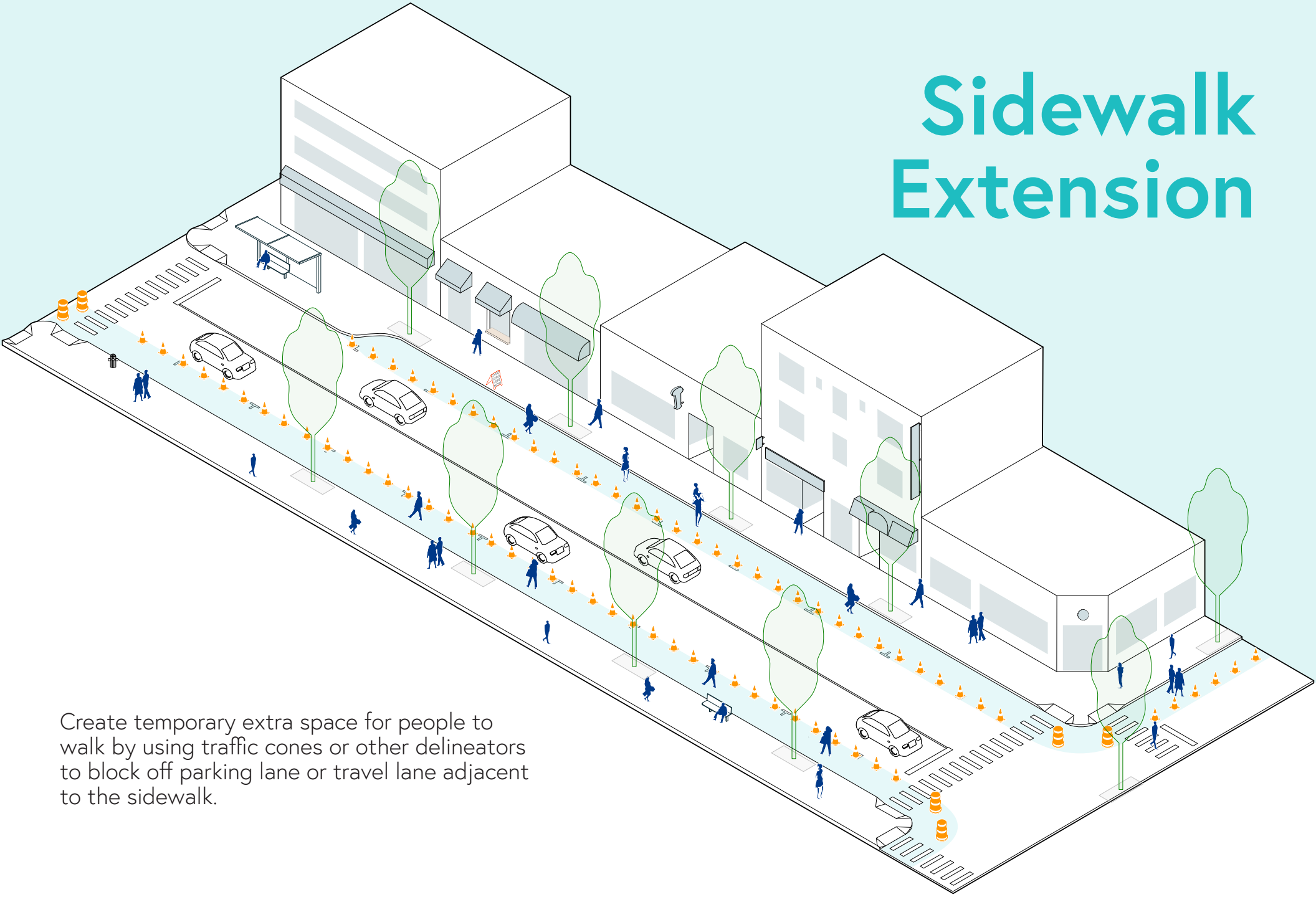
For more significant design modifications, encourage the organization responsible for ongoing management to regularly survey businesses, customers, and visitors.

Design

When designing any street modification, consider:

- The need to maintain the pedestrian clear zone on the sidewalks so that people with disabilities can easily traverse the existing sidewalk and everyone can maintain 6-foot physical distance.
- Whether materials, such as traffic delineators and fences, are cane detectable for people with low vision or blind.
- Whether sandwich boards and street furniture should be relocated or removed in order to create more pedestrian space.
- The need to maintain access to utility boxes, fire hydrants, other utilities, and curbside mailboxes.
- The need to maintain emergency fire lanes.
- Garbage and recycling pick-up schedules and locations.
- Deliveries, including possibly creating delivery drop-off zones and delivery hours.
- Establishing short-term parking for take-out food delivery services.
- Preserving or adding parking spaces for people with disabilities.

Sidewalk Extension



Create temporary extra space for people to walk by using traffic cones or other delineators to block off parking lane or travel lane adjacent to the sidewalk.

Places to implement a sidewalk extension

- Where sidewalks are too narrow for people to adhere to physical distancing guidelines while walking or waiting.
- Any sidewalk that is 6 to 8 feet wide within a business district should be considered for a sidewalk extension.

Planning

- Cities have an important role in assessing whether business districts may have high pedestrian volumes and narrow sidewalks that may compromise 6-foot physical distancing.
- Prioritize sidewalk extensions for business districts with pedestrian clear zones that are less than 8 feet wide.
- If local requirements for temporary traffic control plans cannot be met within the timeline of pandemic response, consider moving forward with the modification as an emergency action and document rationale for departing from traffic control rules and processes.

Design

- To block-off a parking or travel lane adjacent to the sidewalk, use traffic delineators that are appropriate for the traffic volumes and speeds of the adjacent vehicular traffic and which is compliant with state and local laws.

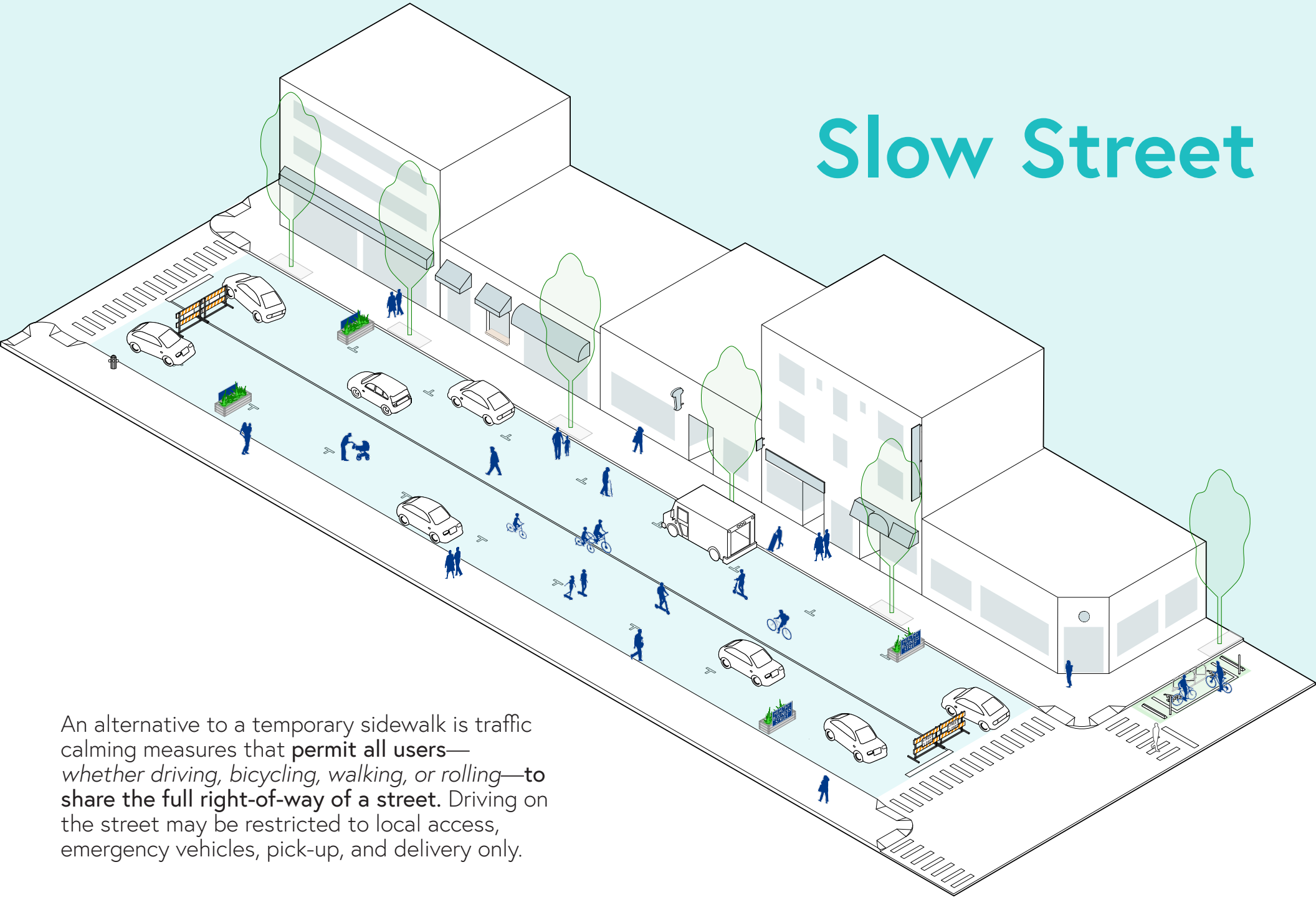
  Traffic cones, barrels, vertical delineator posts, water-filled plastic jersey barriers, concrete jersey barriers, and planter boxes all could be appropriate in the right circumstance.

