



A DESIGN GUIDE FOR EVERYONE - PART 1

07.02.2020

## Creating Welcoming Temporary Outdoor Seating for Restaurants

This design guide for our friends in the hospitality industry demonstrates concepts and solutions to help expand their restaurant operations into the public realm while navigating the challenges of COVID-19.

PCA

ARCHITECTURE PLANNING INTERIORS



## Objective

This design guide is for restaurant owners trying to reopen their businesses after closing due to state restrictions related to COVID-19 and the worldwide pandemic. Outdoor dining is known today as the safest option for patrons, allowed by many states in the first phases of their reopening plans. Requirements and guidelines are strict, and this guide is meant to alleviate some of the difficulty in transferring restaurants' indoor dining to the streets. Restaurants in the city do not usually have access to exterior private space, and many smaller businesses located outside of the city's core barely have a sidewalk. The design diagrams in this document focus on dense spaces in the city, where a restaurant's only option is the public realm.

Minimum requirements for temporary outdoor dining in this document are based on the current regulations in Boston and Massachusetts. Designs in the street go beyond the requirements to suggest better design, though it may need a special permit to implement. Follow your state and local guidelines for varying reopening requirements such as distance between tables and chairs, minimum uninterrupted public sidewalk width, distance from tables to public sidewalks, allowing tents and canopies, and enclosure requirements.

The world has lost a staggering number of restaurants due to the pandemic; it is estimated that 25% of US restaurants may never reopen, and Yelp estimated over 23,000 have already locked their doors due to COVID-19. We want to help keep that number from rising.

### Documents Referenced:

- "Massachusetts Guidelines for Extension of Premises to Patio and Outdoor Areas and Outdoor Dining Regulation" by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- "Boston's Guidance for Temporary Extensions on Public Property" by the City of Boston
- "Tactical Urban Realm Guidelines" by the City of Boston
- "Boston Complete Streets, Design Guidelines" by the City of Boston



Gran Gusto | Cambridge, MA



Mr. Crepe | Somerville, MA

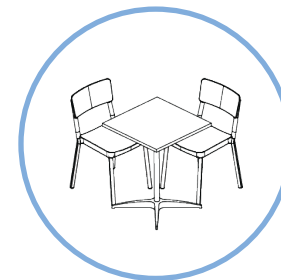


The Indo | Beverly, MA

## Tool Set

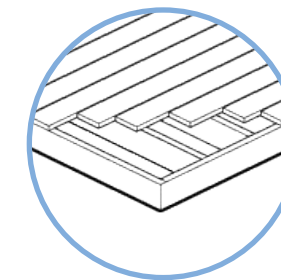
This design guide uses basic tools to show how restaurant owners might set up temporary outdoor dining on the street and sidewalk. Seating, Flooring, and Barriers must meet specific guidelines outlined by state and local governments. Each of the design examples on the following pages use real products, listed for reference in the google sheet link below. Restaurant owners are responsible for the products they buy. The product list is not a recommendation for any brand or source - they are examples to help owners source similar products.

[Google Sheet Link](#)



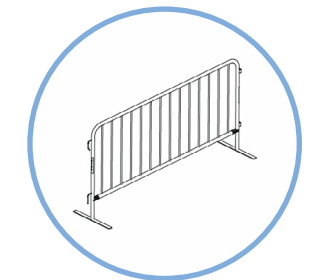
### Seating

All diagrams below use 24 inch tables to maximize space. Tables are placed 6 feet apart edge to edge, interpretation varies by local guidelines. Use existing furniture from inside to save on the budget, but make sure to bring them inside at the end of day.



