

URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

The Urban Design Committee will hold a meeting on **Tuesday, March 03, 2026**, at **3:00 p.m.** in the County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska in **City Council Chambers** on the 1st floor. For more information, contact the Planning Department at 402-441-7491.

AGENDA

1. Approval of UDC meeting record of [November 04, 2025](#) and [February 03, 2026](#).

ADVISE

2. [Sidewalk Café Guidebook-UDR26019](#) – *Advisory Review & Final Action*

Urban Design Committee's agendas may be accessed on the Internet at
<https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/Planning-Department/Boards-and-Commissions/Urban-Design-Committee>

ACCOMMODATION NOTICE

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MEETING RECORD

Advanced public notice of the Urban Design Committee meeting was posted on the County-City bulletin board and the Planning Department's website.

NAME OF GROUP: URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Tuesday, November 4, 2025, 3:00 p.m., County-City Building, City Council Chambers, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mark Canney, Jill Grasso, Michael Harpster, Gill Peace and Michelle Penn. Emily Deeker and Tom Huston absent.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Arvind Gopalakrishnan, Paul Barnes, Collin Christopher and Krist Merfeld of the Planning and Development Services Department; Brandon Kosek, owner of Bison Witches and other interested parties.

Chair Penn called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Penn said the Urban Design Committee action today is an advisory review on agenda item 2.

Penn then called for the approval of the minutes for the regular meetings held on October 7, 2025.

Motion for approval of the minutes made by Peace, seconded by Grasso and approved 5-0: Canney, Grasso, Harpster, Peace and Penn voting "yes". Deeker and Huston absent.

ADVISORY REVIEW

UDR25105 Bison Witches Sidewalk Café- shades review 13th and P Street

Members present: Canney, Grasso, Harpster, Peace and Penn. Deeker and Huston absent.

Arvind Gopalakrishnan, Planning and Development Services Department, 555 S 10th Street Ste 213, Lincoln, NE

came forward and stated that in the June meeting, we discussed the presentation that was given by Gill Peace and the Bison Witches team. We were all in support of and also liked the idea of having more transparency by offsetting this blue wall. Reinforcing the importance of transparency from P Street and the neutral color for the low height segmented walls was also an important concept. After the last meeting some shade options have come for review.

The city's current code does not address shades or previously approved sidewalk cafes with shades. We are working on an ongoing sidewalk café standards document, which is stating that the minimum openness factor for these shades to be at least 10-14 %. Gopalakrishnan mentioned that Brandon Kosek the owner of Bison Witches is present today. Brandon's engineer and Gopalakrishnan had a conversation deciding that the 15% openness would be too much and the gap would be a lot. They would have to add an insect net or mosquito net on the inside. This would take away the transparency. So something between 10-14% should be fine.

Most shade companies mention that they are 0-14% with 14% being the highest. The samples that are before us today are 3-5%. Our recommendation is to get something above 5. 10-14% would be appropriate and it is thought to be because of the blue wall and how dark it already looks from the street. Pictures were shown to display that concept and how a 3-5% could look. It looks brighter when there is light outside and when you are looking from inside to outside. However when looking outside to inside it still looks pretty dark. Some of the internal walls still make it look dark, but there is a space where the sky light can be seen. We would like your advice or recommendation on the 10% or even a lighter color potentially. When you look at this space from the square, it can be hard to see if it is a darker color with a lower openness factor. 15% can be a lot considering there is no point in having 2 shades. Gill had submitted this sample back in July, but according to the applicant it is not very durable. Gopalakrishnan held up a clear piece of plastic. This is why it was transitioned to the drapes.

Penn asked is the design still intact or are we just talking about the shade? Or are we going to screens now?

Gopalakrishnan stated that the design has not changed. It is just a picture to show the shades and how they look in another project.

Peace responded that they had looked at a product from Canada. It is very durable and would be very transparent, not that different from the sample here. If it works in Canada, then it is going to work here. It turns out that there are some local suppliers that can do a much more cost effective job. It's the material that goes into the roller shades that will provide as much transparency as possible and as much function. Peace said he brought a 1, 5 and a 10 and maybe those are the same as the samples, if you hold it up with the light behind it. It looks really good and you can see through it. If the space is backlit inside, it will be really transparent. We have some lighter colors and that is probably where the committee is going to lean, but Peace said he did not want to be the one to propose that idea.

Grasso responded that she thought the point was to keep the wind element out.

Peace commented that this is the other part of it. If you go too low like a 1%, it will hold in more heat. Peace thought that the owner Brandon was trying to find the right balance. If it is more open, then the heaters will have to crank to hold that temperature.

Grasso asked, so you are moving towards a screen or a solid piece of vinyl?

Brandon Kosek, Owner of Bison Witches; replied he would not install the clear vinyl, and that is what he has been advised to do. It would not hold up through a winter and would need to be replaced every year. It would also look bad within a year. If it was the only option, he would not do it because it does not make sense.

Canney replied when we talk about screening and the light and dark, isn't it more important about the interior space then being able to see into that space from the outside?

Grasso stated that the initial standpoint was to be able to see into the space and that wasn't the case. It is not the fact that we could not see, but the whole design of the piece, by keeping it a vibrant part of the courtyard and outdoor seating. At the beginning we were able to see into the space.

Canney commented why is it important to see in? Shouldn't it be about the customer experience inside the restaurant? Canney stated in his experience in this type of setting, he is not spending a lot of time looking outside, but is in the space. If it is dark it will be more of a right element in the space and the lighter is going to get dirty. That will be more apparent.

Grasso responded that it is a catch 22 because, the darker the color allows you to see out better than the lighter color. It is because when you are inside you have light on the other side. A darker shade would let you look out better if you want to.

Kosek said the darker color is more visible either way. Lighter colors are going to reflect the light.

Grasso replied that the initial discussion was the fact of trying to see in or that they would be rolled up when the elements are nice outside.

Canney stated it doesn't matter if you can see the people or their heads when you are walking in this space. If there is not any distractions of the people or activity is that more use of the space and is that more fitting to the art of the concentric circle and the lines of the space?

Grasso commented that it is a better design and looks better on the corner so maybe the color of the shade material is less important.

Penn asked what were the colors that were being used?

Peace said the original color selected was a shade of gray. It was a very neutral kind of background gray for the panels at the base and then the steel is already a darker gray. The idea was to stick to a darker gray and then a little bit is seen on the storefront. Then a dark bronze is used that matches the building. These colors then become the background, so that the primary colors in the plaza will stand out all the more.

Grasso replied that a nice cocoa color from the brown in the storefront would blend in with brick on the building. The dark will hold up better in the space, when sitting outside than just another gray color. Something that is a little bit warmer but still dark would look good. When you are in the space it will be easier to see out. These are motorized and is not a permanent structure and would be rolled up when it is nice outside. All the things that we have asked for have been achieved.

Kosek commented that engineer for this company has not done 10% in years, they do 3 or 5%. 10% has been a recommendation, but it is a very minimal difference between them. We want space activated with people inside. If it is not comfortable inside, people won't be inside. There also needs to be a balance and so the lower % the more comfortable it will be. Yet it will still protect from elements November through April. Kosek replied that he is not sure if 10% would work, but the places they have installed 3-5% have worked well. Spending \$50,000 and not knowing if it will work or not is concerning, when we know that 5% will work and there is not much difference in the transparency between 5 and 10%.

Grasso said they have stopped doing 10% because of all the complaints. The difference between 3 and 5 is very minimal, so she would recommend the 5% and suggested trying a sample for a few days. This way it would let you see what feels the best.

Canney asked if the color was cocoa?

Peace commented that he agreed with having some warmth, because the gray can come off a little cool. The experience inside should really be more important, than the outside.

Arvind responded that in this case the experience outside is also considered important because, it is a city owned park. If it was a regular sidewalk café it would have been a little different, when we looked at the openness, it was more the visibility than elements.

Grasso responded that they look so different outside, and the design is like a day today they would be rolled up.

Penn asked if they all go up and down at same time or is there the ability to close the end?

Peace replied to the drawings that were put together did not specify that. It was being left to the electrical installer. However, it would be pretty nice, if they had the ability to go up or down individually and maybe a master switch that was all or nothing. If there is a day to have a couple open, it would be nice to have that opportunity. The other thing is the sample compared to what it is now, which is red vinyl that doesn't allow much to be seen. But if you can see lights or maybe a tv and people moving, and it is a nice day then there is still activity going on and that would look nice.

Penn commented that maybe they could be controlled with the sun coming in by closing them on the West and keeping the North and South open. They have not seen people hanging out in the courtyard. It would be nice to lower the screen for eating, when you don't want people around for privacy.

Kosek stated that it sounds like there would be times in the summer when it would be nice to shut one or two shades, to block the sun on the side for evening times.

Peace stated that it might make it complex, but they might want the ability to lower it halfway or 2/3.

Grasso agreed each would be wired separate with a remote and that would be additional money. It would be a nice addition, and simpler than what is happening now.

Grasso said she would make a motion, but this was just an advisory.

Penn agreed, yes just an advisory.

Barnes came forward and stated he wanted to clarify things that come from the code where sidewalk cafes are located and permitted. There is a purpose statement in the code that talks about why we want to promote the sidewalk cafes and there is a public interest. This includes making B zone districts active and attractive pedestrian environments. Providing the opportunity for creative colorful pedestrian focused commercial activities on a day or night and a seasonal basis or encouraging commercial activities which adds excitement, charm and diversity and good design.

Barnes continued that it is important to know that we have talked about Arvind's and Brandon's statements. This is also a public space that needs to have some interaction to it. This is where the staff was coming from when looking at 10% or higher, even though there is an interest in the comfort of the patrons. This space is different than an office building that would have shades on the inside. Barnes commented he just wanted to make that point.

Penn asked Grasso to discuss some of the issues with using the 10% screen.

Grasso replied that the key to this, that is super important is to just have them open as much as possible and as often as you can. That is where we started with this, in that

when nobody would sit outside because of the weather, you could roll them down and make it usable. Of course, no one will be out there when it is snowing.

Kosek said that is what we want and our customers want.

Canney responded that he would like to add to the point being the vibrancy and color. Since you are in the middle of a public space you don't want to compete where they may be an art piece or sculpture and the aesthetics might be different. You don't want something to take away from this space, because of the prominence of art and the tile wall. The simplicity of this space needs to be acknowledged, because other places may want more of an ornamental sort of inspired enclosure or something.

Grasso stated that this is to be a sidewalk café and we are trying to enclose it. The 10 percent does not do a lot. They act as more of a privacy filter. The sun will still come in and it does not provide enough sun barrier and have to be switched out. The function is not there. Will this be visited again in a year, because it is not working?

Peace commented that Grasso has the most experience with this type of material. If it is closer to 5.

Grasso replied you will still not be able to see through them and it needs to be functional and keeping them open and more of a warm color will help.

Canney asked if we can make a motion?

Penn said it is an advisory and do not need to make a motion correct?

Kopalakrishnan responded that you can make a motion, if you want to.

Grasso agreed to make a motion to approve the warmer colors of cocoa and charcoal in a 5%. We want to be able to see movement and shadows.

Canney seconded the motion.

Penn commented that this could be an example and we might think the 5% works right and maybe that would adjust the whole idea of what was being considered, which is the percentage.

Harpster stated that the visibility from the outside to the inside depends so much on the lighting conditions, the ambient lighting conditions and whether you have them on the West wall of the building illuminating like that. This would make it much more transparent from the exterior if you have something in the background essentially that is catching light and able to see the light. He thought that most of the lighting in this space is just hung from the ceiling straight down.