- Consider enhancing the sidewalk extension by painting the extension area, encouraging pavement murals, adding outdoor lighting, or using flower boxes as part of the traffic barrier.

- The sidewalk extension should not be considered as a substitute to maintaining ADA-accessible pedestrian clear zones on the sidewalk.

  Tables, chairs, and other obstacles should not be allowed within the pedestrian clear zone unless the street lacks a curb such that someone in wheelchair can access all storefronts.

Slow Street



An alternative to a temporary sidewalk is traffic calming measures that **permit all users**—*whether driving, bicycling, walking, or rolling*—**to share the full right-of-way of a street.** Driving on the street may be restricted to local access, emergency vehicles, pick-up, and delivery only.

Places to implement a slow street

- Where sidewalks are too narrow for people to meet physical distancing guidelines while people are walking or waiting.
  - May be preferable to a sidewalk extension where the extension would eliminate parking or where no parking lane currently exists.
  - Can be implemented in tandem with the sidewalk extension and curbside dining/ market solutions.
  - Generally, not suitable for a major transit corridor. The transit agency's approval will be mandatory.

Planning

- Identify a block or network of streets that can be closed at key entry points, where interior intersections remain unobstructed.
- Avoid affecting streets with bus or streetcar routes, unless the bus routes can be easily shifted to an adjacent street.
- Engage community groups, youth, and local artists in implementing the design.

Design

- Identify which intersections to close fully and which to partially close, preserving local access but preventing most through-movements.
- Place temporary traffic barriers to partially block streets. Consider barrier layouts that require drivers to maneuver into the street rather than go straight through.
- Use signage to indicate restricted use. Use temporary "Local Traffic Only," slow/shared, and/or branded signs (e.g., "Stay Healthy Streets") at main vehicle entry points.
- Encourage traffic speeds of 5-10 mph.
- To reduce traffic volume and the amount of space dedicated to motor vehicles, consider converting the street to one-direction for drivers and reducing the drive lane width by combining other design solutions, such as sidewalk extensions and curbside dining.
- Maintain the pedestrian clear zone on the sidewalks so that people with disabilities can continue to easily traverse the sidewalk.

Washington state law only allows pedestrians to walk in the street when it is "closed." (RCW 46.61.250). Barriers and signage should be installed at each end of the block to make it clear that the street is closed to general through traffic but open for local access and deliveries and for people to walk and bike on.

Beyond business districts

Cities should consider implementing slow streets outside of business districts. Many residential streets have no or narrow sidewalks which make physical distancing difficult for pedestrians.

Bellevue, Edmonds, Everett, and Seattle have restricted access to some residential streets to local access only. Often these restricted streets are prioritized for streets with dedicated bicycle routes.

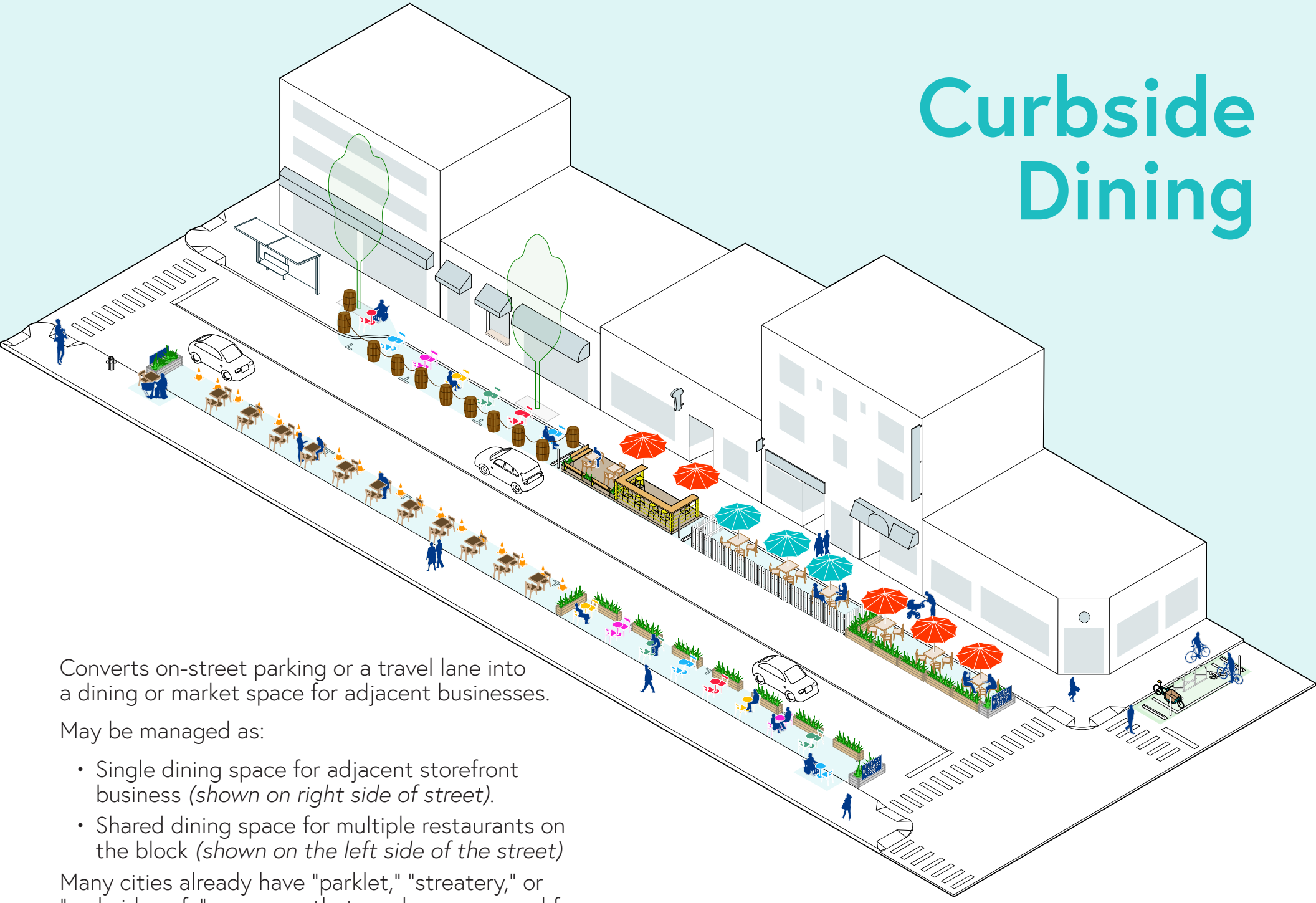
Cities should also consider empowering neighbors to implement their own measures to aid physical distancing on their residential streets. Most cities have programs that allow neighbors to apply for block party permits. Neighbors who have held block parties in the past could be allowed to close their residential street to through traffic.

Seattle created a program for permitting neighbor-led residential street closures, which could serve as a model for other cities to follow.

Examples

- Pike Place in Pike Place Market, Seattle
- Bell Street Park, Seattle
- Seattle Stay Healthy Streets Program
- Bellevue Healthy Streets Program
- Everett Healthy Streets Program
- NACTO spreadsheet tracking cities' transportation-related COVID-19 actions, including open streets initiatives

Curbside Dining



Converts on-street parking or a travel lane into a dining or market space for adjacent businesses.

May be managed as:

- Single dining space for adjacent storefront business *(shown on right side of street)*.
- Shared dining space for multiple restaurants on the block *(shown on the left side of the street)*

Many cities already have "parklet," "streatery," or "curbside cafe" programs that can be repurposed for permitting curbside dining and markets.

