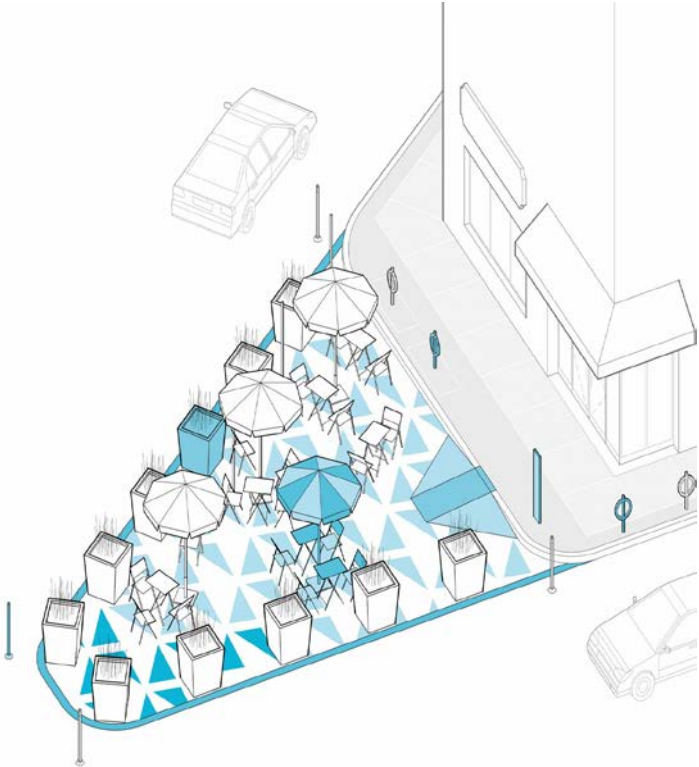
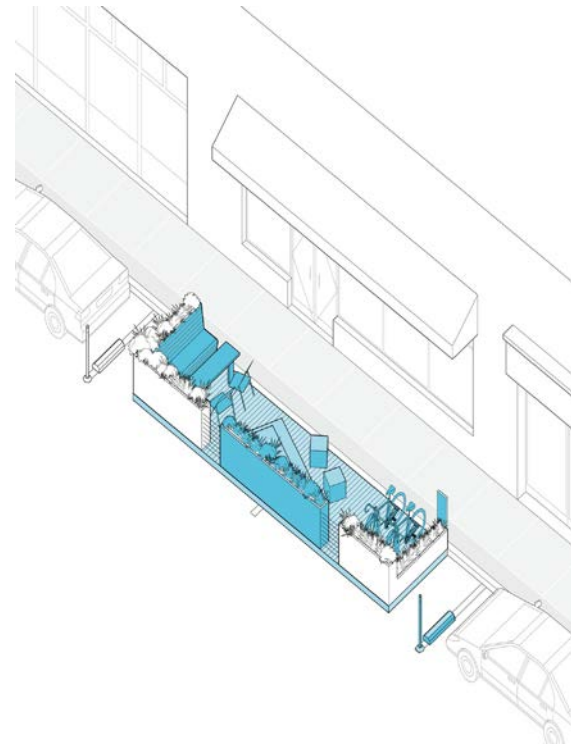


Jessica Robertson
Associate
Utile



Boston had allowed parklets for years, so why did we have so few of them?

- Heavy burden for private proponents:
 - Design
 - Permit
 - Build/install
 - Maintain
 - Pay City for lost meter revenue
 - Deconstruct
 - Store
 - Reinstall
- No financial return, because it's public space



Step one: reduce barriers

- Provide clear design guidelines
- Streamline permitting process and get departments on board ahead of time
- Eliminate requirement to pay the City for lost meter revenue
- Expand the sidewalk cafe program to allow more options for revenue-generating outdoor seating

Step two: direct support

- Create a new City program to fund a number of parklets and plazas each year
- Provide support for installation and removal
- Provide space in City properties to store over the winter

Purpose of the Tactical Public Realm Guidelines

A woman with a tattoo on her arm and a man wearing a blue cap are crouching on a sidewalk, painting a mural. The woman is using a brush to apply orange paint within a blue-painted rectangular border. The man is also painting with a brush. In the background, there are bicycles and other people, suggesting a public outdoor setting.