Kosek replied that Edison's bulbs are hanging there as well.

Harpster responded that it is beyond the scope of what is being discussed, but it is also continuing to promote the idea of transparency and activity. Activating the space lighting will be key, to helping this feel as transparent as they can feel.

Grasso asked, so now are the shades that go up and down on the storefront system on the South still required? Even if you could do a gate that people could access.

Peace commented that the storefront is set for the reason of having a door for egress and there are some limitations to this chunk of storefront, that is seen right here. There are some limitations at the way the inside corners of the 2 different roller shades hit. We are trying to use those locations as an opportunity as well as some existing columns. We want to have a good egress that is a storefront and not a storm door. It seems like it should have the storefront, but if the recommendation is to eliminate it, then that can be looked at as well.

Grasso replied could it be a partial height door or a gate in the guardrail, since there is nothing that is permanent? But it probably needs more structure to hold up the shades. It is not like there is a building with a solid wall, where we need a door. We have open air now and no permanent wall structure.

Peace stated he was not sure he was fully understanding this idea.

Grasso said it would be that this space is all open with just a roller shade and had a gate here?

Peace asked if the shade would be rolled down to the top of the gate?

Grasso responded yes, because it is not a permanent structure.

Peace commented it would take fighting the shade out of the way if you were in an egress situation.

Grasso said she meant it would just be fabric rolled up and was just asking the question?

Peace replied that it was not known if that had ever been considered, but it could be looked at. It was something that wasn't thought of because it was not going to be permanent. Clear glass and egress friendly to meet the egress code, we can sure look at that.

Penn stated she was thinking you could not go through a shade.

Peace agreed that there would probably be some objections to having that kind of shade.

Grasso also agreed with that, however if it is a sliding door that will not work. It is like if there was a patio and screens were placed all the way around it.

Peace commented that yes, if they only went part of the way, they will look into that idea.

Penn asked what color is the glass?

Peace responded that solar band 40 is always used, which is the clearest low E glass that you can get. That was the intent to use the clear code compliant glass.

Penn questioned if there will be spots where you can see in all the way?

Peace replied yes, that is correct. Especially along the street.

Penn stated she like the idea of keeping the glass and it gives the ability to see what is going on inside.

Peace agreed that it was put in the specs as solar band 40.

Canney asked now what?

Penn said does the motion still carry? Or does the motion approve doing the warmer color of 5% ? Ok, and we had a second motion.

Canney seconds the motion.

ACTION:

Grasso approved the motion, Canney seconded and motion approved 4-0. Canney, Grasso, Harpster, and Penn voting “yes”; Peace abstained.

Gopalakrishnan stated that in the ongoing standards it will be 10-14%. This is a little different site because it is on a park and there is tower square. We just don't want every other sidewalk café to be doing this and then be fully closed off.

Grasso asked if there was another place like that?

Gopalakrishnan mentioned Lazlos.

Penn replied Lazlo's downtown.

Canney responded that it is hard when it is an established business, that is already that sort of community. So if it is up or down, does it really have that negative effect on traffic or interaction?

Barnes commented that a lot of cities have the codes to be that fencing barriers or planters cannot block visibility from patrons to the street or vice versa. That is very common and that is what we are trying to avoid.

Canney stated that is understood.

Gopalakrishnan replied that in this case, if it is now all closed it is going against the side triangle rules because it is not transparent at all.

Canney mentioned that he knows that from dining in some of these places a person does not want the sun in their face. It is also nice to get a break from traffic or pedestrians. Even though eating outside comes with that.

Barnes said you could eat inside and there is an attractive space in the pedestrian realm that's the whole point of these things and we want people to see in and out.

Peace asked if anyone knows the percentage openness of the ones that are being shown?

Gopalakrishnan stated he did not know.

Gopalakrishnan replied it is something like 3% or something. I don't know because it is not visible and there is no light inside and you just see the dark windows in the background. So, it can be seen when there is light in the background.

Gopalakrishnan stated that more sidewalk cafes are not going to have light inside.

Grasso said these are retractable.

Gopalakrishnan agreed that these can be rolled up.

Grasso commented that they have them rolled down most of the time.

Gopalakrishnan replied that they are tied and they are not attached to anything.

Canney stated that pulling the sun on the West at certain times of the day, is something that may just need to be monitored and there is a clause about certain hours that you base it off of the sun.

Penn responded that it will be interesting to use this as sort of a case project.

Barnes said once it is up, it is up.

Grasso agreed that was the hard part. Should they have ever been allowed to do any of that and put the bubble up? The guess is they got caught.

Penn said yes.

Grasso commented that there was just a building addition.

Canney replied that he wasn't sure if it could be looked at like that. Isn't that the kind of activity you want in a space like that people eating, drinking and being present like it is sort of a positive activity versus the negative activities that can sometimes occur in public spaces.

Grasso replied that it is nice to sit out there and it would be nice to have a shade down on the North side pretty much all of the time, because of the activity. Grasso was unsure if this would be a good case study.

Peace asked do you know the lifespan because Brandon had mentioned the clear plexiglass might be a yearly or biyearly.

Grasso commented that this will not last forever.

Peace agreed that he wondered that, if it is a 5 year thing until it breaks down?

Grasso responded it has the same properties as the clear vinyl. But that will last a little bit longer, because it does not have any air movement going through it. It is just like those flag signs people put up. After a while they get dirty and stuff it hitting it, so maybe guessing it would last a year. If they are rolled up, then they will hold up a lot better and longer.

Gopalakrishnan asked if it is water resistant and if it rains or snows does it start to collect or just feel wet?

Grasso replied it shouldn't, if it is like the heavy plastic. Things here do not last as long. They use this material on a lot of the newer houses that they screen in entire patios.

Gopalakrishnan stated that in most of the case studies, they were all residential and they like maximum openness, which is why companies advertise the 14-15%.

Grasso mentioned that they did this at 803 Q Street on the second floor. The roller shades have been up for 3-4 years now. We should see how well they have held up. They only put them down when the sun faces West. They are up most of the time, unless it is really windy.

Barnes mentioned this was Arvind's first project when he started and now it is finally getting finished.

UPDATES:

There were no updates for the committee.

Kopalakrishnan discussed with Gill, Grasso and Penn that their term is up as of 2/1/2026. If they want to renew, please let us know. Gill, Grasso and Penn all motioned that they would like to renew their term.

ACTION:

There was no further discussion on this item and no further business to discuss, so the meeting was adjourned at 3:43 pm.

MEETING RECORD

Advanced public notice of the Urban Design Committee meeting was posted on the County-City bulletin board and the Planning Department's website.

NAME OF GROUP: URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 3:00 p.m., County-City Building, City Council Chambers, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mark Canney, Emily Deeker, Jill Grasso, Michael Harpster, Tom Huston, and Michelle Penn.

ATTENDANCE: Gill Peace absent

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Arvind Gopalakrishnan, Paul Barnes, Collin Christopher and Kristi Merfeld of the Planning and Development Services Department; Hallie Salem of Urban Development; Sophia Swanson, Elizabeth Kramer and Cole Wycoff with HDR and other interested parties.

ATTENDANCE:

Chair Penn called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Penn said the Urban Design Committee action today is final action on all items on the agenda

Penn then called for the approval of the minutes for the regular meetings held on November 4, 2025.

Motion for approval of the minutes made by Huston, seconded by Grasso; Canney, Harpster and Huston voting "yes"; Deeker abstained; Grasso and Penn recused. There was not a quorum to approve the minutes, so they will carry over to the next meeting.

Peace was absent

ADVISE:

UDR26005 University Square Parking Garage Façade Improvements

Advisory Review and Final Action

February 3, 2026

Members present: Canney, Deeker, Grasso, Harpster, Huston, and Penn. Peace absent

Arvind Gopalakrishnan, Planning and Development Services Department, 555 S 10th Street Ste 203, Lincoln, NE came forward and stated that this project is located at the Northwest corner of 14th and O Street in the Music District. It proposes a comprehensive series of façade and architectural improvements to the parking garage. The university garage includes 5 parcels on the first floor of the building fronting 14th Street. In addition to the entry and exit driveways, city staff are working closely with our property owners and the design team to ensure that all proposed façade improvement results in a cohesive and unified building appearance. Last October the UDC reviewed a conceptual façade improvement for one of the projects with Tallgrass. This proposal addresses the exterior treatment of the entire parking garage except the Tallgrass, although they're designed would follow and compliment the overall look. It will also depend on the potential tenant so Tallgrass will come back with the design eventually. The proposed scope includes material upgrades to existing ground floor retail facades, excluding the Tallgrass selling space enhancement to the canopies and signages along the street facing elevations. The façade lighting enhancements and the upper garage levels and a redesigned central pedestrian entrance on 14th Street. The proposed improvements will complement the planned streetscape enhancements along 14th Street. This project is limited to façade lighting and signage upgrades. City staff and design teams have determined that these improvements will not impact their project, O street or music street construction timeline. That is because new fittings or construction within the public right of way are required. Together these interventions are intended to strengthen the garage feet and visual appearance. They will also improve pedestrian experience and better integrate the structure into the surrounding music district context. We are requesting some advisory review and final action in this because the project involves both public and private funding. Gopalakrishnan stated that it would be turned over to HCR to talk about the design of the garage.

Cole Wycoff, Architect; HCR; 1248 O Street Suite 716, Lincoln, NE came forward and stated he will discuss the project at University Square Garage and it is a façade improvement project. A lot of work that we have executed on this project is through many conversations with City officials and the Downtown Lincoln Association. The

efforts have been going on to create opportunities for improvement along the 14th Street corridor now referred to as Beamer Street, as part of the music district development in this area. This is the next step in terms of public projects or public involvement that we have the privilege to be a part of. First, the music box down the street and the Eagle Park garage to the South. The street frontage on 14th Street is important as it relates to the music district. The improvements that are being shared today fall into 2 primary zones. There is the garage entrance improvement as well as some additional facade improvements. Above the pedestrian realm, there are some proposed facade improvements. We are planning a new intervention that highlights the entrance to this garage off 14th Street and draws people in and calls attention to this pedestrian experience. It connects the pedestrian realm to the core of the elevators and stairs, which is used to access the levels of parking. The idea for the development of this element is born from music-inspired themes and in this case, strings and notation in an abstract way to musical instruments.

This area, shown in the center, is planned to have an installation that highlights the entrance, which is composed of both lighting elements and metal rods. These promote an image of strings sort of folding and inner weaving among themselves, stretching from the top of the garage down to the pedestrian realm. Then, ultimately back into the garage underneath the structure itself, back to the public elevator core. An image of the garage was shown in daylight for reference. The left-hand side of the image is the Tall Grass property that Arvind had described earlier. This is not part of the scope that is being shared today, but the elements in the center of the screen are part of that as additional facade improvements on the right-hand side of the image.

The lights are intended to be color-changing and will have a dynamic visual effect on the garage. There is a plan to be programmable and dynamic in addition to color changing. The city will have the option to program into this. A similar view more North up the street will show not only the elements associated with that entrance, but also the proliferation of some of these vertical light elements. This facade will have a similar type of controllability. We are forecasting some potential improvements underneath for the garage as well. This is not the focus of approval today, but this is a view looking at that core for reference, walking off of 14th Street to the elevator core and pedestrian experience that might come to fruition under the garage. On the left side of the image is a wall surface that is a future wall that could come into existence with the addition of the Tallgrass property, so we are planning ahead. When this improvement happens someday, some informed assumptions about the opportunities for signage will be made. Art installation and other interactive elements might be installed underneath the garage. An additional element that is being explored is some graphics associated

with the garage, where some thermoplastic ground covering is applied to the ground plane underneath the garage. Again, recalling the same theme described for the façade element itself.

