

Caféto

CAFÉ GUIDELINES 2021



About this Guidebook

This Guidebook, which is authorized under §742-2.1D of City of Toronto Municipal Code [Chapter 742](#) (Sidewalk Cafés, Parklets and Marketing Displays), provides guidelines for cafés on sidewalks and curb lanes for the 2021 summer café season which runs from April 15, 2021 to November 10, 2021. Winter CaféTO guidelines will be released in Fall 2021. These guidelines include the minimum requirements that restaurants and bars must meet to operate a café as part of the CaféTO Program.

Please review these guidelines carefully and plan ahead to ensure compliance. For additional information, refer to [Chapter 742](#). This Guidebook primarily focuses on cafés located on the public right-of-way (e.g., on sidewalks and curb lanes), but there is a section related to patios on private property on **page 36**.

The City of Toronto retains discretion to review installations in the right-of-way on a case-by-case basis considering factors such as limited frontage options, past complaints reported at the address, non-compliance with the CaféTO guidelines and conditions imposed by Community Council in similar local circumstances.

These guidelines are subject to change at any time and cafés are only permitted in accordance with all requirements of the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto, including statutes, by-laws, regulations, orders and guidelines. Information will be updated to reflect evolving public health regulations as they are released. Keep up to date on requirements by visiting toronto.ca/CafeTO and reviewing this Guidebook regularly.

Written permission is required from the City of Toronto to expand your café on the sidewalk or occupy a curb lane.



What's New for CaféTO in 2021?

Exciting changes have been made to the CaféTO program to:

- ensure greater accessibility so all people can enjoy access to CaféTO restaurants
- improve the look of the curb lane closure areas and increase options for cafe customization
- add permissions for temporary platforms in curb lane cafe areas

Please look for other new program guidelines under the heading:

“New for 2021”

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How to Participate

Restaurant and bar operators with a valid Eating Establishment licence must follow the below steps to participate in the CaféTO Program:

1. If you wish to install or expand a café on public property, visit toronto.ca/CafeTO to register. You do not need to register if you wish to expand on private property.
2. Once you complete your registration, City staff will review your application and submitted documents for compliance with these guidelines and [Chapter 742](#). City staff will also review your past compliance with other applicable by-laws (e.g. City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 591 (Noise)) and legislation (e.g. Health Protection and Promotion Act, Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, Liquor Licence Act and any regulations under any such legislation). You will then be provided with more information by email.
3. Applicants who are approved to install a new or expanded sidewalk café can begin operating when outdoor dining is permitted under provincial regulations in Toronto.
4. Applicants who are approved to install a curb lane café will receive more information about the date of installation for their curb lane closure directly from city staff, and their BIA if applicable.
5. Successful applicants will receive an official Municipal Clearance Letter to participate in the CaféTO program, which will identify the conditions of the approval to participate in the CaféTO Program. Applicants will only be able to use the City space identified in this letter for the period of time specified and in accordance with any of the conditions in the approval. At the end of the term, all café items must be removed from the approved area.

An application may be refused in accordance with §742-3.2A of [Chapter 742](#) (modified as necessary) or if the past conduct of the applicant gives the City reason to believe that they will not operate in accordance with the law.

Restaurant and bar operators that wish to expand a patio on private property do not need to register with CaféTO. More information on installing a patio on private property is available on [page 36](#) of this Guidebook.

NEW FOR 2021!!

CaféTO registration is based on a series of registration windows which coincide with installation periods. The third registration window opens on April 27, 2021 and will close May 26, 2021. Additional registration windows will open based on demand. Please stay up to date by visiting toronto.ca/CafeTO.

Registration for new and expanded sidewalk cafés will continue throughout the program and operators will be able to access the sidewalk immediately after their registration is approved, written confirmation is provided and public health regulations allow.

Introduction

The City of Toronto is offering local restaurant and bar operators with an Eating Establishment licence, access to public space on city streets and sidewalks to assist with expanding outdoor seating capacity while maintaining physical distancing requirements. The normal café permitting and application process is paused to provide this expedited opportunity for café operators.

Any expanded or new cafés on the sidewalk or in the curb lane must meet the design and operational requirements set out in this Guidebook and [Chapter 742](#), including but not limited to, obligations related to health and safety, accessibility, equipment (e.g., fencing, barriers, planters), and insurance and indemnification requirements. Pedestrian mobility, physical distancing and road safety requirements must be met for this program to be successful for all members of the public.

The City of Toronto has prepared this document to summarize the essential information required to safely install or expand sidewalk or curb lane cafés, where possible, and to provide a suite of options to take advantage of the 2021 café season.

Toronto Public Health Requirements

Restaurants and bars operating in Toronto must follow current public health guidelines as developed by Toronto Public Health and the [Province of Ontario](#). Please visit the Province of Ontario's website to stay informed. Toronto Public Health has also published comprehensive [Guidelines for Re-Opening Your Restaurant](#).

Business Improvement Areas (BIA)

BIAs are an integral part of the CaféTO program. If your restaurant or bar is located within a BIA you should speak to your BIA representative for additional information and assistance. Please find the list of BIAs [here](#).

Patios on Private Property

Restaurant and bar owner/operators that wish to install or expand a patio on private property do not need to register with the CaféTO program. Toronto City Council has approved a Temporary Use By-Law that provides additional temporary permissions for expanded outdoor dining on private property. More information is available on **page 36** of this Guidebook.

Temporary Outdoor Dining on City Streets and Sidewalks

Temporary Outdoor Dining on City Streets and Sidewalks

The City of Toronto is temporarily pausing certain permitting, application and fee requirements under [Municipal Code Chapter 742 \(Sidewalk Cafés, Parklets, and Marketing Displays\)](#) to allow for expedited approvals of expanded outdoor dining opportunities, but there are still basic requirements necessary to safely operate a café on city streets and in the public right-of-way. Please review this document carefully as it is the operator’s responsibility to ensure that all requirements are met. City staff will ensure that expanded cafés meet these guidelines and will be visiting establishments to ensure compliance. Café operators that do not comply with these CaféTO and Chapter 742 requirements may be unable to continue participating in the program.



REGISTRATION

If you wish to expand your existing permitted café or create a new café, you **MUST** register with the City of Toronto, **even if you participated in the CaféTO program in 2020**. Please visit toronto.ca/CafeTO for full registration requirements, which include providing proof of comprehensive liability insurance and identifying that you have a valid Business Licence issued by the City of Toronto.



FEES

The City of Toronto recognizes the financial hardships faced by the restaurant industry as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are no fees required to participate in the 2021 CaféTO program.



ALCOHOL SERVICE

The Province of Ontario is temporarily allowing current liquor licence holders to serve alcohol outside of their officially licensed area without a temporary extension application to the AGCO. It is the operator’s responsibility to ensure compliance with all AGCO regulations, available [here](#) as well as adhere to any conditions on their liquor sales licence.

Restaurant and bar operators wishing to apply for permanent changes to liquor licences will still need to apply for approvals through the AGCO. Further instructions on new permanent licences are available [here](#).

Types of Cafés

Types of Cafés

Curb Lane Café



CURB LANE CAFÉS

- Located in the curb lane of the road
- This café type requires registration with the City of Toronto
- More information about curb lane cafés is on **page 27** of this guidebook

Sidewalk Café



SIDEWALK CAFÉS

- Located on the sidewalk adjacent to the frontage and expanded frontage wall of the building
- Sidewalk cafés may be expanded in front of a neighbouring business if written permission is granted from the adjacent tenant and/or property owner
- This café type requires registration with the City of Toronto