Places to implement curbside dining

- Adjacent restaurants or retail stores may need exterior space to conduct business when facing interior capacity limitations.
- When sidewalks lack enough space for seating or retail to occur adjacent to building or in the landscape zone.
- Blocks with many restaurants, cafés, food stalls, food vendors, and retail stores.

Planning

- **Individual Dining.** Ensure city permitting rules to enable individual restaurants and retail stores to install curbside dining or markets in an adjacent curbside parking area.
  - Establish a rapid permitting program or establish clear guidelines for businesses to follow without any necessary permit approval process.
  - Reduce or eliminate permitting fees.
  - Allow deviation from existing city parklet or streatery standards and allow additional flexibility for more temporary installations.
  - Provide city staff support to businesses to implement curbside dining.
- **Shared Dining.** Establish processes for a neighborhood association or informal group of businesses to convert in-street parking lane into a shared curbside dining and market area.
  - Consider the roles that parking enforcement officers, transportation/public works department staff, and/or a local business district organization could play in assisting with support tasks, such as monitoring, cleaning, and public communication.
- Consider providing or facilitating access to low- or no-cost materials, equipment, and other resources for businesses and other groups to set up outdoor spaces.

Design

- Ensure tables and seating are configured such that people seated are at least 6 feet from other individuals of different households, whether the other people are seated at another table, are servers, or are customers moving through the space. Spacing shall be measured from occupied chair to occupied chair.
- All tables must seat no more than 5 people.
- The adjacency to the pedestrian walkway must be considered — the table/chair sets should be set back 6 feet from the nearby pedestrian clear zones of the sidewalk.
- If outdoor customers are expected to order or purchase inside a business, a clear pedestrian path should be established from the business entrance to the outdoor dining/retail area.
- If curbside dining area is separated by the sidewalk curb, ensure people with disabilities can dine at a table at sidewalk level or in the business. A ramp may need to be constructed.
- Use fencing, traffic cones, or other barriers to delineate the shared outdoor dining and market curbside space from the vehicular travel lanes.
- If closing a lane of traffic, use a larger barrier such as a jersey barrier or ecology block as an end-cap to the lane.
- Consider providing handwashing stations and public restrooms. If using private restrooms for public use, provide clear informational and wayfinding signage.

WSDOT partners with cities

Many cities have state highways that go through core business districts, which are managed by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). To support physical distancing during the pandemic, WSDOT has established a program to allow parking lanes on these streets to be converted into outdoor dining and other uses. WSDOT wants to partner and encourages interested city officials to contact the Active Transportation Division or the regional active transportation specialist.

- WSDOT Safe, Healthy and Active Streets Program

Example Curbside Dining Programs

- Everett Streatery Program
- Redmond Outdoor Dining Program
- Seattle Temporary Streatery Café, Merchandise Display, & Vending Permits
- Tacoma Curbside Cafés & Marketplaces (PDF)

Plaza & Market Street



Close street to vehicular traffic and allow businesses to set-up tents, tables, and chairs within the street for dining and retail.

Layout can be similar to a farmers market or curbside dining and market area.

City or a local business district organization may set and manage the shared outdoor dining area, including providing tables and chairs.

Places to implement a plaza or market street

- Streets with permanent or active open-air markets, periodic farmers markets, or streets adjacent to market buildings.
- Non-principal arterial streets in business districts with a high-density of restaurants and storefront retail.
- Streets adjacent to parks within business districts.

Planning

- Assess total vendor and customer capacity of the street based on current physical distancing guidelines.
- If activating a street with a regular farmers market or similar event, use the existing/prior permit and traffic control plan to reflect the new operation scheme.
- Allocate space and schedules to allow for safe loading and drop-off outside market operating hours.

Design

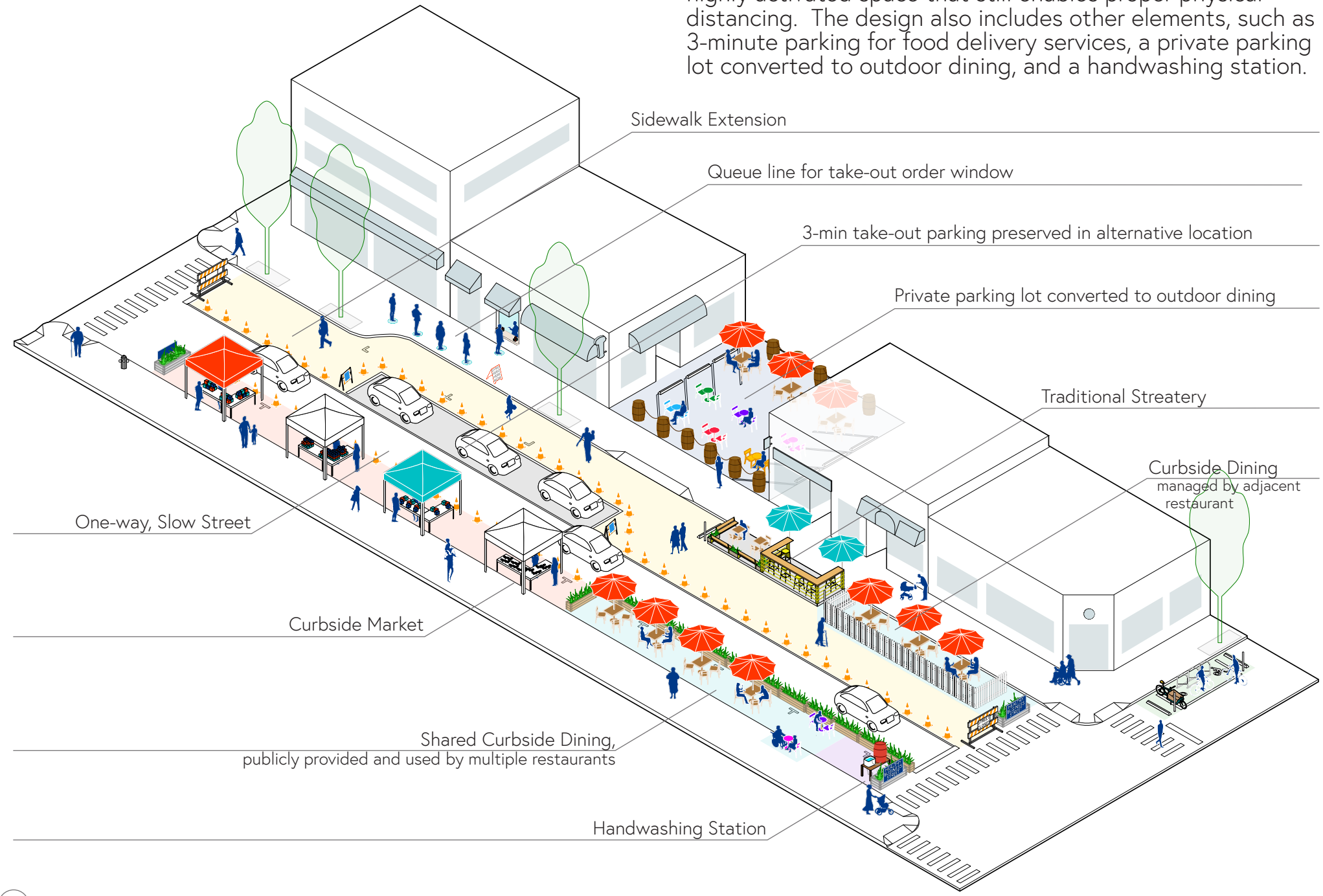
- Restrict access to the street using barriers. Options may include "Type 3" barriers, jersey barriers, ecology blocks, large planter boxes, and fencing. For fire lane access, ensure the barriers within the fire lane can be easily moved.
- If the market is established for only one side of the street, use barriers and signs to demarcate where market boundaries abut vehicle traffic.
- Create large signage for entrance areas.
- Design for Physical Distancing:
  - For a booth style configuration, ensure there is at least 12 feet between the booths to enable people to move between the booths 6 feet from the booths. Use paint or other ground markings to indicate locations for vendor stalls.
  - For a fenced-in eating and retail configurations and for public plaza seating, ensure the tables and seating are configured such that people seated are at least 6 feet from individuals of different households, whether the other people are seated at another table, are wait staff, or are customers moving through the space.
  - The adjacency to the pedestrian walkway should be considered. The table/chair sets should be setback 6 feet from nearby pedestrian clear zones.
  - To assist blind people navigate space, use cane-detectable barriers, such as fencing, to define edges of seating arrangements.
- If dining is a significant programmed use of the plaza, consider providing handwashing stations and public restrooms. If using private restrooms for public use, provide clear informational and wayfinding signage to the bathrooms.
- With an expectation that fewer people will arrive to the plaza or market street by motor vehicle, ensure there is adequate bike parking, such as providing a set of "staple" or "inverted-U" racks within a "bike corral" at each end of the block.
- In later phases of the Washington State Safe Start, possibly consider adding a stage for music and other performances so people feel more comfortable in the open, physically-distanced space. Guidance for when such entertainment will be permissible will be added to a future edition of this Guide.