Beyond the entrance we have been working collaboratively with the city and the property owners that own the condo retail frontages underneath the garage to develop a strategy that updates and improves the materials. The general aesthetic of those façade frontages here, the view from O Street to the Northwest at the corner of 14th Street, showing more of the lighting. It proliferates itself around the upper portions of the garage and then begins to look at the material improvements beneath the existing canopy to those facades. More specifically, a rainscreen system composed of cast stone material is being evaluated. Wycoff displayed a slide that shows some of the construction associated with that, as Arvind had mentioned in his introduction. Part of the benefits of this strategy is it facilitates a material that is durable, and we believe is appropriate for this urban setting, while also being able to be installed without the need for additional footings and potential conflicts with the ongoing project O street work. Furthermore, we are evaluating or planning for some improvements to the canopy itself. Such as refinishing the surfaces of the canopies as well as some new lighting underneath the canopy shown on the image on the right. The opportunity for some suspended signage will be able to be customizable for the tenants of the retail spaces.

Another view of the same area shows this in greater detail, how the material improvements work collaboratively with the upgrades to the canopies. The color of the façade that can be seen is a darker gray. Wycoff brought samples so that it can be seen what is being planned and in real life. As it was mentioned, it is a cast stone with a deep, slightly dark gray color. The intention with this is to contrast the color palette of the existing garage with a bit of a darker neutral tone. The material being passed around is planned for the façade. The other materials are associated with the project O Street streetscape. There are 2 colors of concrete. The darker color is what will be closest to the facades and placed right around the perimeter of these retail spaces. The smaller, darker sample is the paver planned for the project on O Street, again just for reference. It was shown in the plan that the darker portions of paving here, adjacent to the building proper lighter paving around the perimeter and then some of those pavers in these zones along 14th Street.

Here is a bit more detail on the basis of the design that is being used for the façade improvements. The material for our rainscreen system is the cast stone and we are developing this system assuming that it will be an open joint rainscreen system with

fastening happening in a concealed way along the edges of the panels, like it is shown here with the effort being to minimize. Access and opportunity for debris and other elements to get behind the rainscreen proper, so this is a continuous track that these panels sit on. Then some elevational views starting with the North looking at the North elevation. This is the entrance into the garage of vehicular entrance, we are planning the material improvements all along this section of the North façade as well as some improvements to the existing ticket booth underneath the garage as it wraps around 14th Street. The extend of the lighting is planned at this entrance and then the façade improvements again planning for the idea of ground covering. Then we wrap around to the South more of the same improvements and the façade improvements beyond the lighting really being focused to the area below the existing canopies.

Penn stated that she is recused from the discussion and voting on this manner. She could facilitate the discussion to get it going.

Grasso asked with the existing canopies are they looking at recladding?

Wycoff replied, yes..

Grasso responded then adding some integrated light, on the other side.

Wycoff said correct.

Huston commented that the Tallgrass space is the former bank drive through for Commercial Federal that has been inactive and used for illegal parking for 20 years. So it will be active space now?

Wycoff stated that he couldn't speak as to what the plans are for that space, it is not part of their scope.

Salem replied that they did the redevelopment agreement with Tallgrass. There are 2 phases that are being considered. One is putting in any of the utilities and footings related to the future façade, so that they can be installed without getting into the paving of 14th Street. At which time they have a tenant, it would likely build the rest of the commercial build out. The South wall of the pedestrian walkway and then the façade on lighting 14th Street and the way it is configured still allows for some parking. This keeps some space between the building to the South, so that they have a fire egress.

Huston mentioned that it marks the pedestrian entrance to the parking garage from 14th Street. It was always been less clear.

Salem stated that right now it is our intention to take the emphasis off that entrance to that garage there and focus it towards P Street. This is because of some of the conflicts with pedestrians and now with the pedestrian walkway being extended.

Huston said the automobile traffic is kind of awkward to begin with because you have to weave through the parking garage to get to the entrance.

Salem responded that it is a two-way alley, without being sized to be two-way. It does create an issue.

Huston replied that he thought it was a great idea and liked the opportunity to address the music district and part of the downtown master plan.

Canney commented that he liked the design inspiration of the piano, for the embellishments. Is there any significance of the 9 and 9 or how was it determined?

Wycoff said in terms of the number of threads, it is an abstraction. Part of the consideration is just density and creating something that feels scale wise sort of appropriate for the width of that structural bay. Beyond that, it wasn't the intent to be overly heavy handed with the proportions reflecting that of a guitar or piano. Music is terribly specific. They just want to recall the visual language of a musical instrument more abstractly and speak more generally to the idea of music.

Canney just wondered if there was something that he was missing.

Jill asked if they have looked at the specific jointing patterns of the new façade and keep those as large as possible?

Wycoff stated yes that is the intention. Large spaces that we are attempting to clad are really the column enclosures between each bay of the retail frontage and then the panels above the storefronts of those frontages. So the intention is to maximize the size of the panels for 2 reasons. One is to create as monolithic looking element as possible and then 2 it is just more economical, so these panels can be quite large. That is approximately 6 feet in long dimension and approximately 3 or 4 feet in the short dimension. We are unsure of the exact dimensions of the limits are specifically and it depends on who might win the contract. Or in terms of proprietary nature, which

material gets chosen. To answer the question, the intention is to use as large of panel as possible and minimize the joint thing as much as possible.

Grasso replied that this is great and it was briefly looked at months ago and discussed.

Huston commented that this project is 37 years old and needs to be refreshed.

Penn asked them to talk a little bit about South façade and what the plans are there.

Wycoff responded that there are some interesting nuances on the South, and it was mentioned that the entrance to the secondary core here includes the area, that is being shown on the screen. There are existing soffits and existing sort of freestanding columns that hold up. The intention is to continue the material from the façade out and reclad all of those elements in consistent material. We are anticipating some of the graphic appliqué of the branded element of the garage happening in a much smaller way at this entrance. Just to recall 14th Street is going to be a secondary entrance in that way, so some of the graphic elements can be seen at that entrance to recall the theme.

Deeker asked if that is the existing or if the half hoop cycle will be taken off on the University?

Wycoff replied that above these columns today is a semicircular sign. There is signage at the entrance on 14th Street that will also come down as part of this project. There is also a 3rd sign on top of the elevator core of the garage that would come off as well.

Huston wondered if the garage was going to be renamed?

Wycoff commented that there have been discussions about that, but not sure if that has been established.

Hallie Salem, Urban Development Department; stated she had not introduced herself earlier. Parking is also in this department, and it has been discussed to rename the garage, as they are not set on the University Square Garage name. It seems confusing to some people. It has been talked about, but it will not be Beamer garage, but it could be something else related to the music district. We will have to see what that would be. It's important to have wayfinding around the garage, so people know how to get to the stair towers, but other than that, there will probably not be a lot of names listed on the garage.

Canney responded what is the process for those banners and is that a public art component?

Salem said it is not intended to be a public art component, but more for events. We expect as events occur or promotions for other downtown and music district related projects it might be put up by the event programmer. It depends on what they are meant to be for, but more temporary.

Deeker commented on the South elevation, it was noticed that the light element on the far right hand doesn't show how it is wrapped around.

Wycoff mentioned that it wasn't mentioned directly. This is another array similar to the 14th Street entrance up the street. The intention with this was to just add a bit of emphasis to the corner. This is a very visible corner and we wanted to carry some of that theme to that corner and promote the music district from that vantage point.

Grasso replied that it is an important part of the overall design for the signage for naming the garage and will bring some cohesiveness. This will be a part of this when the drawings go out?

Salem agreed these are the schematics and as we get down into the details of the design, we will identify some locations.

Grasso responded that part of the signage on this building is nice that it is a little simpler and more up to date. The signage is going to be a huge component and to keep this kind of uniformity as it is around the building. Will each tenant be in charge of their own canopy sign or is that something that will have strict parameters?

Salem stated that Heath McComber is the owner of these retail spaces, and would work directly with the retailers on the signage inserts for those signs and we would install as part of the canopy.

Grasso asked if the framework is part of this and will there will be parameters?

Salem agreed "yes"

Grasso replied that this is one of the things talked about last time is the cohesiveness as you turn the corner.

Canney asked when looking at the lights, is there concern about damage or people vandalizing them? Can this be talked about a little bit more and the structure of the lights? Even though it is conceptual at this point, is there some sort of assurance of their long-term standing in this design.

Wycoff commented that this is a great question. The lights that are being used come in 4-foot segments. The other areas of concern would be on the decks of the garage, where people can reach them and do something with them. The set-off distance is going to play a factor in mitigating some of our concerns. The structure of what is there will be installed on a rigid steel or aluminum backup.

Canney mentioned how it was appreciated that his questions were answered and that it was being looked into, because vandalism and maintenance were important things.

Wycoff stated that the reason the 4-foot segments were mentioned is because it could be swapped or replaced without disrupting the entire length of each of them.

Harpster asked what is the approximate size of the fixtures that the 4-foot segments were describing?

Wycoff felt that they were about one inch diameter.

Grasso commented that the lighting is lovely and there is not too much of that downtown and it will add a lot.

Canney responded that it is nice to see different lighting come into play.

ACTION:

Penn asked for a motion, Huston approved the motion, Canney seconded and the motion was approved 4-0. Canney, Deeker, Harpster, and Huston voting “yes”; Penn and Grasso recused; and Peace was absent.

Penn said the second item on the agenda is the Urban Design Committee 2025 Annual Report and it is a final action.

UDC 2025 Annual Report

February 3, 2026

Gopalakrishnan stated that there were 7 projects for the year of 2025, a little less than 2024. There were some that had multiple reviews and went on for a few months. Included in this total is one TIF project, 3 city led projects, one sidewalk café and 2 private projects. The only TIF project was the Foxtail Meadows which is also just an amendment to the original plan, which was around revisions focusing on one of their phases. This was replacing Single-family attached homes with attached townhomes, to increase affordability and unit count. This was reviewed once, but before we did that we had Michael Harpster join our Urban Design Committee. As for the city led projects, we had staff present sidewalk design standards for the H 2 district to support its transition to a mixed-use district that encourages high quality redevelopment and improved workability. Also there were new established streetscape standards requiring sidewalks to be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the curb. This was a response to portions of O Street and 48th Street where narrow sidewalks create an unsafe pedestrian environment.

Next was University Place which had 3 major recommendations. One was along the 48th Street corridor and strengthening surrounding residential areas. We had some historic preservation efforts and some neighborhood revitalization strategies that also included expanding the blight study area and establishing a new TIF district to support public improvements. There was another major project the PBC garage that came to UDC multiple times and the city worked with the design team to come up with a design for the parking garage expansion at 425 S 10th Street, just North of the City County building. It involves expanding 2 level parking structured located North of the city county building by adding 3 levels of precast concrete parking increasing capacity from 470 to approximately 966. This project went through a rigorous 6-month review period and several meetings with the city staff and around 3 meetings with the Urban Design Committee. The designs and discussions mostly revolved around façade articulation and materials, architectural lighting, vehicular access and circulation entry and egress organization. Signage, landscaping, and the product relationship with the proposed project.

Over the last few years, Bison Witches has finally received approval for the revised sidewalk café design. This had multiple issues through the included opaque. Gopalakrishnan mentioned this was his first project with the Urban Design Committee. This included segmented low walls and transparent storefront doors and windows, and rolled on screens. This significantly improved transparent aesthetics and café connections to the tower square during the café location with the city-owned park, and the importance of maintaining visibility. The committee and staff reviewed

multiple shade options and ultimately recommended approval of a shade with a 5% openness, and that is something the city did not have any standards for before, and now we do.

