

SEC.7 Pedestrian Streetscape

A downtown must do more than have beautiful buildings to create a vibrant setting, it must also support the basic functions of its people. The street is a public living room for all nearby residents and business owners, who must take ownership to ensure it is well cared for.

A pedestrian-oriented street invites business owners to do their part in enhancing the streetscape by stepping outside of their buildings and taking responsibility for the circulation space in front of their building. There are many options available, from planters and benches to garbage bins and public art. This handbook will demonstrate methods for commercial tenants to provide these amenities to the public realm as well.

The following questions should help owners assess their business's potential impact:

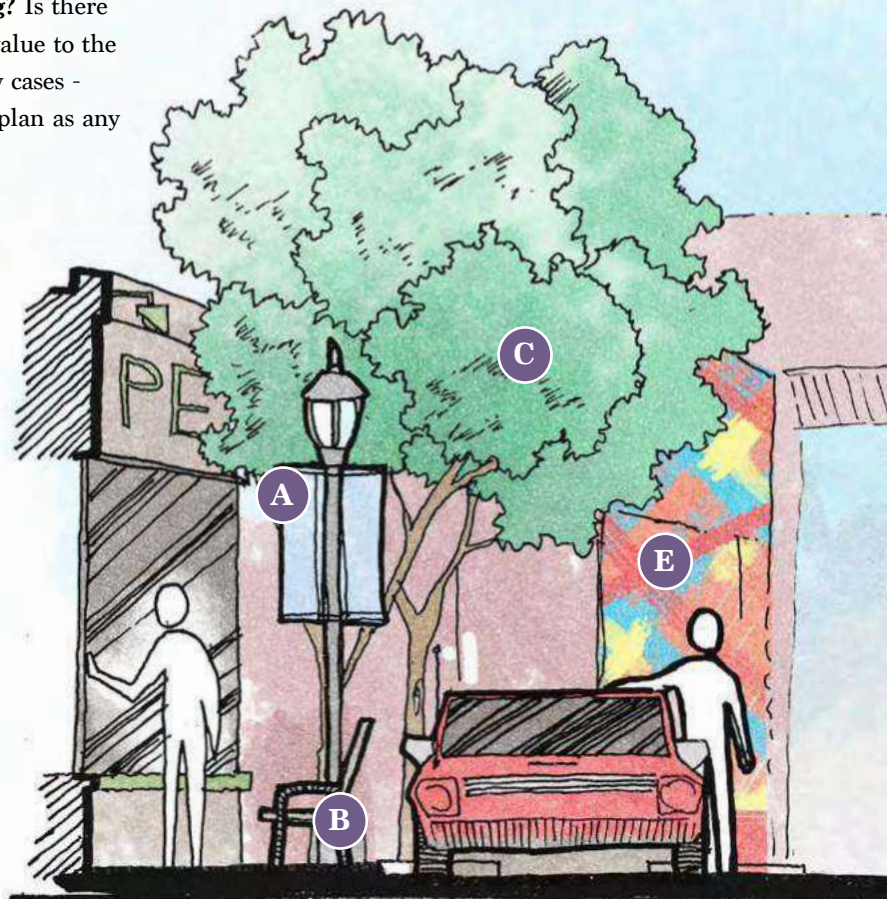
1: How can my business positively impact the public realm? Can I provide curbside seating for my customers? Can your goods be placed outside for enhanced visibility? Could there be some way to provide a unique experience to those passing by?

2: Is there anything missing on the street that would benefit pedestrians that my business could provide? A pedestrian friendly public realm benefits businesses and citizens alike, am I doing my part? Is there an excess of trash in and around my area? Is there a need for bicycle parking for my clients? Does my street need shaded seating for people to rest?

3: How can engaging the streetscape be an opportunity to promote my brand without excessive logos or marketing? Is there a creative way to showcase my goods or services by adding value to the community? Word of mouth can outperform media in many cases - and how you engage the streetscape is as good a marketing plan as any ad campaign.

Streetscape Elements

- A** Wayfinding & Signage
- B** Public Street Furniture
- C** Plantings & Trees
- D** Garbage Receptacles
- E** Murals & Public Art
- F** Commercial Overflow



- **How can my business impact the public realm?**
- **Is there anything missing in the streetscape that I could provide?**
- **How can engaging the streetscape help promote my business?**



[A] Wayfinding & Signage

A unified wayfinding and signage campaign for the businesses of Prospect Ave has the potential to do one thing: communicate to pedestrians the locations of interest.

