

CaféTO

SIDEWALK CAFÉ APPLICATION GUIDE



About this Application Guide

This guide explains the requirements for applying for a sidewalk café in the City of Toronto and provides direction on the permanent sidewalk café permit application process. Please see Toronto Municipal Code [Chapter 742](#), Sidewalk Cafés, Parklets and Marketing Displays for more information.

For more information about cafés located in the curb lane, please see the CaféTO Curb Lane Café Guidebook at toronto.ca/CafeTO.

The [CaféTO Property Improvement Program](#) offers business operators matching funding of 50 per cent for the cost of eligible improvements to café space on private property or City property where a valid permit has been issued. Expenses eligible for funding include platforms or decking (rented, leased, or purchased), fencing, technical drawings and accessibility improvements which meet Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA) design standards. Up to \$7500 is available for each applicant. Fully funded by the Federal Economic Development Agency for South Ontario (FedDev Ontario), this program is part of the Toronto Main Street Recovery and Rebuild Initiative (MRRI).



HOW TO APPLY FOR A PERMANENT SIDEWALK CAFÉ PERMIT

Restaurant and bar operators with a valid municipal business licence that includes a refreshment endorsement must follow the below steps to apply for a permanent R57 Sidewalk Café permit.

5 EASY STEPS TO APPLY FOR A CAFÉ PERMIT

1. Visit toronto.ca/CafeTO to download and complete the café application form and apply for your sidewalk café through the [permit portal](#).
2. You must submit a detailed, scaled site plan of the proposed permit area in your application. More information on site plans is on [page 11](#).
3. City staff will review and circulate your completed application and submitted documents in order to ensure compliance with [Chapter 742](#). City staff will also review your past compliance with other applicable bylaws.
4. Successful applicants will receive a permanent R57 Sidewalk Café permit, and will be required to agree to and sign a Sidewalk Café Agreement identifying the terms and conditions of the permit.
5. Permit Holders may renew their permanent R57 Sidewalk Café permit annually thereafter.

Fees

On February 7, 2023 City Council approved the transition of CaféTO from a temporary emergency response initiative into a sustainable program. The fees for sidewalk cafes, which were waived by Council between 2020 and 2022 to support the industry, will be phased in over three years with the full amount to be charged in 2025.

To support CaféTO operators, the City has reduced all permit and application fees by 66 per cent in 2023. In 2023, the one-time application fee is \$285 +HST per application and the annual permit fee is \$14.56 +HST per square metre.

Alcohol

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

TYPES OF SIDEWALK CAFÉS

Frontage Cafés

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

Small Frontage Cafés

- This café type does not require a permit with the City of Toronto but must comply with Article 8 of Chapter 742.
- Café is 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. If you exceed these dimensions, you **MUST** apply for a sidewalk café permit.
- 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.
- Umbrellas, fencing, and enclosures are not permitted for this café type.

Frontage Cafés on Local Streets (Flankage Cafés)

- Sidewalk Cafés located on [designated local roads](#) are subject to additional regulations for alcohol service and closing times.
- These may be either the frontage of a business located on a local road or the side (flankage of) a corner unit.
- This café type requires a permit.



Frontage Cafés



Small Frontage Cafés



Frontage Cafés on Local Streets (Flankages)

TYPES OF SIDEWALK CAFÉS

Curbside Cafés

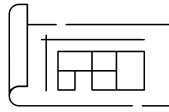
- Located on the sidewalk at the curbside (between the sidewalk and the road) in front of the associated establishment.
- Curbside cafés may be expanded in front of a neighbouring business if written permission is granted from the adjacent tenant and/or property owner.
- This café type requires a permit.
- To apply for a Curb Lane Café (café located on the street, requiring closure of a curb lane) please visit toronto.ca/CafeTO.



Curbside Cafés



Below is a checklist to help ensure a complete Sidewalk Café Permit application. Incomplete or incorrect applications may experience delays in processing time.



1. Site Plan

Detailed, scaled plans and specifications must be submitted to determine if the proposed sidewalk café complies with the requirements set in [Chapter 742](#) (Sidewalk Cafés, Parklets and Marketing Displays).

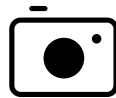
Format:

- ☐ Computer drafted plans (CAD) are strongly encouraged. All plans must be accurate, legible and drawn to scale using metric measurements.
- ☐ Legend: A legend must be provided showing what the lines and objects mean in the drawing. Ensure clear labels.
- ☐ If paper drawings are provided, they must be on paper no larger than 279mm x 432mm (11"x17") and drawn in blue or black ink. Poorly scanned/photocopied plans will not be accepted.