There were also some private projects such as Black Hills proposing relocating gas meters from inside buildings to exterior locations along O Street to improve safety and emergency access. This initial focus was on sites along near Walgreen's, 13th and O Street and Bloom on O Street. The city staff and Urban Design Committee reviewed 3 placement options and recommended the one that kept the meters inside the building, while locating risers and regulators on the outside. We also discussed broader standards and strategies to minimize visual and pedestrian impacts in the high traffic areas.

Next was the Tallgrass development façade improvement, which is related to the previous agenda item. It is part of the University Square Garage. There has been preliminary feedback on façade materials, colors, and streetscape interaction, along with approval to proceed with the façade design while allowing flexibility for refinement to align with the music district construction schedule. We have not discussed much about other parts of the garage at the time, as city staff continues to work with the design team to coordinate some design for the entire garage. Tallgrass is expected to return soon once they update their design based on their potential new tenant.

Deeker commented that there is an update to Walgreen's gas meters. Black Hills was able to move that to the alleyway, so that is not happening anymore. It is by YaYa's.

Huston replied it was a light agenda for 2025, maybe due to the interest rates.

Gopalakrishnan said previous years there were 14-16 projects.

FINAL ACTION

Penn asked for a motion to approve and Deeker approved the motion, Harpster seconded and the motion was approved 4-0. Canney, Deeker, Harpster, and Huston voting "yes"; Penn and Grasso recused; and Peace was absent.

UPDATES:

There were no updates for the committee.

ACTION:

There was no further discussion on this item and no further business to discuss, so the meeting was adjourned at 3:44 pm.

URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

APPLICATION NUMBER	Urban Design Record #UDR26005
APPLICATION TYPE	Advisory review and final action
ADDRESS/LOCATION	All B-zoned and O-1 districts in Lincoln.
HEARING DATE	March 03, 2025
ADDITIONAL MEETINGS	-
APPLICANT	Paul Barnes, pbarnes@lincoln.ne.gov
STAFF CONTACT	Arvind Gopalakrishnan, 402-441-6361, agopalakrishnan@lincoln.ne.gov

RECOMMENDATION: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Summary of Request

The City recognizes the many benefits of sidewalk cafes but also understands the need to update regulations and streamline the review and approval process. The Sidewalk Café package addresses this need by updating Lincoln Municipal Codes and adopting new design standards.

In coordination with Project O Street, the Planning and Development Services Department has authored a text amendment change related to sidewalk cafes. Together, the text amendment and the new design standards will create more clarity and flexibility with the design and layout of sidewalk cafes while also providing for a possible administrative approval process.

The origin of this text amendment and updates to the sidewalk café design standards comes from a desire from City staff and Downtown stakeholders to update the requirements for sidewalk cafes to allow them to be better integrated into the Downtown environment.

Guidebook and Design Standards

The Sidewalk Café Guidebook is a graphic document that intends to provide clarity and guidance for permit holders regarding permitted and prohibited uses within the public right-of-way. At the same time, the Design Standards ensure that outdoor seating areas operate safely, remain accessible, and comply with all applicable City requirements while supporting an active and vibrant streetscape. The Guidebook encompasses the applicable codes and standards in a way that's easily understood.

The existing sidewalk café design standards lack sufficient guidance for applicants navigating the application materials and process. There has also been limited direction on key design elements, including permissible barriers and defining feature types, required setbacks and buffers, shades, awnings, overhead structures, lighting, heating elements, and ADA accessibility, making application review complicated for staff and applicants alike.

The proposed Guidebook addresses these gaps by presenting the content in a clear, accessible format that walks applicants through the application process, materials checklist, and permit eligibility. The Design Standards use concise text, imagery, and easy-to-understand graphics to provide guidance on all of the above elements, incorporating lessons learned from previous sidewalk café reviews and case studies from other comparable cities to help streamline the approval process.

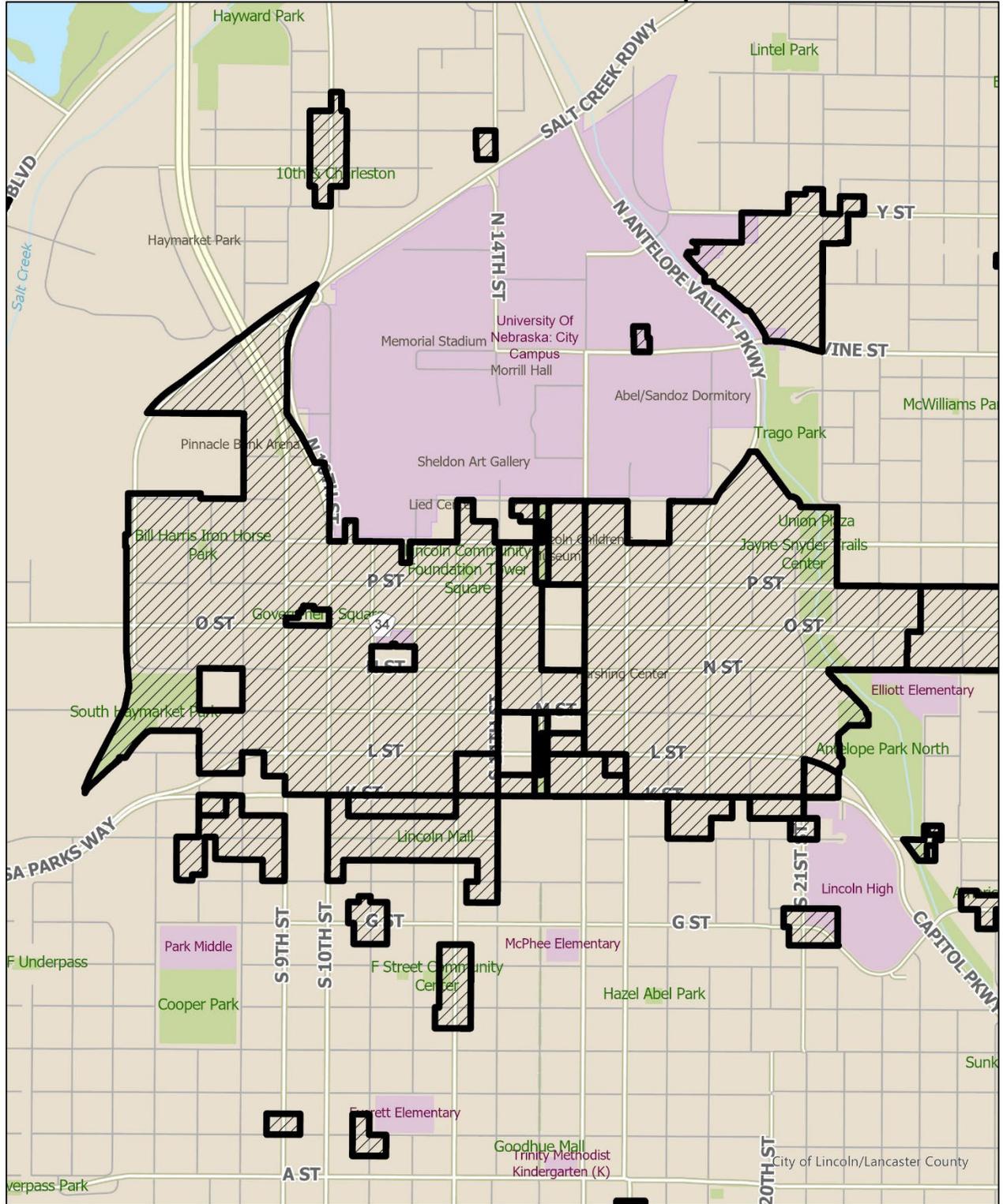
The text amendments to the code establish clearer provisions for administration and enforcement, including updated permit conditions and a revised list of required application materials. These updates are intended to improve coordination among reviewing departments and provide greater transparency for applicants.

Importantly, the amendments introduce a possible administrative approval pathway. Under the proposed changes, sidewalk café applications would be reviewed by a Sidewalk Café Review Committee consisting of representatives from the Health Department, Planning & Development Services Department, City Clerk's Office, Department of Transportation and Utilities, Police Department, Urban Development Department, and Fire Prevention Bureau. Applications that fully meet the standards outlined in the guidebook may be eligible for administrative approval and would not require UDC review. Applications that deviate from the standards may require additional review, as outlined in the proposed code.

Overall, the proposed changes are intended to create a more predictable, efficient, and enforceable framework while ensuring public safety, accessibility, and high-quality design within the public right-of-way.

The UDC is asked to provide advice and feedback on the Sidewalk Café Guidebook and the updated Design Standards, particularly as they relate to the Downtown streetscape, and on the expanded options they offer applicants in terms of café layouts and furniture.

ATTACHMENT A - Location Map



**UDR26019 - Sidewalk Cafe Text Amendment and Guidebook
(Map Focused to Downtown Extent)**



Project: _GIS\Project\DW\Drawings\UDC_LocationMaps.aprx
PDF: I:\boards\UDC\REPORTS\Location Maps



Sidewalk Café Guidebook

A Guide to Help Lincoln Businesses Develop and Maintain Sidewalk Cafés



CITY^{of} LINCOLN



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN CREATING A SIDEWALK CAFÉ

The City of Lincoln is committed to supporting local businesses. Whether you are just starting to explore the idea or ready to apply, this guide is here to walk you through every step of the process.

CAFÉ SEATING IN THE RIGHT OF WAY

Lincoln is known for its vibrant dining scene, and our local restaurants and bars provide essential economic, cultural and community benefits for our city. To support the local restaurant industry, the City of Lincoln has developed these design standards to help restaurant and bar owners continue to use the public right of way to expand their dining areas through café seating on sidewalks. This program aims to offer clear and consistent guidance for the use of outdoor dining furnishings and structures in the right of way.

ABOUT THE STANDARDS

These standards ensure that all outdoor dining installations in the public right of way are accessible for emergency responders, provide space for public transit operations and loading zones, and prevent street safety hazards. All installations must comply with ADA standards for accessibility. The standards acknowledge the importance of serving individuals with disabilities, ensuring that everyone in our community can benefit from these enhancements and seating options. By adhering to these design standards, permit holders have clarity about permitted and non-permitted uses and can ensure that their right-of-way outdoor seating meets all requirements.



APPLICATION PROCESS

After you submit an application, a team member will get in touch with you to complete the permitting process. The City of Lincoln will support applicants as much as possible to make sure they meet the permit requirements. **This is what applying for an Sidewalk Café Permit looks like:**

Step 1: Verify Eligibility

Verify that your property falls within an approved zoning district.

Step 2: Complete Application

Complete the Sidewalk Café Permit Application and submit all required materials. Make sure to:

- *Answer all questions completely*
- *Upload all required documents*
- *Pay the \$150 annual fee*

Submitting a complete application helps avoid delays.

Step 3: City Review

City staff review new applications to confirm compliance with zoning, safety, and design standards.

Step 4: Receive Your Permit

Once approved, the City Clerk's Office will contact you with next steps to finalize payment and issue your permit. Cafés must be set up as approved, display the permit on site, and remain subject to inspection.

Prepare Application Materials Checklist

Before starting your application, collect the following materials:

- Business and property information
- Required permits
- Photos of proposed furniture and equipment
- A site plan with dimensions
- Proof of insurance
- A \$5,000 bond, if applicable

Questions about the design standards or potential deviations should be directed to the Planning and Development Services Department at **402-441-7491**.