Examples

- City of Edmonds Weekend Closure of Main Street
- Washington State Department of Health's Farmers Market Guidance (PDF)

Alternative Designs

Solution options may be combined. The illustration below combines ideas from the Sidewalk Extension, Slow Street, Curbside Dining, and Market Street solutions to create a highly activated space that still enables proper physical distancing. The design also includes other elements, such as 3-minute parking for food delivery services, a private parking lot converted to outdoor dining, and a handwashing station.



Considerations

There are many additional considerations beyond physical distancing and street layout design that are important for modifying the configuration of a street. This subsection highlights some of those issues and directs to the appropriate decision-making authorities where necessary.

Design Considerations

- Delivery and pick-up zones
- Order and take-out windows
- Timing of uses
- Emergency access
- ADA design and universal design
- Weather protection
- Transit
- Bicycles and scooters

Business Considerations

- Restaurants and dining
  - Sanitation protocols
  - Employee safety and health
  - Outdoor seating and food safety
  - Alcohol
- Permits and insurance

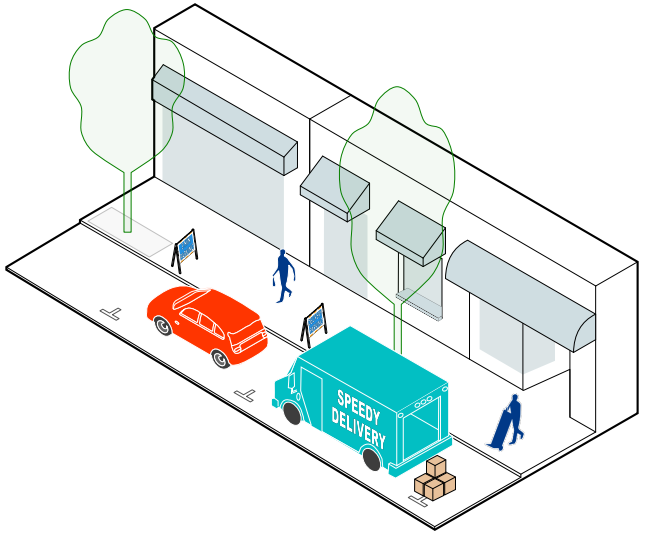
Equity Considerations

- Priority businesses and communities

Other considerations, such as long-term funding to support permanent installation of temporary solutions, bicycle access, and autonomous vehicles, may be added to future editions of this Guide.

In addition, future editions of the Guide may address when and how to safely program space for entertainment, such as a music stage in public plaza. Such programming may be appropriate in later phases of the State Safe Start, but not currently.

Delivery and Pick-up Zones

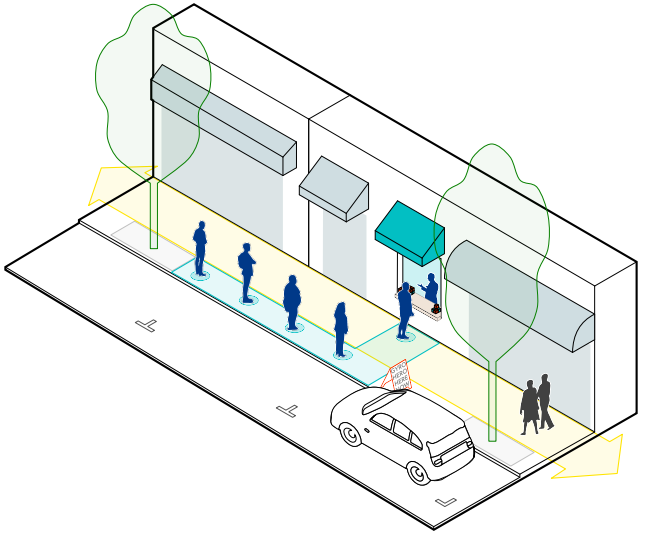


Take-out food has become a major income stream for restaurants during the stay-at-home order. Providing more curbside space dedicated to take-out & pick-up can be a key strategy for cities to support local businesses. For example, the City of Seattle established a program for restaurants and retail stores to have temporary pick-up zones for free.

Resources

- Seattle Program for Temporary Pick-up Zones

Order and Take-out Windows



Many restaurants have shifted service to be through only a window or their front door. This service model may result in customers standing on the sidewalk in a line, waiting to make an order or for their food to be prepared.

The business should have signage that reminds people to wear a mask and maintain proper 6-foot physical distancing. The queue lines can be maintained by putting dots or lines on the ground, spaced at 6-foot intervals. The queue line should be outside of the pedestrian clear zone so that passing pedestrians can get by at a safe distance.

The number of people in a queue may be reduced by encouraging pre-orders and texting when an order is ready.

Timing of Uses

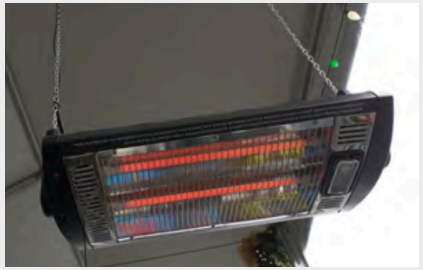
Curb extensions, curbside dining and markets, plazas, and the other street design modifications highlighted in this report need not be put in place 7 days per week, 24 hours per day. Lane closures and complete street closures can be either for just a few days a week (such as weekends), or even only during certain times of the day.

By making the modifications apply to certain days of the week or times of the day, the modification can be made more responsive to the delivery schedule needs of businesses and to peak pedestrian traffic volumes.

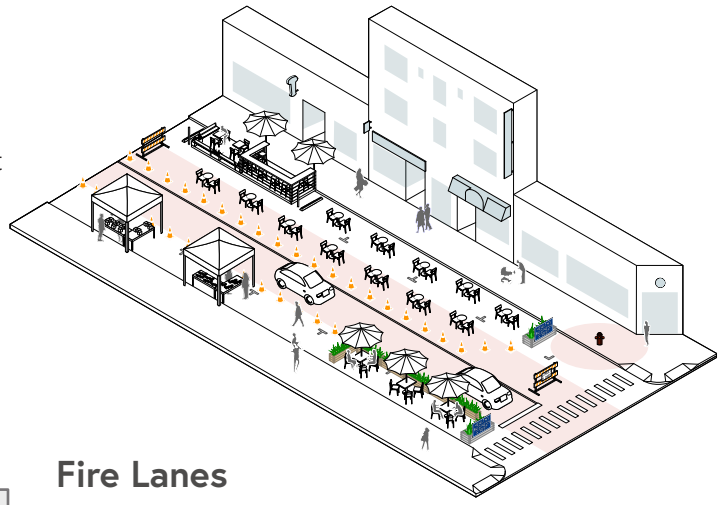
Infrared heat examples

Infrared heaters are a cheap, sustainable way for restaurants to keep guests warm during the winter. The *Business Insider* has an explanation on how they work.





Emergency Access



Fire Lanes

Any street closure will likely need approval from the local fire department to ensure emergency access. In Seattle and Tacoma, the fire departments require a 20-foot wide unobstructed emergency access lane.

Cones, an unimpeded bike lane, a walkway, and easily moveable chairs and small tables typically can be included within the 20-foot wide emergency access lane, but not structures such as booths, tents, and large tables.obstacles for

Tent Sizes

Local fire departments may also restrict the size of a temporary canopy or tent that a vendor may wish to set-up. In Seattle, tents greater than 400 square-feet (20'x20' or 10'x40'), must receive a permit. For tents placed within 12 feet of one another or a building, tent coverage must be no greater than 700 sq. ft.

Resources

- Seattle Fire Department requirements
- Tacoma Fire Prevention Bureau requirements

Weather Protection

Larger tents, outdoor heaters, and lighting protect against rain, provide heat, and extend hours of operation to later in the evening, especially during winter months.

The Washington State Open Air and Outdoor Seating Requirements include design and operations standards for larger tents and smaller pods/igloos. Tents will also need to meet the size restrictions set by local fire departments.

To meet latest public health guidance, occupancy may need to be reduced depending on the airflow in the structure. Please consider airflow and current state and local guidance when considering side panel use on tents.

Heaters present a fire hazard, so fire departments should also be consulted in determining allowable heater types. The Seattle Fire Department allows electric heaters.