You must include and label the following on your site plan:

- ☐ Show the plan view of the proposed permit area from above, showing the outer edges and the dimensions (width and depth).
- ☐ Pedestrian clearway measurements: distance between outer edge of proposed permit area to nearest object and back of the curb.
- ☐ Pedestrian clearances must be minimum 2.1m for arterial and collector roads, 1.8m for local roads. Refer to the [Road Classification System Map](#) to determine the correct type of road.
- ☐ Pedestrian clearance must be minimum 2.5m for sidewalks wider than 5.0m with high pedestrian volumes. See [page 16](#) of this guide for more details.
- ☐ Property lines (dimensioned to the street), name of street, name of business, and address.
- ☐ Exterior walls of buildings including doors and windows, and all entrances/exits (location and widths).
- ☐ Width of sidewalk from the building wall to the back of the curb.

- ☐ Plan view must extend at least 5.0m to either side of the proposed permit area and show all objects on the sidewalk and measurements indicating their location relative to the edge of the proposed permit area. See [page 11](#) of this guide for more details. Objects on the sidewalk may include but not limited to:
 - ☐ fire connections
 - ☐ gas/electric/phone/internet equipment
 - ☐ trees/tree grate/planters, benches
 - ☐ bicycle parking
 - ☐ waste bins, newspaper boxes, parking meters
 - ☐ transit stop poles and transit shelters, accessible transit ramps
 - ☐ utility covers and hydro vaults
 - ☐ loading/delivery zones, taxi stands
 - ☐ sign posts.
- ☐ Nearest object measurements must assume the use of the object, e.g., person sitting on bench (add 0.4m for seated person's legs) or bike locked to bicycle parking ring (add 0.7m for the width of a bike on either side of the bike ring).
- ☐ Location and dimensions of the accessible entrance/exit to the proposed permit area.
- ☐ If the café is on a local street, show the visual screen location and dimensions (required at the end of a café that faces a residential area).



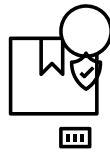
2. Three Photos of the Proposed Café Area

- ☐ Your application must include three photos, one for each of the following views:
 - ☐ view of the front of your property including the full width of your property and the sidewalk in front of your property
 - ☐ left view of your property showing the sidewalk parallel to the street
 - ☐ right view of your property showing the sidewalk parallel to the street.
- ☐ Photos must show the whole sidewalk area including the view to the curb and the neighbouring properties, and all sidewalk objects and elements. Google Streetview cannot be used.
- ☐ Two sets of photos are required if applying for a frontage and a flankage in the same application. An additional photo set is also required for curbside café applications and must show the curb lane.



3. Application Form and Valid Municipal Business Licence

- ☐ [Café Application Form](#) must be filled out by Director/Officer listed on the corporation.
- ☐ One piece of government-issued photo ID for the Director/Officer to be uploaded at the time of application.
- ☐ Municipal Business Licence must be valid and in good standing at the time of application.



4. Insurance

- ☐ Proof of \$2,000,000 in Commercial General Liability (CGL) insurance. The completed Certificate of Insurance PDF must be signed and stamped by the insurer.
- ☐ The completed Certificate of Insurance must be on the City of Toronto [form](#).



5. Letter of Permission (Optional)

If you have the agreement of your neighbouring property owner or tenant to extend the café area in front of your neighbour's establishment, then you can apply for an extended sidewalk café.

You will require:

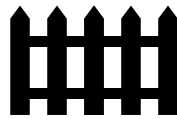
- ☐ A [written letter of consent](#) from the adjacent property owner or tenant is required that is satisfactory to the City that acknowledges they are providing consent for the term of the permit.
- ☐ Note that consent can be revoked by the adjacent property owner or tenant at any time.



6. Awning (Optional)

An awning is a removable or retractable unenclosed temporary structure affixed to the building wall that covers a café area. If you are applying for an awning, you must provide professional detailed drawings of the awning with your sidewalk café application. Please check with [Toronto Building](#) if you need to apply for a building permit. You can find more information about requirements for Awnings in Section 9.6 of Chapter 742.

- ☐ You must submit detailed drawings that show the awning location, design, dimensions and mechanical specifications for its framing, mounting and materials.
- ☐ A certificate indicating the Fire Proof Rating of the fabric/materials.
- ☐ Any applicable permit approvals from the Chief Building Official or Heritage Preservation Services if your building is on the Heritage Register.
- ☐ Awnings must be at least 2.1m above the level of the sidewalk so no part of the frame, curtain, canopy or fabric or part of these is any lower.
- ☐ Awnings must be easily removable or retractable, and cannot be attached to the surface of the sidewalk.