PERMIT ELIGIBILITY

Sufficient pedestrian passageway

My outdoor café would leave AT LEAST 5 feet of unobstructed clear passageway on the sidewalk.	Yes, you are eligible.
My outdoor café would leave LESS THAN 5 feet of unobstructed clear passageway on the sidewalk.	No, you are not eligible.

Alcohol sales

My outdoor café does NOT sell alcohol	Does not have any barrier around it.	Yes, you are eligible.
My outdoor café DOES sell alcohol	Does not have any barrier around it.	No, you are not eligible.
	Does have a barrier with an opening of less than 8 feet.	Yes, you are eligible.

Proximity to permanent objects in the right of way

My outdoor café:

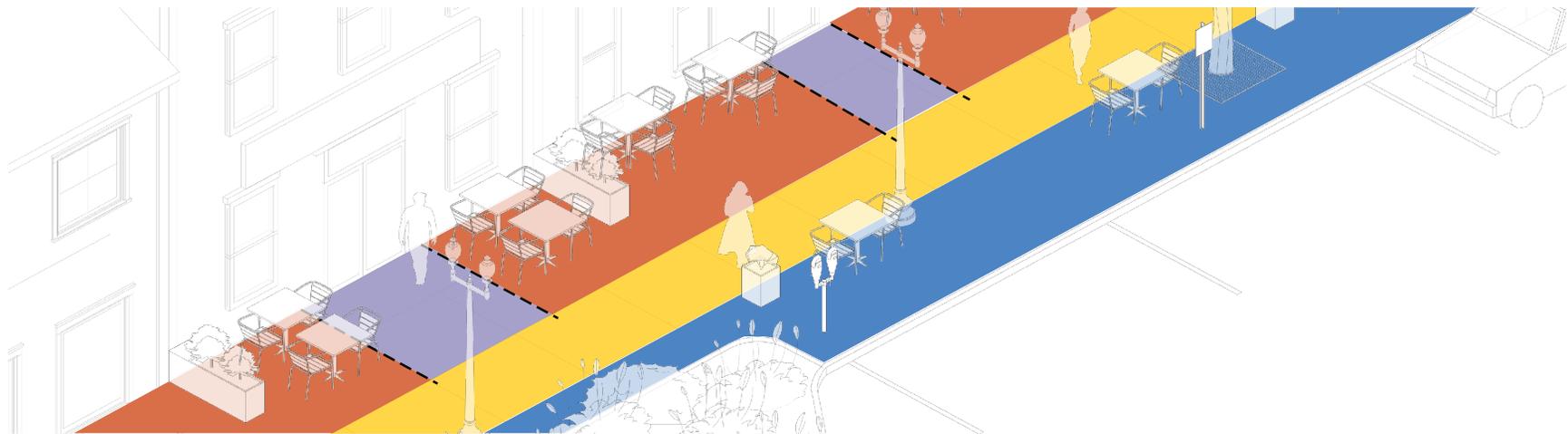
Is within 5 feet from crosswalk landings, curb ramps, bus stops, or bus shelters.	No, you are not eligible.
Is within 2 feet from the edge of the curb from driveways, parking, or loading zones.	
Is within 3 feet from fire hydrants, parking meters, signage, or bike racks.	
Has a clear zone of less than 5 feet in the front of business entry & exit points.	
Has a clear zone of less than 5 feet in front of business entry and exit points.	
Maintains a clearance of less than 10 feet from crosswalks.	
Is near an intersection or driveway, but located outside of the sight triangle defined by the City.	Yes, you are eligible.

USING THE DESIGN GUIDEBOOK

City of Lincoln Café Seating Program Design Principles

Design for maintenance • Accessible for all • Quality materials and finishes • Easily removable

Throughout the design guidebook, diagrams illustrate requirements and recommendations to obtain a sidewalk café permit.



Sidewalk Zones Explained

Curb Zone

This is the area next to the street. Café seating may be placed here if all required buffers and safety clearances are maintained.

Building Entrance Zone

Keep this space open in front of doorways to allow safe and easy access in and out of the building.

Frontage Zone

This is the area along the building where café seating is typically placed.

Pedestrian Through Zone

Keep at least 5 feet completely clear so people can walk through comfortably and safely.

SIDEWALK CAFÉ TYPES

If your café is directly against your building, there must be at least five feet of clear passageway between the café and the street. If café seating is placed both near the building and at the curb, the five-foot passageway must run between them.

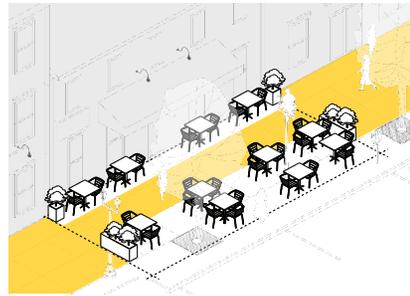
In areas with special site characteristics, the City may require a wider passageway.

 min. 5' unobstructed pedestrian passageway



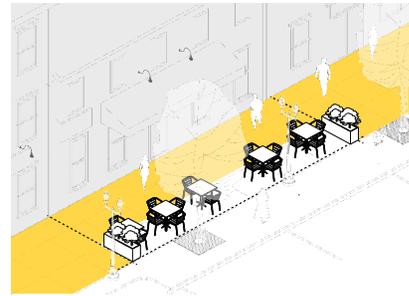
Building abutting

Sidewalk café located directly next to the building.



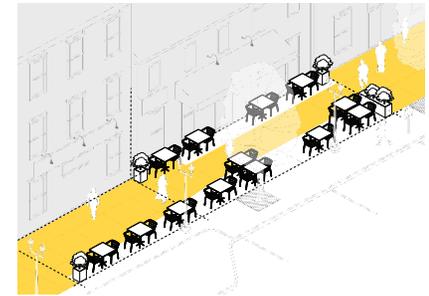
Split by pedestrian passageway

Sidewalk café on both sides of the pedestrian passageway, encroaching the curb zone.



Curbside

Sidewalk café near the curb side of the pedestrian passageway.



Split by pedestrian passageway and abutting neighboring property

Sidewalk café on both sides of the pedestrian passageway, and abutting part of the neighboring property.

SIDEWALK CAFÉ CRITERIA

Use of Public Property

Your café must sit on public sidewalk space between your building and the curb.

You cannot extend into the street or public parking spaces.

If your café footprint uses the space in front of a neighboring business, you'll need a notarized agreement from that property owner.

When reasonable, new sidewalk cafés should align with existing cafés on the same block face to accommodate a consistent, direct pedestrian passageway.



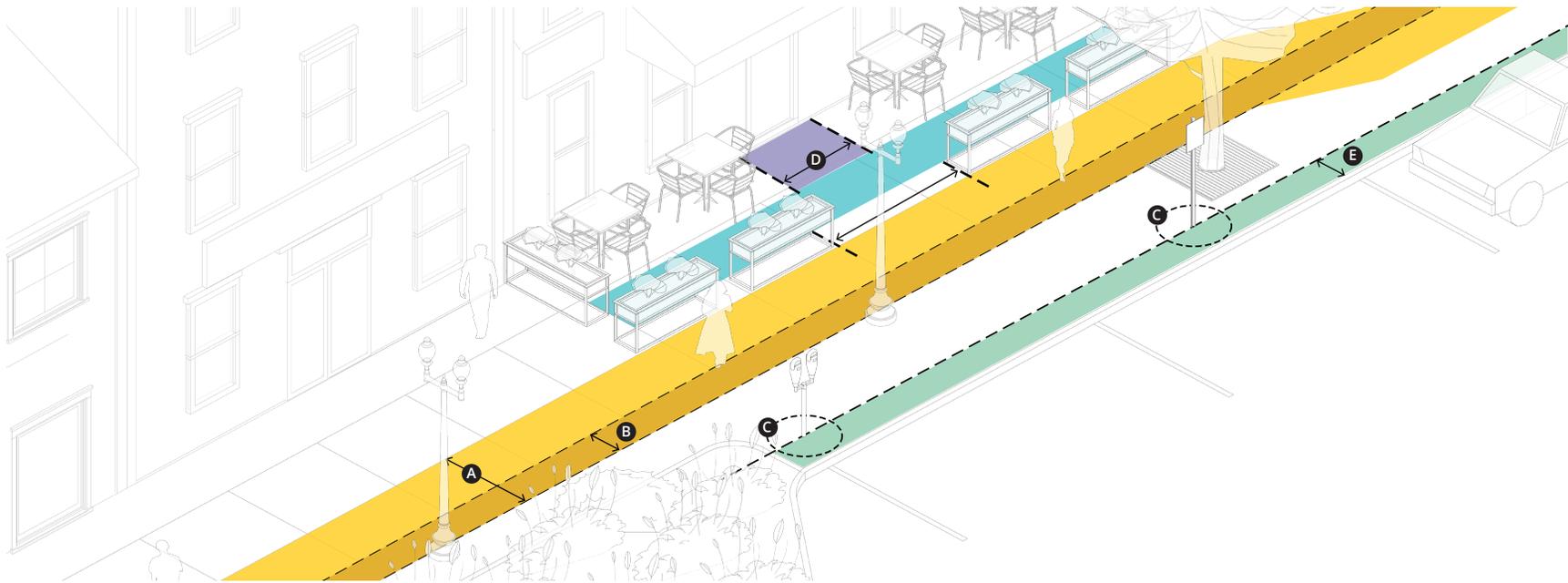
Serving Alcohol?

If you plan to serve alcohol, your sidewalk café must be delineated with movable rigid barriers or planters.

You must hold a valid liquor license from the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission.



REQUIRED SETBACKS AND BUFFERS



- A Pedestrian through zone:** Keep at least 5 feet of sidewalk completely clear of furniture, heaters, planters, signs, cords, or other objects.
- B Clear visibility zone:** Maintain a straight, continuous 2-foot wide path along the sidewalk so people can move through without obstacles.
- C Obstacle buffer:** Keep café furniture and barriers at least 3 feet away from fire hydrants, parking meters, signs, and bike racks.

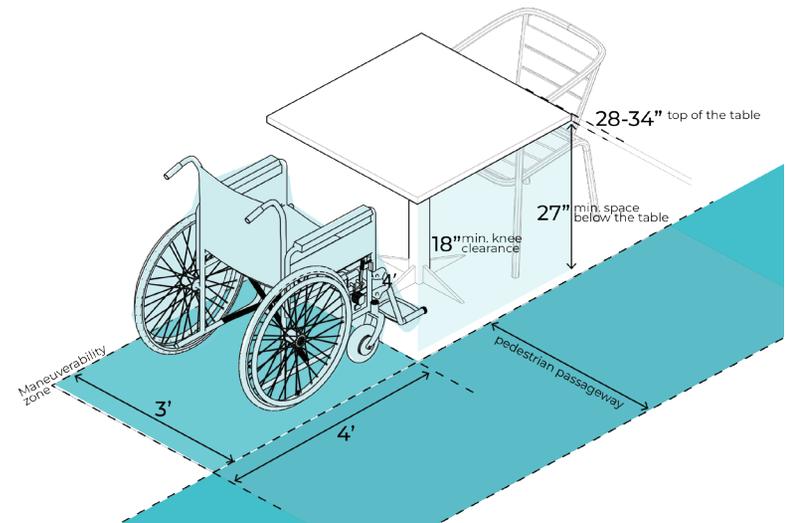
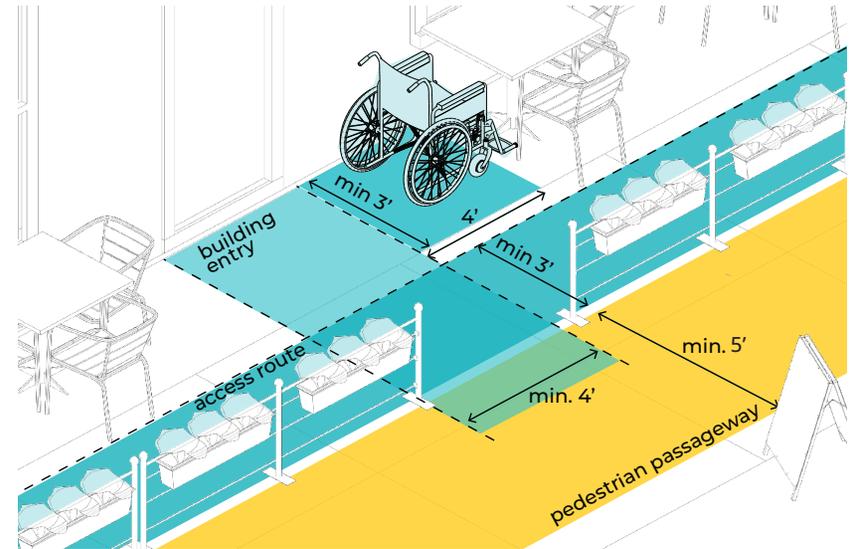
- D Entry/exit point:** Leave a 5-foot clear space in front of business doorways so customers can enter and exit safely.
- E Curb buffer:** Keep café items at least 2 feet away from the curb near driveways, parking spaces, and loading zones.