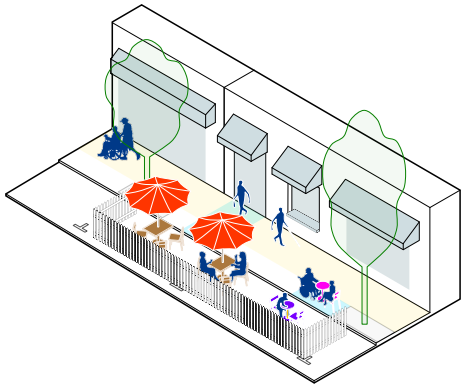
Heaters that burn propane may increase carbon monoxide exposure risks to employees and customers.

The potential tripping hazard of electric cords for heaters and lighting can be eliminated by running the lines overhead.

Resources

- Washington State Open Air and Outdoor Seating Requirements (PDF)
- SDOT Winter Equipment Guidance
- Seattle Fire Department guidance
- Seattle Guidance for Electric Vehicle Charging Cord Crossing the Public Right-of-Way (PDF)

ADA and Universal Design



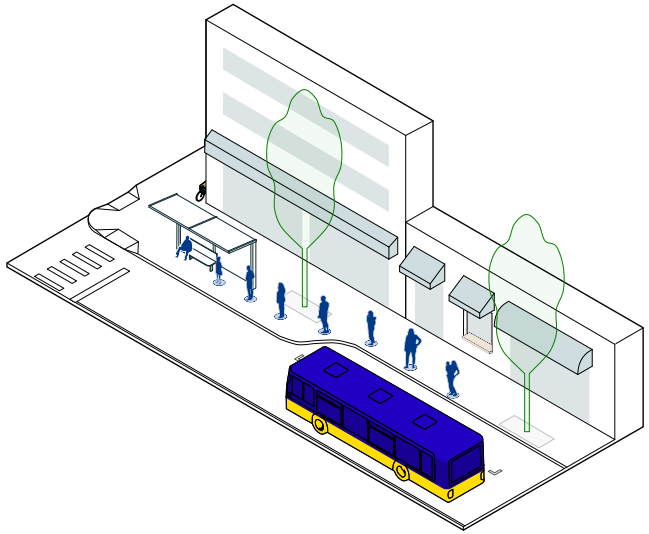
Designing for people with disabilities must be a core element to any street modification. People who have low or no vision benefit from straight, clear paths and people who rely on mobility devices require ramps to get on and off curbs. Maintaining clear space to navigate the sidewalk and public plazas, ensuring accessibility to curb ramps and bus stops, and locating ADA parking spots are critical considerations. The 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design are the foundation for all street design for people with disabilities, which should be embedded into a city's "right-of-way improvement manual."

This Guide has attempted to incorporate best practices for ADA design, but businesses and local city staff should ensure any street design is achieving the requirements and goals of the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. It is recommended that any street or sidewalk modification follow the principles of Universal Design. City staff and businesses are encouraged to reach out to local disability rights advocates and service providers to get their input on proposed street modifications.

Resources

- 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- Seattle Streets Illustrated Guide (Right-of-Way Improvement Manual)
- The Principles of Universal Design, NCSU
- "ADA vs. Universal Design," Spaces Quarterly

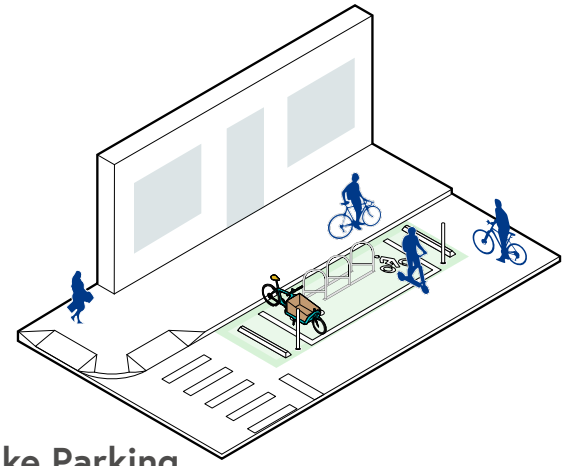
Transit



Streets with bus routes will not be able to close to vehicle traffic without approval of the transit agencies. Bus shelters and benches are often property of the transit agency, so repurposing a shelter or bench would need to be approved by the agency as well as the jurisdiction.

Physical distancing at bus stops can be encouraged through signage and on-ground markings that encourage 6-foot spacing for people waiting to get on a bus. Any marked queue line should be outside of the pedestrian clear zone of a sidewalk to allow pedestrians to pass by at least 6 feet away from those waiting to get on the bus. Access and circulation for all transit facilities must accommodate people with physical and vision impairments.

Bicycles & Scooters



Bike Parking

Bicycling is a great mode for people to travel while maintaining appropriate physical distancing. During COVID-19, record numbers of people have purchased bicycles for transportation and recreational purposes.

For improved safety of all visitors, consider adding "bike corrals"—sets of three to four "staple" or "inverted-U" bicycle racks—to each end of a block.

Bike Share & Scooter Share

Dockless, free-floating micromobility services provide a way for people to get around the city while observing safe physical distances.

Parked bikes and scooters can present obstacles for people with disabilities and take up space on sidewalks and streets needed for safe physical distancing.

Consider designating parking areas for shared scooters and bikes provided by micromobility companies so they do not interfere with pedestrian movement.

Sanitation Protocols

Sanitation efforts should follow the latest requirements from the Washington State Department of Health and the local county public health agency.

Per CDC guidelines, surface contact is not currently considered a common way that the virus spreads, therefore surfaces such as sidewalks, traffic cones, and other barriers do not need to be disinfected.

Here are a few important steps that can help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Display posters and signs to remind people to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including messages about:
  - Wearing a mask and covering coughs and sneezes.
  - Maintaining six-foot physical distancing.
  - Discouraging large groups of people.
  - Washing hands often with soap and water.
- Clean and disinfect regularly, including:
  - Restaurant staff should wipe-down outdoor tables between customers.
  - Public tables should be wiped-down at least twice a day, whether by an adjacent business, business district, or the city.
- Regularly monitor the space to ensure people observe proper physical distancing.
- Establish a sanitation management plan with roles and responsibilities for cleaning furniture and other food contact surfaces in public spaces.
- Follow state and local food code regulations.

Employee Safety and Health

Employers must follow the Washington State Department of Labor & Industry COVID-19 requirements to protect workers:

- Educate workers about COVID-19 and how to prevent spread of disease. Workers should also know the employer's COVID-19 policies. This should happen in the language workers understand best.
- Maintain at least 6 feet of separation between all employees and customers. If physical distancing is not possible for a specific task, use other prevention measures: use physical barriers, limit the number of people in narrow or enclosed areas, stagger breaks and work shift starts so fewer people are working at the same time and space.
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, goggles, face shields, and face masks as appropriate .

Resources

- L&I COVID-19 Safety and Health Requirements and Guidance Requirements (PDF)
- King County Safe Starts for Taverns and Restaurants (SSTAR) Program

Outdoor Seating and Food Safety

This Guide does not address food safety, rather it informs characteristics of and space use for safe outdoor restaurant seating. This Guide applies to restaurants and food vendors that produce kitchen-cooked food and maintain designated travel corridors for servers and guests when food is brought from the business to designated curbside takeaway locations or seating areas.

- Restaurants that do not have table service must have protocols that ensure adequate physical distancing at food and drink pick-up stations and seating areas. *Table service is when servers take guests' orders at their table and bring them their food.*
- Table size is limited to six people and tables must be spaced to allow nearest diners at neighboring tables seating to be at least 6 feet apart.
- Outdoor seating must follow all other requirements of the local public health authority.
- Outdoor seating must be at 50% of the normal outdoor seating capacity. An outdoor seating permit may be required from your local municipality for expanding or creating new outdoor seating on private property or a public right-of-way.
- Physical distances of more than 6 feet between outdoor tables should always be maintained on all sides. A physical barrier, such as a wall or booth back, separating tables is acceptable for chairs to be closer together. If customers and wait staff are expected to walk between open tables, the backs of the chairs must be at least 6 feet from the middle of the aisleway.
- Food establishments that share common walls with adjacent restaurants need to set up their outdoor seating so that they are more than 6 feet apart or separated by a physical barrier. Physical barriers may be needed in other areas as well to maintain separation from public rights-of-way and other public areas. Consult with your local municipality on what types of physical barriers are allowed.
- Customers are strongly encouraged to wear a cloth face covering anytime they are not seated at the table (while being seated or leaving, waiting for a table or take-out order, or while walking to the restroom). Cloth facial coverings must be worn by every employee not working alone.
- For self-serve items, restaurants must provide signage informing customers that cups, lids, and straws cannot be reused.