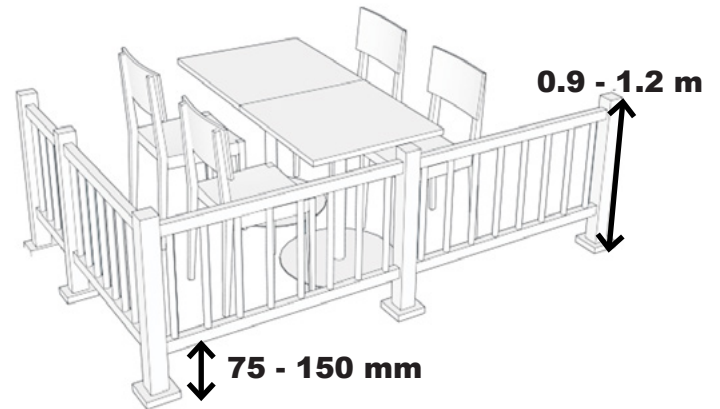
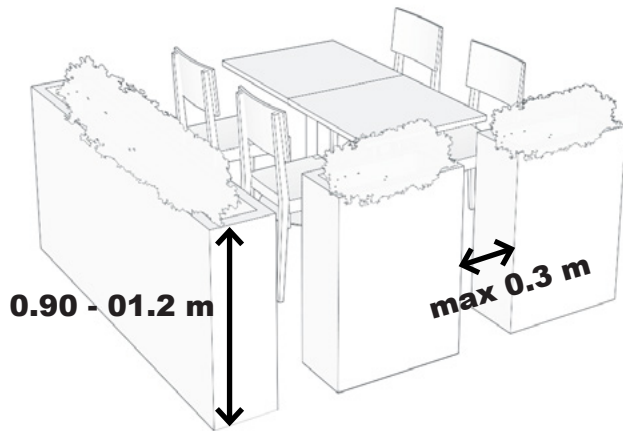


7. Fences

Businesses applying for a frontage café or curbside café on an arterial road or collector road must provide a fence sketch. Fences need to be:

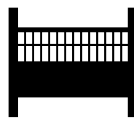
- ☐ At least 1.2 metres from any fire hydrant.
- ☐ Designed so that pumper or fire department connections are visible and easily accessible.
- ☐ Curved or angled at a street corner where frontage cage extends around the corner.
- ☐ Designed to provide detectability for the visually-impaired by including at least; lower rail height between 75 mm and 150 mm above the sidewalk surface with a contrasting color to the sidewalk; or planter boxes with a detectable base that are spaced no more than 0.3 metres apart from each other except for the entrance; or a solid base that extends to or rests on the surface of the sidewalk with no gap.
- ☐ No shorter than 0.9 metres and no taller than 1.2 metres for the height of the top rail of the fence or opaque part of planters and plants.
- ☐ No shorter than 0.9 metres in height for all opaque parts of the fence or planters with plants within 30 metres of any intersection to maintain sightlines.
- ☐ Self-supporting or supported by removable plates attached to the paved surface of the permit area.

- ☐ Not penetrating the surface of the sidewalk with footings other than bolt attachments.
- ☐ Not attached to properties on the Heritage Registrar, street trees, street furniture or utilities/ services.