While commercial tenants are unable to directly use public infrastructure for advertising, way-finding can still effectively be used to impact businesses. Way-finding could call attention to specific historic areas or events, or parking areas shared by multiple adjacent businesses.

Examples could be: Prospect Ave Caribbean district, Prospect opportunity corridor, etc... Having a community poll or branding competition might be a great way to get local buy-in for names and zones.

Another opportunity for commercial way-finding is sandwich board-style signage to call attention to individual storefronts -- with due care not to infringe on circulation of the sidewalk. It is advised not to use low-quality plastic boards, but to instead use durable materials that reflect your business. These “ground signs” are permitted by zoning if they are temporary and removed during non-operating hours.



Do use banners as corridor wayfinding.



Don't place objects into the flow of pedestrian traffic, it may be hard for those less than able-bodied to navigate.



Street furniture can be visually tied to the storefront via color, decoration, or material.



Do use durable street furniture.

[B] Public Street Furniture

When appropriate and where sidewalks allow, use outdoor seating as a way to extend indoors to outdoors and add to depth and scale. Park benches, tables and chairs made of wood or metal are preferred as they are durable, can be maintained, and are easily repaired. When in the public right of way, all street furniture must be issued a special use permit.

The street can be further activated with elements such as awnings, perpendicular signs, seating, and other three-dimensional elements that interact with the public space. Owners are encouraged to use elements that best fit their storefront's particular aesthetic, marketing, or functional needs. A variety of options are available. Due to light weight, lack of durability, inability to be repaired, and residential aesthetic, plastic lawn furniture is discouraged for downtown use.

[C] Plantings & Trees

One of the most aesthetically pleasing elements of a streetscape is landscaping. Acting as a buffer between pedestrians and traffic, it enhances the overall quality of a downtown significantly.

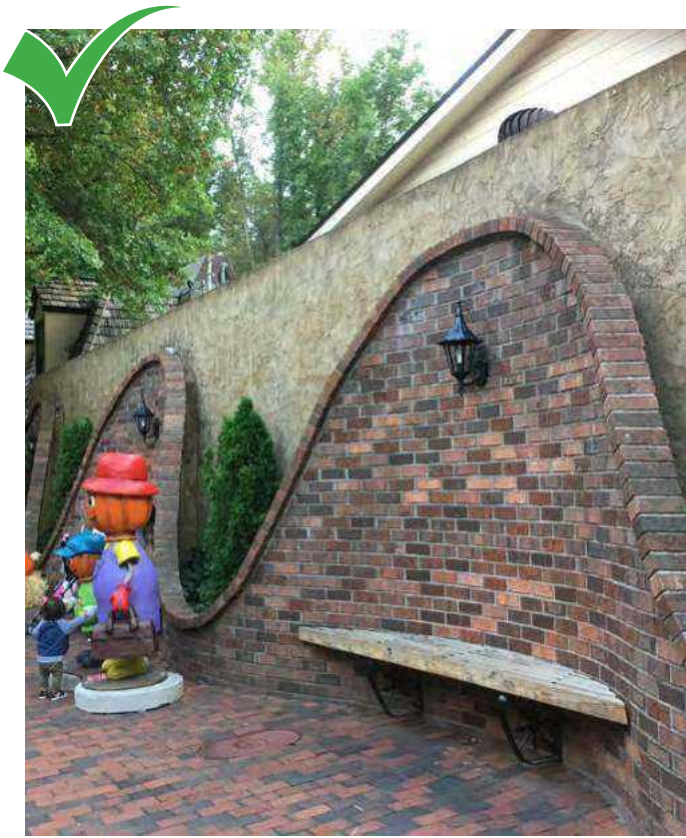
While commercial tenants can't plant street trees, they are encouraged to provide additional plantings where appropriate. Large- and medium-sized potted plants can emphasize entry spaces, and hanging baskets can add repetition in between storefront windows and under awnings. Mounted flower baskets under windows are also common choices for decoration on both upper and lower store windows.