Types of Cafés

Small Frontage Café



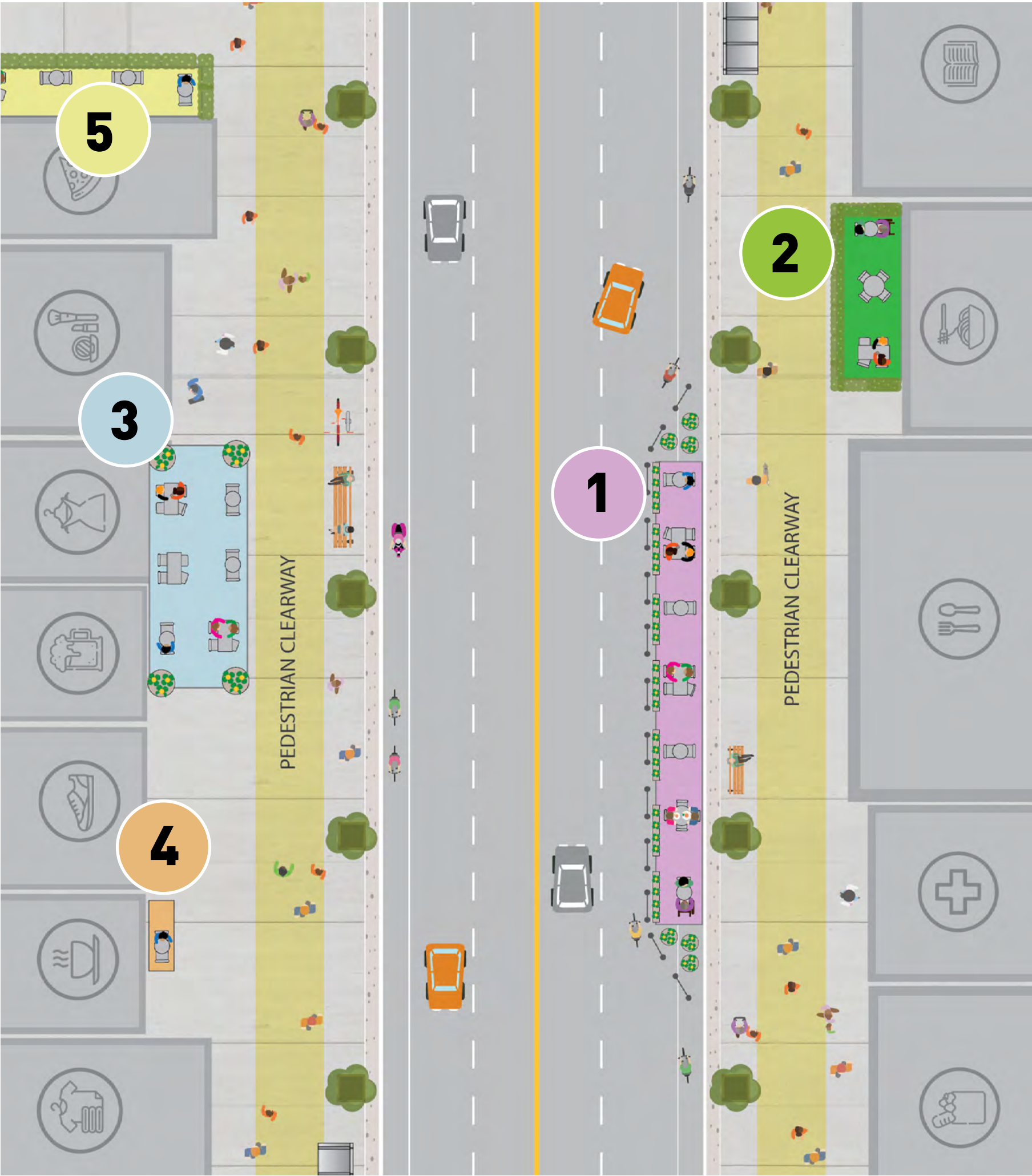
SMALL FRONTAGE CAFÉS

- Cafés located directly against the building
- Maximum size of a small frontage café is 0.8 metres deep by 5.5 metres wide or the width of the establishment frontage, whichever is less
- Must have a planter or similar item with a solid base as a white cane navigation aid to make your café safe for people with low or no vision. Please see **page 17** of this Guidebook for more information on how to ensure your café does not impede accessibility
- Umbrellas, fencing and enclosures **are not permitted** for this café type
- This café type does not require registration with the City of Toronto, but must comply with CaféTO guidelines and Article 8 of [Chapter 742](#)

FLANKAGE CAFÉS

- Flankage cafés are located on the sidewalk or boulevard along the side of a restaurant, generally on a local street. This café type requires registration with the City of Toronto and written support from the local Councillor's office.

Types of Cafés



- 1 Install a **curb lane café** in the street
- 2 Install a **new café** on the sidewalk
- 3 Expand a **café** in front of an adjacent property on the sidewalk
- 4 Install a **small frontage café** on the sidewalk
- 5 Install a **flankage café** on the sidewalk

Designing for Accessibility

Designing for Accessibility / Pedestrian Clearway

Ensuring accessibility for CaféTO includes meeting requirements from the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), City of Toronto accessibility requirements and accessibility criteria specific to the CaféTO program. All accessibility requirements are equally important and together they create a CaféTO program that is accessible to all Torontonians.

The pedestrian clearway is the most important area of the sidewalk for the safe, accessible and efficient movement of pedestrians. The sidewalk is how people and customers of all ages and abilities access local shops, restaurants, offices, transit stops and other services, and pedestrians have the first priority for its use. It is everyone's responsibility to protect the pedestrian clearway.

The pedestrian clearway is a continuous straight path of sidewalk, clear of all obstructions including utility poles, fire hydrants, traffic signals, signs and street furniture. The pedestrian clearway never includes the curb edge, the street furniture zone or a café enclosure area.

For most areas of the City, a minimum pedestrian clearway of 2.1 metres is required. When installing sidewalk cafés, operators must ensure a pedestrian clearway of 2.1 metres is maintained.

Maintaining a minimum pedestrian clearway is essential since a clear and straight path of travel ensures that all pedestrians in your neighbourhood can move unimpeded along the sidewalk, particularly those using mobility devices, strollers and other similar apparatus.

If you do not maintain the minimum pedestrian clearway required, a City of Toronto enforcement officer will require you to adjust your café upon inspection. Café operators that are the subject of repeated complaints may have café permissions removed.

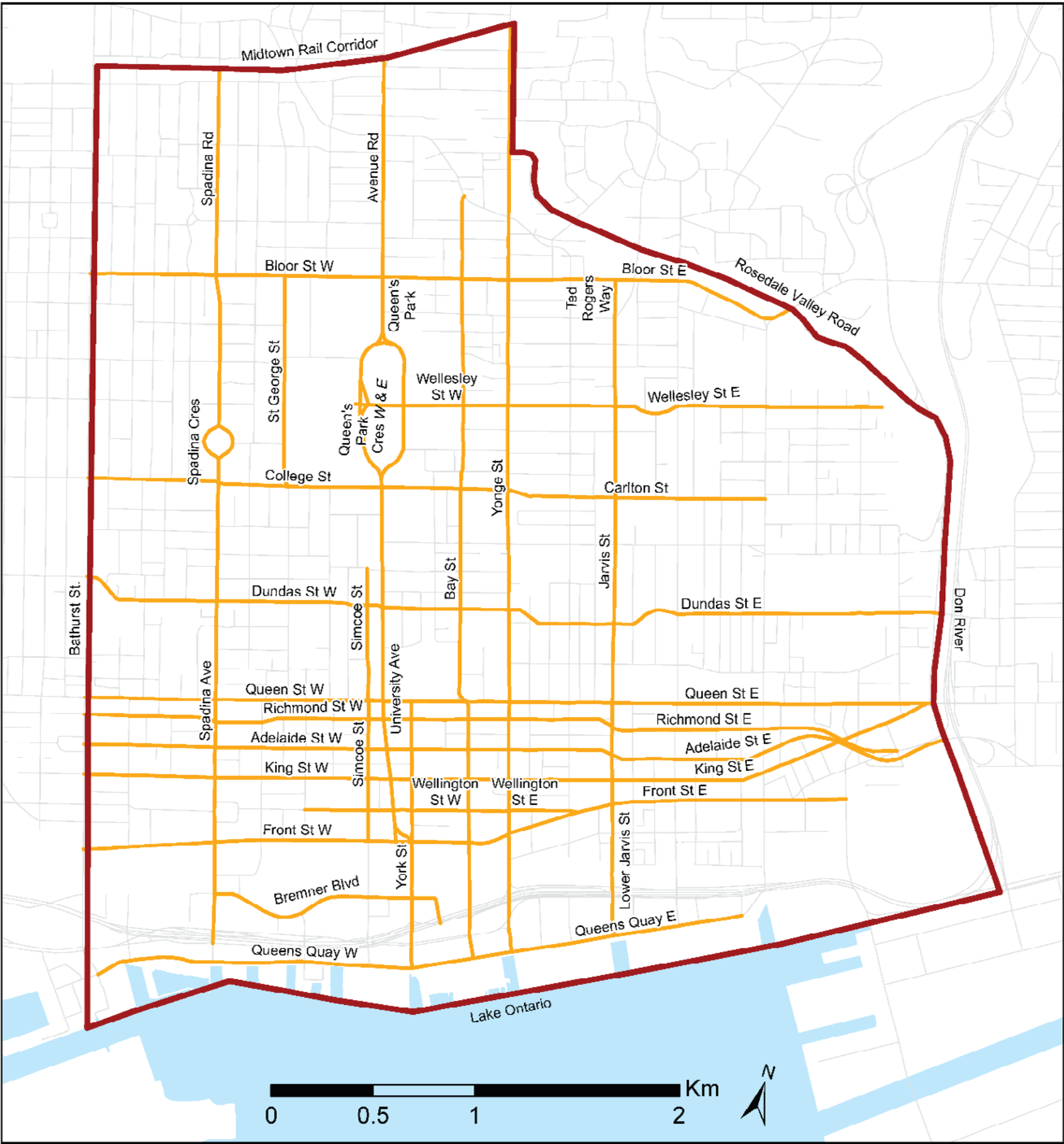


MAKING SIDEWALKS ACCESSIBLE

- Do not use the pedestrian clearway to queue patrons awaiting their reservation or table
- Do not place A-frame signs in the pedestrian clearway
- Do not lay electrical wires for any appliances (e.g. heaters, lights) across the pedestrian clearway

Designing for Accessibility / Pedestrian Clearway

Some streets in Toronto’s downtown core have sidewalks that have very high pedestrian volumes and require a wider pedestrian clearway of 2.5 metres. New and expanded sidewalk café operators on streets indicated within the boundaries of the below map where the distance from the building face to the edge of the curb is at least 5 metres must maintain a 2.5 metre pedestrian clearway. A list of affected streets is available on page 41 of [Chapter 742](#).