- Provide a menu using one of the following options: (1) single-use disposable menu, (2) a reusable menu if sanitized between uses, (3) electronic, chalk board, or white board menu, or (4) an app service or website for viewing on customer's personal device.
- Any condiments (such as ketchup or soy sauce) must be single-use or sanitized hourly.
- Restaurants must ensure proper physical distancing in the lobby, waiting areas, and payment counters.
- Minimize the number of staff serving a table.

Resources

- Restaurant, Tavern, Breweries, Wineries, and Distilleries COVID-19 Requirements (PDF)
- Washington State Open Air and Outdoor Seating Requirements (PDF)

Alcohol

If liquor is to be served and consumed, the Liquor and Cannabis Board must approve the layout and operation of the space. Your city's street use permitting division may have additional information.

Resources

- Liquor Control Board: Special Licenses and Permits

Permits and Insurance

With restrictions on operations during the pandemic, businesses are financially struggling. In order to support local small businesses, cities may consider reducing or eliminating any permit fees that might be associated with curbside dining and markets. Cities may also consider expediting review for permits to ensure more businesses can benefit from these programs.

Cities typically require organizations that are hosting a street fair or businesses that set-up and manage a curbside dining area to carry liability insurance. Each city may have different requirements. Cities can reduce barriers to business districts and businesses to redesign a street by eliminating or reducing the insurance requirements or processes, or by taking responsibility for the design and maintenance of the street.

Resources

- City of Seattle Café/Streatery Insurance Requirements (PDF)

Priority Businesses & Communities

Health equity is advanced when local jurisdictions proactively assist communities and businesses that have been disproportionately negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Black, Latinx, Pacific Islander, and Indigenous populations are experiencing higher infection rates and tend to work in industries that are hit by job and wage loss.

In response, cities can:

- Work with trusted community liaisons and community-based organizations to reach priority businesses.
- Engage and consult priority populations in street modification opportunities.
- In priority neighborhoods, assist businesses and business associations in developing permit applications.

Resources

- **Equitable Engagement**
  - Intentionalist
- **Data**:
  - King County Map of COVID Cases
  - King County Statistics of COVID Cases by Race/Ethnicity
  - Washington State Department of Health COVID-19 Data Dashboard
  - Monica Webb Hooper, Anna Maria Napoles, & Eliseo Perez-Stable, "COVID-19 and Racial/Ethnic Disparities," 323 J. of Am. Medical Ass'n, 2466-67 (2020)
  - How Streets Were a Success, Government Technology

3. Formalize Roles & Responsibilities

Street modifications should be collaborative efforts between the city, businesses, neighborhood organizations, and other key stakeholders resulting in shared stewardship of sidewalks, facilities, and neighborhoods. Effective collaboration requires communication, an understanding of responsibilities, and an inclusive spirit of co-creation.

Key Steps

- Welcome and include potential new stakeholders and partners.
- Define and engage permitting authorities, including for street use, traffic safety, and food service.
- Respond to emerging concerns of area residents, business owners, customers, and employees, and through traffic; and proactively consider ways the design could be adjusted in configuration or operation as new information and concerns arise.
- Establish and formalize agreements among key actors, and as necessary, craft written agreements that define the sharing of organizing roles and operational responsibilities, including communications, set up and break down tasks, timing, and material storage.

4. Prepare and Implement

Coordinated with the local transportation or public works department, implement the planned street modification.

Key Steps

- Define and provide guidance for traffic safety and public health.
- Establish clear communications to and from all affected parties.
- Message an iterative approach from outset—welcome course corrections .
- Create several easy ways for businesses and street vendors to register interest and get involved.
- Partner with local business groups and business districts, schools, youth, artists, and other groups to publicize programs.
- Fast-track assessment and notification within each neighborhood.
- Establish set-up and break-down processes and operating protocols and practices.
- Build shared participation in safety, inclusivity, and problem solving.
- Keep interagency communications open, especially emergency services and any cleaning or maintenance crews.
- Establish ways to hear from and respond to emerging concerns and opportunities.
- Inform all adjacent businesses of final design of the street modification at least 48 hours prior to implementation.
- Prepare materials and messaging that is language accessible and culturally relevant for stakeholder groups, particularly immigrant and refugee-owned businesses.

5. Operate, Monitor, and Adapt

All street modifications should be viewed as temporary solutions to a public health and economic crisis that will need to be monitored, adapted, and iterated upon to ensure the design meets core objectives for public health and businesses recovery.

As temporary solutions, the modifications may also serve as pilot projects to collect user feedback toward a permanent installation

Key Steps

- Using on-site observation, customer and pedestrian counts, and business surveys, monitor the effectiveness of the street modification, considering:
  - The sufficiency of space for physically distant walking and queuing.
  - Safe corridors for delivery or take-out pick-ups.
  - Whether the configuration of outside tables and seating and the cleaning efforts continue to meet public health guidelines.
  - Whether the clear zone for pedestrian movement continues to be maintained per ADA and public health guidance.
  - Whether hours or days of operation of the street modification should be adjusted.
- Resource key actors and operations with tools and clear safety and operating protocols.
- Ensure active systems and processes to listen and adjust at frequent intervals.
- Host a physical or online point of coordination, where operational details are made accessible and input can be received, reviewed, and responded to.

Local Examples of Healthy Business Streets

Several cities across Washington State have supported outdoor dining and other street modifications to support local businesses.

The following pages include photos of some of these changes in:

- Bothell
- Edmonds
- Issaquah
- Kirkland
- Langley
- Port Townsend
- Redmond
- Seattle
- Sumner
- Tacoma
- Walla Walla

Communities across Washington state known to have implemented in-street modifications, whether for outdoor dining, physical distancing, active transportation, or recreation in response to COVID-19, include:

- Bellevue
- Bothell
- Burien
- Edmonds
- Enumclaw
- Everett
- Issaquah
- Kent
- Kirkland
- Langley
- Mercer Island
- Mukilteo
- Port Townsend
- Puyallup
- Redmond
- Renton
- Seattle
- Shoreline
- Snoqualmie
- Spokane
- Sumner
- Tacoma
- Walla Walla

Bothell

Starting June 15, 2020, the City of Bothell closed streets for outdoor dining, first Main St between 101st Ave NE and 102nd Ave NE and later also 101st Ave NE between Main St and SR-522. Within the closed streets, adjacent restaurants set up fenced-in dining areas.



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Edmonds

Throughout the summer of 2020 until October 11, the City of Edmonds worked with the Edmonds Downtown Alliance to close Main St to automobiles between 6th Ave and 3rd Ave on Saturdays 10am-10pm and Sundays 10am-9pm. The closed street was branded, "Walkable Main Street."

In addition, Edmonds permitted restaurants to set-up outdoor dining within adjacent on-street parking lanes.



Dongho Chang


Dongho Chang


Luke Distelhorst


Luke Distelhorst


PEDESTRIAN
ACCESS
ONLY
Luke Distelhorst


Dongho Chang


Dongho Chang


NO
PARKING
TAKE
OUT
ONLY
Dongho Chang


Dongho Chang

Kirkland

Starting July 2, 2020, the City of Kirkland closed one block of Park Lane every evening throughout the summer. Park Lane is a narrow curbless one-way street with diagonal parking and several restaurants. The street's lack of a curb presented an opportunity for the middle of the street to serve as the main pedestrian area while closing the sidewalks each evening for dining directly adjacent to the restaurants. Photos of "Evenings on Park Lane" are shown on the next page.

After successful implementation of the Park Lane dining, other restaurants also sought to expand their outdoor dining experience, including the one shown on this page. As can be seen in the photos, this particular dining area included ramps for ADA access off the curb into the area, as well as plastic wheel stops and strung outdoor lighting.