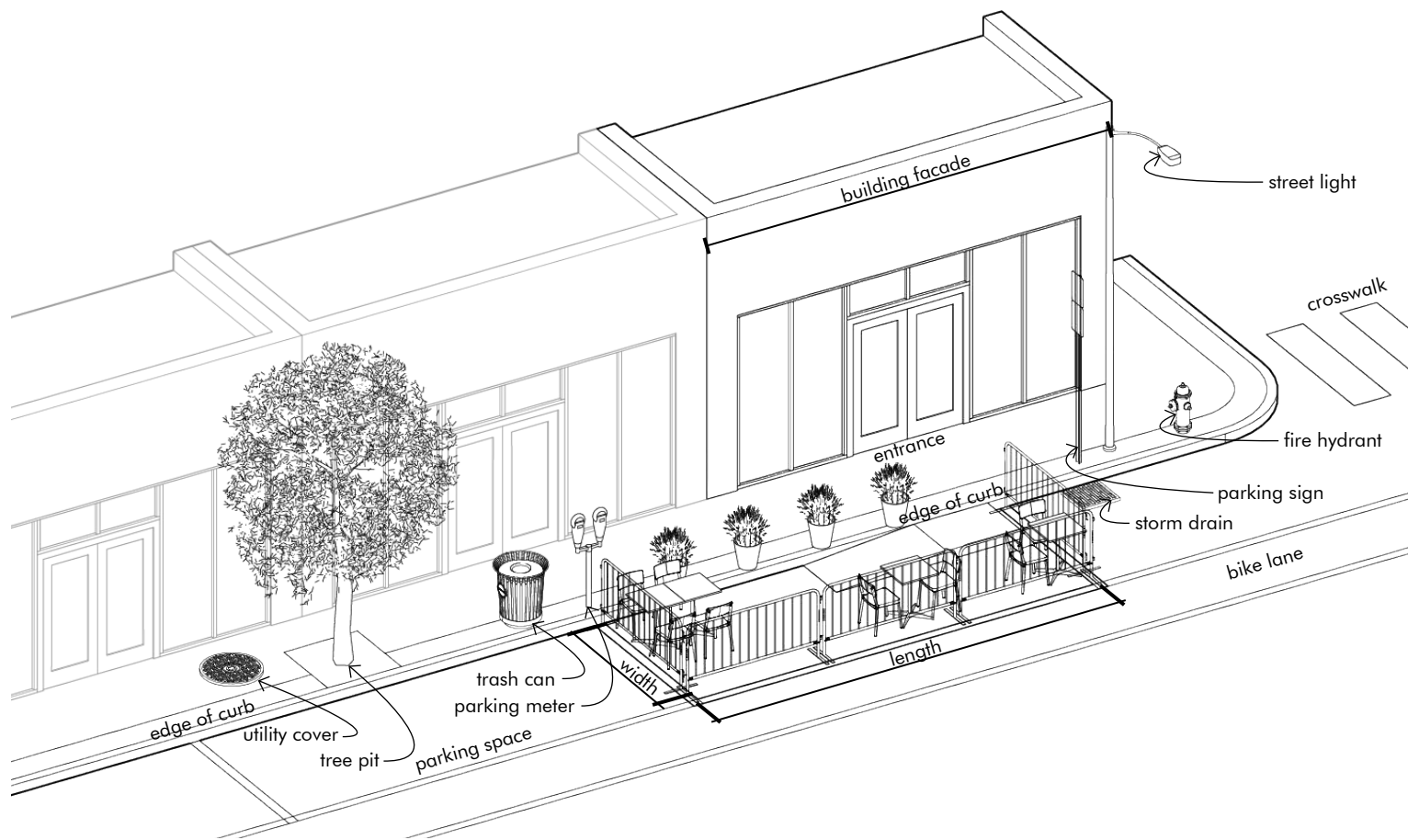
### Flooring

All diagrams below show best practice to ensure seating is accessible to wheelchairs. Requirements related to accessibility vary by local guidelines. Maintain a clear path for patrons and employees at all times.



### Barriers

Use a railing system with a 4 inch post base to maximize space for seating, as shown in plans. Diagrams require varying widths depending on containment depths. Requirements for barriers on the street vary in local guidelines.



Area Restrictions Diagram



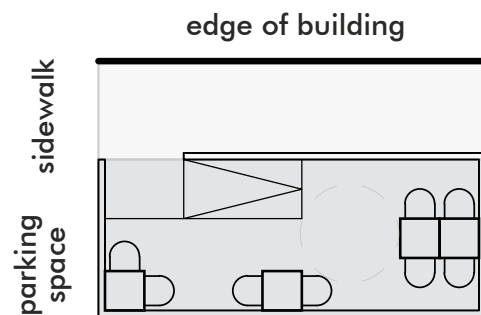
Aquitane | Boston, MA

## Area Restrictions

The public sidewalk and street contain utilities that need to remain accessible to Public Works. Note all utilities locations and dimension distances from seating area in plan submissions (example p5).

Plan seating area in front of a place of business with a close and direct path to restaurant's main entry.