Additional requirements:

- Stay at least 10 feet away from crosswalks.
- Keep café setups 5 feet away from crosswalk ramps, curb ramps, bus stops, and bus shelters.

ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- The sidewalk cafe space must have a minimum 4-foot wide accessible entry from adjacent pedestrian passageway.
- Cafes serving with capacity over 50 people must have two such entry points.
- Inside the café, a minimum three-foot-wide accessible path that connects accessible features must be provided.
- At least 5% of tables, but no fewer than one, must meet ADA standards:
 - **Table height:** 28 to 34 inches (measured from the ground to the top surface)
 - **Knee clearance:** 27 inches high, 30 inches wide, 19 inches deep
- Surfaces must be relatively flat, with a maximum 2% cross slope (perpendicular to the curb) and 5% running slope (parallel to the curb).



RESPONSIBILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

Sidewalk café permit holders are responsible for keeping their café seating well-maintained and in good repair to ensure safety, accessibility and cleanliness of these spaces. Permit holders must follow these maintenance procedures:

Operational Requirements

- Adhere to the approved layout: your café must match the plan approved by the City. Any changes, including furniture types, layout adjustments, or added elements like heaters, require City review and approval.
- Keep your permit on display: your active sidewalk café permit must be visible from the public sidewalk at all times.
- Sidewalk cafes may operate during hours noted in your approved application. You may not operate earlier or later without written permission from the City.
- You are responsible for keeping the sidewalk café and surrounding area clean, safe, and free of debris at all times.

PERMIT CONDITIONS

Emergencies and Complaints

- The City or emergency services may require the temporary removal or closure of your sidewalk café in the event of public safety concerns, construction or utility work, or severe weather.
- If complaints are received about safety, accessibility, or obstruction, the City may inspect your café and require corrective action.

Renewing Your Permit

- Sidewalk café permits are valid for one year.
- To continue operating, you must submit a renewal application before your current permit expires.
- If there are no changes to your layout, a streamlined renewal process may be available.
- The City may deny renewal if your café has violated regulations or failed inspections.

What Could Cause Your Permit to be Revoked?

The City reserves the right to revoke your permit at any time if you:

- Fail to maintain the required clearances or accessible paths
- Operate outside of approved hours or boundaries
- Do not maintain cleanliness or safety standards
- Ignore the required corrections following a City inspection
- Misrepresent your café setup in your application

GENERAL DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

Furniture

- All proposed furniture (tables, chairs, benches, etc.) must be commercial-grade, durable for outdoor use, and their specifications must be included in the permit application.
- Furniture should be removable and not permanently affixed to the sidewalk.
- When not in use for extended periods of time, businesses are encouraged to remove the furniture from the sidewalk.

Materials

- Acceptable materials include stainless steel, powder-coated aluminum or steel, and treated hardwoods or composites proven for durability.
- While not a requirement, we recommend that applicants consider water drainage on flat surfaces when selecting furniture. Tabletop selections are encouraged to include metal meshes, slats, or alternative materials like solid surface acrylic to prevent water pooling.
- A variety of materials may be used for landscaped planters, but materials that are susceptible to salt damage like concrete, are discouraged.

Barriers and Defining Features

- If alcohol will be served, the café must be delineated by a rigid barrier or other defining feature at least 36" in height.
- Barriers must maintain a minimum 4-foot-wide open entrance, preferably located in front of the business entrance, and shall not exceed 8 feet in width.

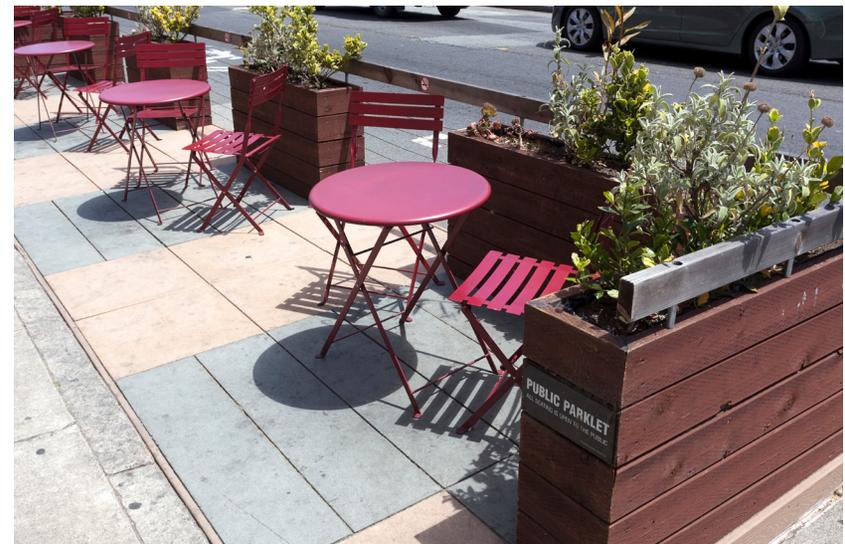
Temporary vs Permanent Elements

- All sidewalk café elements, except those attached directly to the building, must be temporary and removable without tools.
- Any element requiring drilling or bolting into the pavement is considered permanent and is generally not allowed unless otherwise approved by the City.

TYPES OF RIGID BARRIERS, OR OTHER DEFINING FEATURES

Requirements

- Barriers must be free-standing, stable, well-balanced, and removable. They must not pose any risk of tipping or causing tripping hazards.
- Height and placement of barriers, and other defining features will be reviewed case-by-case, particularly near street or alley intersections where sight triangles are critical for the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.
- Barriers must maintain clear visibility between the street and café.
- Planters and rope barriers must have a lower edge no more than 27 inches above the ground so people with vision impairments using a cane can detect them.
- Rigid barriers taller than 60 inches may be permitted only at café corners or adjacent to building façades, not along curbs.
- Businesses must ensure regular maintenance of the planters and keep the plants healthy, well-pruned, and free of debris.



Prohibited barrier types

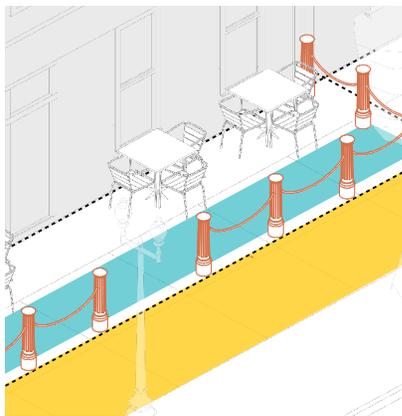
- Unstable sectional fencing
- Chain-link fencing
- Trash receptacles used as barriers
- Corten steel
- Plastic lattice
- Untreated lumber

Or any material not intended for permanent outdoor architectural use.

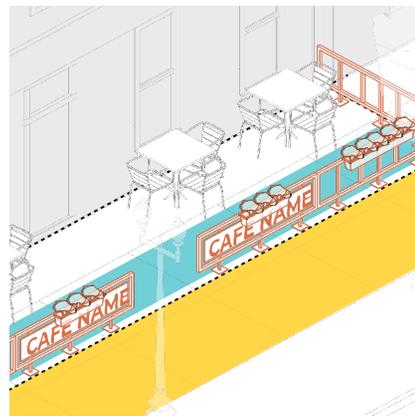
TYPES OF RIGID BARRIERS OR OTHER DEFINING FEATURES

The City of Lincoln encourages creative, well-designed, and visually appealing solutions for sidewalk café enclosures, including planters, and other rigid barriers.

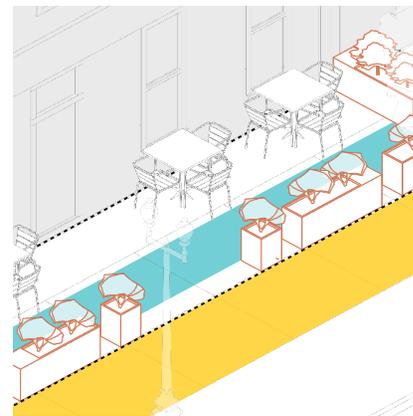
- Acceptable materials include:
 - **Metal:** Powder-coated steel, aluminum, or wrought iron with a durable, weather-resistant finish.
 - **Wood:** Hardwoods or treated softwoods suitable for outdoor environments.
 - **Cable or tensioned rail systems:** Stainless or coated steel cables supported by a rigid frame.
 - **Planters:** Constructed from metal, wood, or other stable, weather-resistant materials such as high-density polystyrene. Heavy materials like stone or concrete may be used sparingly.
 - **Tempered glass or acrylic panels:** Supported by metal or wood framing for a clean, modern aesthetic.
- The above are approved types of movable rigid barriers that may be used to enclose a sidewalk café space. The selection of materials, dimensions, and placement of these barriers will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis.



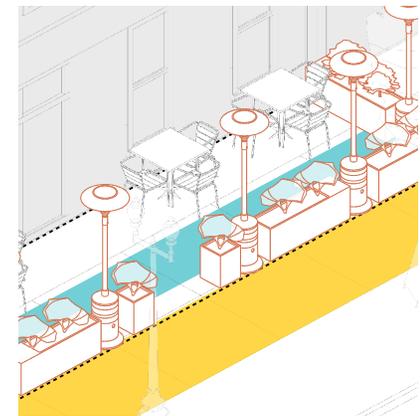
Rope barrier bollards



Customized movable barricade/partitions with planter boxes



Landscape planters



Landscape planters + heaters

OVERHEAD ELEMENTS

Permitted

- Roller shades will be approved on a case-by-case basis and must maintain an opacity of 95% or less, corresponding to a minimum transparency (openness) level of 5% or more; fully opaque shades are not permitted.
- Shades with higher openness percentages let in more light and offer a clearer outside view, making them ideal for spaces like sidewalk cafés that allow visibility to the sidewalk and from the sidewalk into the café.
- Awnings, shades, railings, umbrellas, and other sidewalk café features may only display the name of the business and should not be used to advertise any other products.

NOT Permitted

- Shade sails are not permitted. Awnings, coverings, and shades must not obscure the building façade or disrupt the transparency of the ground-level frontage.



Awning with the business name

✔ Permitted.



Umbrella with a brand name

✘ Not permitted.



Transparent shades

✔ Permitted.