Encourage tactical transformation of the public realm by making the process as easy and transparent as possible

Audiences for the Tactical Public Realm Guidelines

- Potential proponents of tactical interventions
 - Small businesses, neighborhood organizations (little funding/resources)
 - Developers (significant funding/resources)
- Internal City stakeholders

Boston Tactical Public Realm

Temporary Art

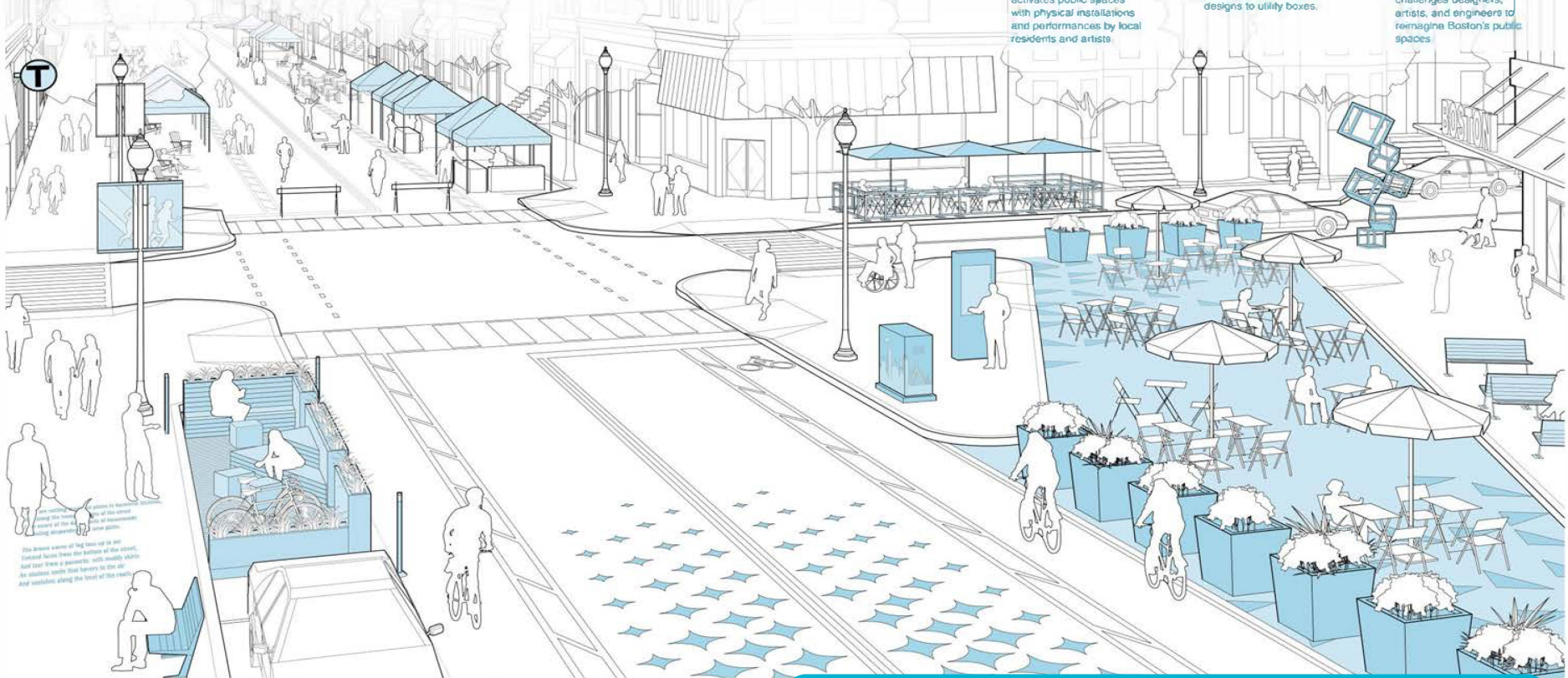
activates public spaces with physical installations and performances by local residents and artists

Paint Box

celebrates local artists by bringing their original designs to utility boxes.

Public Space Invitational

challenges designers, artists, and engineers to reimagine Boston's public spaces



*The street scene of the scene is the...
...of the street...
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...of the scene...*

Beta Blocks

serve as testing areas where the newest street ideas, materials, and technology can be easily piloted and evaluated.

Benches

can be integrated with digital features to provide solar-powered phone charging and measure activity in outdoor spaces.

Open Streets

invitative temporarily closes streets to car traffic and frees streets for pedestrians, recreation, and community events.