Downtown Streets Where Wider Pedestrian Clearways Are Required for Sidewalks Wider Than 5 Metres

Legend

- Streets

Other Streets/Roadways

Downtown Plan Boundary

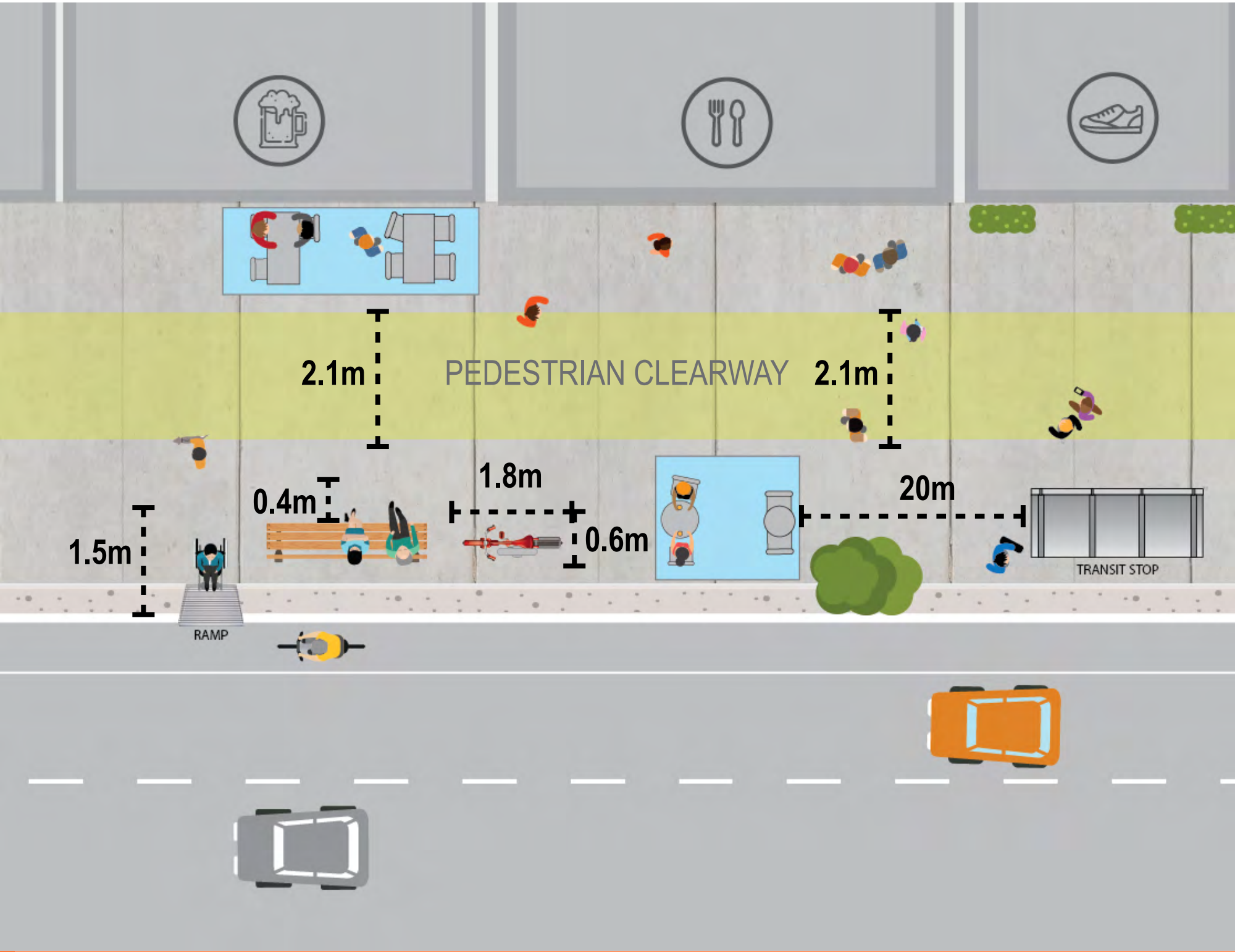
Lake Ontario

HOW TO ACCURATELY MEASURE THE PEDESTRIAN CLEARWAY

The pedestrian clearway must be a straight and unobstructed path of travel. This determines how wide your sidewalk café should be. Ensure you start your measurement from the edge of your café area, including planters, furniture, umbrella stands and other café elements, and continue to the nearest obstruction in the sidewalk (e.g., street furniture, utility pole, tree pit, bike parking). You must include the measurement of a bike for bike rings, a person’s legs and feet at a bench, and the measurement for a person in a wheelchair using the accessible ramp at transit stops.

It is also critically important for people with low to no vision and people with mobility issues that a straight path of travel is maintained on the pedestrian clearway. Sharp changes in the pedestrian clearway must be avoided. More information on accurately measuring changes of direction on the sidewalk can be found on **page 53**.

The following diagram indicates the measurements you should use when determining the width of the pedestrian clearway.



Designing for Accessibility / Entrances and Ramps

It is important to consider accessibility when designing all aspects of your café area. Please ensure your establishment adheres to the following accessibility standards:

- Provide an accessible entrance to your café with a minimum width of 1 metre
- Café or customer queuing areas must not impede any existing barrier-free access or sidewalk clearances for people using mobility devices to your establishment or that of your neighbours
- Ensure that you maintain barrier-free access and sidewalk clearance for people using mobility devices, especially when considering the placement of your café equipment and customer queuing areas

It is the responsibility of the business owner to comply with the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) (AODA) at all times.

For temporary cafés in the curb lane where platforms are not present, the City of Toronto will install ramps to ensure that people using mobility devices can enter your café in the curb lane. The ramps must be kept clear at all times, including the landing space at the bottom of the ramp to facilitate the turning of mobility devices.



Designing for Accessibility / Temporary Fencing and Delineation

Cane-detectable materials allow people with low vision or no vision using a white-cane to travel more safely on the sidewalk. Cafés on the sidewalk must have planter boxes, fencing or similar items with a solid base as a white cane navigation aid for people with low to no vision and must incorporate the critical accessibility requirements below.

- Planters and fencing must have a base so a white cane can be used to tap along the bottom of the element to determine where to safely walk
- Planter boxes with a solid, detectable base must be spaced no more than 0.3 metre apart, except for the accessible entrance which must be at least 1 metre
- Temporary stanchions should only be used to delineate your café area if they have a solid base and they are spaced 0.3 metres apart to ensure cane-detectability
- Non-solid delineation items (e.g. fencing) must have a lower rail height between 77mm and 150mm above the sidewalk surface
- Free-standing or self-supporting fencing/planters must not create a trip hazard or project into the pedestrian clearway

Additional details about fencing and delineation can be found on **page 29** of this Guidebook.



Colour Contrast

Delineation elements like planter boxes and fencing must be a contrasting colour to the sidewalk. In most cases, where the sidewalk is grey, delineation items should primarily be a dark colour (e.g. black or brown) to provide adequate contrast. Red and green can be difficult to detect for people living with colour blindness and should be avoided.

Designing for Accessibility / Café Furniture and Facilities

Café operators can make several choices that will increase accessibility for all Torontonians in their CaféTO areas. Please consider the following when making decisions about your café elements:

- Consider people using mobility devices when determining what type of furniture you will set out in your café area. For example, picnic tables significantly limit the ability for a person using a mobility device to access a surface on which to dine and are often the entire width of the curb lane closure therefore impeding movement.
- When determining seating arrangements in your café area, install some tables with room underneath to accommodate people using mobility devices. Ensure that there are clear routes and maneuvering space for people using mobility devices.
- Protruding objects with a small base are particularly harmful. Be cautious with service stands, tables, umbrella bases and other pieces of furniture with tops that extend into the pedestrian clearway.
- Asphalt ramps into curb lane cafés require a landing space for mobility devices to maneuver properly. Do not place furniture in this space
- Advertise whether you have accessible washrooms on your website

Picnic tables can limit accessibility. If your primary seating arrangement is picnic tables, ensure you have another table type available to accommodate people using a mobility device.

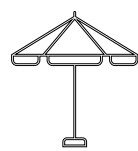


CaféTO

General Requirements

CaféTO

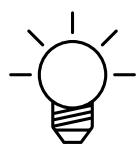
General Requirements



UMBRELLAS

Umbrellas are a source of shade for cafe patrons and employees, and must be installed correctly to ensure the safety of customers and passers-by.