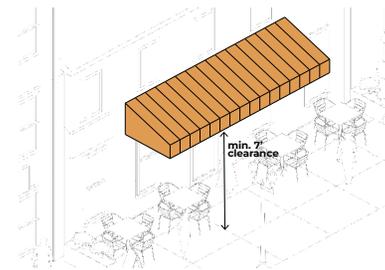


Opaque shades

✘ Not permitted.

Clearance

- Overhead elements, including awnings, umbrellas, pergolas, or other elements are permitted as long as they meet the code requirements and do not obstruct circulation or visibility for pedestrians or drivers.
- Retractable awnings are allowed, as long as the awning is fully supported by its attachment to the building and not via vertical posts on the sidewalk.

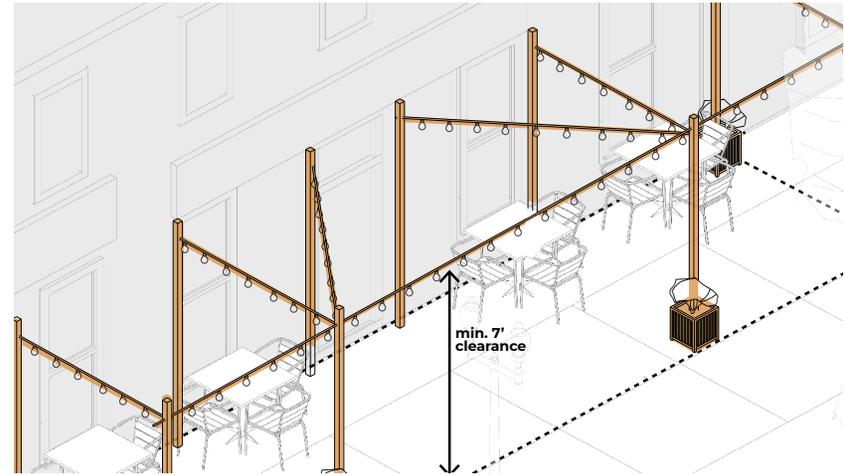


Awnings and umbrellas must have a minimum clearance of 7'

LIGHTING AND HEATING

Lighting

- Lighting must be low-glare, downward-facing, temporary in nature, and must be UL listed, meaning it's been safety-tested and approved for outdoor use.
- Power cables that extend overhead or on the ground surface of the pedestrian passageway are prohibited.
- Lighting equipment must not be attached to or strung through street trees or any other public infrastructure.
- Lighting elements must avoid added glare for pedestrians or drivers. Approved lighting must be low-level output and directed downward.



Posts with overhead festoon lighting

Heating

- Heaters must be portable, UL-listed, and approved by the Fire Prevention Bureau. No wood-burning fire pits are allowed.
- Propane and electric heaters are allowed, subject to approval from the Fire Prevention Inspector.
- Floor-mounted patio heaters must maintain a minimum clearance of 5 feet from buildings and any combustible elements such as awnings or overhangs.
- Heaters may not be permanently installed in the public right-of-way, but must be securely fastened to the ground using a cable and lock system, and shall not be relocated during business hours.
- Sprinklers are mandatory for any sidewalk café that includes overhead or floor-mounted patio heaters.



HAYMARKET EXCEPTIONS



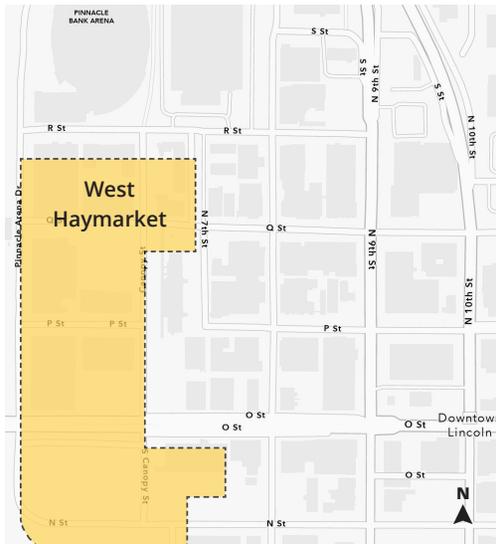
Historic Haymarket

Since the Historic Haymarket is a designated local landmark, all proposed sidewalk cafés within the area are subject to review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Per standard 16.6 of the Historic Preservation Design Standards, sidewalk cafés and other dining areas in or adjacent to the public right-of-way should be designed with high-quality materials and low railings to avoid obscuring views of the historic buildings.

The proposed design of the sidewalk cafés must complement the architectural elements of the abutting building.

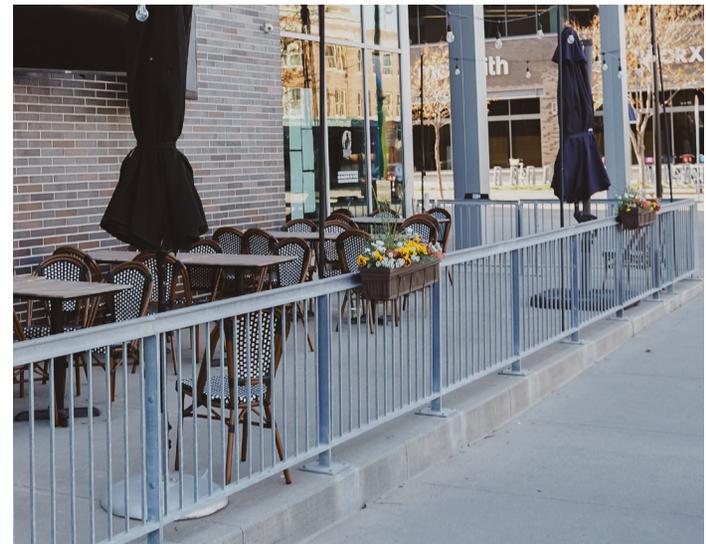
Sidewalk cafés located on loading docks must have a secured barrier along the full length of the dock.



West Haymarket

All new sidewalk cafés in the West Haymarket are required to use a consistent railing design, as shown on the right. No other railing types are permitted in this area.

You can find out if your business is located in the Historic Haymarket or West Haymarket by searching your address at Lincoln.NE.gov/GIS.



RESOURCES

Application Form and Checklist

To start your application, visit [Insert link to the webpage/ application]

If you need a printed copy, contact the Planning Department using the information below.

City Code References

For full details on sidewalk café regulations, see:

Lincoln Municipal Code Chapter 14.54 – Sidewalk Cafés

[Insert hyperlink to code section]

Who to Contact for Help

Have questions? We're here to help. Contact the City of Lincoln Planning and Development Services Department:

Planning and Development Services Department

555 S. 10th Street, Suite 213

Phone: 402-441-7491

Email: plandev@lincoln.ne.gov

Website: [Insert website URL]

Title 3 DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ZONING REGULATIONS

Chapter 3.78 SIDEWALK CAFE DESIGN STANDARDS

The Planning Department is assigned responsibility for the administration of these design standards.

Section 1. INTRODUCTION

The allowance of sidewalk cafes in the City of Lincoln was first formalized in 1980 with an update to the Lincoln Municipal Code that established regulations for the use of public right-of-way. Sidewalk cafes are supported and are intended to enhance pedestrian environments in commercial districts by bringing excitement, vitality, and good design to public spaces.

1.1 Definition of a Sidewalk Café

Sidewalk café shall mean an outdoor area included in an annual permitted premises, which is used for the service and consumption of food, and/or for the consumption of alcoholic liquors, and when the premises are contained by a rigid barrier, or other defining features clearly delineating the permitted area. The defining features may be made to be removable when a special designated liquor license is obtained.

Section 2. WORK REQUIRING REVIEW

The Design Standards apply to new sidewalk cafes and renewal applications located in B and O-1-zoning districts.

Section 3. APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Planning staff will coordinate review of new sidewalk café applications with the Outdoor Dining Committee and will administratively approve those that meet the requirements of the Design Standards. Sidewalk café applications that do not meet these design standards will be forwarded to the Urban Design Committee, Historic Preservation Commission, or Nebraska Capital Environs Commission. Renewal applications will be processed by the City Clerk.

Efforts will be made to avoid increased time for review and approval. To facilitate this review process, the applicant shall submit all items outlined in 14.50.040, as applicable.

Section 4. SITE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Location and Site Requirements

- a. Sidewalk cafés must be located in B-zoned districts, including B-1 Local Business, B-2 Planned Neighborhood Business, B-3 Commercial, B-4 Lincoln Center Business, B-5 Planned Regional Business District, or O-1 Office District.
- b. Sidewalk café spaces shall be allowed within public property, between the property line and the back-of-curb of the adjacent street. They are not allowed to extend into the street or public parking spaces.
- c. Sidewalk cafés must provide a clear, unobstructed pedestrian passageway not less than five feet in width at all points, entirely across the frontage of the space to be permitted, except where

larger pedestrian passageways are otherwise required. If a non-alcohol sidewalk café applicant wishes to occupy an area that captures space on both sides of an unobstructed passageway, the permit shall be for an overall space that includes the abutting unobstructed passageway.

- d. A consistent and clear visibility zone of no less than two feet must be provided within the pedestrian passageway.
- e. The location and layout of a proposed sidewalk café shall consider the context of adjacent sidewalk cafés on the block to ensure efficient pedestrian circulation. When reasonable, new sidewalk cafés should align with existing cafés to accommodate a consistent, direct pedestrian passageway.
- f. Sidewalk cafés shall be located at least five feet away from all curb ramps, business entry/exit points, and bus stops and shelters.
- g. Sidewalk cafés should be located to leave at least three feet of clear space from the following elements to ensure proper visibility and usability:
 - 1. Streetscape furnishings and amenities (bike racks, trash receptacles, benches, etc.)
 - 2. Parking meters
 - 3. Fire hydrants
 - 4. Streetscape signage
- h. If a sidewalk café abuts the curblines where parking or loading exists, a two-foot buffer between the café and the back-of-curb must be maintained.
- i. Sidewalk cafés shall not extend beyond the abutting limits of the business/property, except for the following conditions:
 - 1. The limits may be extended to abut a neighboring property if a notarized agreement between the affected parties is submitted prior to the issuance of a permit.
 - 2. If a non-alcohol sidewalk café is being located nearest the curb side of the pedestrian passageway, or if the sidewalk café is to occupy an area that captures space on both sides of the passageway, the part of the sidewalk café between the curb and the passageway may extend past the owner's abutting property lines if approved by the City.

4.2 General Design Requirements

- a. Materiality
 - 1. All sidewalk café features shall consist of commercial-grade products to ensure long-term durability.
 - 2. Metal elements shall either be stainless steel or powder-coated aluminum/steel to avoid rusting caused by the natural elements and salting of the streetscape.
 - 3. A variety of materials may be used for landscaped planters, but materials that are more susceptible to salt damage, like concrete, are discouraged.