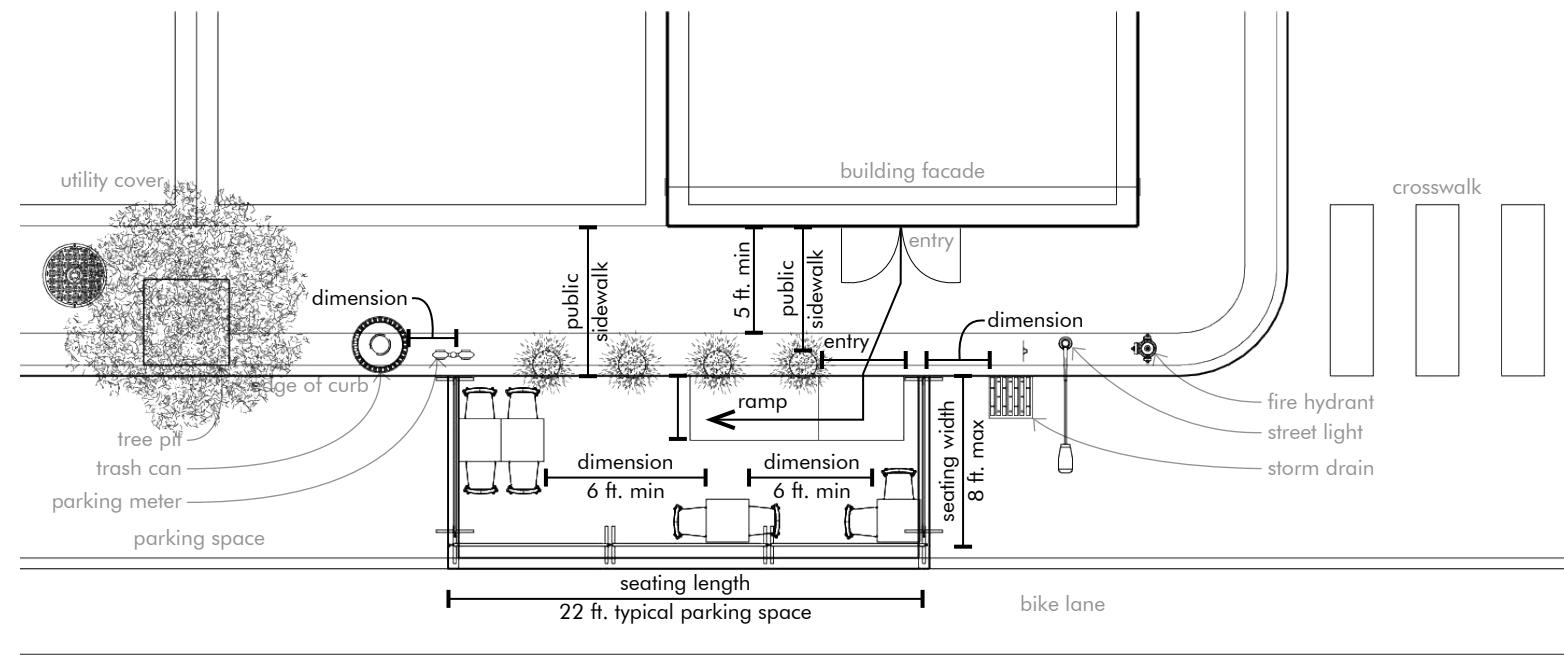
Protect seating on street from oncoming traffic with heavy barricades (local guidelines dictate where these are required). Delineate area in public right of way with elements to prevent passers by from entering, making clear that the area is for restaurant patrons.



Plan Diagram Key

## Plan Requirements

- All area restrictions and dimensions near proposed seating
- ADA accessible ramps when applicable
- Length and width of proposed seating area
- Dimensions of width of public right of way on sidewalk from proposed boundary
- Any flooring material used