Banners

placed consistently along main streets, bring vibrancy to streets and contribute to placemaking

Tactical Plazas

transform underutilized pavement and irregular intersections into pedestrian only gathering spaces

Parklets

repurpose on-street parking spots into public spaces for socializing and gathering

Outdoor Cafes

add activity to the street and seasonally expand spaces for businesses and patrons.

Temporary Art: Street Murals

incorporate the creativity of local residents and artists to convert streets into public art installations.

What is a tactical plaza (or parklet, etc.)?

Why are they worth doing?

TACTICAL PLAZAS

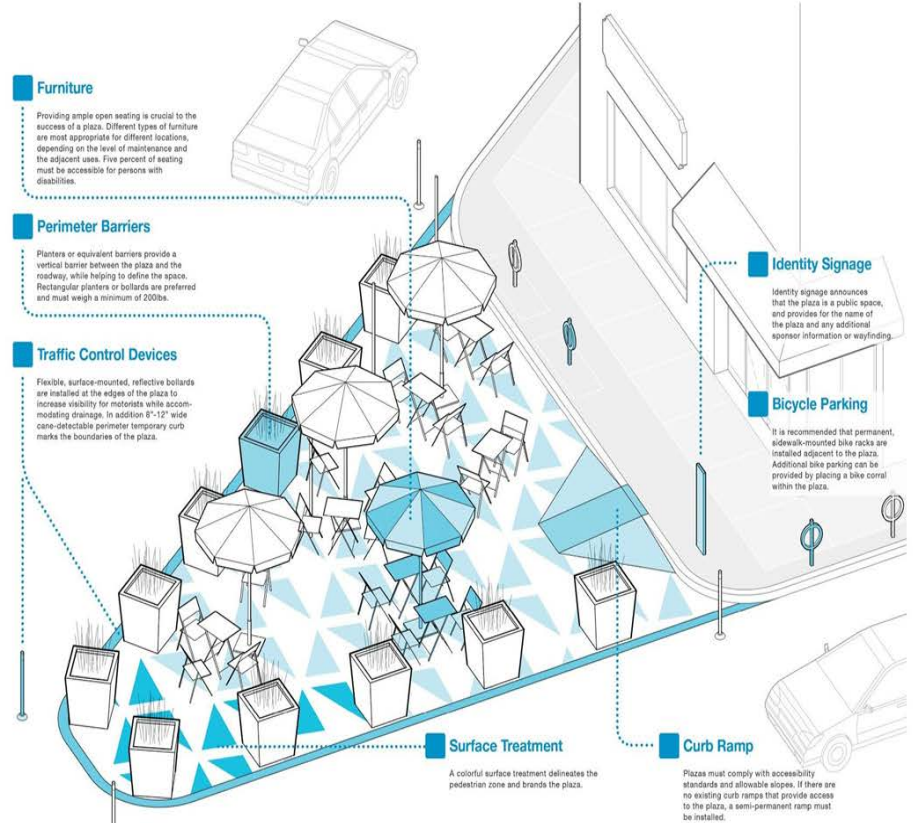
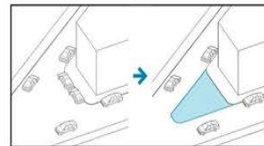
Overview

Boston's unique charm stems in part from its dense network of sometimes irregular streets. These streets were once a chaotic mix of pedestrians, carriages, trolleys, and bicycles. Throughout the 20th century, street infrastructure was shaped to segregate different users, and most of the space was given over to automobiles. In dense neighborhoods of Boston, pedestrian space is often limited to narrow sidewalks, with relatively few opportunities for outdoor gathering spaces. At the same time, some of Boston's many irregular intersections and blocks harbor more pavement than is needed for safe traffic movements. Boston has joined a growing number of cities taking advantage of these areas of superfluous pavement, and is turning them into public plazas and parks.

Tactical Plazas are public open spaces that are created out of underutilized space on city streets. They can quickly transform barren pavement into a lively place to gather, improving safety and setting the stage for the construction of a permanent plaza.

A few simple components can transform a barren stretch of pavement into an attractive place for people to gather. The most important elements are surface paint and perimeter planters to delineate the space clearly, and seating, so that people passing by will be encouraged to linger. This section will review each element in detail.

Tactical Plazas are a partnership between the City and neighborhood groups, small business organizations, or major property owners. Although successful plazas have active community partners, they are public spaces that are open to all and not licensed to specific businesses.



Where should (or shouldn't) a parklet be installed?

What are the design requirements?