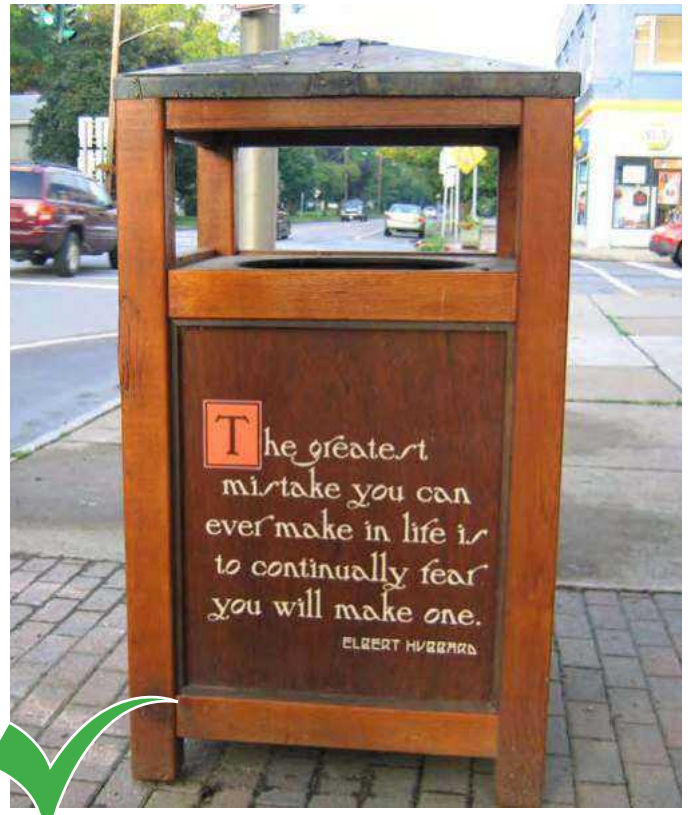
Do use flower boxes under windows.



Do use plantings to add visual interest to your commercial storefront.



Do integrate planters and seating together



Do supplement existing garbage bins when needed.

[D] Garbage Receptacles

A tidy streetscape provides the appearance of safety and care that is necessary for a positive experience in the public realm.

Commercial entities, specifically ones that provide goods or services with discarded packaging, should take due care not to overburden the existing waste infrastructure. If municipal waste bins are overflowing with packaging from your business, it is considerate to provide additional refuse containers in front of your business to accommodate the added waste.

Dumpsters and other large garbage receptacles should be visually screened from the street using a variety of methods ranging from fencing, placement, and even vegetation. This provides a tidy appearance to spaces adjacent to buildings where they are normally stored.

Curb-side trash bins on the street should correspond to areas with large volumes of garbage. Garbage bins come in many different styles and sizes, a style that compliments the existing character and elements of the area should be selected. Many communities find that waste bins and other street furniture can provide branding opportunities when paired together.



Don't leave garbage bins overflowing

[E] Murals

Murals may be an option as a design proposal for buildings that lack specific historic identity, side street facades, pedestrian alleyways, or large monolithic areas of facades that may not have any viable alternatives for renovation. Murals and art communicate to pedestrians that a place is lived in and cared for - providing a feeling of safety and ownership of the public realm.



Do restore historic signage to create visual interest.

Mural planning and placement should use the following rules of thumb:

- Professionally executed with craft and care on a well maintained surface
- Convey a sense of place in some artistic way, be it color, symbology, notable figures, signage, etc...
- Be maintained over the course of its lifespan.
- Provide some level of public input when funded/ placed in public space.
- Avoid high concentrations of murals or overshadowing architectural characteristics.



Don't use untested methods or materials.

Historic events and characters make great murals for large, uninteresting building facades.





Murals can brighten up otherwise unwelcoming infrastructure such as this concrete staircase.

[F] Public Art

Public art be another simple and effective way that a community can take ownership and pride in their public spaces. Often, green spaces such as parks make natural locations for municipal art - but finding art in unexpected places can also be beneficial to the urban environment.

Bike racks can be a great opportunity to playfully engage the public realm with art. Other opportunities are municipal infrastructure such as bridges, or overlooked objects like electrical boxes. Public art should be durable, well received by the community, and reflective of the people and place.

Over time, communities with a critical mass of public art can become destinations in their own right, further helping businesses nearby. Business districts should think how they can sponsor or help make public art as a benefit to themselves and the community.



Do use art to make everyday objects more appealing.





Public art can be practical as well as playful.