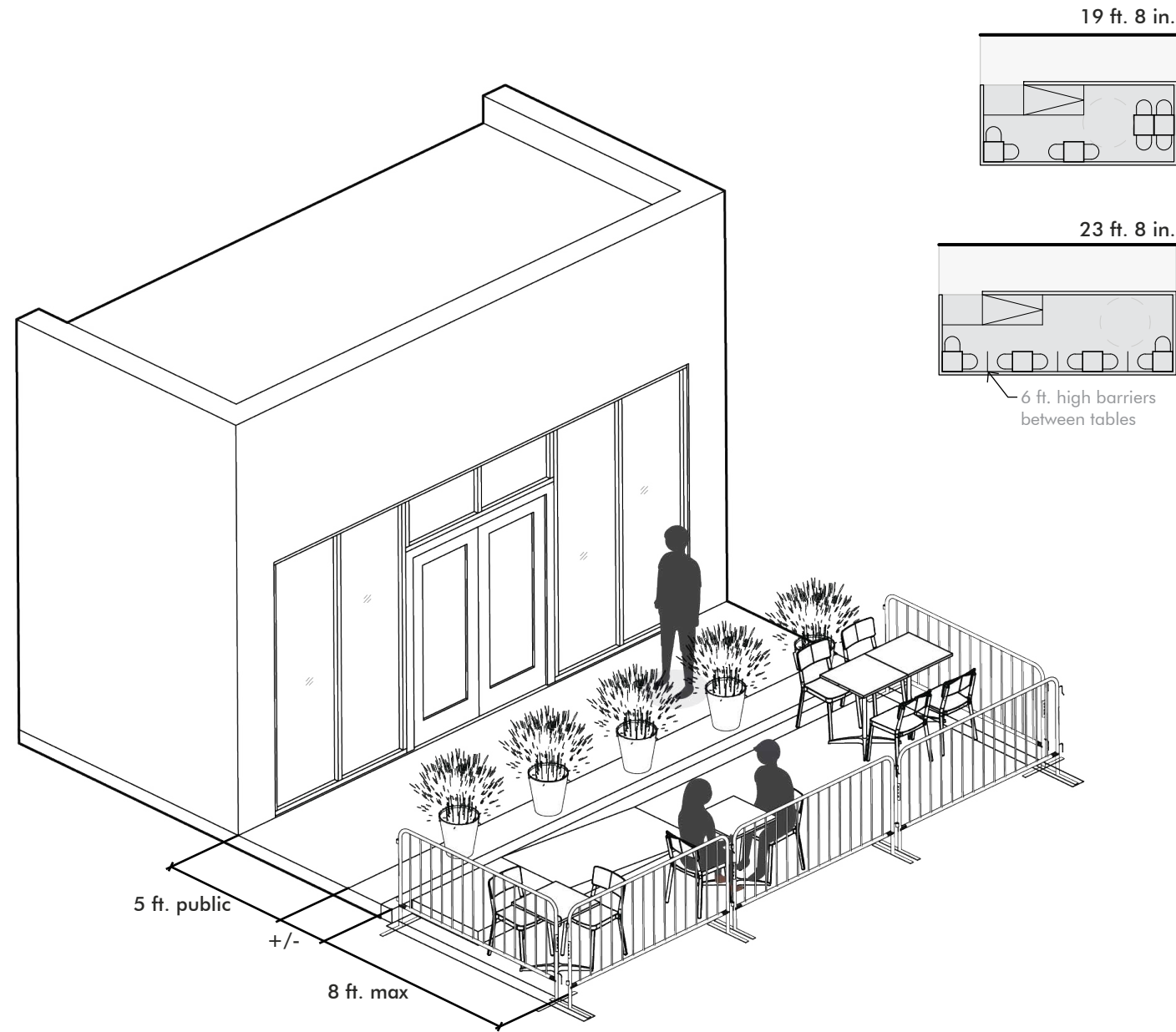


Seating Plan Submission

# 01

## Concept One

If your sidewalk is **less than 7'4" wide with access to adjacent parking space(s)**, this concept may work for you. By using the adjacent parking space(s) for seating, you can create a welcoming environment for your restaurant patrons.



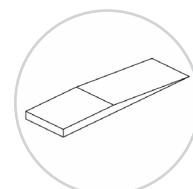
B01 Barricade



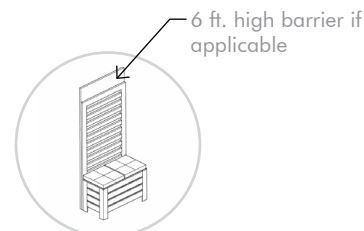
S01 Bistro Set



B02 Planter



F01 Ramp

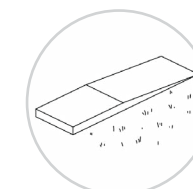


B03 Bench Screen + 6 ft. Solid Backing

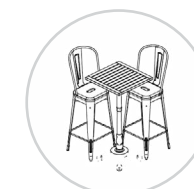
# 01

## + Add Life and Greenery

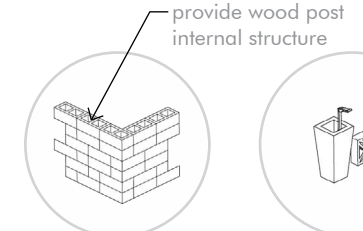
Seating in a parking space puts your patrons at level with cars, surrounded by pavement and noise. You can mitigate this by lining your space with planters and greenery to create a barrier, giving protection, buffering noise, and bringing the backyard to the street.