PARKLETS
Context and Location Criteria

Parklets are best suited for streets that have relatively narrow sidewalks and no public open space in the immediate vicinity. They are especially well-suited to neighborhood business districts like small Main Street Districts, where there is a concentration of street activity, but retail footprints are smaller, and sidewalks often lack space for benches or outdoor seating. Parklets should be located as close as possible to existing hubs of activity, such as cafes, shops, and other popular destinations. The most successful Parklets are in the center of a business district, and are immediately adjacent to an active ground-floor use.

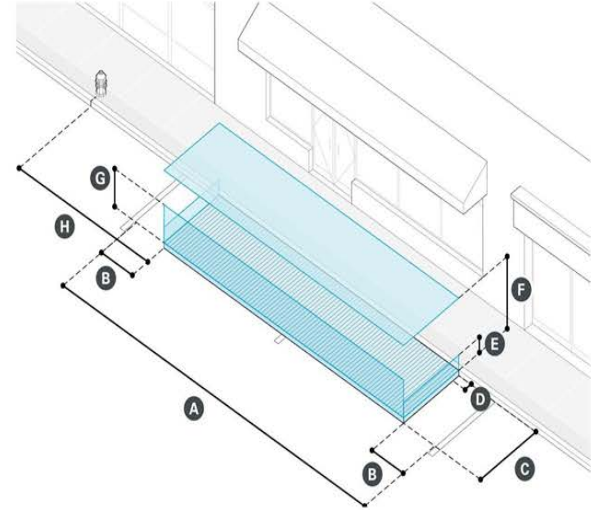
There are a few types of locations where siting a successful Parklet may be more difficult. Parklets are less well suited for busy arterial streets with heavy or fast-moving traffic. Also, Parklets may serve no real purpose if they are located too close to an existing public open space, such as a park.



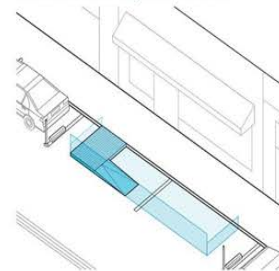
Top: Parklet in Roslindale, Boston
Bottom: Parklet in San Francisco

General Requirements

Speed Limit	Parklets are permitted on streets regulated at or below the default speed limit of 25 mph.
Street Slope	Parklets are allowed on streets with a running slope of 5% or less.
Public Utilities	Parklets must not block fire hydrants or cover any utility or manhole covers.
Water Drainage	Parklets must not be installed over street drains unless accommodations for water flow are made.
Existing Public Right of Way	Parklets must not obstruct other street furniture, plantings, or signage. Electrical cords may not run across the public right of way from a partner establishment to a Parklet.
Paving Schedule	Parklets should not be installed in locations scheduled for resurfacing or utility work within 8 months of installation.
Assembly and Disassembly	Parklets must be easy to assemble on site and dismantle for storage or in case of emergency hazard situations. Components must be transportable by a standard pickup truck when disassembled.



An accessible curb ramp and platform can also be used to create a Parklet directly on the pavement:



Design and Placement

A	Typical width occupied along street	2 parking spaces
B	Distance from platform to wheel stop	3'
C	Maximum parklet width from curb	7'
D	Platform is flush with curb and maintains curbline drainage	
E	Minimum side edge height	17"
F	Minimum overhead clearance	80"
G	Street edge height	36-42"
H	Minimum distance from fire hydrant to Parklet	15'

How do you get a plaza permitted?

What are the roles of the Community Partner vs. the City?

Application and Implementation Process

Each year, the City may fund one to two Tactical Plazas selected by a public nomination process. Additional Plazas may be implemented if fully funded by community partners. The process for privately-funded Plazas is the same, except that the partner must provide their own design consultant and contractor.

The Tactical Plaza Program will follow the process outlined below, with specific roles identified for Plaza Partners.

1 Nominate a location for a Tactical Plaza and submit application to Boston Transportation Department (BTD)

Application guidelines can be found at www.boston.gov/publicrealm.

Applications are accepted annually from November 15 through February 15, and must include:

- ▶ street-level photos of the site to describe its existing conditions and an aerial image diagram to indicate the proposed Plaza location
- ▶ letters of support from abutters and local organizations such as resident associations and business groups

2 Initial review by the City

Applications will be evaluated by the City and selected based on criteria (www.boston.gov/publicrealm).

3 The City's on-call design consultant will work with the community partner to design the Tactical Plaza

- ▶ Applicant should expect to meet with BTD and the City's on-call consultant up to three times.
- ▶ Applicant is strongly encouraged to work with local artists and designers to develop concepts that incorporate art.