Colour Contrast

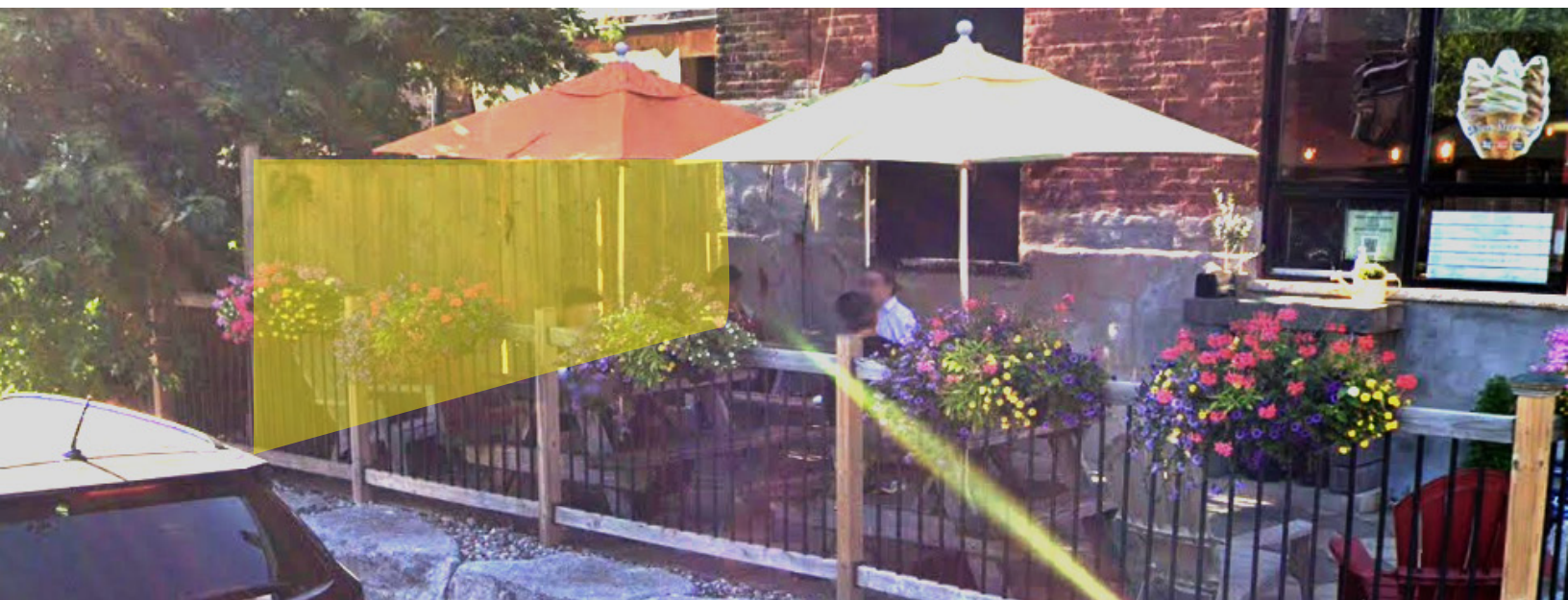
Delineation elements like planter boxes and fencing must be a contrasting colour to the sidewalk. In most cases, where the sidewalk is grey, delineation items should primarily be a dark colour (e.g. black or brown) to provide adequate contrast. Red and green can be difficult to detect for people living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