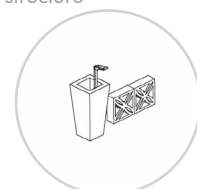
F02 Ramp  
F03 Turf



S02 Chair  
S03 Table



B04 Paint  
B05 Paint  
B06 Cinder Block

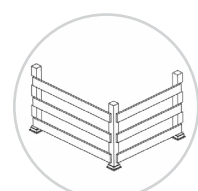
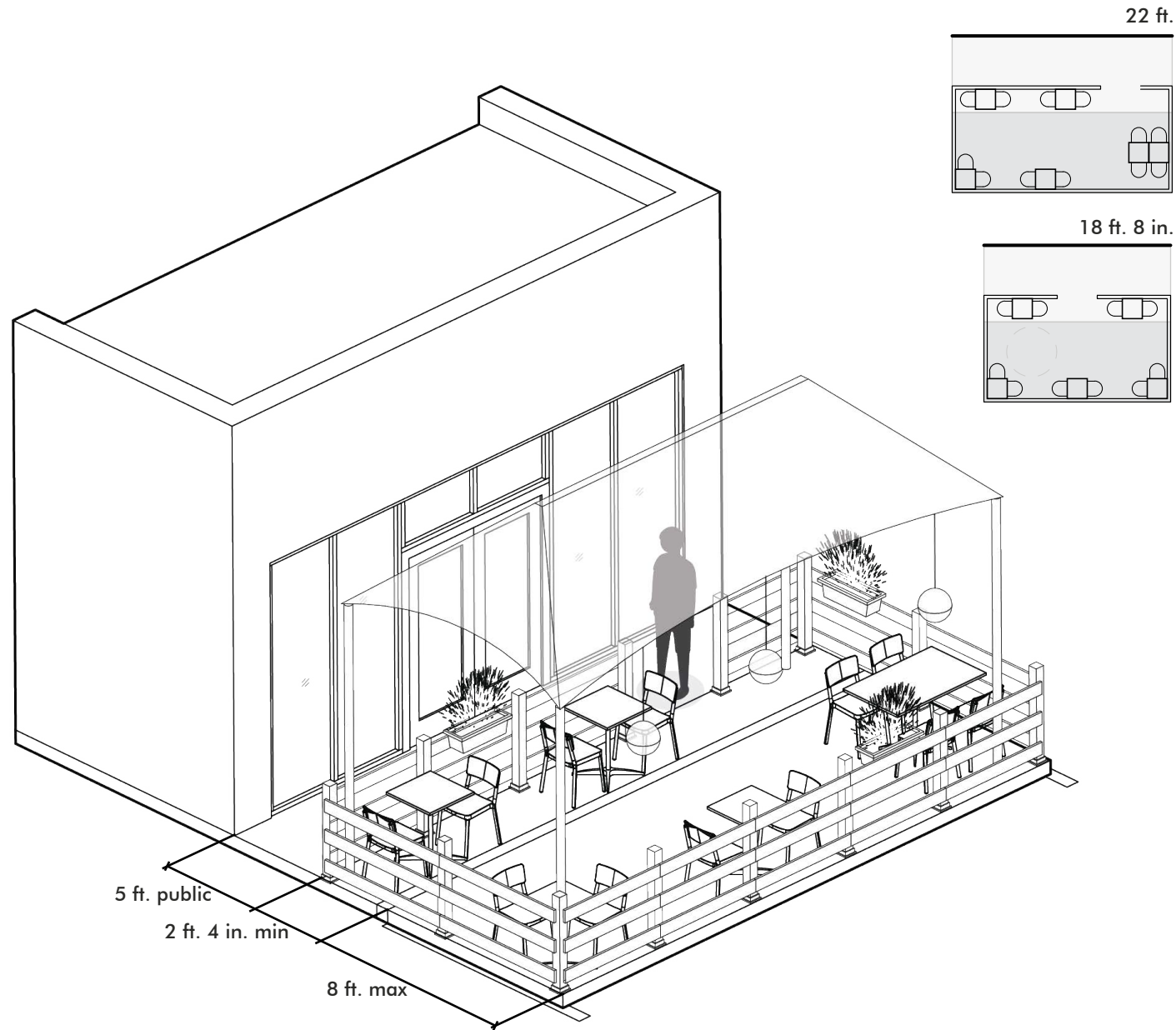


B07 Cinder Block  
B08 Planter  
L01 Path Light

# 02

## Concept Two

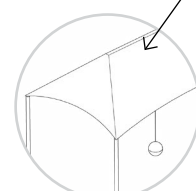
If your sidewalk is **greater than 7'4" wide with access to adjacent parking space(s)**, this option will help you create space for your patrons to dine and socialize. Using a portion of the sidewalk and the adjacent parking spaces can create a robust and memorable dining experience.



B10 Post Base  
B11 Post  
B12 Rail  
L02 Post Light

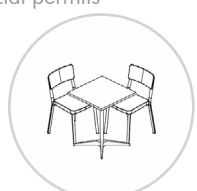


B09 Planter

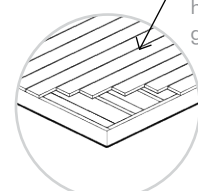


SH01 Tent  
L03 Lantern

tents might require special permits



S04 Chair Set  
S05 Table Top  
S06 Table Base



F04 Decking  
F05 Deck Supports

support sizes depend on height of curb, maintain gap from curb for drainage

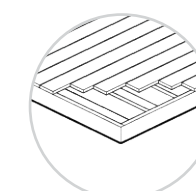
# 02

## + Add Comfort and Ambiance

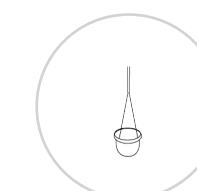
Since eating outside is the safest environment for people right now due to COVID-19, we can bring the comforts of inside onto the street. Using treated wood, turn railing posts into columns, creating a shell for a trellis and a place to extend ambient lighting. Patrons are protected from the sun during the day, and comforted by the lighting at night.



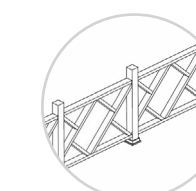
S07 Chair  
S08 Table



F04 Decking  
F06 Deck Supports  
F07 Deck Supports  
F08 Deck Transition (optional)