4 Proposal will be reviewed through a public process determined by the City and adjusted based on the feedback

5 The City's on-call design consultant presents to Public Improvement Commission (PIC) for administrative approval

6 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Successful applicant becomes the official Plaza Partner by signing an MOU with the Public Improvement Commission (PIC). Sample available at www.boston.gov/publicrealm.

7 Design installed by City contractor

Plazas will be in place year round for up to three years. Furniture may be stored during winter.

Community Partner and City Roles

The City has committed to assist the funding and implementation of Tactical Plazas. However, the long-term success of the Plazas will depend on community partners. Successful Tactical Plazas are embraced by those who use them, and are supported by community partners that provide "eyes on the Plaza" and have a true sense of ownership.

Plaza Partner

Regular Maintenance

- ▶ Cleaning, trash removal, furniture maintenance, and plant watering are the responsibility of the Plaza Partner.

Day-to-Day Management

- ▶ Daily setup and breakdown of any items that cannot be left out overnight, such as games, are the responsibility of the Plaza Partner.
- ▶ Selection of plaza furnishings should take into consideration the level of daily management required.

Winter Maintenance

- ▶ Leaving the plaza snowed in is acceptable as long as it does not inhibit access through the intersection for all users. Furniture may be removed, and shoveling is the responsibility of the Plaza Partner.

City

- ▶ The City is responsible for maintaining the temporary curb.
- ▶ The City is responsible for any necessary replanting or repair/replacement of furniture, perimeter, and bollards/planters.
- ▶ Maintenance of the pavement in the case of utility work or pavement repairs will be the responsibility of the City via its contractor. Coordination with paving schedules will take place during the design process.
- ▶ Trash pick-up locations at the outside edge of the plaza will be determined as part of the design process.

Established permitting process for street murals: led by Boston Art Commission, with BTDR review.

Context and Location Criteria

Street Murals are best suited to neighborhood residential streets. Murals can be located mid-block or within intersections. A mural can take on various designs, but should not include any colors or shapes that could be perceived as traffic control indicators, and thus, confuse people about the appropriate path of travel. The design and installation of a mural should be collaborative and involve community members and local residents.

General Location Criteria

Murals can be located only on residential streets and streets classified as "local" according to the federal functional classification system.

Designs should avoid pedestrian paths of travel and should not impact existing street parking or traffic control indicators, such as crosswalks, lane lines, regulatory signs, etc.

Pavement must be in good condition.

Murals should not be installed in locations scheduled for resurfacing or utility work within 3 months of painting.

Design Criteria

Designs should not include any shapes or colors that could be perceived as traffic control indicators, or be mistaken for directions to the roadway user or pedestrian.

Designs should not include shapes or color contrast that would confuse persons with vision impairment.

Colors must be non-retro-reflective and must not resemble existing traffic control devices.

Designs should not invite pedestrians to linger or be distracted in the street.

Designs should not include words or universally recognized symbols, logos, any trademarked materials, or advertisements.

Paint must be skid resistant.

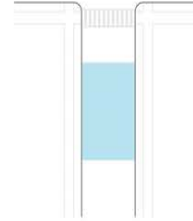


Street murals in New York City, NY

Possible Mural Locations

Mid-block

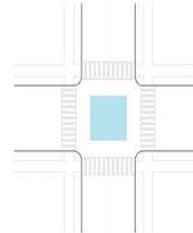
Different types of streets can be appropriate locations for mid-block murals. Neighborhood Residential and Shared Streets are the most typical locations for mid-block murals. Murals in higher-traffic locations will need more frequent repainting. See more on Neighborhood Residential and Shared Streets in the Boston Complete Streets Guidelines (<http://bostoncompletestreets.org/guidelines>).



Intersections

Murals in intersections are most appropriate on lower-volume streets with no traffic signals—in particular, Neighborhood Residential and Shared Streets.

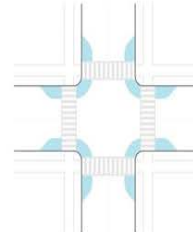
- ▶ Designs should have a small enough coverage area to avoid wear from turning vehicles.
- ▶ Any artistic design within an intersection must not indicate to pedestrians, cyclists, or drivers a path of travel that is contrary to the existing or traditional route.
- ▶ Designs must not interfere with crosswalks.
- ▶ There should not be lines, resembling lane markings, that indicate a path of travel—unless they reinforce the expected path of travel.