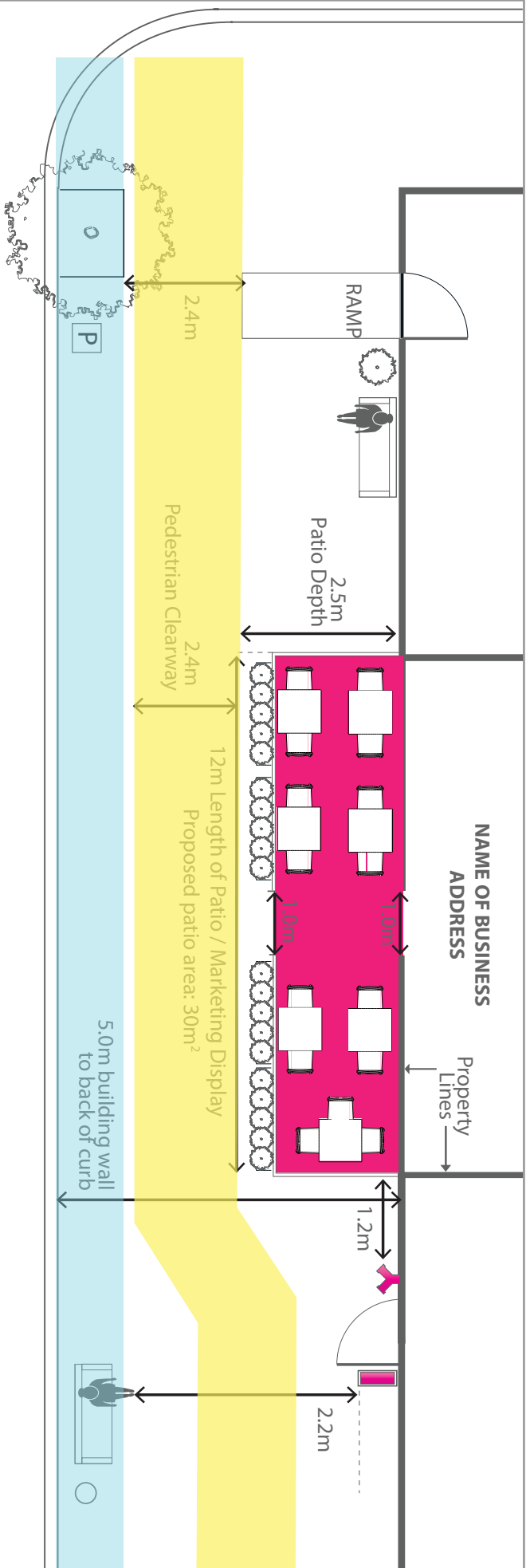


8. Visual Screen (Cafés on Local Roads)

If you are applying for a sidewalk café on a local road, you must have a visual screen on the edge of the permit area facing any residential area.

- ☐ You must provide a copy of your visual screen design drawing.
- ☐ Visual screens must be at least 1.5m in height and not more than 1.8m in height.











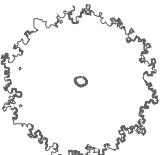





Sidewalk Café Site Plan Example

RESTAURANT NAME
ADDRESS
 Proposed patio area: 30.0m²
 (total square metres)

Pedestrian Clearway
 Street Furniture Zone

LEGEND

-  Chair
-  Table
-  Street Bench
-  Parking Meter
-  Street Light/Hydro Pole
-  A-Frame Sign
-  Fence
-  Planter
-  Concrete Raised Tree Planter
-  Fence Planters
-  Fire Connection
-  Door Entrance

Scale 1cm=1m (1:100)

Minimum Separation Distances

(must be indicated on your site plan)

| Utility or Infrastructure Element (measured from edge of element / utility) | Required Clearance | |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| | Temporary Fixed Elements | Temporary Portable Elements |
| Hydro Infrastructure | | |
| Cable Chamber* | 2.0 metres | 0.3 metres |
| Hydro Vault* | 1.0 metres | 1.0 metres |
| Transformer/Switchgear* | 3.0 metres | 3.0 metres |
| Distribution Pole | 0.6 metres | 0.3 metres |
| Street Lighting Pole^ | 0.6 metres | 0.3 metres |
| Guy wire/anchor | 0.6 metres | 0.3 metres |
| BIA lighting access hatch^ | 0.3 metres | 0.3 metres |
| Traffic Infrastructure | | |
| Traffic signal pole | 0.3 metres for local street or 1.0 metres | 0.3 metres |
| Traffic control box | 1.5 metres from front, sides 0.6 metres | 0.3 metres |
| Traffic or parking sign pole | 0.3 metres | 0.3 metres |
| Fire Services and Water Infrastructure | | |
| Fire Hydrant* | 1.2 metres | 1.2 metres |
| Fire Standpipe Connection* | 1.2 metres | 1.2 metres |
| Water Valve (post indicator/isolation) | 0.6 metres | 0.3 metres |
| Catch basin^^ | 0.6 metres | 0.3 metres |
| Storm/Sanitary maintenance access covers | 0.6 metres | 0.3 metres |
| Gas Infrastructure | | |
| Gas valve (and other assets) | 0.6 metres | 0.3 metres |
| Telecom Infrastructure | | |
| In-ground access covers | 0.6 metres | 0.3 metres |
| Public Realm Infrastructure | | |
| Street Furniture (bench, litter bin, newspaper corral, postering column)* | 1.0 metres | 1.0 metres |
| Transit shelter: with advertising^^ | 5.0 metres | 5.0 metres |
| Transit shelter: without advertising^^ | 2.5 metres | 2.5 metres |
| Transit stop poles^^ | 2.5 metres | 2.5 metres |
| Wayfinding columns* | 3.0 metres | 3.0 metres |
| Wayfinding sign poles* | 1.0 metres | 1.0 metres |
| Bicycle locking ring** | 2.5 metres | 2.5 metres |
| Bike Share station^^ | 1.0 metres | 1.0 metres |
| Toronto Parking Authority ticket kiosk* | 1.0 metres | 1.0 metres |

| Utility or Infrastructure Element (measured from edge of element / utility) | Required Clearance | |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Temporary Fixed Elements | Temporary Portable Elements |
| Trees and Horticulture | | |
| Street tree* and*** | 1.0 metres | 0.3 metres |
| Above and in-ground planters*** | 1.0 metres | 0.3 metres |
| Pedestrian Safety | | |
| Intersection or Pedestrian Crossover**** | 3.0 metres | 3.0 metres |

Street furniture or utility listed without an asterisk (^) may be located within proposed permit area if approved by the City

