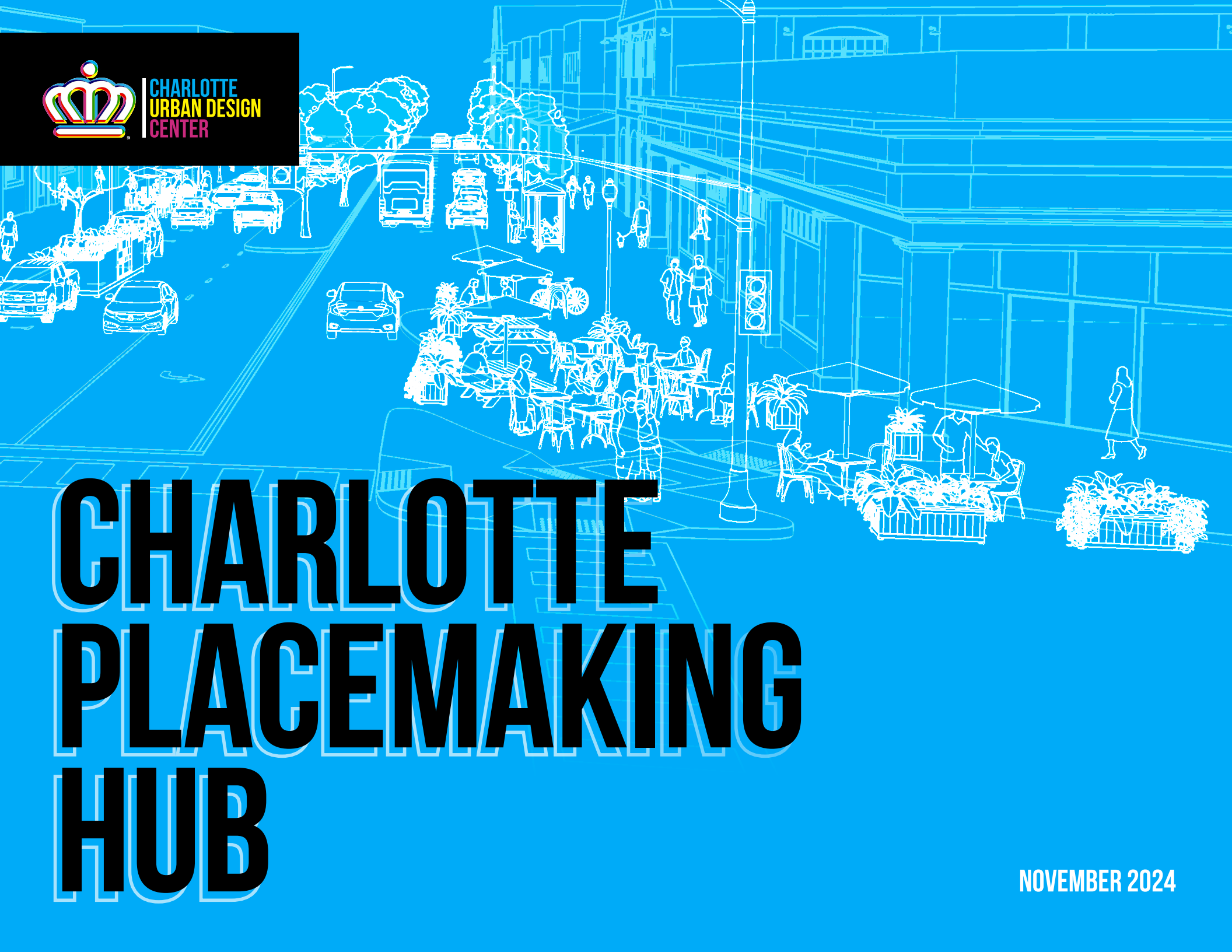




CHARLOTTE
URBAN DESIGN
CENTER



CHARLOTTE PLACEMAKING HUB

NOVEMBER 2024

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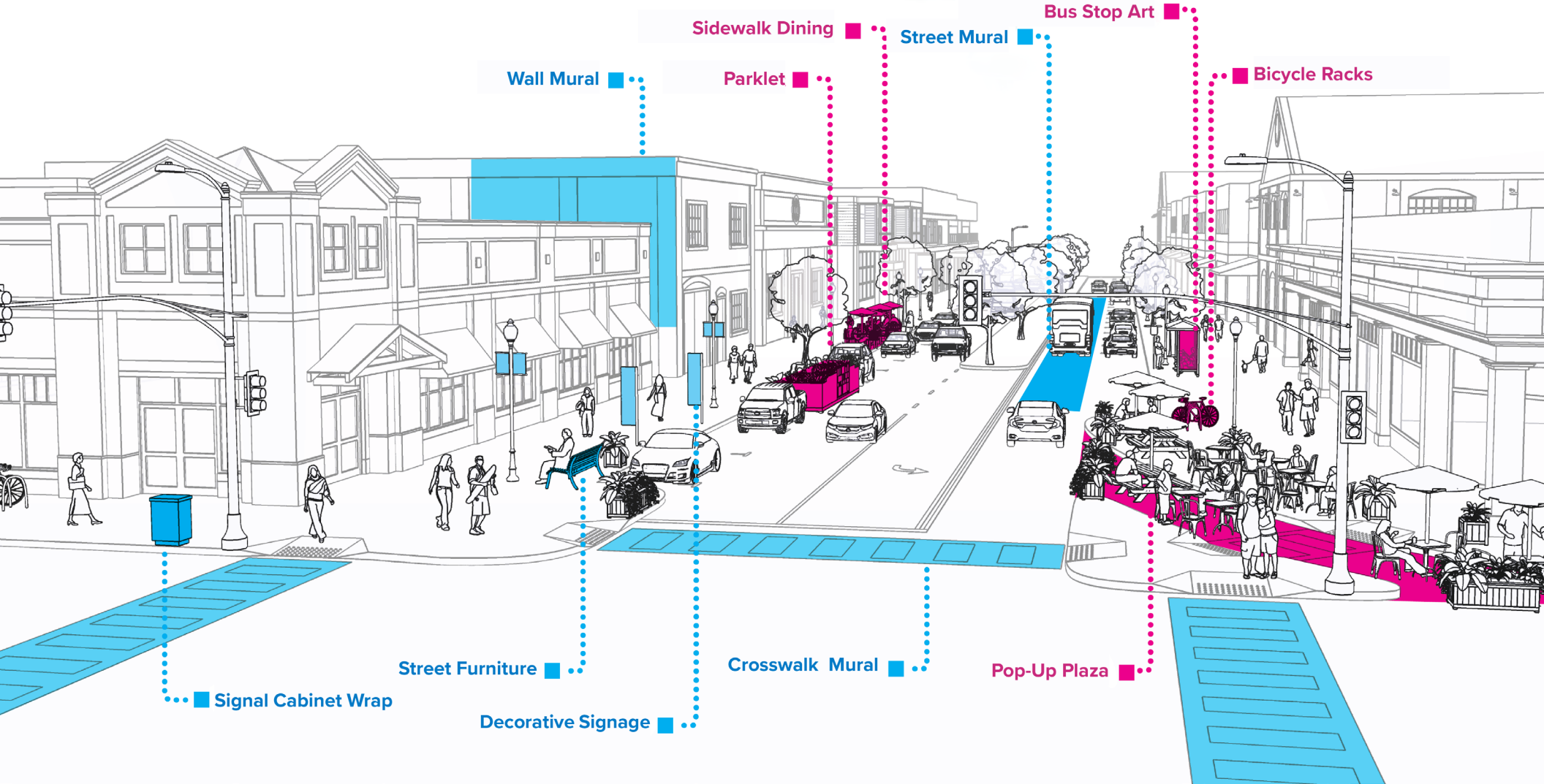
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INTRODUCTION



WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

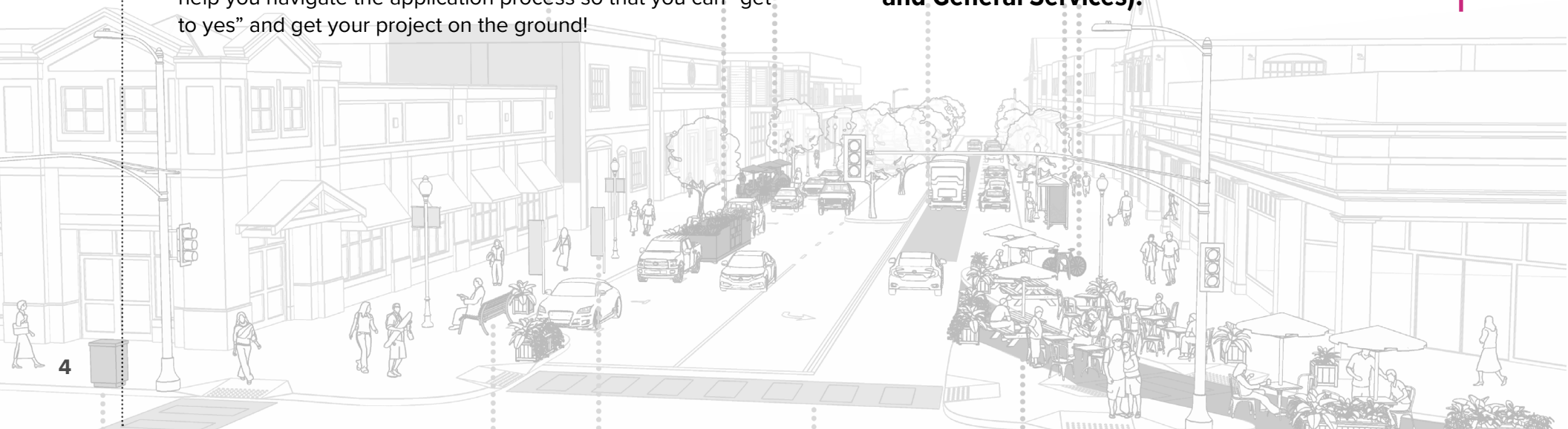
Placemaking describes the process of reinventing public spaces to strengthen the connection between people and the places they share. The city's Placemaking Program supports creating quality public spaces where people want to be – spaces that are unique, active, interesting, visually attractive, welcoming to all, engaging, and most importantly, people-friendly.

The purpose of this Charlotte Placemaking Guidebook is to empower residents to design, install, and maintain their own, community-driven placemaking projects. Imagine your street, your downtown business district, or even your entire neighborhood as a canvas that can be transformed to inspire others and connect friends and neighbors.

The tools in this guidebook are available to help you make changes to the public space(s) in and around your home, neighborhood, shop, or business district. The city's goal is to help you navigate the application process so that you can “get to yes” and get your project on the ground!

The Urban Design Center (UDC) oversees the city's Placemaking Program. The mission of the Charlotte Urban Design Center is to advance the quality of Charlotte's built environment and bring public awareness to the importance of urban design.

The Placemaking Hub is led by the UDC and is a collection of tools from multiple city departments (Planning, Design & Development; Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT); Housing & Neighborhood Services (HNS); Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS); and General Services).



USING THIS GUIDEBOOK

The City of Charlotte has many policies, programs, and processes that enable the transformation of public space in our neighborhoods, and there are a variety of placemaking tools available to help you reimagine where you live.

Explore Charlotte's Placemaking Tools:

Are cyclists locking their bikes to trees and fences near your business?

Use this guidebook to get a new bike rack!

Are the tables in your restaurant overflowing?

The guidebook can help you get that sidewalk dining you've been dreaming about!

Want more art in your neighborhood?

Learn how to get your neighbors together to paint a street mural!

This guidebook organizes the city's placemaking tools in a clear, step-by-step process to help you get your placemaking project on the ground.

There are seven steps to Charlotte's placemaking process:

- 1 Choose a Placemaking tool.
- 2 Provide a project summary.
- 3 Attend an application meeting.
- 4 Demonstrate public support.
- 5 Submit required forms to the City.
- 6 City issues a permit for your Placemaking project.
- 7 Install and maintain your project.

This process is intended to help you and your neighbors make changes to the public spaces in your neighborhood by getting placemaking projects on the ground!

Also, check out the Important Resources section at the end of this guidebook for FAQs, information on potential sources of funding, and tips/tricks for installing a great placemaking project!

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Eligibility

Charlotte residents, business owners, neighborhood associations/organizations, homeowners' associations, and property owners can install a placemaking project using the tools and process outlined in this guide.

Keep in mind, most projects must demonstrate public support (e.g.: business owners along a block, property owners along a street) to receive approval.

Process Overview

The process for installing a placemaking project begins with your great idea and ends with you installing and maintaining a fantastic, community-driven project. Along the way, City staff can help you navigate the application process and permit(s) you'll need based on the type of project.

To initiate a placemaking project, the most important things you'll need to know are:

- What type of placemaking project you want to install. (See the Placemaking Toolbox – page 17)
- Where you'd like to install your placemaking project. (Every placemaking tool has location requirements that specify where you can/can't install them.)


It's also a good idea to familiarize yourself with the design requirements and public support requirements for each placemaking tool (See the Placemaking Toolbox – page 17).



Ready to Get Started?



We're excited to hear more about your idea!



Please review the Placemaking Process outlined on the following pages (10-16), then contact us so we can help you on the road to installing your placemaking project.



Contact: placemaking@charlottenc.gov

The Charlotte Urban Design Center (a division of the Charlotte Planning, Design & Development Department) oversees the city's Placemaking Program.