Painted curb extensions at intersections

Painted curb extensions can help calm turning traffic and increase visibility for pedestrians, but should not encourage pedestrians to stand in the street while waiting to cross.

- ▶ Any artistic design should increase visibility for pedestrians and drivers.
- ▶ The painted curb extension must look distinct from the sidewalk, and should not suggest that the painted curb extension is part of the sidewalk.



Multiple new options for sidewalk cafes!

Context and Location Criteria

Outdoor Cafes can be welcome amenities on many different kinds of streets, in all neighborhoods throughout the City. On streets with wide sidewalks, an Outdoor Cafe located adjacent to the building is appropriate **A**.

In some locations the sidewalk width between the building and the curb may be wide enough for an Outdoor Cafe, but trees or street furniture closer to the curb may make it more appropriate to locate the clear path along the building façade. In these cases, an Outdoor Cafe is best located adjacent to the curb, **B** in order to create less disruption for pedestrians.

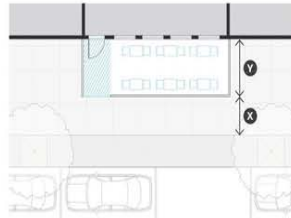
In many neighborhoods, sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate cafe seating adjacent to either the building or the curb. Yet, in many of these neighborhoods the businesses themselves are smaller and could benefit from expanded seating. Therefore, the City has expanded the options for Outdoor Cafes to allow them to be located on the street adjacent to the sidewalk. **C** In these cases, one or more on-street parking spaces can be converted to an Outdoor Cafe that is associated with the adjacent business. Outdoor Cafes located on the street are regulated in the same way as those on the sidewalk. Public Parklets may look similar to on-street Outdoor Cafes, but Parklets have lower permitting requirements, are open to all, and do not allow table service from any one restaurant or business.

General Requirements

Public Utilities	Outdoor Cafes must not block a fire hydrant.
Existing Public Right of Way	Outdoor Cafes cannot obstruct other street furniture, plantings, or signage unless permitted. Electrical cords may not be laid across the public right of way from a partner establishment to an Outdoor Cafe.
Assembly and Disassembly	All components of an Outdoor Cafe must be able to be dismantled for storage during periods of non-use.
Seating	Five percent of seating must be accessible to persons with disabilities.
Water Drainage	On-street outdoor cafes must not be installed over street drains unless accommodations for water flow are made.
Barriers	Barriers must be fixed and effectively immovable (bolted posts, planters, etc.).

A Façade Seating

Cafe seating adjacent to a building must provide a clear entry path through the seating area to the entrance of the cafe.



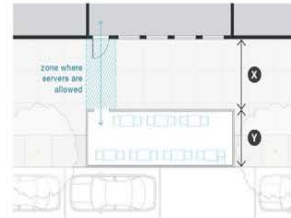
Clear Path Requirements

X	Pedestrian Clear Path	The minimum clear pedestrian path outside of the proposed seating area shall conform with the Pedestrian Zone "preferred and minimum widths for sidewalk zones" as noted in the Boston Complete Streets Guidelines.
Y	Seating Area Width	May not exceed 50% of total sidewalk width

For on-street Outdoor Cafes, see Parklet Design Guidelines for additional requirements (pg. 13).

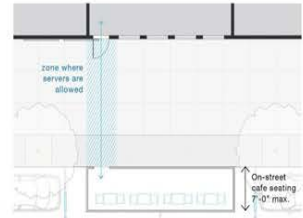
B Curbside Seating

Cafe seating along the curb must provide a proper enclosure on all sides of the seating area. Cords and furniture cannot obstruct the clear path between the establishment and the seating area.



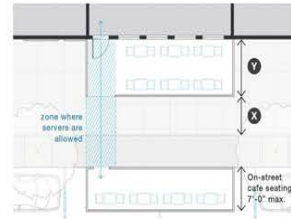
C Roadway Seating

The length of a seating area on the street cannot exceed three parking spaces. For other design requirements for on-street seating see Parklet Design Guidelines (pg. 13).



A/C Façade and Roadway Seating

Building-adjacent seating and on-street seating can be combined to create a large outdoor seating space with a clear pedestrian path running between adjacent and on-street areas.



B/C Curbside and Roadway Seating

A combination of curbside seating and on-street seating can be used to create an expanded outdoor seating area along the street.