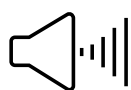
- All umbrella parts must be at least 2.1 metres above the level of the street or sidewalk
- All umbrella parts in a curb lane café must be set back at least 0.8 metres from either edge of the closure area
- Umbrella canopies must not protrude into the roadway or pedestrian clearway
- Umbrellas must be properly weighted down to prevent being blown over by wind
- New awning, canopy, structure or tent installations are not permitted on public property. You may only use an awning if it is approved on your existing permanent café permit



LIGHTING

Installing lighting elements can be an important benefit to your cafe area in the evening. Please ensure your lighting elements comply with the following guidelines:

- Lighting features must be temporary and comply with all applicable safety standards and codes
- Ensure no power cables or lighting elements run over the pedestrian clearway
- Lights must not cast glare for pedestrians, passing road users or nearby properties
- Lights cannot be attached to trees, utilities or other street elements
- Permission has been granted for your power source if it is not your own

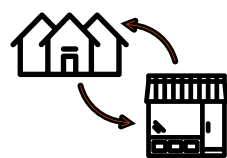


NOISE

- Ensure that noise arising from the service of food and alcohol on your outdoor café does not disturb local residents, including the conduct of your patrons
- Amplified sound is not permitted in any outdoor dining area

CaféTO

General Requirements



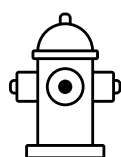
ACCESS TO NEIGHBOURING BUSINESSES & HOMES

Ensure doorways and other access points to neighbouring businesses and doorways are not blocked when positioning your sidewalk café.



WASTE COLLECTION

- Restaurants and bars that receive night time waste collection from the City of Toronto should continue to place their bins at curbside on your regular collection night
- If a curb lane closure prevents you from placing your bins in front of your establishment, place them communally with your neighbours 3 metres away from the end of the closure area, away from bike lanes and preferably under a streetlight, if possible
- Ensure your location’s address is on your bins



FIRE AND UTILITY ACCESS

- Expanded cafés must maintain unobstructed emergency access routes and existing facilities confirming to the Ontario Building Code and the Fire Code
- You must maintain a 1.2 metre clearance from all fire hydrants or fire connections
- Fire hydrants or fire connection must be visible from the street and accessible at all times for Fire Services
- You must allow City officials and other utility providers to access their assets for use or maintenance, including removing café elements if required



TORONTO HYDRO

Café materials must not be placed on top of Toronto Hydro Cable Chambers or Underground Vaults to maintain access for emergency maintenance and ensure that materials are not damaged. More information about distance requirements to hydro elements is available in the **Appendix on page 48**.

CaféTO

General Requirements



MAINTENANCE, CLEANLINESS, ORDERLINESS

Café operators are responsible for:

- Keeping the sidewalk, the curb lane and any other street areas around their café in a clean and sanitary condition
- Clearing debris and trip or slip hazards (e.g., cigarette butts, spilled food or liquids)
- Maintaining dining furniture in good repair
- Ensuring that patrons are not smoking or vaping in the café area, or within a nine metre radius of the perimeter of the café area
- Ensuring no café elements are mounted on or within hard surface street tree openings, panels or grates
- Ensuring that outdoor carpeting, artificial turf or other surface covering is not placed on any portion of the sidewalk or street



REMOVAL AUTHORITY

The City may take enforcement action under Articles 13 and/or 14 of Chapter 742 and, in addition, may immediately remove any café type at the expense of the operator without reporting to Community Council where, in the opinion of the General Manager of Transportation Services, the café does not comply with these guidelines, Chapter 742, other applicable by-laws (e.g. City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 591 (Noise)) or other municipal or provincial orders or regulations or the past conduct of the applicant gives the City reason to believe they will not operate in accordance with the law.



HOURS OF OPERATION

- Cafés in the curb lane and on the sidewalk frontage may serve alcohol until 2 a.m., and must be vacated by 2:45 a.m., unless the operator has a condition imposed on their establishment from Community Council or the AGCO that requires them to close earlier, or unless alternate hours of operation have been imposed under provincial regulations
- Flankage cafés (along the side of your building, and/or on a local road) must be vacated by 11 p.m., which requires the business to have their “last call for alcohol service” at 10:15 p.m. or unless alternate hours of operation have been imposed by Community Council or under provincial regulations

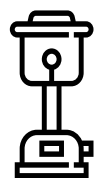
CaféTO

General Requirements



CaféTO AREAS WHILE OUTDOOR DINING IS NOT PERMITTED

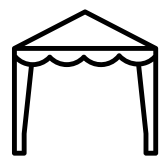
Curb lane closures may be in place while public health regulations restrict outdoor dining. Should a café operator store their outdoor dining furniture in the curb lane or on the sidewalk, the operator is responsible for ensuring their furniture cannot be used for public seating or any other type of congregation. Failure to comply with this requirement may affect ongoing participation in the CaféTO program.



HEATING DEVICES AND FIRE SAFETY

Fueled outdoor heaters may be placed within sidewalk and curb lane cafés on public property provided manufacturer’s specifications are met and Toronto Fire Services guidelines for placing, storing and operating them in outdoor dining spaces are followed. Operators must ensure that all fire protection equipment is being maintained as per Ontario Fire Code regulations. More information about the safe operation of portable heaters is available in the **Appendix on page 46**.

Open air fires, fire pits or cooking devices (including BBQs) are not allowed within the public right-of-way.



TEMPORARY TENTS AND STRUCTURES

For safety and accessibility reasons, tents, enclosures and other similar structures are not permitted on City roads, sidewalks or any portion of the public right-of-way.

Cafés In The Curb Lane

Cafés In The Curb Lane

It may be possible in some locations to close the curb, or parking lane to accommodate an expanded café. Public safety is the first priority and City staff require a detailed review and traffic plan to close the curb lane because it is next to moving traffic.

Every effort will be made to investigate the potential for a curb lane closure, but they are not guaranteed. Curb lane closures are not possible within in the following areas:

- Commercial or Accessible loading or boarding zones
- Certain transit stop zones
- Designated Accessible Parking locations
- Designated Taxi cab zones
- Certain bike lane locations
- Areas that would conflict with active construction zones



Cafés In The Curb Lane

Proximity to an intersection will also limit the ability to close a curb lane to ensure traffic safety and emergency vehicle access. **Curb lane closures are not possible within:**

Signalized Intersections:

- 30.5 metres of an approaching signalized intersection measured from the closest curb edge of an intersection
- 9 metres beyond a signalized intersection measured from the closest curb edge of an intersection

Un-signalized intersections:

- 15 metres of an approaching un-signalized intersection measured from the closest curb edge of an intersection
- 9 metres beyond an un-signalized intersection measured from the closest curb edge of an intersection

Pedestrian Crossovers:

- 15 metres of a pedestrian crossover located prior to an intersection
- 9 metres of pedestrian crossover located beyond the approaching intersection

Driveways/Laneways:

- 1.0 metres approaching or beyond a driveway or laneway

Curb lane cafés may not be possible in other areas beyond these location restrictions, if in the opinion of the General Manager, Transportation Services, a curb lane café cannot be safely installed.

CaféTO staff will make every effort to find an alternate location for cafés that cannot be placed as requested due to the above restrictions, however, staff must ensure that the café remains adjacent to your business for the purpose of extending your liquor licence. In these cases, staff may rely on a ruling from the AGCO to determine whether the curb lane closure area is near enough to a liquor licensee’s service entrance to qualify for alcohol service adjacency. If it is determined that any proposed café location is not considered adjacent, the café will not be permitted.

The curb lane closure guidelines in this document are set up in accordance with Book 7 of the Ontario Traffic Manual which provides guidance for temporary conditions for road safety.



Leave Room For Cyclists!

Leave room for cyclists! Café operators must leave a 1.2 metre offset from the live lane of traffic to provide enough space for a cyclist to safely pass by your café. A 1.5 metre offset is required on streetcar routes. Please ensure your café materials do not encroach into space for cyclists. Umbrella canopies must not protrude into the roadway.

Cafés In The Curb Lane

NEW FOR 2021!! CURBSIDE CAFÉS

Operators who are approved for a curb lane café may be permitted to occupy and place tables in the furnishing zone, the space between the sidewalk and the curb, adjacent to their curb lane café, as long as accessibility requirements are met.

These guidelines must be met if you choose to set up a curbside café:

- 1. If an operator has received written approval for a curb lane café, no separate registration is required.
- 2. The pedestrian clearway of 2.1 m (or 2.5 m for locations listed on **page 14** of this Guidebook) must be maintained on the sidewalk.
- 3. Planters with a cane detectable base must be located at either end of the curbside café
- 4. Setbacks from utilities like fire hydrants and cable chambers must be maintained.
Please refer to **page 21** for further details
- 5. Access into the curb lane café must be maintained at all times, including a minimum 1 metre wide path to the accessibility ramp



- Curbside Café
- Curb Lane Café

Cafés In The Curb Lane

NEW FOR 2021!!