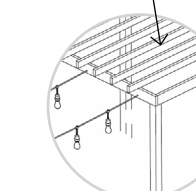


B16 Planter



B10 Post Base  
B11 Post  
B13 Post Cap  
B14 Railing  
B15 Paint

canopies might require special permits

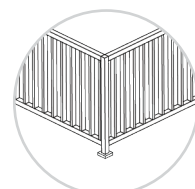
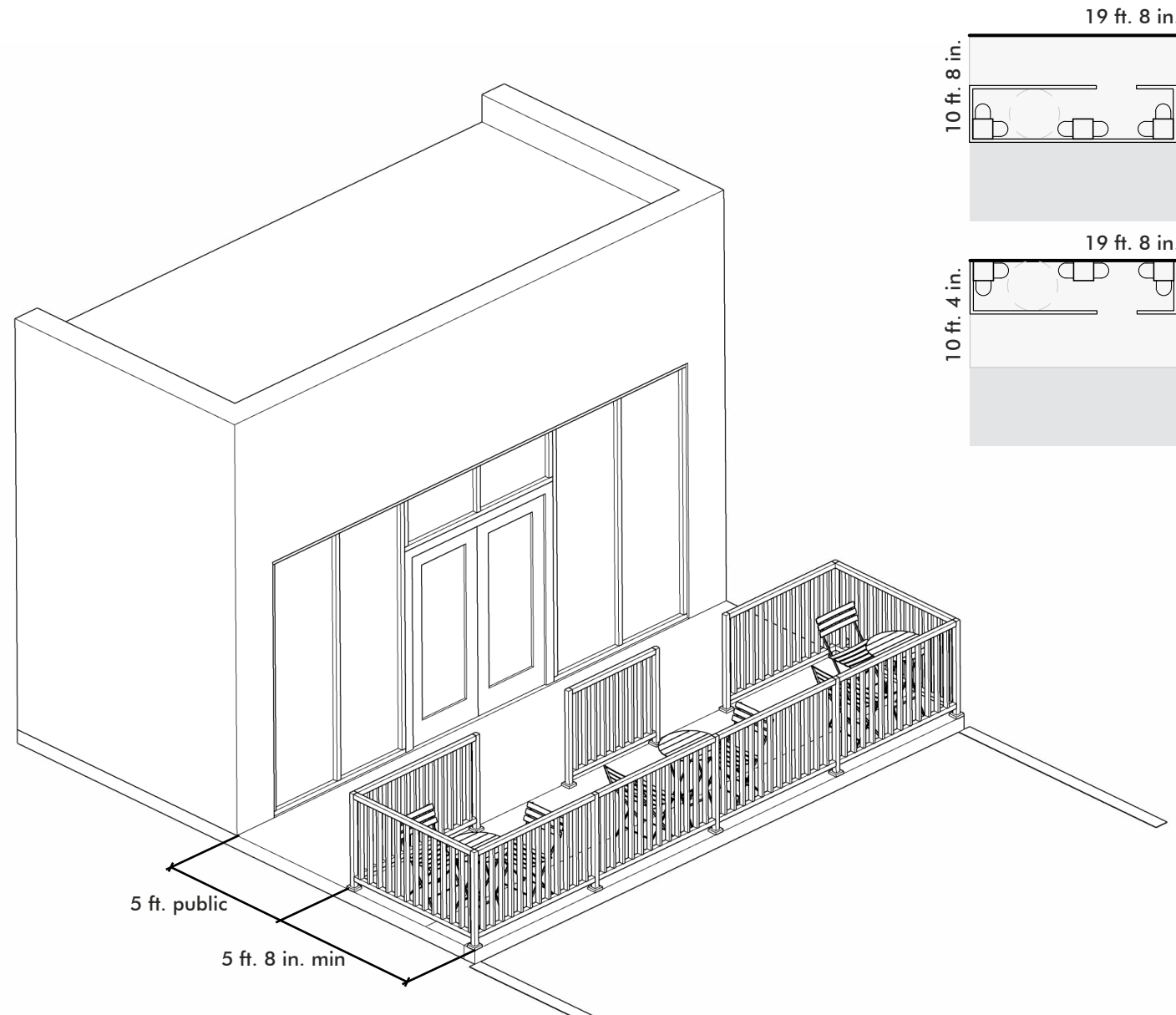


B11 Post  
B12 Main Beam  
B14 Cross Beam  
L04 String Lights

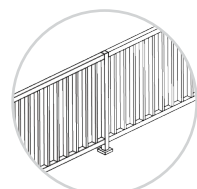
# 03

## Concept Three

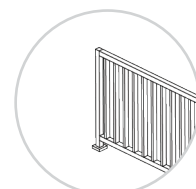
If your sidewalk is **greater than 10' 8" wide** you can split it up, giving space for pedestrians and diners along the same path. By using barriers, you create a dining patio that is truly your own.