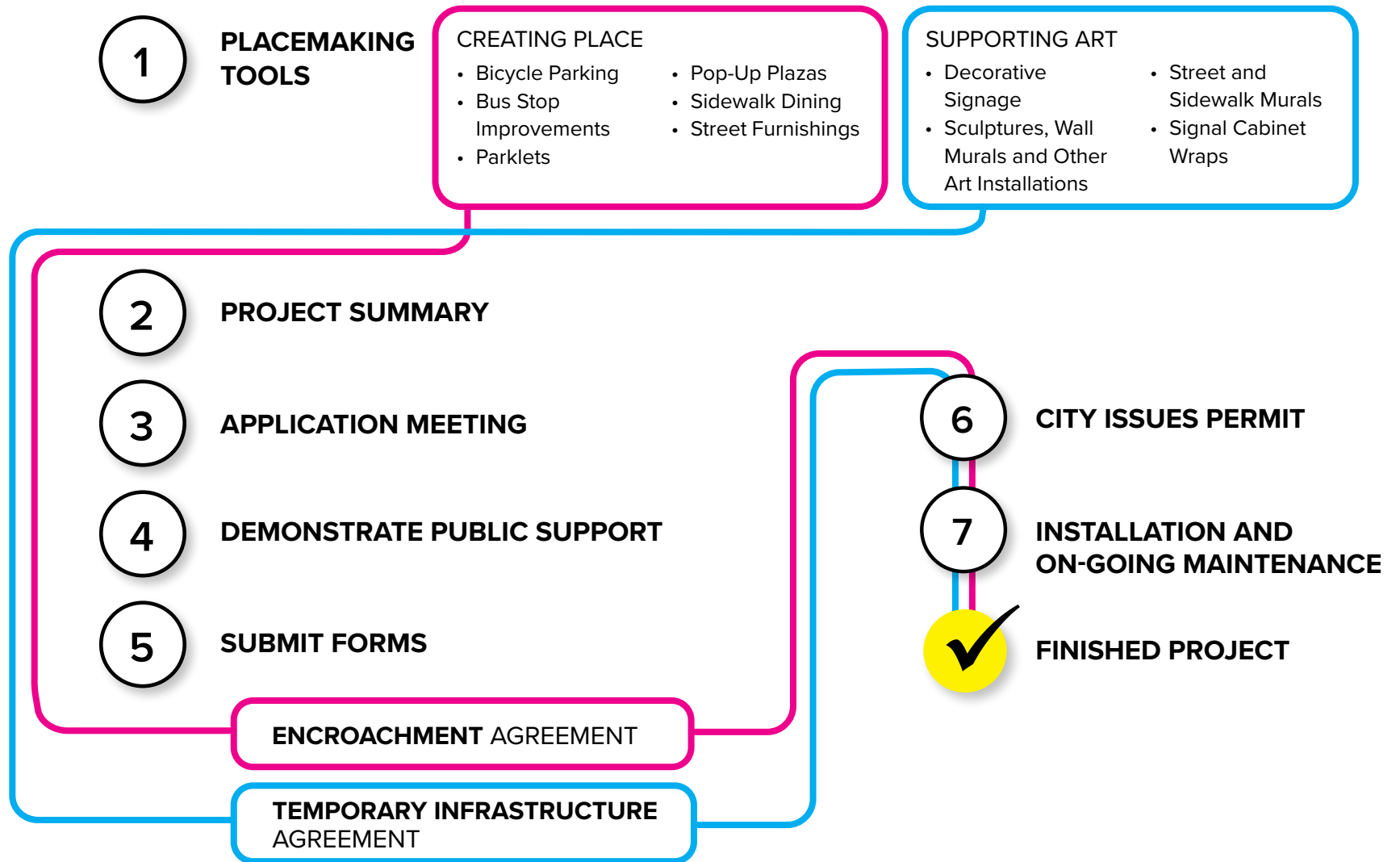
THE PLACEMAKING PROCESS



PLACEMAKING HUB PROJECT APPLICATION PROCESS

The placemaking process is designed to enable Charlotteans to create change in their neighborhoods while supporting the city’s efforts to create equitable and inclusive neighborhoods and public spaces. City staff are responsible for balancing the needs of both while providing a clear pathway for residents to install and maintain their own placemaking projects.

Select your placemaking tool(s) below (1).



APPLICATION STEPS

1. PLACEMAKING TOOLS	2 & 3. PROJECT SUMMARY					4. PUBLIC SUPPORT		5. SUBMIT FORMS		6. APPROVAL
Use this table following Steps 2-7 to find out which elements are needed to get your project approved.	Project Map/Location	Location Photos	Written Description	Design Sketch	Application Meeting	Letter of Support	Petition	Encroachment Agreement	Temporary Infrastructure Agreement	Receive Placemaking Permit Approval
Creating Place										
Bicycle Parking	x	x		x	x	x		x		CDOT
Bus Stop Improvements	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	CATS/CDOT
Parklets	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	CDOT
Pop-Up Plazas	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	CDOT
Sidewalk Dining*	x	x		x	x			x		CDOT
Street Furnishings	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		CDOT
Supporting Art										
Decorative Signage	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	CDOT
Sculptures and Other Art										
Installations	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	CDOT

* The placemaking process is designed to enable Charlotteans to create change in their neighborhoods while supporting the city's efforts to create equitable and inclusive neighborhoods and public spaces. City staff are responsible for balancing the needs of both while providing a clear pathway for residents to install and maintain their own placemaking projects.

CHOOSE A PLACEMAKING TOOL

The tools outlined below can help improve the public spaces in your neighborhood. Think of these tools as a menu of possibilities to make your favorite place more attractive by creating a unique vibe in a business district, adding art to a street, or celebrating the history of your neighborhood!

There are two toolkits: *Creating Place* and *Supporting Art*. Each toolkit is based on the typical approval process for its

individual tools. *Creating Place* includes placemaking projects that program or activate existing places and streetscapes and create new public spaces. *Supporting Art* includes placemaking projects that incorporate art such as artwork, sculptures, and wayfinding. The approval process for each tool is based on project type (page 14), shown in the diagram on page 8, and described in the Placemaking Toolbox on page 17).

STEP

1

CREATING PLACE *pg. 18-30*



Bicycle Parking



Bus Stops Improvements



Parklets



Pop-up Plazas

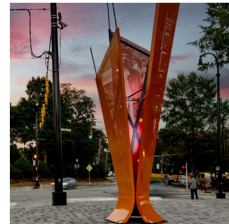


Sidewalk Dining

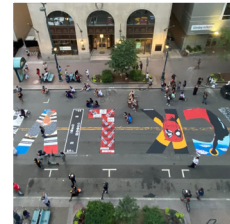


Street Furnishings

SUPPORTING ART *pg. 32-40*



Sculptures & Other Art Installations



Street & Sidewalk Murals



Signal Cabinet Wraps



Wall Murals



Decorative Signage

PROVIDE A PROJECT SUMMARY

Details about your project should be summarized based on the outline below. All applicants are required to submit the following content in order to initiate a Placemaking project. These requirements are intended to help City staff understand where your project is, and what type of project you want to implement.



Project Map

- Create a map that illustrates the project location and approximately 1/4-mile surrounding area. If you do not know how to do this, staff will be able to assist you.
- Most applicants will find [Charlotte Explorer](#) or Google Maps to be a helpful tool.



Location Photos

- Provide a minimum of four (4) photos that show the proposed project location from different angles.
- Include additional photos for additional context as needed or required by City staff.



Written Project Description

- Provide a 1-2 paragraph description of the placemaking tool and context of the surrounding area.



Design Sketch

- Provide a simple, plan view drawing on a map or aerial photo with labels to explain the basic design idea. This can be hand drawn or computer drawn.
- Don't be intimidated by this step if you're not a designer. This sketch does not need to represent the final project design.
- The sketch, along with the written description are intended to help staff understand the most important design features of your idea and the general context of the area.
- If you do not know how to do this or if you have questions about this step staff will be able to provide guidance.

STEP

2



Submit your project summary to: placemaking@charlottenc.gov

See the Placemaking Project Summary Form at the end of this guidebook.