Café operators may leave heavy materials (e.g., furniture, planter boxes, umbrella bases) in the curb lane closure area overnight provided that:

- Materials are left within the fenced/delineated café area and not on the sidewalk/ pedestrian clearway
- Materials are secured and stacked neatly and not available for public seating or congregating while the establishment is not open for outdoor dining
- Items that cannot be secured or are lightweight must be brought indoors overnight
- Do not leave propane heaters in the curb lane closure area overnight
- Do not block storm drains or catch basins with any café element

The City of Toronto is not liable for any damage to or theft of café materials and equipment.



Temporary Fencing

Temporary Fencing / Sidewalk Cafés

In addition to essential white cane-detectability requirements noted on **page 17** of this Guidebook, operators installing temporary delineation items (e.g. fencing, planters) in their sidewalk café area must also meet the following guidelines:

- Temporary delineation items must be no less than 0.9 metres and no more than 1.0 metres in height. This includes any and all opaque parts of the fence or planter, including plant material.
- Maintain a barrier-free entrance to your café area of no less than 1 metre in width.
- At least 1.2 metres from any fire hydrant or fire connection.
- Delineation elements must not be attached to street trees, sidewalk elements or utilities. Drilling into or otherwise affixing items into the surface of the sidewalk and/or roadway is prohibited
- Free-standing and self-supporting delineation items must have a stable base or have self-supporting footplates. Any delineation items, including their supports, must not create a trip hazard or project into pedestrian clearway.
- No roofs, roof supports, retractable roofing, poles, pergolas, arches, trellises, tents, or tent-like structures are permitted, whether constructed of rigid or pliable materials, including any decorative items



Curb lanes must be safely closed by the City of Toronto before installing any items in the right-of-way.

NEW FOR 2021!!

The City of Toronto will allow café operators to replace the linear closure equipment (candlestick pylons and connectors) provided by the City of Toronto with temporary fencing, planter boxes or other items that provide a barrier between the café area and the cycling lane on the street. To ensure safety and accessibility for your patrons and the travelling public, these guidelines must be followed:

- A vertical barrier between 0.9 and 1.0 metres in height must be in place along the curb lane closure area at all times. Opaque items (including dense plant material) must not be greater than 1.0 metre in height, measured from the surface of the street to preserve sight lines.
- Free-standing and self-supporting vertical barrier items must be stable planter boxes or weighted by self-supporting footplates. Any delineation items, including their supports, must not create a trip hazard or project into the path of travel.
- Alternatives to footplates may be used and include precast concrete blocks, sand bags, water weights, etc.
- Fencing/planter boxes/vertical barrier items must be no less than 1.2 metres from the travelled path of vehicular traffic (1.5 metres on streetcar routes) to provide space for cyclists and prevent contact with moving vehicles. Your café must not take up the entire width of the curb lane area.
- Open guardrails are encouraged to reduce the risk of a fence or other barrier shifting or dislocating with adverse weather conditions such as high winds and rain. Fabric, canvas, plywood, plexi-glass or similar materials are not to be used for the vertical barrier.
- Temporary fencing, planter boxes and other vertical barrier materials must have retro-reflective tape, or reflective flexi-posts at each end of the café area, and preferably along the full length of the closure area. All other materials must minimize glare for nighttime road users. Reflective items are widely available for purchase at hardware stores.

Temporary Fencing

Curb Lane Cafés

It is not safe to enter a live lane of traffic to install fencing, planter boxes or other delineation items. Ensure you remain within the boundaries of your closure area during installation.



If your curb lane café installation no longer requires City of Toronto provided equipment (candlestick pylons and connectors), please email cafeTO@toronto.ca with your restaurant name and address and City crews will pick them up. Ensure items are neatly placed next to your café and are not impeding cyclists or pedestrians while waiting for collection.

Temporary Platforms

Temporary Platforms

Temporary platforms are constructed or pre-fabricated structures placed in the curb lane that provide a raised, step-free sidewalk-level walking and seating surface for café patrons that conforms to the Ontario Building Code and the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Temporary platforms are not permitted to be built on sidewalks or boulevards.

Temporary platforms are only permitted in curb lane cafés. They must be removed at the end of the café season, when your curb lane closure is removed.

When you submit your CaféTO application, there will be an opportunity to indicate interest in building a platform for your curb lane café. You must receive written approval from the City before constructing your platform. Certain inputs are required to confirm that temporary platforms are built to ensure user safety, compliance with the Building Code and AODA and that utility outlets are protected.

Before you apply for a platform, please ensure you have read and understand these guidelines.

Please note that CaféTO is a temporary program, and permission to install a platform in 2021 does not guarantee a curb lane café or the ability to install a platform in future years.

APPLYING FOR A PLATFORM

If you wish to install a platform, as part of your CaféTO initial application you will be required to submit:

Two photos showing the streetscape of the proposed location, one in each direction (e.g., one facing east, one facing west) showing the curb lane where your deck or platform is proposed to be located.

CaféTO staff will conduct a preliminary review to determine if a curb lane café and platform is feasible at this location.

CaféTO staff will contact you with the results of the preliminary review. If the platform is feasible, you will be asked to produce and submit drawings, at your own expense, stamped by a structural engineer/architect, or signed by a BCIN (Building Code Identification Number) licensed designer.

You can find full details about submission requirements and platform specifications in the **Appendix on page 44.**

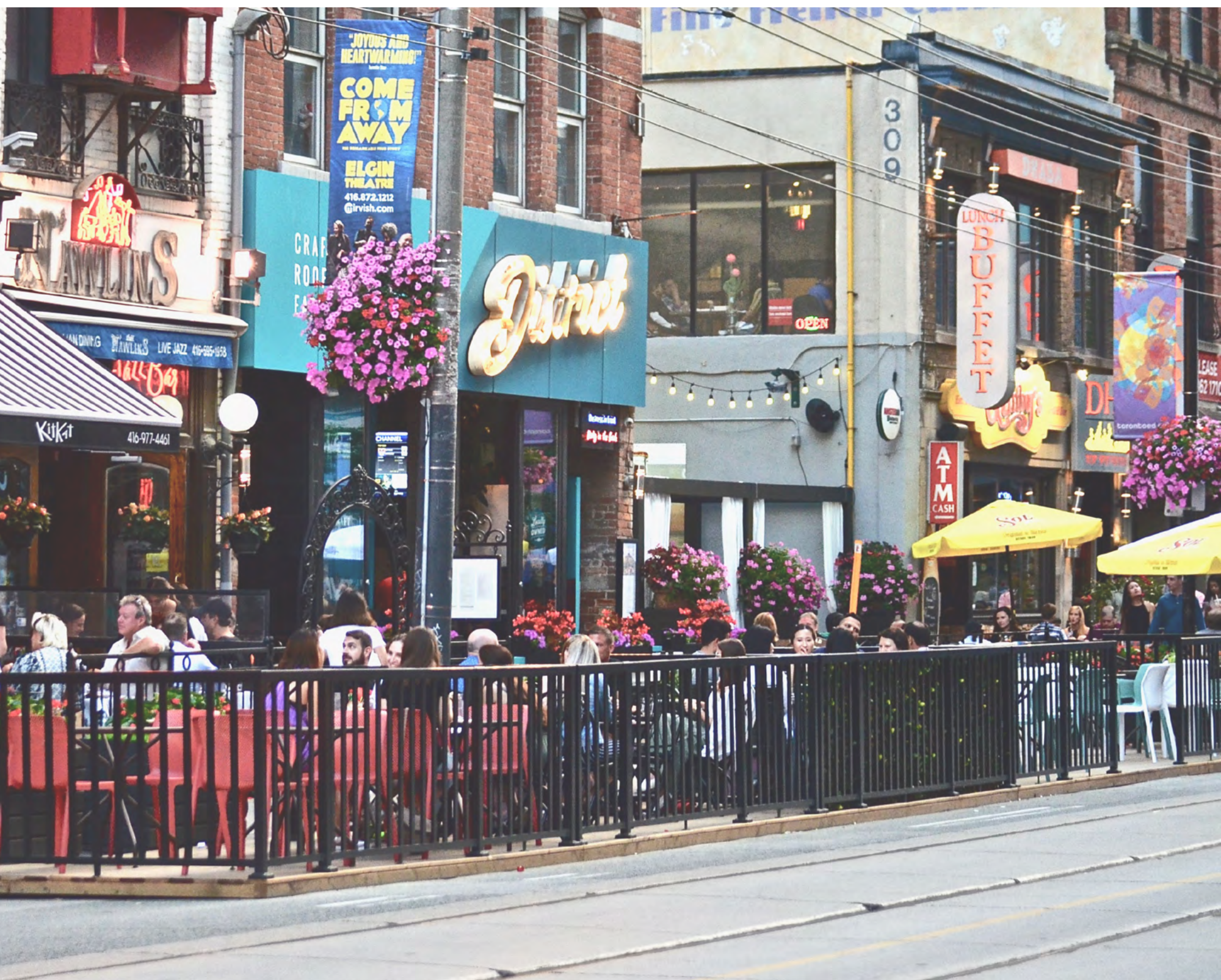
Temporary Platforms

The applicant is responsible for disassembly or removal of the platform, at their own cost, in the event of planned or emergency capital or utility work, as directed by the General Manager of Transportation Services, or their delegate.