^ or other clearance as determined by the local BIA for BIA owned lighting infrastructure

^^ must be measured as a minimum linear distance along the curb edge; and for transit stops/shelters must have a minimum 2.4m width for the transit platform area

* must be measured as a minimum radius width from the street element or utility

** clearance may be less if approved by the City in consideration of the streetscape context and bike parking facilities in the immediate area

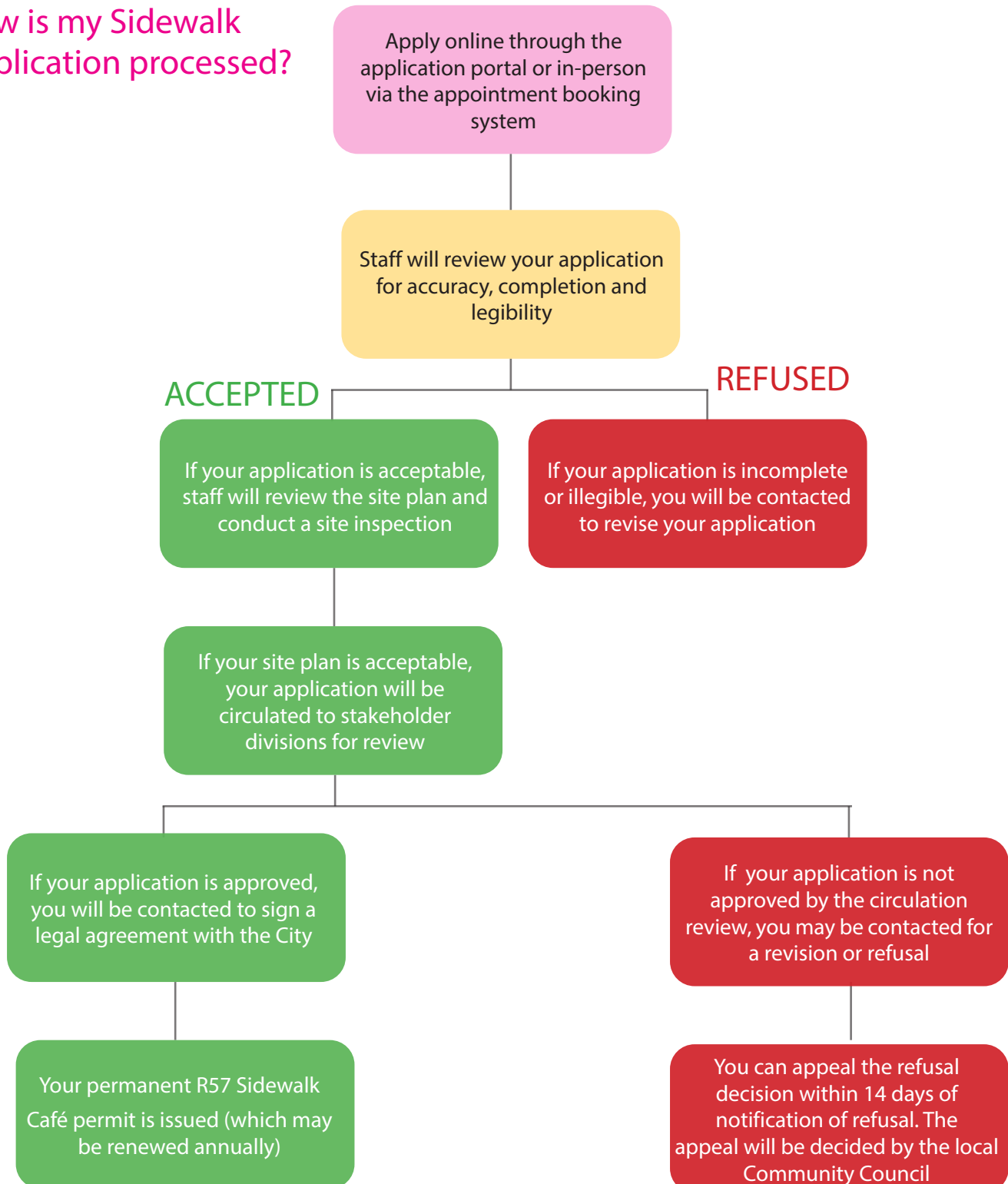
*** café elements must not be placed on open soil or soft surfaces adjacent to street trees, nor be fixed to the tree pit surface

**** intersections and pedestrian crossovers require adequate space for people of all ages and abilities waiting to cross the street and for safety and visibility. Additional separation distances are required for curbside and curb lane cafés for visibility and road safety

Sidewalk Application Process and Timeline

The expected application review process from receipt of a sidewalk café application to the issuance of an R57 Sidewalk Café permit is 6-8 weeks. This timing may vary depending on café application volumes, and if incorrect or insufficient information is submitted as part of a café application.