APPLICATION MEETING

After you submit a project summary, City staff will reach out to schedule an application meeting, typically within two to three weeks, to discuss your project proposal. The purpose of the meeting is to:



Verify the eligibility of your project idea based on your Project Summary;



Provide guidance on the eligibility of your project idea (the placemaking tool and location you have in mind),



Offer some feedback on design ideas, and



Help you understand which form(s) will be required (e.g.: Encroachment Agreement, Temporary Infrastructure Agreement).

STEP

3

DEMONSTRATE PUBLIC SUPPORT

Successful placemaking projects should be designed with the public in mind, and ideally in collaboration with your neighbors. This step acknowledges that projects built within a community should represent the wishes and input from the people who live and work nearby. Placemaking projects (except where noted) require applicants to work with their community, nearby residents, HOAs, business owners, and/or business associations or districts to demonstrate support for the project.

Not sure where to start? The city's [Neighborhood Organization contact list](#) may help you identify neighborhood leaders.

One or both of the following may be required:



Letter of support: All project types except sidewalk dining and street sign toppers require letter(s) of support from the groups identified above. UDC staff will determine which group(s) you should approach to present your project idea to seek your letter(s) of support. Sidewalk dining permits do not require a letter of support.



Project Petition: Street sign toppers require a petition with signatures of support from property owner(s) and/or business owner(s) within the neighborhood requesting street sign toppers. City staff will work with applicants to determine the geography and the threshold for a successful petition.



Submit the required documents* to placemaking@charlottenc.gov.
See the Placemaking Project Petition Form at the end of this guidebook.

**See the Process Summary chart on page 9 for more information on which type(s) of public support are required for each placemaking tool. Note that Sidewalk Dining Permits do not require a demonstration of public support.*

STEP

4

SUBMIT FORMS

Projects taking place in the public right-of-way (e.g.: on streets or sidewalks) require a permit. There are two types of permits (called “agreements”) as follows, and staff will advise you on which form you need and any associated requirements:



Encroachment Agreement

Typically used for permanent objects being placed in the public right-of-way.



Temporary Infrastructure Agreement

Typically used for temporary objects being placed in the public right-of-way.



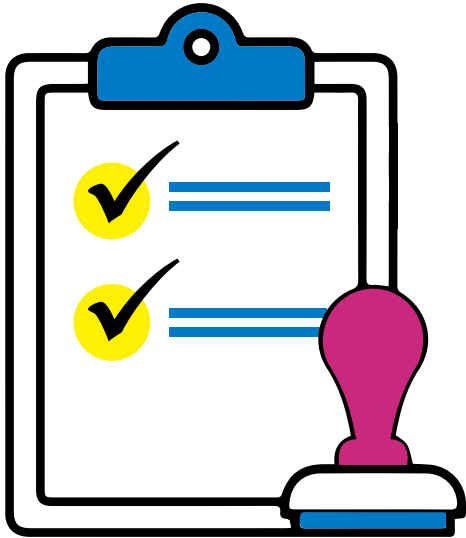
Submit the required forms to placemaking@charlottenc.gov.

After the forms are submitted, the City will review them for completion and work with applicants to verify or finalize any additional information needed.

STEP

5

CITY ISSUES PERMIT



After the City reviews and approves your project, you will receive (via email) a digital placemaking permit and a notice to proceed.

STEP

6

INSTALL & MAINTAIN YOUR PROJECT

You should invite people to join in the fun of installing your project. Bringing the neighborhood together to install your project is a community-building experience that is just as important as the design of the project! At a minimum, you must notify the adjacent property owners / business owners of the planned installation date and invite them to participate in installing the project.

Some projects may require street closures, or other traffic control, in order for you to safely install them. Additional coordination with the City may be required in those instances.

Note: You will be asked to submit a maintenance plan for projects that will remain in place for extended periods of time.

Some projects are temporary, and others may be in place for an extended period of time. *If projects are not maintained or pose a safety risk, the City reserves the right to remove any project at any time.* Applicants must provide ongoing maintenance of the project as required by City staff.

STEP

7

The Placemaking Toolbox provides more information about each Placemaking Tool. On the following pages you'll find a description of each Placemaking Tool and the specific requirements you'll need to follow to install them.

PLACEMAKING TOOLBOX



Bicycle Parking

Providing ample bicycle parking encourages people to bike to local shops and businesses and supports city transportation and environmental objectives. There are two types of bicycle racks that can be installed: decorative bike racks and inverted-U racks. The City will work with business owners who want to install customized bicycle racks, and offers free inverted-U racks. Bicycle parking can be created on your street or at your business as described below. Note that each new bicycle rack application is reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis.

1. **Decorative Bike Racks:** The City encourages decorative, unique, custom bike racks to add whimsy or character to a neighborhood or shopfront. These are privately-funded racks that must meet the city’s design requirements (see Design Requirements below) and can be installed in the public right-of-way (see Bicycle Parking in the public right-of-way). Have fun with your bicycle rack design!
2. **Inverted-U Racks.** The city’s Bicycle Rack Partnership Program offers free inverted-U bicycle racks that can be installed in the public right-of-way and at eligible businesses (see *Bicycle Parking on Private Property*).

BICYCLE PARKING IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY

- Free inverted “U” bicycle racks are available for you to install on the sidewalk at your business.
- Businesses can install their own inverted-U or custom/decorative racks.
- Decorative or custom bicycle racks that meet the city’s design requirements (see below) are supported and encouraged. Have fun with your bicycle rack design!

BICYCLE PARKING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY (BICYCLE RACK PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM)

- Free “inverted-U” style racks are available for businesses on sites developed on, or prior to, the adoption of the city’s first bicycle parking ordinance in 2005 (subject to availability).
- Businesses may install bicycle parking subject to Unified Development Ordinance Requirements.

PERMITTED LOCATIONS

- Public Right-of-Way
 - » Publicly accessible locations at business located on sites developed prior to the adoption of the city’s bicycle parking ordinance.

- Business at sites developed prior to the adoption of the city’s bicycle parking ordinance.