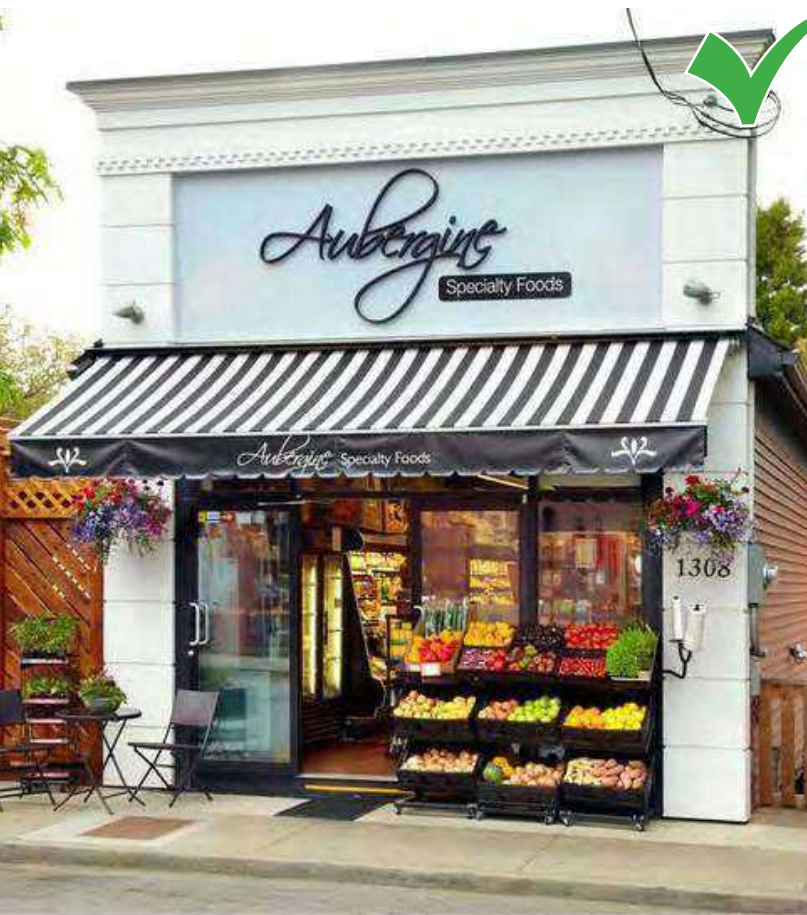




Do encourage businesses to utilize bumpouts and oversized sidewalks for sales, specials, and events.



Do keep and maintain the public right of way so that pedestrian circulation is maintained.



Do display products on the street to attract customers.



Do use available space to provide outdoor seating.

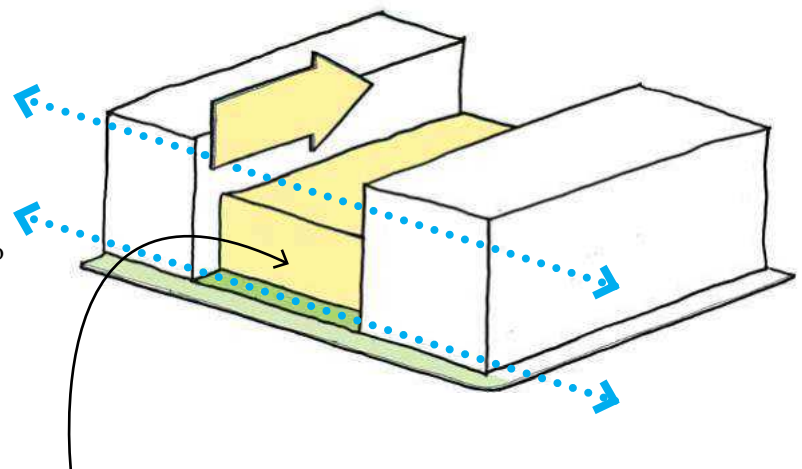
[G] Commercial Overflow

Finding ways to use the space in front of your storefront can have a benefit for both your business, and the surrounding area.

For retail spaces, consider the feasibility of outdoor displays of goods, or engaging the public with free samples or hands-on displays. Not only is it great marketing, but it provides an opportunity to respond to customer feedback.

For restaurants and cafes, consider providing outdoor seating for customers to enjoy themselves during the warmer times of year. It allows you to increase the number of occupants dining, and is effective advertising - suggestive of a successful destination.

Regardless of how you choose to engage the street, due care should be taken to not infringe the public right of way. When in the public right of way, all encroachments must be issued a license by the municipality when required.



Existing buildings with extra setbacks are encouraged to fill the space with commercial overflow - maintaining the street edge of the surrounding buildings.