Once an application for a temporary platform is approved, a Letter of Approval with conditions will be issued to the applicant. Any person who installs a temporary platform as part of the CaféTO program must comply with the conditions listed in the Letter of Approval.

All permitted platforms will be required to be removed at the end of the curb lane café season, before your curb lane closure is removed.

You must wait until your curb lane closure materials are installed before building your platform. It is not safe to construct your platform without the proper road closure materials in place.



Patios on Private Property

Patios on Private Property

OUTDOOR PATIOS LOCATED ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

Outdoor patios associated with bars, restaurants and cafés are often located on private property. You do not need permission from the City, if you can accommodate a patio for your establishment entirely on private property and meet the regulations of the zoning by-law.

Outdoor patios on private property are regulated by the City's zoning by-laws. Many of the zoning rules are intended to manage potential conflicts between outdoor patios and other nearby properties. [Zoning By-law 569-2013](#) is a harmonized zoning by-law that applies across the entire city. There are also many properties in Toronto where the city-wide by-law does not apply. These properties are subject to the [former municipal zoning by-laws](#) of one of the six pre-amalgamation municipalities.

The City of Toronto has enacted temporary use zoning by-laws to permit larger outdoor patios than would otherwise be permitted and to ease some other restrictions. These temporary use by-laws are anticipated to be in effect until April 14, 2022.

The Province of Ontario is temporarily allowing current liquor licence holders to serve alcohol outside of their officially licensed area without a temporary extension application to the AGCO. It is the operator's responsibility to ensure compliance with all [AGCO regulations](#) and adhere to any conditions on your liquor sales licence.

Photo by
Héctor Vasquez / BlogTO



Patios on Private Property

ZONING REGULATIONS FOR OUTDOOR PATIOS

Zoning permissions for outdoor patios can vary depending on the zone, unique circumstances of a property, or which zoning by-law is in force.

At this time, a restaurant, bar or café that is located in a mixed use, commercial or employment zone can usually operate an outdoor patio without any special zoning permission. In most cases, your patio will need to meet the following rules:

Size

You can install an outdoor patio on the ground that has an area up to 50% of the interior floor area of your establishment, or 50 square metres, whichever is greater. (If the patio is above the first storey – such as on a rooftop – the maximum size is 30% of the interior floor area of your establishment, or 30 square metres.)

Setback

An outdoor patio must be set back at least 30 metres from all properties in a residential zone. If the patio is located above the first storey (for example, on a rooftop), the required distance increases to 40 metres.

Parking

The outdoor patio can occupy parking spaces, provided those parking spaces are not accessible parking spaces or parking spaces that are required for a residential use. This means commercial plazas across the City can now easily install outdoor patios.

Entertainment

An outdoor patio may not provide entertainment, such as performances, music or dancing.

Fence

If your property abuts a residential property, a fence must be installed along the portion of the outdoor patio parallel to the property line.

These permissions will apply to most outdoor patio installations located on private property. If elements of your patio proposal are not addressed in this guide or you would like verification that your specific proposal complies with the zoning by-law, you may request a [Preliminary Project Review](#) prior to the installation.

If your outdoor patio proposal is located entirely on private property, complies with the zoning by-law, and does not incorporate any structures that require a building permit, then you do not need to obtain City permission prior to the installation. If you are a tenant of the property, you may require permission from your landlord.

If your property is located on both private property and the public right-of-way, your outdoor patio will need to comply with the zoning by-law as well as the regulations in the CaféTO program.

Trees

Significant trees on private property are protected under Chapter 813 ([Private Tree Bylaw](#)). If you wish to injure or remove a protected tree you must obtain a [permit](#) under the Private Tree By-law

Temporary Tents & Building Permits

Temporary Tents & Building Permits

Temporary tents and structures may be possible on private property but may require a building permit.

- To meet current public health regulations, an area that is covered by a roof, canopy, tent, awning or other element, must have at least two full sides open to the outdoors and cannot be blocked by other walls or physical barriers.

A building permit for a temporary tent is not required if the tent is:

- Less than 60 square metres in aggregate ground area
- Not attached to a building
- Constructed more than 3 metres from other structures (per [Ontario Building Code](#))

Tents may not obstruct required exits from buildings nor obstruct any fire access route. These requirements may change and operators must comply with all City and provincial statutes, by-laws, regulations, orders and guidelines.

For more information on building permits and regulations:
Call: 416-397-5330 Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.,
or by visiting the Toronto Building [website](#).