PROHIBITED LOCATIONS

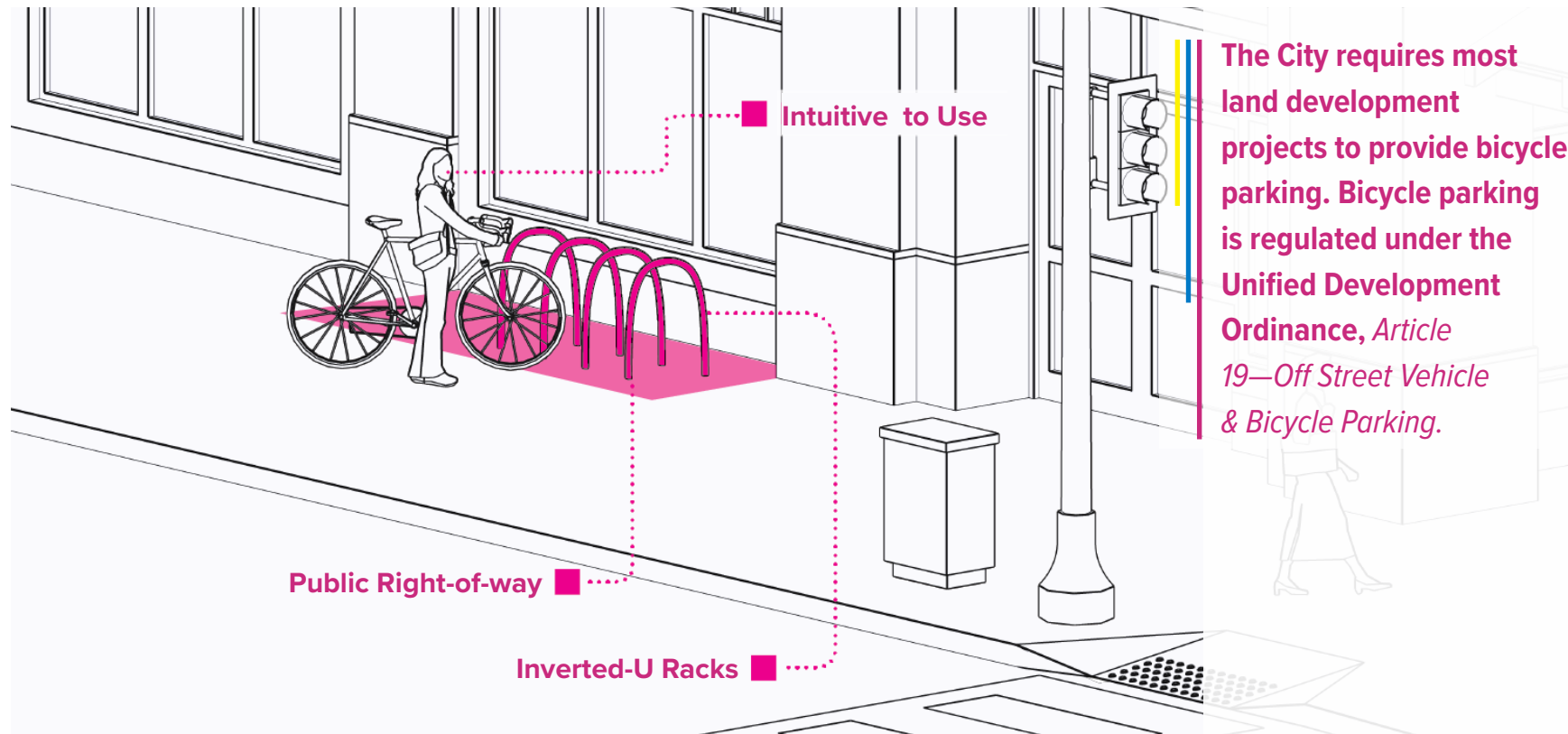
- Locations that would cause an obstruction to pedestrian circulation along the sidewalk.
- Any location deemed inappropriate by CDOT.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

- All bike rack designs must:
 - » Support the bicycle upright without putting stress on the wheels
 - » Accommodate a variety of bicycles and attachments
 - » Allow locking of the frame and at least one wheel with a u-lock
 - » Provide security and longevity appropriate for the intended location
 - » Be intuitive to use

NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

- There is a limited supply of free bicycle racks provided by CDOT. Applications may be declined or delayed until new racks are ordered.
- CDOT may require applicants to complete a Bicycle Parking Partnership Agreement.



Arch shaped bicycle parking near Charlotte's Joy Ride bike share system



Decorative City of Charlotte crown bicycle parking



Decorative bicycle parking in NoDa

Bus Stop Improvements

Charlotte has hundreds of bus stops that help thousands of people traverse the city every day. Bus stops are an important amenity for any neighborhood. Creating attractive, comfortable stops can help make your neighborhood unique while providing a more enjoyable experience for riders. The City and the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) support temporary and permanent improvements that enhance bus stops and showcase nearby communities or beautify the public realm. Improvements can be physical installations, like benches, or aesthetic enhancements, like adding art to shelters or trash bins.

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Applicants should consider the following placemaking enhancements for bus stops:

1. **Concrete Waiting Pad**
2. **Shelter** – Windscreens and ceilings can be customized with adhesive vinyl.
3. **Bench** – Add customized, decorated or sculptural benches to existing stops.
4. **Trash Cans** – Add paint, mosaic tiles, or other decorative elements to existing trash cans.
5. **Landscaping** – Add plantings (such as flower beds, butterfly gardens, and native plantings) in existing planting strips within the public right-of-way are eligible.

PERMITTED LOCATIONS

CATS bus stops with existing infrastructure for proposed design elements.

PROHIBITED LOCATIONS

- Bus stops that already have existing Art in Transit elements
- Locations that block/obscure transit signage and schedule information.
- Projects that impede service or create a safety or security hazard.
- Projects at stops that require easements that may conflict with adjacent private property.
- Projects that cannot meet potential encroachment agreement requirements.
- Bus stops with existing Art in Transit elements or Placemaking Projects.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

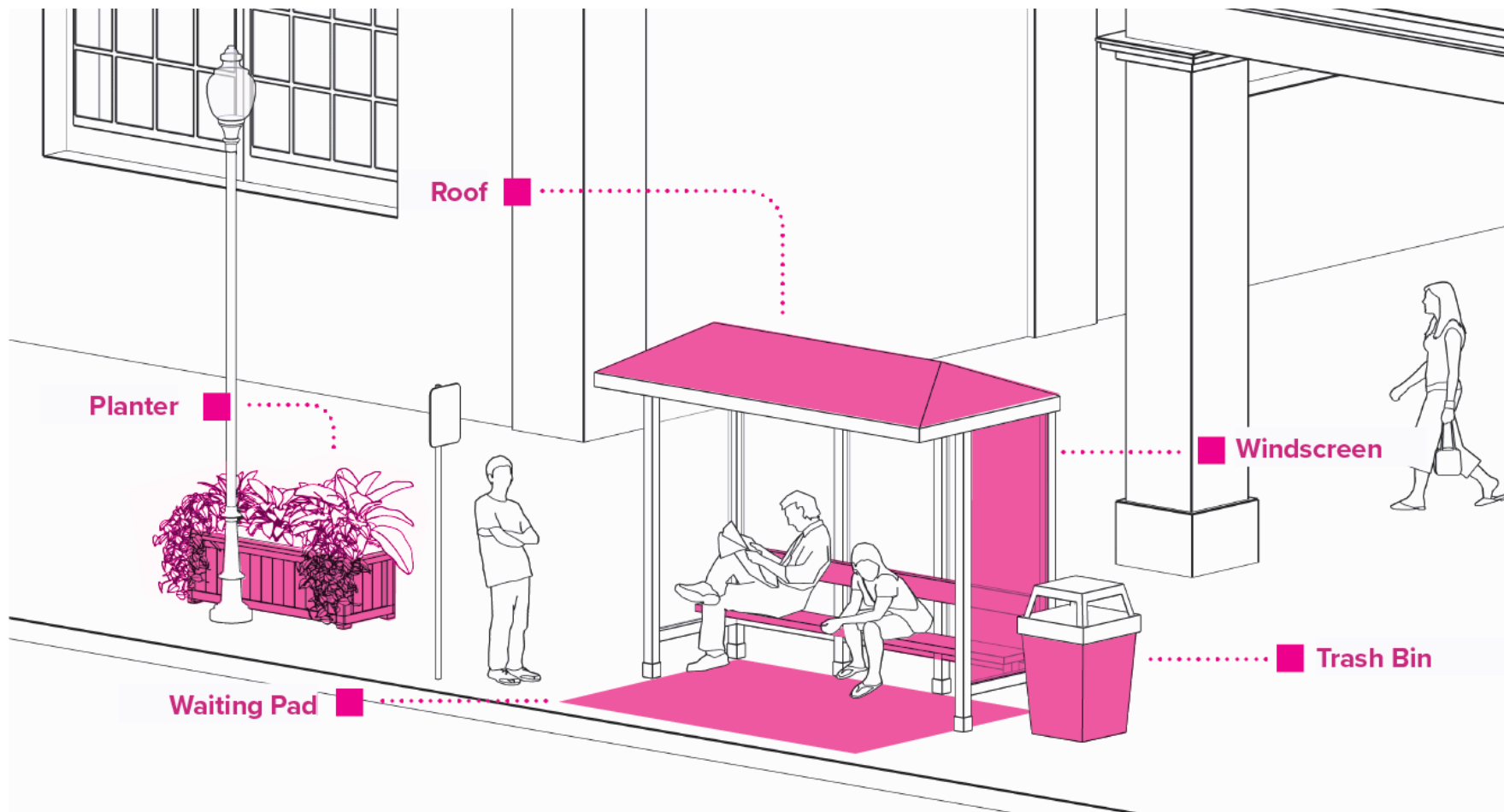
- Bus stops cannot be used for commercial advertising or for promoting any political or social advocacy organization or political or religious message.