B17 Rail  
B18 Balluster  
B19 Post



B20 Post



B21 Post  
L05 Post Light

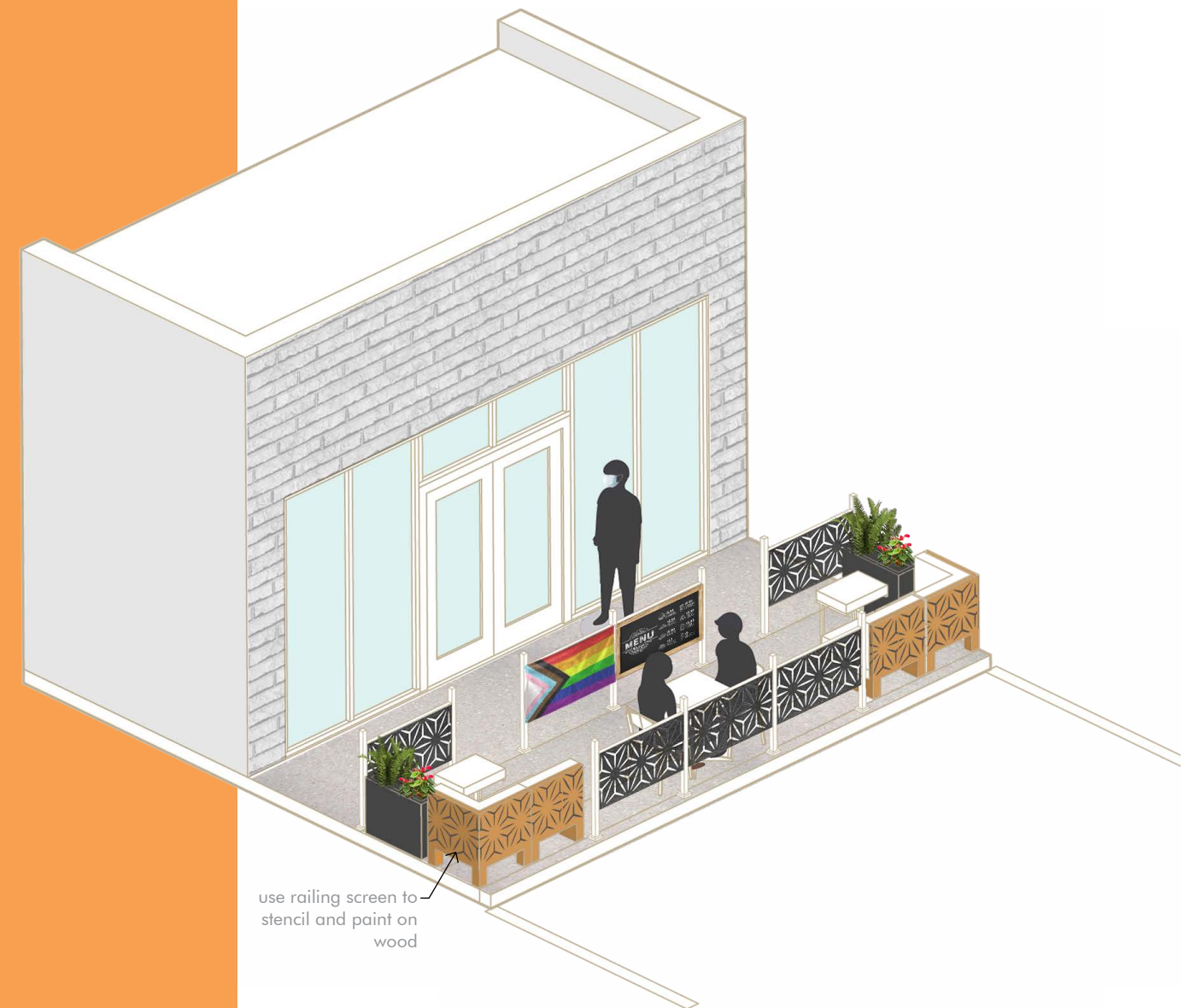


S09 Bistro Set

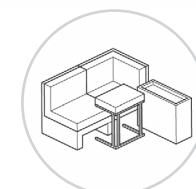
# 03

## + Add Interest with Street Barriers

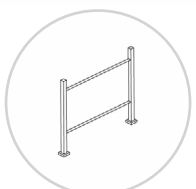
While the simplest post system on the street meets the requirements to enclose restaurant seating, more can be done to soften and activate the edges. Maximize the space and use the solid backs of seating and planters to enclose it. Replace typical railings with expressive prefabricated panels to grab the eye of the passing pedestrian.