How is my Sidewalk Application processed?



APPENDIX

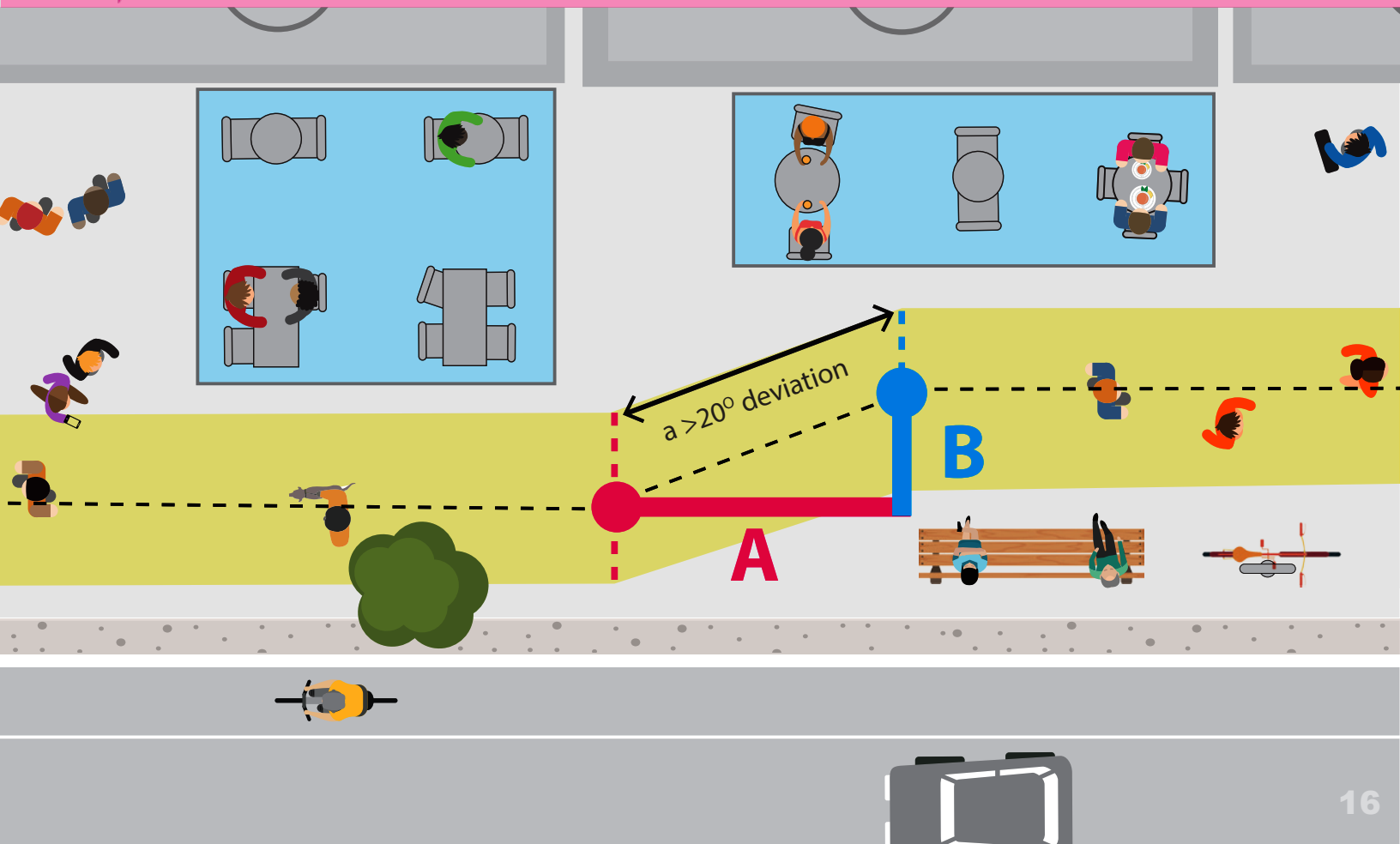
Measuring Sidewalk Deviations

Abrupt or sharp changes in the path of travel on the sidewalk poses significant risk to persons with low to no vision or those requiring the use of mobility devices. 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 (pylons, chalk marks, 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, calculated the above measurements again to make sure the new result is equal to or greater than 3