Avenida de la Hispanidad Bus Shelter. Source: City of Charlotte



Bus stop bench in Derita



NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

» Installation must be coordinated with CATS Facilities and Operations to ensure there are no bus service or access impacts when installing the art at the existing bus stop.

» CATS shall have final authority to screen and identify eligible project types and locations and may deny any Bus Stop Placemaking request for any reason.

» CATS will work with applicants to provide specific design requirements and approve placemaking projects at bus stops.

Parklets

Parklets are installations that replace one or two on-street parking spaces with a small public space. Parklets, similar to Pop-up Plazas, are a great way to transform the public right-of-way by reclaiming a small amount of space from the street to contribute to an active, accessible, and vibrant urban environment. Neighborhoods with retail, pedestrian traffic, mixed-use development, commercial or high-density residential developments are ideal candidates for parklets.

PERMITTED LOCATIONS

- Neighborhoods with existing pedestrian activity due to the presence of retail, mixed-use, commercial, or high-density residential development
- Within marked, on-street, parallel, public parking spaces
- On City-maintained streets with a posted speed limit of 35 mph or less
- In spaces where parking is normally permitted during all hours of the day/night

PROHIBITED LOCATIONS

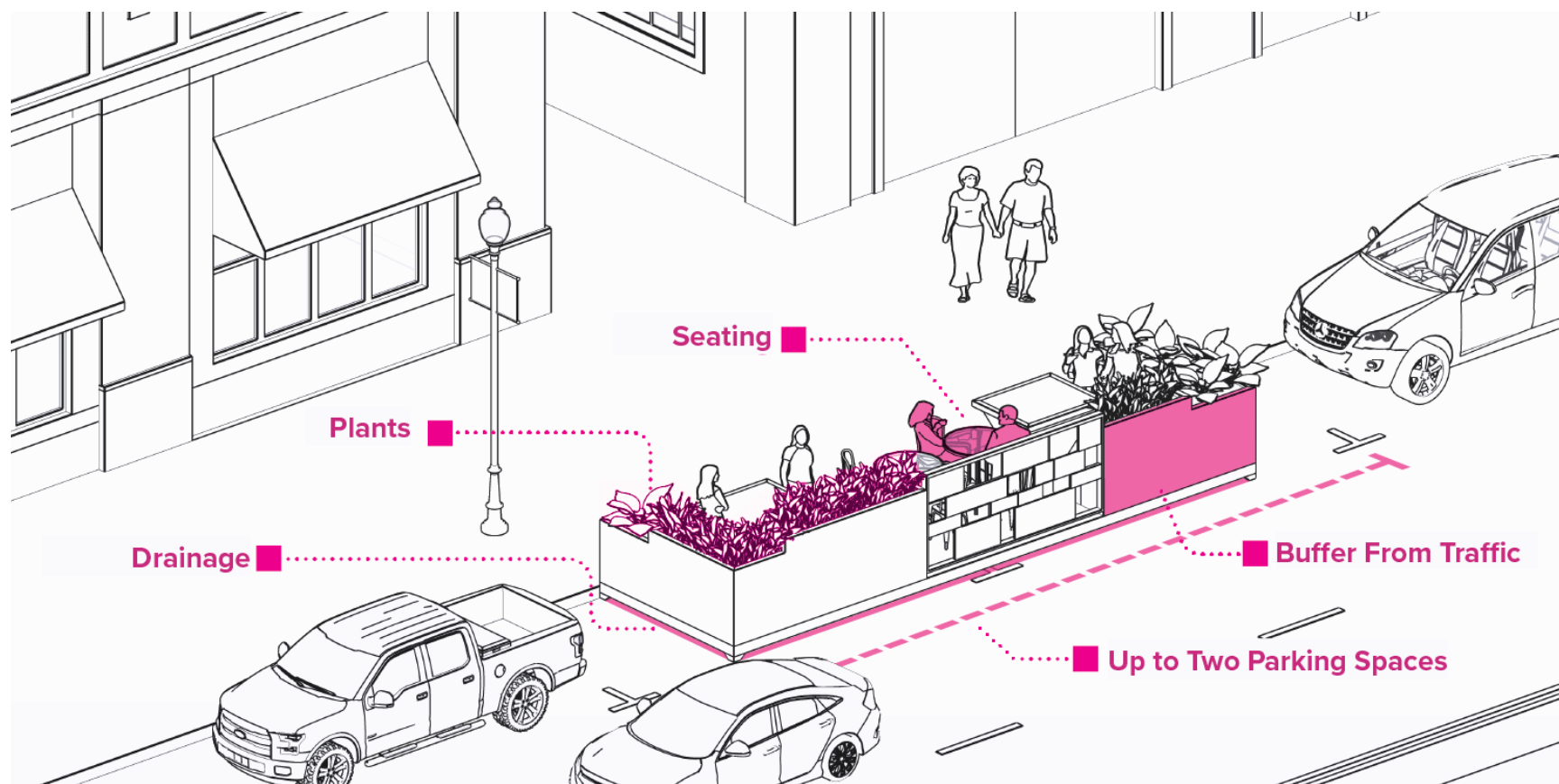
- Within 20 feet of intersections
- Within 10 feet of driveways and bus stops
- Within 5 feet of fire hydrants

- In parking spaces with a running slope greater than or equal to 5%
- Above manholes or other utility access
- Where resurfacing or other street improvements are scheduled to occur within 6 months
- Where access to the sidewalk is limited by raised planting strips or vegetation
- In bus lanes or loading zones
- In accessible parking spaces
- On bridges
- On NCDOT-maintained streets
- In any location deemed inappropriate by CDOT

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

- Accessibility Requirements
 - » Must be open and accessible for public use
 - » Must comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design requirements for accessibility. CDOT staff will provide specific requirements based on your project.
- Physical Design Requirements
 - » Maximum length of 2 consecutive parking spaces and must fit within the width of the marked parking space(s)

- » Must incorporate plantings and seating
- » Must use appropriate buffer devices to separate people from vehicular traffic
- » Must not impede curbside drainage or stormwater drainage inlets unless accommodations for water flow are made
- » Must not obstruct other street furniture, plantings, or signage.
- » Electrical cords may not run across the public right of way from a partner establishment to a Parklet.
- » No portion of the Parklet may be glued, nailed, bolted, cemented, or otherwise affixed to the street or curb.
- » Parklets must be designed to be easily removed without damaging the curb, sidewalk, any drainage structures, and the underlying roadway.
- » Non-structural elements (e.g.: umbrellas) must be secured or affixed to structural elements.



NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

- Parklet permits require annual renewal and are revocable without notice. CDOT staff will explain the renewal process.
- Parklets should not be installed in locations scheduled for resurfacing or utility work within 6 months of installation.
- Parklets must be easy to assemble on site and dismantle for storage or in case of emergency hazard situations. Components must be transportable by a standard pickup truck when disassembled.
- CDOT reserves the right to have the Parklet removed at any time.
- [Charlotte Center City Partners](#) manages certain activities in Uptown, notably on Tryon Street. City staff will instruct applicants to contact/coordinate with this organization where necessary and appropriate. Most applicants typically use the Tryon Street Mall Use Application from the linked website above.

Pop-Up Plazas

Charlotte has many great, walkable neighborhoods and business districts, however, some of them lack outdoor gathering spaces. Pop-up plazas are a useful way to quickly transform inactive areas into lively places where people can gather. Typically, these plazas are created on city streets or next to the public right-of-way on private property in highly visible areas. Although these plazas are often temporary, they can be a great way to test potential permanent plaza designs.

PERMITTED LOCATIONS

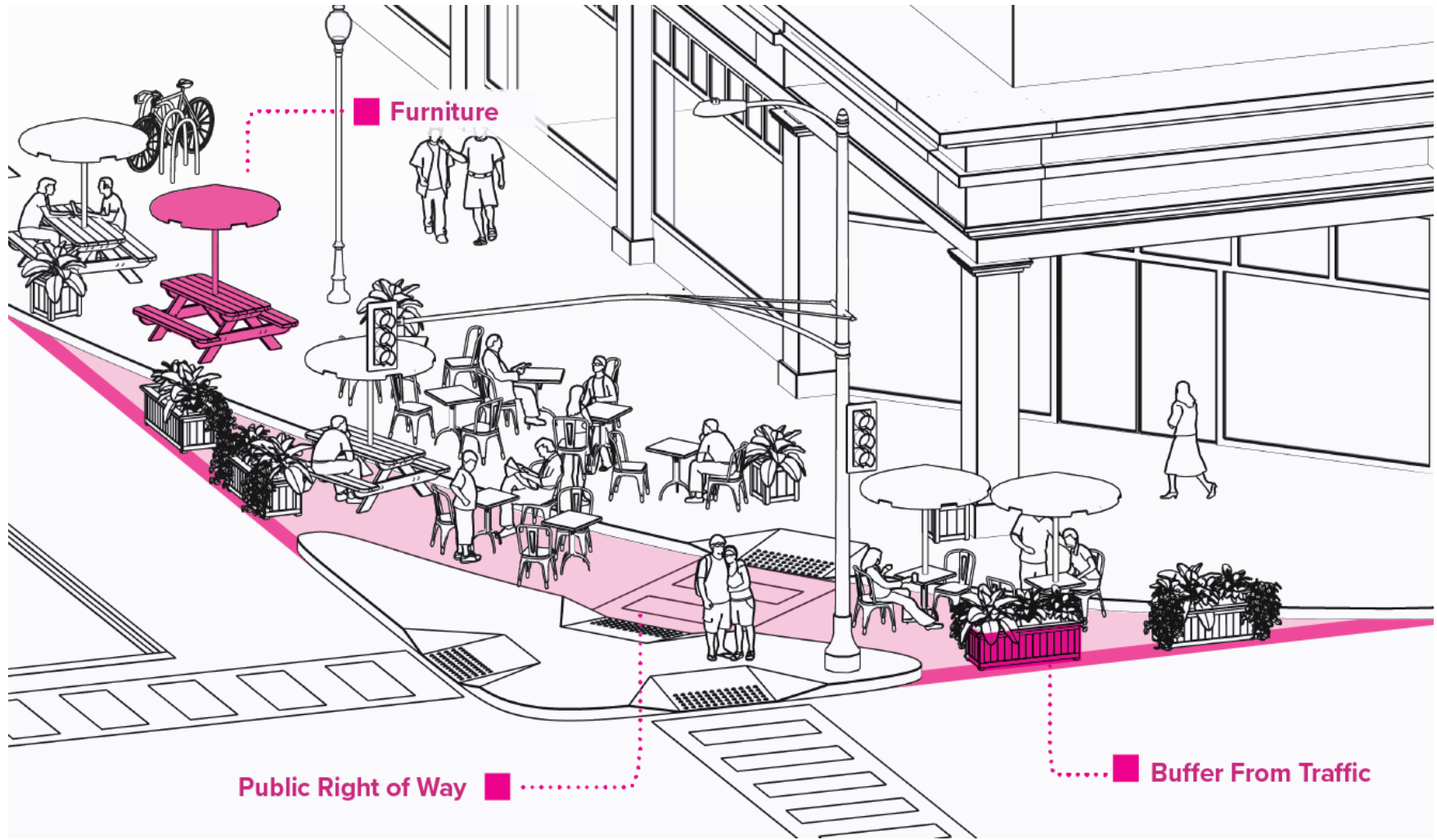
- Public right-of-way on City-maintained streets with a posted speed limit of 35 mph or lower
- City-owned property
- Private property with consent of the property owner

PROHIBITED LOCATIONS

- Public right-of-way along NCDOT-maintained streets
- Public right-of-Way on City-maintained streets with a posted speed limit over 35mph
- In any other location deemed inappropriate by CDOT

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

- Plazas are permitted on streets regulated at or below the default speed limit of 35 mph.
- Size – There are no dimensional requirements. Size limitations may be applied based on staff guidance.
- Plazas must not interfere with transit stops.
- Plazas in the public right-of-way must not block pedestrian and bicycle routes.
- Plazas must open to the public.
- Seating in a plaza may not be licensed to an individual establishment or business.
- Plazas must not affect the circulation of emergency vehicles.
- Plazas must not block access to fire hydrants.
- Manhole covers and other utilities are allowed within plazas but cannot be blocked by furniture.
- Adequate clearance must be provided for turning in and out of nearby driveways.
- Plazas should not be installed in locations scheduled for resurfacing or utility work within 6 months of installation.
- Non-structural elements (e.g.: umbrellas) must be secured or affixed to structural elements.