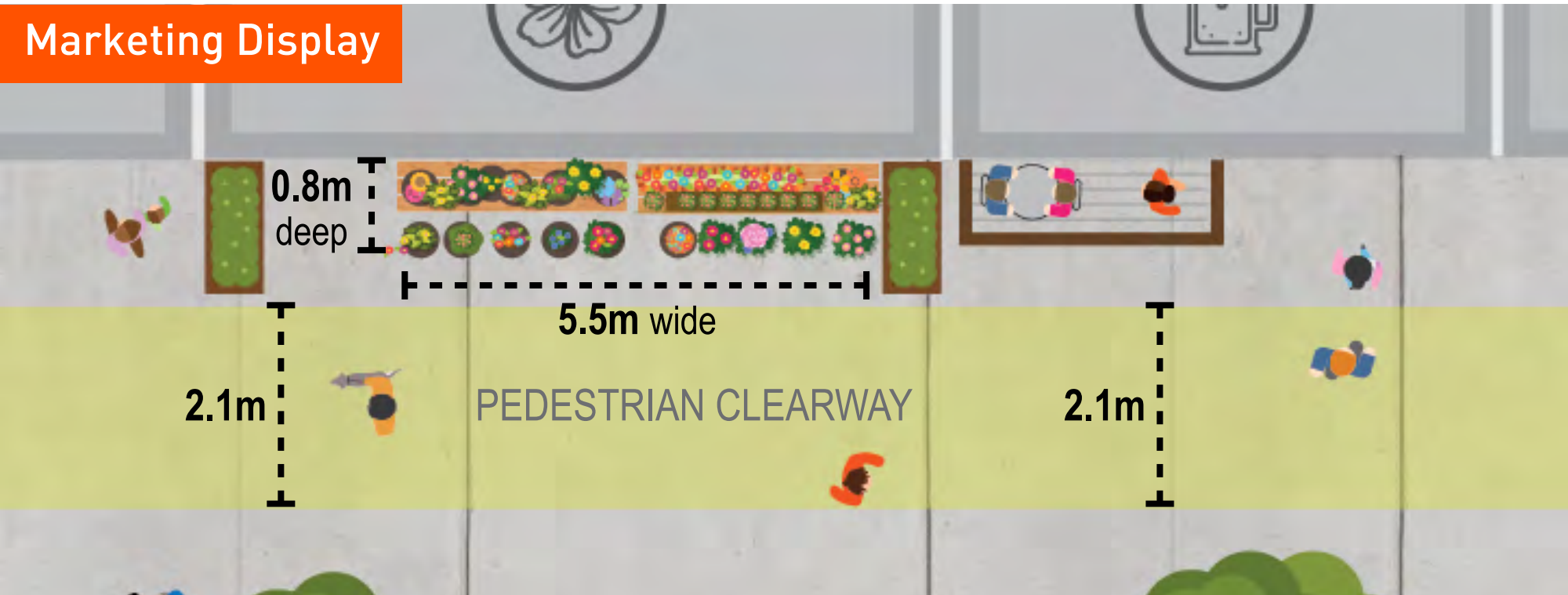
Marketing Displays

Marketing Displays

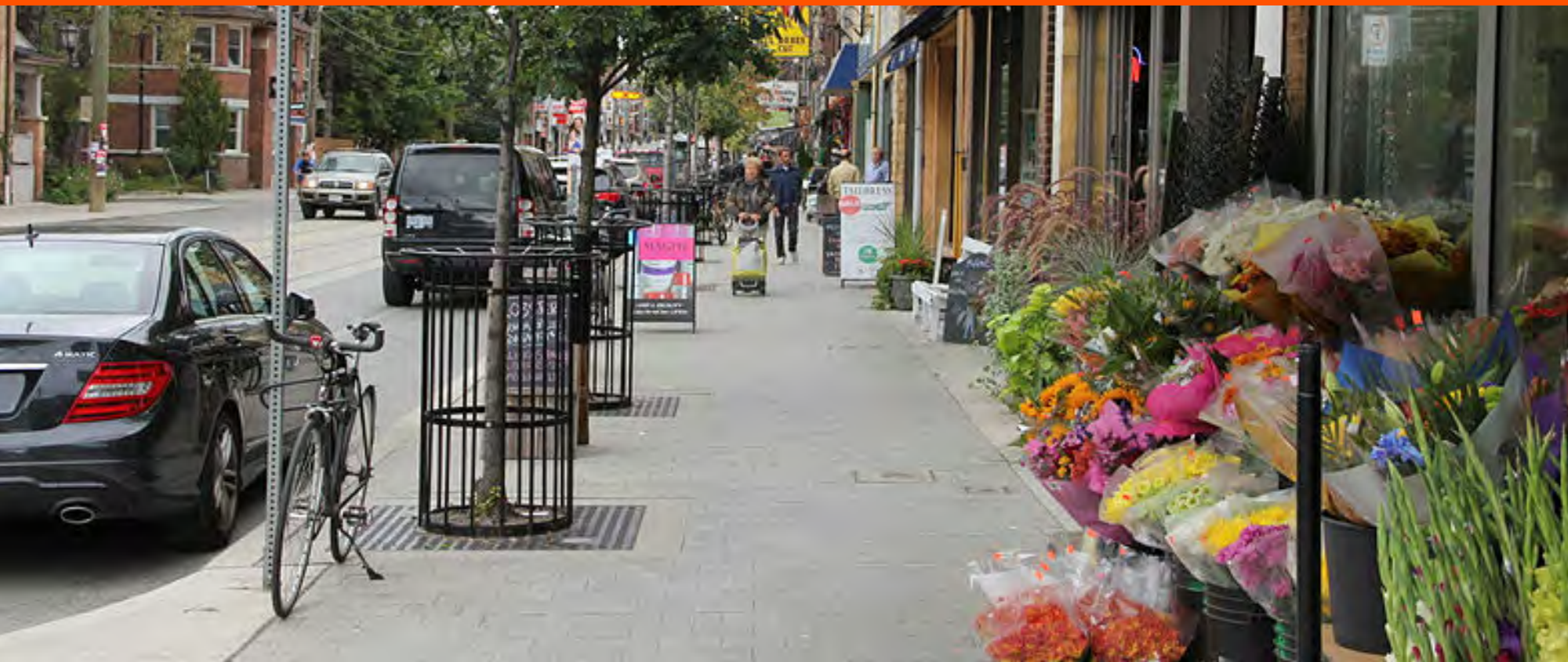
Retail businesses may display goods on the sidewalk without a permit application and fees when the following requirements are met:

- Maximum size is 0.8m depth x 5.5 width, or the width of the associated establishment frontage, whichever is less
- Must be located directly against the building wall
- Must have white cane-detectable planters at each end
- No umbrellas, fencing or enclosures
- Displays must be removed after business hours
- No adjacent A-frame signs on the sidewalk
- Must be portable to ensure access to utility connections

Additional pedestrian clearway measurement instructions are available on **page 15** of this Guidebook.



Businesses that wish to apply for a permit for an extended frontage Marketing Display should complete an application [here](#). Licence application and renewal fees must be paid online.



Appendix

Appendix

TEMPORARY PLATFORM SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIFICATIONS:

If you wish to install a platform, as part of your CaféTO initial application you will be required to submit:

Two photos showing the streetscape of the proposed location, one in each direction (e.g., one facing east, one facing west) showing the curb lane where your deck or platform is proposed to be located.

CaféTO staff will contact you with the results of the preliminary review. If a platform is feasible, you will be asked to produce and submit drawings, at your own expense, stamped by a structural engineer/architect, or signed by a BCIN (Building Code Identification Number) licensed designer.

After the preliminary review, staff will inform you of the permitted location of your temporary platform so that you can prepare the required materials. Your submission will require:

- a) A dimensioned site plan or key plan, indicating the location of the platform in relation to:
 - i. the closest intersection
 - ii. fixed street elements (e.g. Hydro pole, in-ground utilities, trees, bus shelter, etc.)
 - iii. sidewalk and bike lane, if applicable
 - iv. overall patio footprint dimensions
- b) Fully dimensioned plan view of the platform, indicating orientation, construction materials.
- c) 1-2 fully dimensioned platform elevations, including the guard/fence construction materials and details.
- d) Any additional construction details or drawings as pertinent to the design.
- e) Applicable notes to the assembly and construction of the platform should it need to be moved or disassembled for emergency work.
- f) If your submitted site plans show that your deck encroaches beyond the limit of your business' frontage, you may be required to submit letters of approval from the adjacent property owner.

Appendix

SPECIFICATIONS FOR TEMPORARY PLATFORMS

Temporary platforms must meet the following guidelines:

- The platform must be designed by an engineer, architect or BCIN licensed designer to meet Ontario Building Code and AODA requirements
- Platforms must not exceed the café space allocated to you by the CaféTO program
- Platforms may not be affixed to the roadway, sidewalk, or attached to any utilities, street trees or sidewalk elements
- Platforms must be built so that the height of the walking/dining surface is flush with the sidewalk
- In order to ensure space for cyclists, the perimeter of the platform, including the guard or fence, must be a minimum 1.2 metres (1.5 metres on streets with streetcar service) away from the travelling path of vehicular traffic
- Platforms may not be placed over in-ground utilities, such as storm drains, hydro vaults, maintenance covers, hand wells etc.
- Platforms must provide clearances as noted in the hydro utilities table on **page 48**. Platforms must provide a 1 metre clearance from all other in-ground and above ground utilities and street furniture to permit maintenance activities, or any other alternative set-back or clearance requirement as determined by city staff
- Platforms must provide a 1.2 metres clearance from any fire hydrant or fire connection
- Opaque items (including dense plant material) must not be greater than 1.0 metre in height, measured from the surface of the street, to preserve sight lines
- No roofs, roof supports, retractable roofing, poles, pergolas, arches, trellises, tents, or tent-like structures are permitted, whether constructed of rigid or pliable materials, including any decorative items
- Fabric, canvas, plywood, plexi-glass or similar materials are not to be used for the vertical barrier
- Platforms must have retro-reflective tape, or reflective flexi-posts at each end of the café area, and preferably along the full length of the closure area. All other materials must minimize glare for nighttime road users. Reflective items are widely available for purchase at hardware stores.
- Approved locations must meet all curb lane closure requirements and must be installed within the design of the closure area

Appendix



TORONTO FIRE SERVICES PORTABLE HEATER GUIDELINES

Your portable heating appliance must:

- Be certified by CSA/ULC
- Meet the requirements of TSSA Act 2000
- Be designed for outdoor use only
- Have an anti-tilt feature that automatically shuts off the heater
- Be free-standing, with a minimum height of 160 cm (65 inches)
- Table top heating appliances are not permitted

DO install

your portable heating appliance:

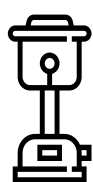
- On a non-combustible solid surface (e.g. not on grass or uneven sidewalk)
- With a minimum of 1 metre (3 feet) clearance from the base of the unit to any combustible material

DO NOT install

your portable heating appliance:

- In windy conditions. Wind negatively impacts efficiency and can create a hazard if the unit is blown over
- Under fire escapes
- Within a means of egress or adjacent to a sidewalk
- Near a combustible structure
- Adjacent to or otherwise obstructing firefighting equipment like fire hydrants or connections
- Within the Tree Protection Zone of any trees. For more information or to request an exception, please contact your district Tree Protection and Plan Review office [here](#)
- Near or attached to any utilities or other street elements
- If electrical wires need to be placed on the pedestrian clearway

Appendix



FUELED HEATING APPLIANCES

- If you choose to use a propane or other fueled heating appliance, please follow these specific safety guidelines:
- Do not store the unit indoors
- Keep a maximum of one (1) day's supply of propane on site
- Storage of additional cylinders (including cylinders in cages) is not permitted in public thoroughfares or sidewalks)
- The maximum allowable propane tank size is a single 9 kg (20 lb) tank (approximately 10 hours of operation)
- Do not move portable heaters while the flame is still open. Ensure the gas supply is properly shut off and the unit is cool before relocating
- Follow all manufacturer safety requirements for the safe transportation, operation and storage of fuel



The Technical Standards & Safety Authority (TSSA) has released Patio Heater Safety Guidelines and propane cylinder safety information. More information is available [here](#).

Appendix

TORONTO HYDRO REQUIREMENTS

When installing cafés on the sidewalk or street, there are distance requirements that must be maintained from Toronto Hydro structures and equipment to ensure that Toronto Hydro staff can conduct maintenance or make emergency repairs.

Hydro Clearances	FIXED Café Elements*	TEMPORARY Café Elements*
Structure Type	Minimum Clearance	
In Ground Cable Chamber (maintenance holes) • <i>measured from lid edge</i>	2.0 metres	0.3 metres
In Ground Hydro Vault (rectangular grates /steel covers , usually on sidewalks) • <i>measured from perimeter</i>	1.0 metres	1.0 metres
Padmount Transformer or Switchgear (e.g. above ground green box on concrete pad)	3.0 metres	3.0 metres
Distribution Pole (no lighting)	0.6 metres	0.3 metres
Street Lighting Pole	0.6 metres	0.3 metres
Guy Wire/anchor	0.6 metres	0.3 metres

* Temporary cafe elements include items like tables, chairs and umbrellas.