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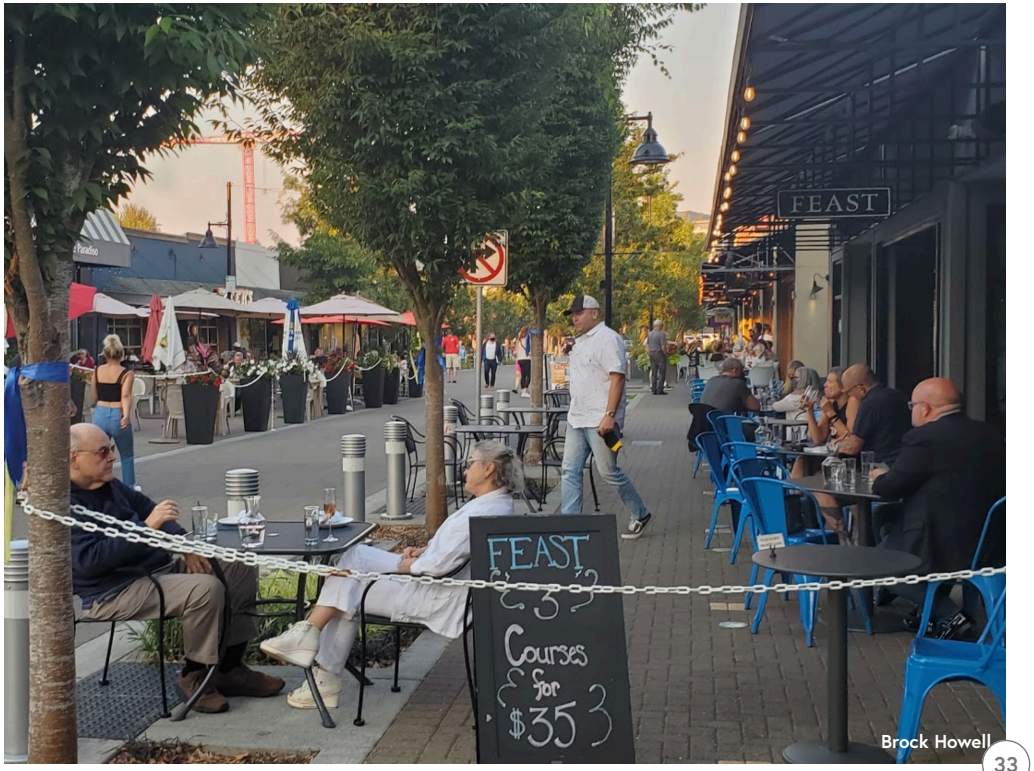
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Issaquah

Following a two-weekend pilot in early July, the City of Issaquah established "Downtown Streatery" as a permanent weekend fixture from 2pm Fridays to 10pm Sundays, closing Front St (from Dogwood to Sunset) and Alder (from First Pl NW to First Ave NE) to automobiles. Adjacent restaurants are allowed to set-up dining areas within the street. "Downtown Streatery" is approved to continue until November 1.



City of Issaquah



City of Issaquah


City of Issaquah


City of Issaquah

Port Townsend

As part of its "Open Streets Initiative, during Memorial Day Weekend, the City of Port Townsend piloted closing Taylor Street to allow for additional seating for customers to enjoy takeout meals. The next weekend the City kept Taylor Street open to automobile traffic but created shared dining areas within the parking lane. Following lessons learned, the city pivoted to free permitting for restaurants to convert adjacent on-street parking into outdoor dining. Permit requirements were minimized for rapid implementation. Approximately a dozen dining areas were created throughout downtown and uptown.

Langley

The City of Langley on Whidbey Island secured event fencing for restaurants to block off adjacent parking for outdoor dining. Approximately four businesses in the small town took advantage of the program.

Redmond

Working with the Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association, the City of Redmond established a new streatery program to allow restaurants to build dining areas within adjacent parking lanes for outdoor dining. Decking was required to be level with the sidewalk and have protective parking stops around the structure. Two restaurants have created streateries.







Seattle

The City of Seattle started by creating "Stay Healthy Streets" and "Keep It Moving Streets" programs to close non-arterial, mostly residential streets to thru-traffic and prioritize people walking and biking. On June 26, Seattle launched a free, expedited permitting for outdoor dining and markets within on-street parking lanes, and on July 27 Seattle expanded the opportunity to close entire street blocks.

Ballard, Seattle

Throughout June, the Ballard Alliance worked with businesses along Ballard Ave to apply for the permits to convert parking into dining and markets. When the opportunity to close street blocks occurred, the Ballard Alliance then successfully secured a street closure to thru-traffic, making the street even more comfortable for customers and pedestrians.



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Mark Ostow



Dongho Chang



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Melrose Avenue, Seattle

Street closure with outdoor dining.





Crocket Street, Queen Anne, Seattle

Street closure with shared outdoor dining for multiple restaurants. An adjacent business have provided testimonials about how the outdoor dining has been critical for their survival during the COVID-19 pandemic.







11th Avenue, Capitol Hill, Seattle

Street closure with individual outdoor dining areas for adjacent businesses.





Broadway Place, Capitol Hill, Seattle

Street closure with outdoor dining for Optimism Brewing.



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Columbia City, Seattle

Street closure with shared outdoor dining for multiple restaurants.



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Pike Place Market, Seattle

Shared outdoor dining area in previous diagonal parking area with two separate areas, one for alcohol and one general sitting and dining.



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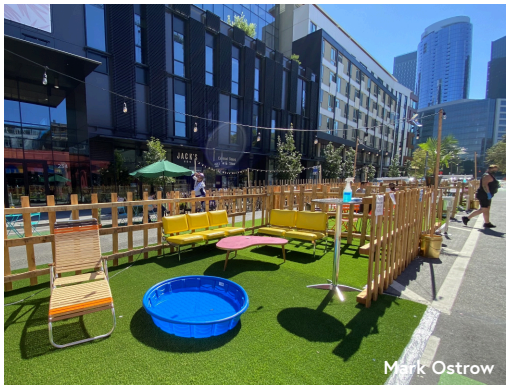


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9th Avenue, South Lake Union, Seattle

A restaurant initially put seating that covered the entirety of the sidewalk. After initial concerns about the layout, the restaurant secured a temporary street closure permit for dining in the middle of the street. Initial design blocked the bike lanes, but then after feedback about the need to preserve the bike lanes as 9th Ave is a major bike route, the design was again adapted. After a two week trial run, the design was approved for a longer period.


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Capitol Hill, Seattle

Curbside dining on Capitol Hill.



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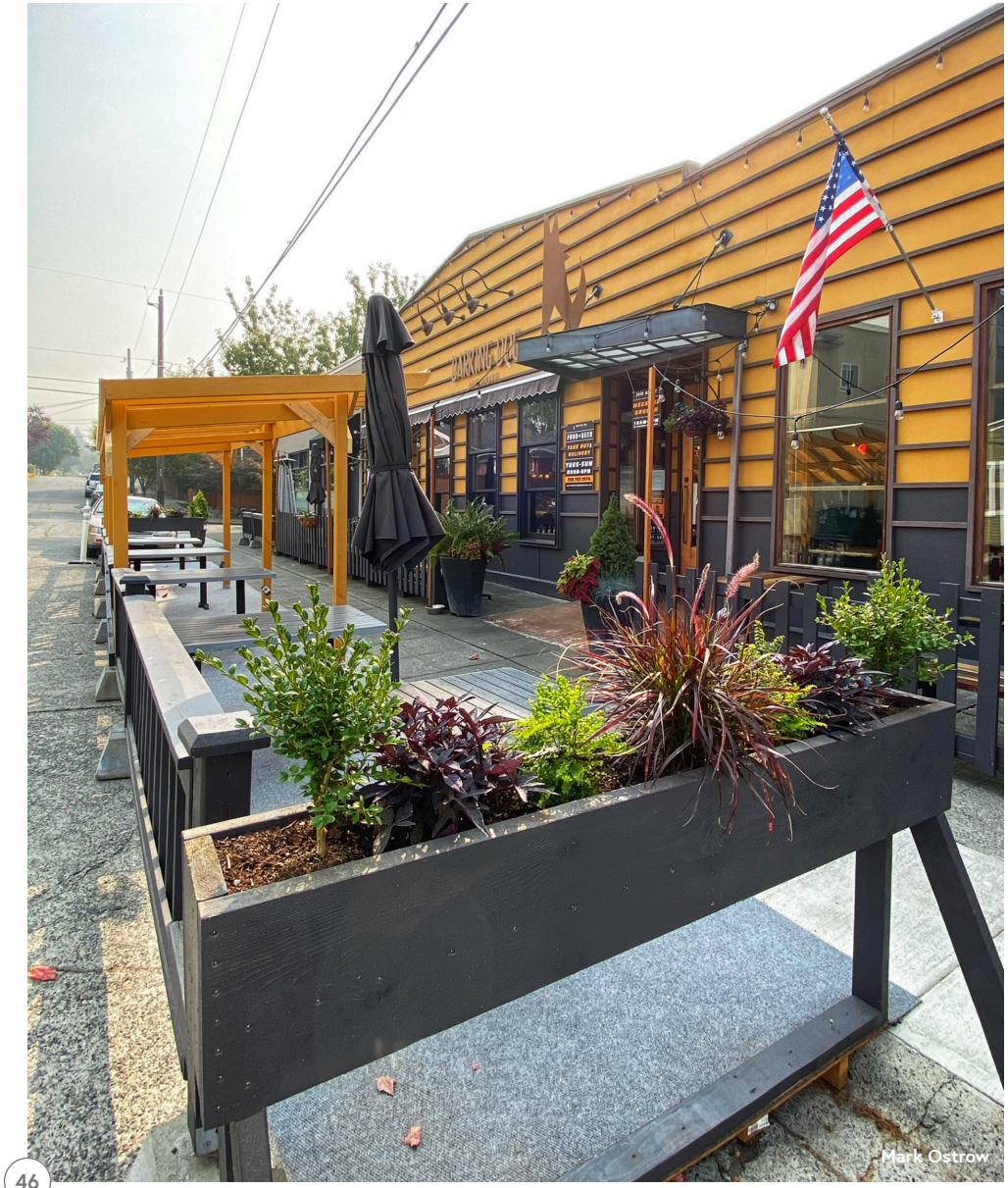
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West Woodland, Seattle

Curbside dining in West Woodland, a neighborhood west of Phinney Ridge and north of Ballard.