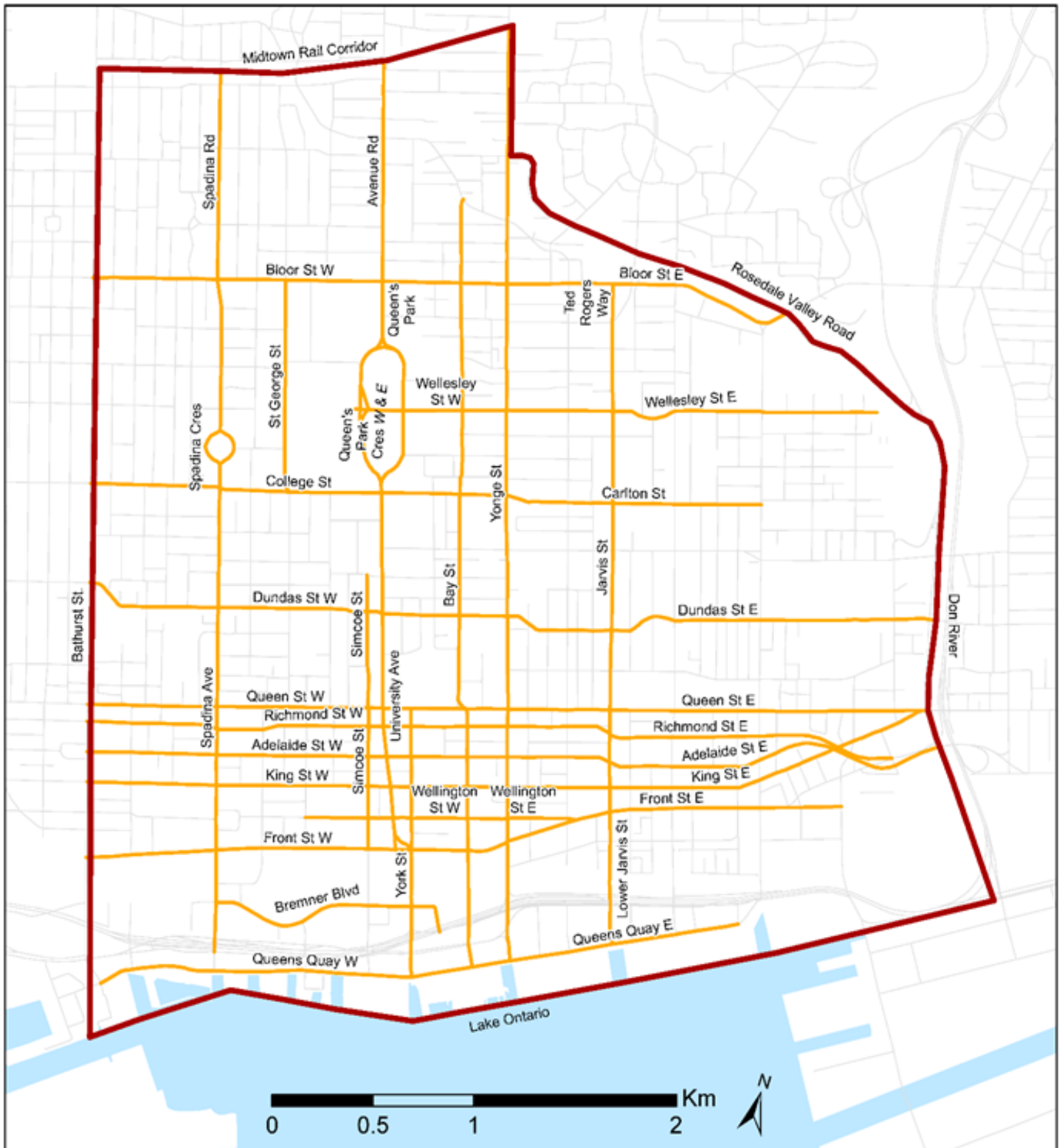
IMPORTANT

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.



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. Sidewalk cafés 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](#).





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 1.0 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](#).
- Near or attached to any utilities or other street elements free-standing, with a minimum height of 160 cm (65 inches)
- If electrical wires need to be placed on the pedestrian clearway



Fueled Heating Appliances

- 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 [online](#).

SIDEWALK CAFÉ
APPLICATION GUIDE
VERSION 3.0

toronto.ca/CafeTO