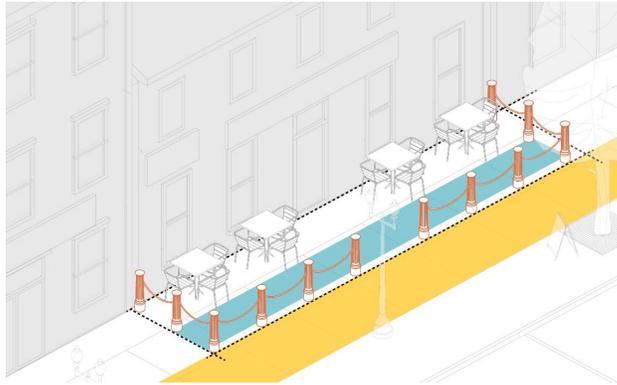
4. Fabrics used for awnings and umbrellas shall be commercial-grade products that can withstand significant winds.
 5. Wood and composite materials shall be limited to selections with proven track records for durability.
- b. Temporary Nature of Sidewalk Cafes
1. All sidewalk café elements, except for those directly attached to the building, shall be temporary in nature unless otherwise approved by the City. Temporary shall be defined as removable without special equipment or tools, or otherwise requiring mounting that permanently impacts the ground surface of the right-of-way. For instance, core drilling or surface mounting with bolts drilled into the sidewalk shall be considered permanent in nature, and are not typically allowed.
- c. Rigid Barriers or Other Defining Features
1. Although not required for non-alcohol sidewalk cafes, the sidewalk café permit area may be delineated with a rigid barrier or other defining features.
 2. Acceptable defining features shall include vertical posts, landscape planters, and other unique elements that help define the café space.
 3. Barriers must be free-standing, stable, well-balanced, and removable. They must not pose any risk of tipping or causing tripping hazards.
 4. Height and placement of barriers, and other defining features, will be reviewed case-by-case, particularly near street or alley intersections where sight triangles are critical for the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.
 5. Barriers must maintain clear visibility between the street and the café.
 6. For planters and rope barriers, the lower edge must not exceed 27 inches from the ground.
 7. Planters taller than 60 inches may be permitted only at café corners or adjacent to building façades, not along curbs.
 8. Businesses must ensure regular maintenance of the planters and keep the plants healthy, well-pruned, and free of debris.
 9. Alcohol sales requirements:
 - a. Due to existing State of Nebraska laws and regulations, a sidewalk café with a liquor license must abut the building and be fully enclosed on all open sides with a minimum 36-inch-high rigid barrier, movable planters, or a combination of these.
 - b. Applicants wishing to sell alcohol shall conform to the requirements of Chapter 5.04 Alcohol Liquor of the State of Nebraska Revised Statutes and regulations (Nebraska Liquor Control Commission).

c. Sidewalk cafés serving alcohol must be licensed by the State of Nebraska.

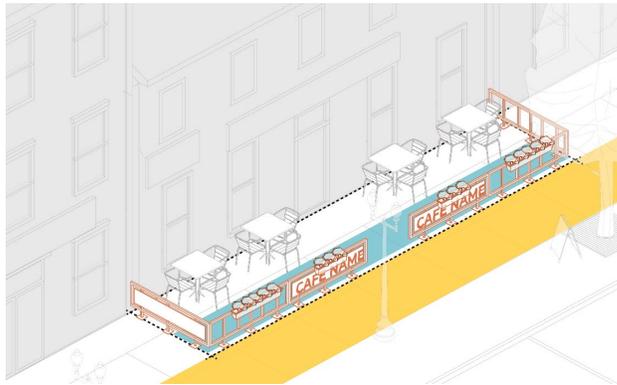
10. The defined sidewalk café space shall have at least one accessible entry that is four feet or greater in width. Sidewalk cafes planning for a maximum occupancy of 50 or more shall have two entry points.

11. The following are approved types of rigid barriers that may be used to enclose a sidewalk café space where alcohol is served. The selection of materials, dimensions, and placement of these barriers will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis.

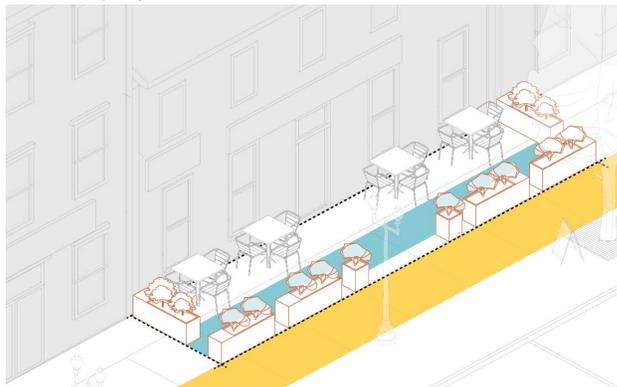
a. Robe barrier bollards



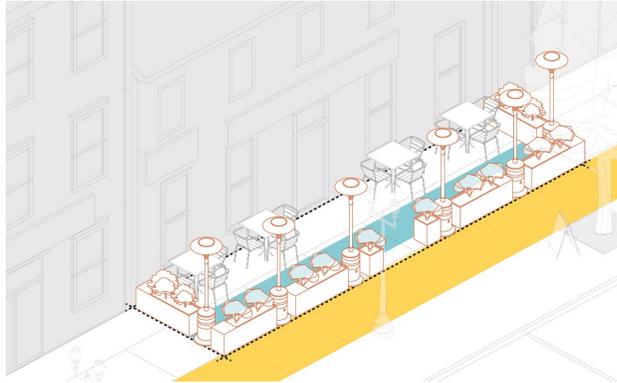
b. Customized movable barricade/partitions with planter boxes



c. Landscape planters



d. Landscape planters + heaters



d. Overhead elements

1. Overhead elements, including awnings, umbrellas, pergolas, or other elements, shall be allowed as follows:
 - a. They do not obstruct circulation or visibility for pedestrians or drivers.
 - b. They must maintain a minimum unobstructed height clearance of seven feet between the ground and the element.
 - c. Retractable awnings shall be allowed if the awning is fully supported by its attachment to the building. Vertical supports may be used to support overhead elements as long as they are not drilled into the sidewalk (i.e., secured in planters).
 - d. Awnings, umbrellas, and shades must not obscure the transparency of the ground-level frontage.
 - e. Shade sails are not permitted.
 - f. Roller shades may be allowed on a case-by-case basis and must maintain an opacity of 95% or less, corresponding to a minimum transparency (openness) level of 5% or more; fully opaque shades are not permitted. Shades with higher openness percentages let in more light and offer a clearer outside view, making them ideal for spaces like sidewalk cafes that allow visibility to the sidewalk and from the sidewalk into the café.
 - g. Awnings, shades, umbrellas, and other sidewalk café features may only display the name of the business and shall not be used to advertise any other products.

e. Lighting

1. All lighting equipment must be UL-listed, approved for outdoor use, and temporary in nature.
2. Extension cords that extend overhead, or on the ground surface of the pedestrian passageway, are prohibited.

3. Solar and battery-powered lighting elements are acceptable.
4. Lighting equipment shall not be attached to or strung through street trees, landscaping, or any other public infrastructure.
5. Lighting elements shall not result in added glare for pedestrians or drivers. Instead, all approved lighting shall be low-level in output and directed downward, meeting the outdoor lighting standards set forth in Chapter 3.1000 Design Standards for Outdoor Lighting.

f. Heating

1. Heaters included as part of sidewalk café space must be UL-listed, approved for outdoor use, portable, and fully compliant with the current edition of the Nebraska Fire Code.
2. Propane and electric heaters are allowed, subject to approval from the Fire Prevention Inspector.
3. Floor-mounted patio heaters must maintain a minimum clearance of 5 feet from buildings and any combustible elements such as awnings or overhangs.
4. Heaters may not be permanently installed in the public right-of-way but must be securely fastened to the rigid barrier using a cable and lock system and shall not be relocated during business hours. They must be located within the defined sidewalk café space and must not impede the required pedestrian passageway.
5. Set up, operation, and maintenance must follow the manufacturer's recommendations. All relevant heater specifications shall be submitted with the sidewalk café application.
6. Sprinklers are mandatory for any sidewalk café that includes overhead or floor-mounted patio heaters.
7. Wood outdoor fire pits are prohibited in the right-of-way.

g. Furniture

1. Specifications for all proposed tables, chairs, benches, lean rails, and other furniture elements shall be submitted with the permit application.
2. Permittees are encouraged to remove all furniture from their sidewalk cafes during times of the year in which they are not in use in order to maximize the life of said furniture and to eliminate unnecessary streetscape clutter.
3. While not a requirement, it is recommended that applicants consider water drainage on flat surfaces when making furniture selections. Tabletop selections in particular are encouraged to include metal meshes, slats, or alternative materials like solid surface acrylic to limit the damage caused by pooling water.

h. Accessibility requirements

1. Sidewalk cafes shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities. While the standards that follow serve as a baseline for accessibility, the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, the Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), and the International Building Code should also be consulted.
2. An acceptable path of travel shall connect the defined sidewalk café space to the adjacent pedestrian passageway. The accessible path must be a minimum of four feet wide.
3. Accessibility within the Sidewalk Cafe
 - a. Within the sidewalk café space, an accessible path at least three feet in width that connects to accessible feature(s) shall be provided.
 - b. Sidewalk cafes providing tables, drink rails, or other similar dining features shall ensure that 5%, but no fewer than one of the said features, shall be wheelchair accessible. Accessible features shall meet the following standards:
 - a. The height measured from the ground surface to the top surface of the dining feature must be between 28 and 34 inches.
 - b. The knee clearance for accessible dining features must be a minimum of 27 inches tall, 30 inches wide, and 19 inches deep.
 - c. The accessible part of the sidewalk café shall adhere to the following slopes:
 - a. Cross slope (perpendicular to the curb) should not exceed 2%.
 - b. Running slope (parallel to the curb) should not exceed 5%.

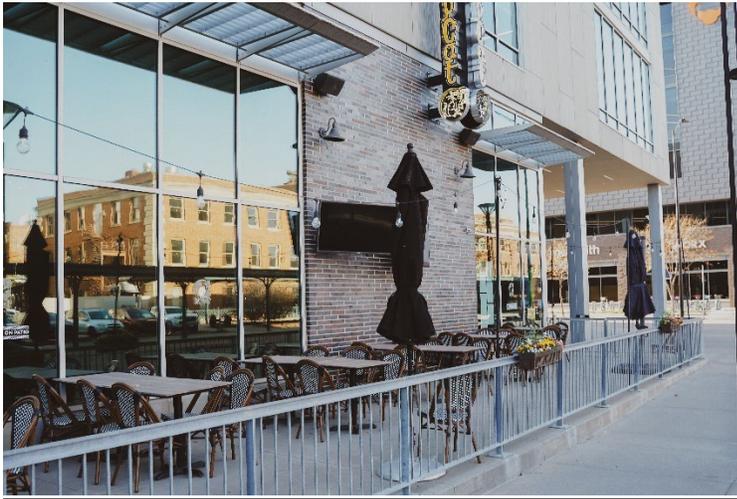
4.3 Special District Requirements

- a. Haymarket and other Landmark Districts
 1. Historic Haymarket, as shown on the map below, is a designated local landmark. All proposed sidewalk cafés within the area are subject to the Historic Preservation Design Standards and may require approval by the Historic Preservation Commission.
 2. Per standard 16.6 of the Historic Preservation Design Standards, sidewalk cafes and other dining areas in or adjacent to the public right-of-way should be designed with high-quality materials and low railings to avoid obscuring views of the historic buildings.
 3. The proposed design of the sidewalk cafés must complement the architectural elements of the abutting building.
 4. Sidewalk cafés located on loading docks shall have a secured barrier along the full length of the dock.

5. In other areas of Haymarket, to maintain control over the outdoor seating area, the sidewalk café permit area shall be delineated with defining features such as planters and other rigid barriers.

b. West Haymarket

1. All new sidewalk cafés in the West Haymarket are required to use a consistent railing design, as shown in the figure below. No other railing types are permitted in this area.



Lincoln.NE.gov/GIS

Section 5. PROCEDURES

Sidewalk café applications and materials must be submitted per 14.50 of Lincoln Municipal Code.

Section 6. WAIVERS AND APPEAL

Any request for a deviation of the Lincoln Downtown Design Standards may be approved by the Planning Director, Appeals Board, or City Council as provided in Chapter 1.00.