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Madrona, Seattle

Curbside dining in the Madrona neighborhood of Seattle.





Tangletown, Seattle

Curbside dining in Tangletown (a neighborhood in North Wallingford and South Green Lake) provides much needed outdoor seating for a tiny restaurant during evening hours and for a donut shop in the morning.

Sumner

The City of Sumner worked with a restaurant to open a permanent outdoor sitting and dining area in a former on-street parking lane.



City of Sumner



City of Sumner



City of Sumner

Tacoma

The City of Tacoma established a free, expedited permitting program for on-street dining and also closed a street for outdoor dining.



Walla Walla

The City of Walla Walla created "First Street Plaza," with outdoor seating and strong outdoor lights.



Downtown Walla Walla Foundation





Downtown Walla Walla Foundation

Sidewalk Dining

Where sidewalks are wide, cities may permit adjacent restaurants to set-up tables and chairs within the furniture zone rather than on the street.

A minimum six-foot wide pedestrian clear zone should always be maintained on the sidewalk so people — especially people with mobility impairments — can safely navigate walking or rolling down the sidewalk.

On 2nd Ave in Seattle's Belltown neighborhood, a few restaurants and bars already had fenced-in outdoor dining within the furniture zone of the sidewalk. During the pandemic, these restaurants and several others have expanded and added outdoor dining.



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Curbside Markets

Many retail businesses have taken advantage of the permit processes for converting curbside parking into other uses.

Anecdotal experience suggests that curbside markets are more prevalent when several other businesses on the same street are also converting parking spaces into dining and market spaces. This suggests that coordinated efforts, either by a business district association or the city itself, are more likely to result retail businesses participating. Having several businesses participating along a street can also serve to market the street as a destination for safe, healthy outdoor shopping, making the time and expense worthwhile to individual businesses.



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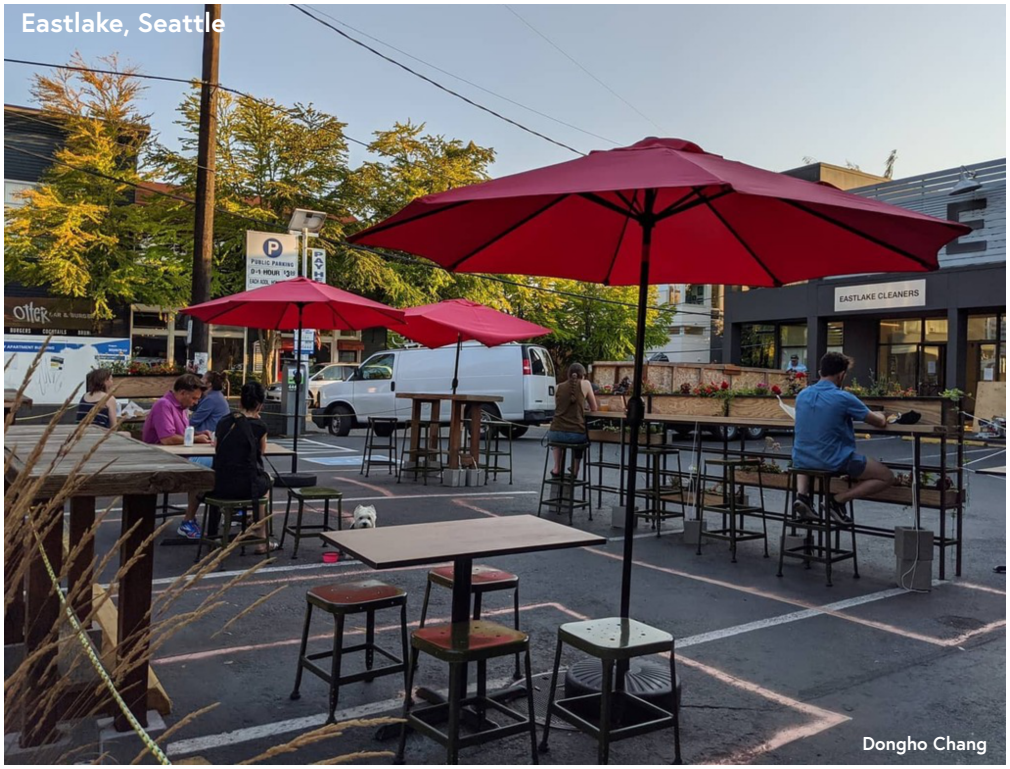

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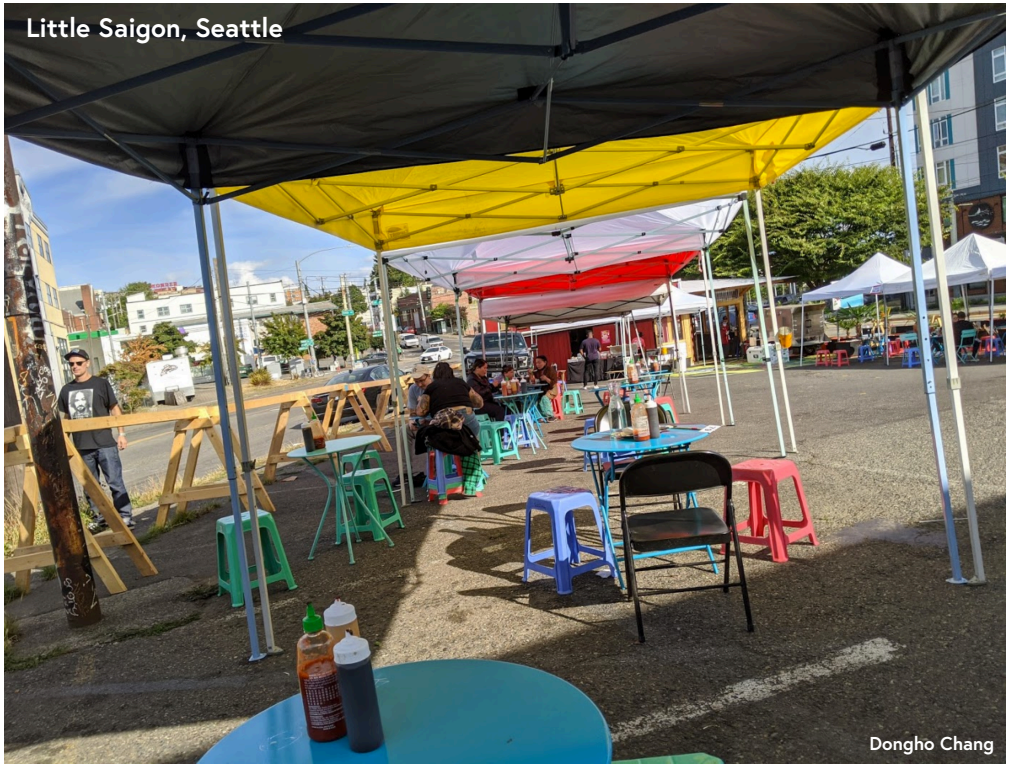
Converting Private Off-Street Parking Lots

Many businesses have recognized the benefit of converting automobile space to dining and market space is not the exclusive domain of the public realm. Parking lots that were previously oversized for the number of customers actually driving to adjacent businesses have been right-sized to prioritize the economic activity of dining rather than driving and parking. This change also matches a shift toward customers dining more locally than previously so that they walk and bike to their local restaurants. The expanded dining have been critical for the success of many businesses.



Eastlake, Seattle

Dongho Chang



Little Saigon, Seattle

Dongho Chang



Tangletown, Seattle

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Outdoor Dining at Shopping Centers

University Village in Seattle has repurposed streets and parking spaces within the shopping center for outdoor dining.


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Making Changes Permanent

There are many examples across Washington State of how in years past streets have been converted from being dedicated for automobile traffic to public space. These spaces continue to provide safe outdoor dining and physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic and encourage healthy, active lifestyles. Likewise, streets and parking areas modified during the pandemic can continue to provide significant public health benefits beyond the pandemic.


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