S09 Bistro Set



S10 Seat  
S11 Seat  
S12 Table  
B27 Planter

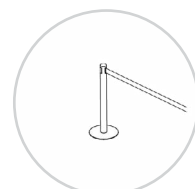
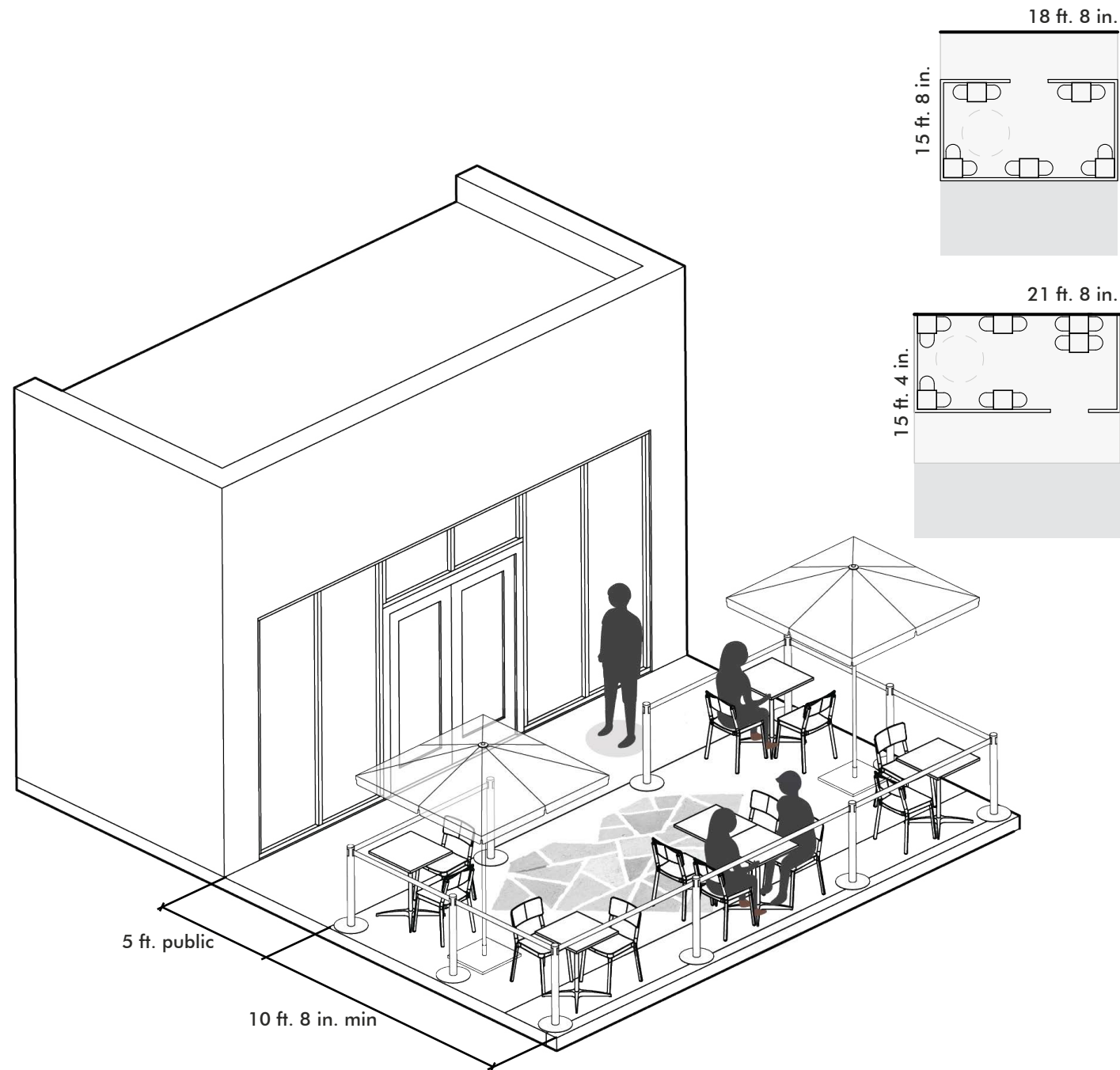


B22 Post  
B23 Screen  
B24 Screen (alternate)  
B25 Screen (alternate)  
B26 Sign

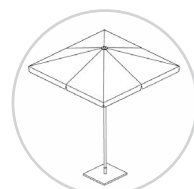
# 04

## Concept Four

If your sidewalk is **greater than 15' 8" wide** you have the opportunity to create a roomier dining area with plenty of space for creative touches and branding.



B28 Posts



SH02 Umbrella



S13 Bistro Set

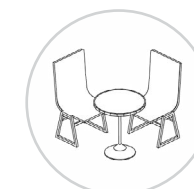


F09 Chalk

# 04

## + Add Connection with Branding

A restaurant can meet outdoor seating requirements with minimal effort and basic products. Beyond meeting the minimum, add a little personal character and it will stand out against everyone else's seating on the street. Many items can function as posts or planters, like old barrels. Try painting fun murals on the ground using temporary paint to provide relief from the pavement.



S14 Lounge Set



F10 Paint



B29 Barrel  
B30 Rope  
B31 Snap  
B32 Hook



Metropolis | Boston, MA



Life Alive | Boston, MA



Mela | Boston, MA



Main Street | Maynard, MA



Moona | Cambridge, MA



Dryft | Revere, MA

# PCA

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[www.prellwitzchilinski.com](http://www.prellwitzchilinski.com)

## Disclaimer:

The guidelines presented in this document are meant to serve as a starting point for further development by establishments seeking to build outdoor seating. PCA will not be held responsible or liable for final build-out of the options presented. Site-specific plans must be submitted to appropriate town and city agencies for approval prior to build-out. Volunteer architects can be found via the Boston Society of Architects and PCA to assist with plan production and build-out.

This design guide interprets the Massachusetts Guidelines for Extension of Premises to Patio and Outdoor Areas and Outdoor Dining Regulation. Requirements are based on, but do not strictly follow Boston's Guidance for Temporary Extensions on Public Property, as they are meant to apply to cities more widely.