* Fixed cafe elements include items like platforms, fencing and planter boxes or other elements over 20 kg.

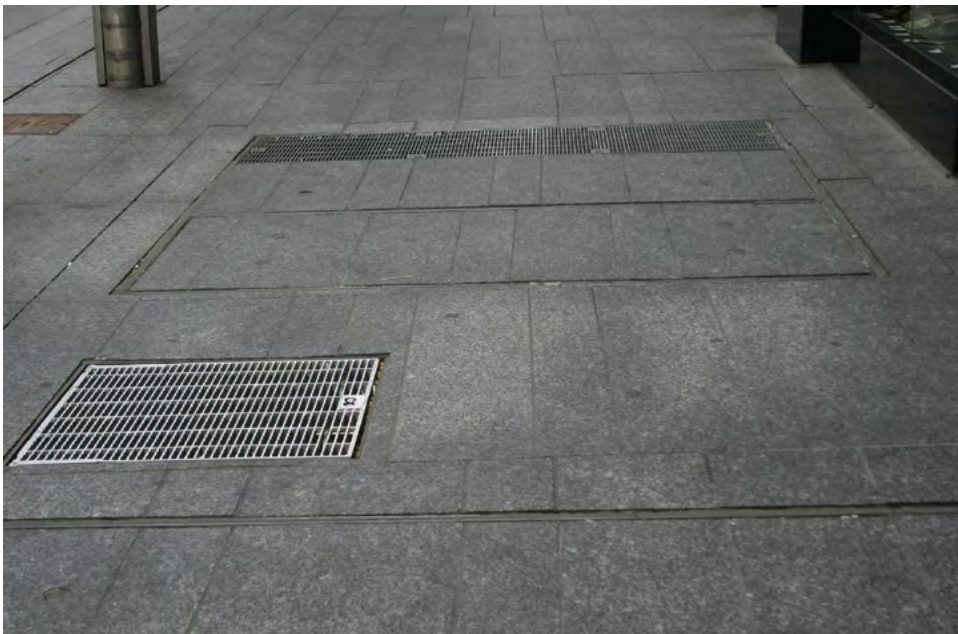
Appendix

TORONTO HYDRO REQUIREMENTS

Examples of Toronto Hydro structures and equipment:



Cable Chamber



Hydro Vault



Padmount Transformer or Switchgear



Distribution/Street Lighting Pole



Guy Wire/Anchor

Carefully review this information and ensure that your café materials are placed the appropriate distance from Toronto Hydro structures and equipment.

Notes:

- CaféTO participants will generally need to follow the set-back guidelines for “Temporary Café Elements” as no equipment should be affixed to any element in the right-of way
- Cable chambers, distribution poles and street lighting poles are very common and include BIA street lighting elements

Appendix

MEASURING SIDEWALK DEVIATION

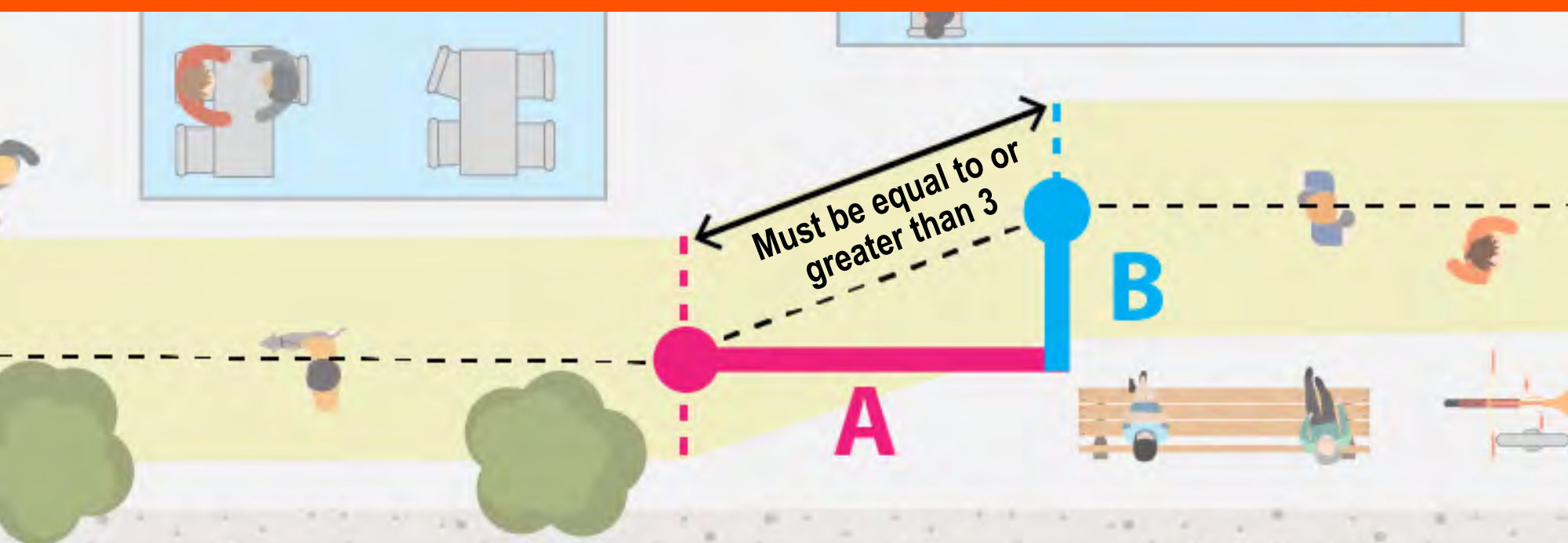
You must pay attention to the location of your café equipment in relation to other elements on the sidewalk, including neighbouring cafés. Ensuring that the pedestrian clearway path does not vary by more than 20 degrees is critical for accessibility for people with low to no vision and people with mobility issues and is an important component of Chapter 742.

To ensure your café area does not impose a change in direction of the pedestrian clearway of more than 20 degrees, you will need a tape measure and something to mark measurement points (a stone, a chalk mark, etc.). Then follow the steps and refer to the diagram below to determine whether a direction change of more than 20 degrees has been created.

- Measure A (pink line) and B (blue line)
- A begins at the start of the deviation, and in the centre of the clearway. It ends where it meets B
- B begins at the centre of the clearway and goes across the clearway, perpendicular to the path of travel. It ends where it meets A
- Use a calculator to divide the A by B ($A \div B =$)
- If the result is **equal to or greater than 3**, then no action is required
- If the result is **less than 3**, take action that will either reduce B (blue line) or lengthen A (pink line). After, calculate the above measurements again to make sure the new result is equal to or greater than 3

CaféTO staff can provide more information about sidewalk deviations by emailing cafeTO@toronto.ca

If the deviation is pointing in the other direction, mirror the lines and make sure A is always parallel to the path of travel and B is always perpendicular to the path of travel.



Appendix

ToGoToronto



Now accepting restaurant registrations



Add your restaurant to Destination Toronto's **ToGoToronto.com**, a free listing of Toronto restaurants that are open for safe takeout, delivery and patios as public health restrictions allow. The platform was created by Destination Toronto in partnership with the City of Toronto to continue to support the economic recovery of the restaurant community.

CaféT0 Contact Guide

CaféTO

Contact Guide

If your business is located in a Business Improvement Area (BIA), you can contact your local BIA representative for questions about CaféTO areas. A list of BIAs and individual representative contact information is available [here](#)

Email cafeto@toronto.ca for questions about:

- The safe installation and removal of curb lane cafés
- Registration including approvals and status
- CaféTO guidelines, including accessibility concerns

Email biaoffice@toronto.ca for questions about:

- Communication with Business Improvement Areas, streetscape areas, and administering café enhancement grants to BIAs

Email businesssto@toronto.ca for questions about:

- Support for individual restaurant and bar owner/operators, including potential cultural enhancements, winter enhancement opportunities and public consultation opportunities

Email parkbusiness@toronto.ca for questions about:

- Administration, installation and enforcement of cafés located adjacent to hard-surfaced park space

Contact [Toronto Building](#) for questions about plans for temporary or permanent structures on private patios or cafés (to ensure they comply with the Ontario Building Code), local [Zoning By-laws](#) and other applicable laws and issues related to building permits where required.

More information on building permits and regulations is available by calling 416-397-5330 Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or by visiting the [Toronto Building](#) website.

Contact the appropriate [Community Planning Manager](#) for individual patios that need special zoning permission on a temporary basis, beyond what is described in this Guidebook.

Contact dinesafe@toronto.ca or 416-338-7600 for questions about provincial public health orders, as well as food establishment and food safety inspections under the [DineSafe](#) program.

Contact 311 Toronto for more information about the CaféTO program, or to submit Service Requests to appropriate City divisions related to café operations, including complaints/concerns about accessibility.

Café**TO**
Version 1.5 2021