Sidewalk Dining

Sidewalk dining is a way to bring life and vitality to neighborhoods and business districts. Businesses can add items including tables, chairs, and planters to create an active and safe environment for customers and the neighborhood. Sidewalk dining is permitted and regulated by the CDOT right-of-way Management Section and the City of Charlotte Code of Ordinances Article IX. CDOT staff will provide more details about the application requirements for sidewalk dining.

PERMITTED LOCATIONS

- Generally, any sidewalk or space in the public right-of-way that allows at least 6 feet of unobstructed, paved space in Uptown, and 5 feet in other parts of Charlotte.

PROHIBITED LOCATIONS

- At locations where the clear space for the passageway (paved area, including tree grates) of pedestrians is reduced to less than 6 feet in Uptown and 5 feet in other parts of Charlotte.
- Within 10 feet of any driveway or alleyway
- Within 15 feet of any fire hydrant or standpipe
- Within 10 feet of any side of a bus shelter or sign marking a designated bus stop

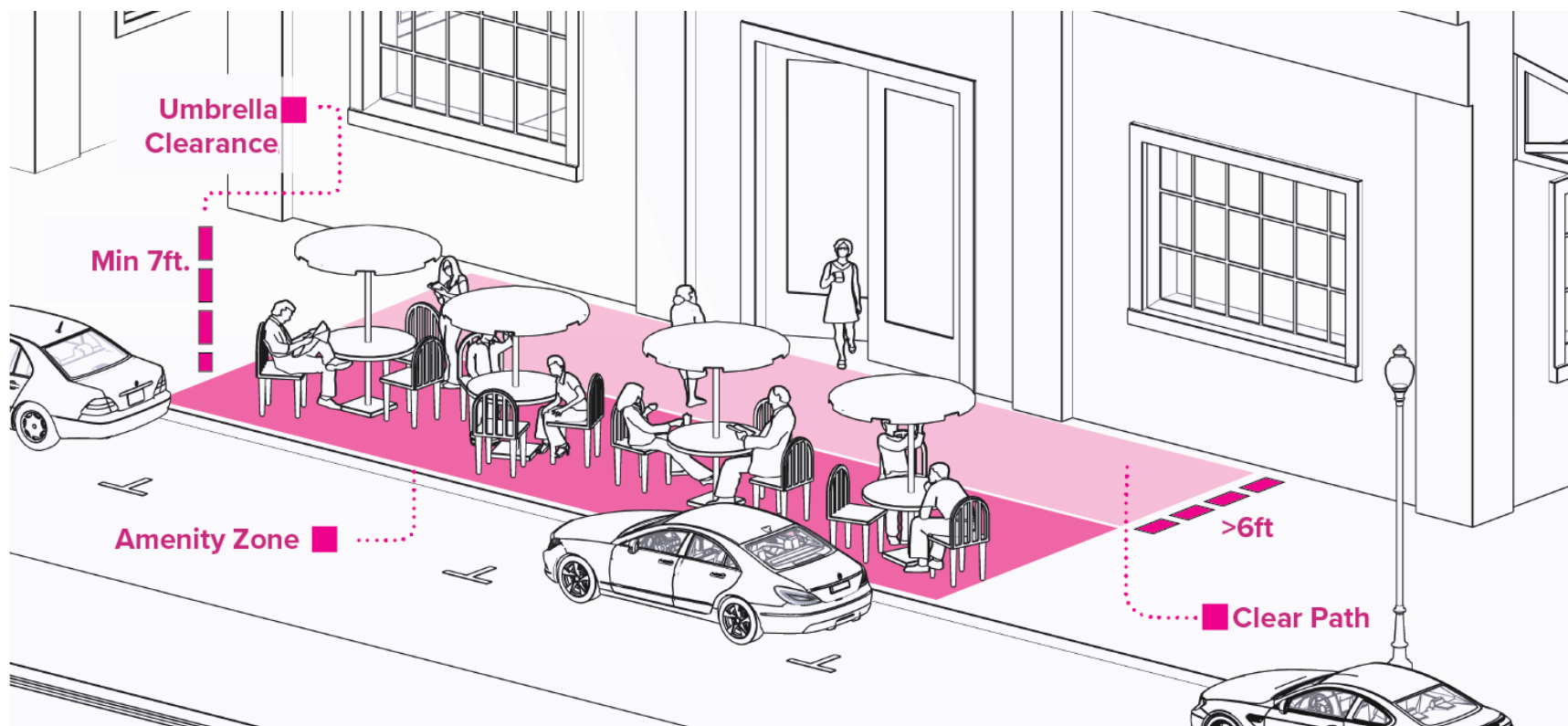


Sidewalk dining space on Tryon Street

- Within 10 feet of a crosswalk or the intersection of public right-of-way lines (property lines) at a street intersection
- At locations that cause an obstruction to underground utility access points, ventilation areas, meters, accessible ramps, or other facility provided for people with disabilities, any building access, exit, or any emergency access or exit
- In front of an adjacent property without written approval of the adjacent business/property owner
- In front of any display window without the written approval of the business or property owner
- Any location deemed inappropriate by CDOT

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants are required to submit a scaled drawing or site plan showing the following:
 - » The section of sidewalk or right-of-way to be used for the dining.
 - » The section to be kept clear for pedestrian use.
 - » The existing curb line and public right-of-way line.
 - » The proposed placement of the tables, chairs and other furnishings on the sidewalk.
- Must be located directly adjacent to the retail food establishment
- Accessible Design Requirements
 - » At least eight 6 ft of clear pedestrian passageway is required in Uptown and 5 feet in all other parts of the city
 - » Must have a cane detectable barrier system separating dining area from pedestrian passageway
 - » Umbrella vertical clearance must be a minimum of 7ft



Sidewalk dining on Poplar Street

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- » Permanent fixtures, facilities, or structures are not allowed
- » Dining area must remain clean & sanitary, free of litter & food products
- » Advertising, business, or product signage is not allowed on any encroaching item
- » No business, product, or advertising signs are allowed on any encroaching item

NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

- Dining is for waiter service only.
- Cover charges are not allowed for sidewalk dining.
- Sidewalk dining permits are renewable and remain in effect for one year and are not transferable or assignable.

Street Furnishings

Street furnishings are physical streetscape features, such as benches, bicycle racks, lighting, trash cans, and banners located in the public right-of-way. These features create unique spaces and help make streets more inviting for pedestrians.

PERMITTED LOCATIONS

- In the public right-of-way, typically on wide sidewalks or in a planting strip adjacent to a sidewalk. These locations are defined as Amenity Zones or Green Zones in the Charlotte Unified Development Ordinance
- City-owned property
- Private property (does not require a permit)

PROHIBITED LOCATIONS

- At locations where the clear space for the passageway (paved area, including tree grates) of pedestrians is reduced to less than 6 feet.
- Within 10 feet of any driveway or alleyway
- Within 15 feet of any fire hydrant or standpipe
- Within 10 feet of a crosswalk or the

intersection of public right-of-way lines (property lines) at a street intersection

- At locations that cause an obstruction to underground utility access points, ventilation areas, meters, accessible ramps, facilities for people with disabilities, building access or emergency access or exit
- In front of an adjacent property without written approval of the adjacent business/property owner
- In front of any display window without the written approval of the business or property owner
- Any location deemed inappropriate by CDOT

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

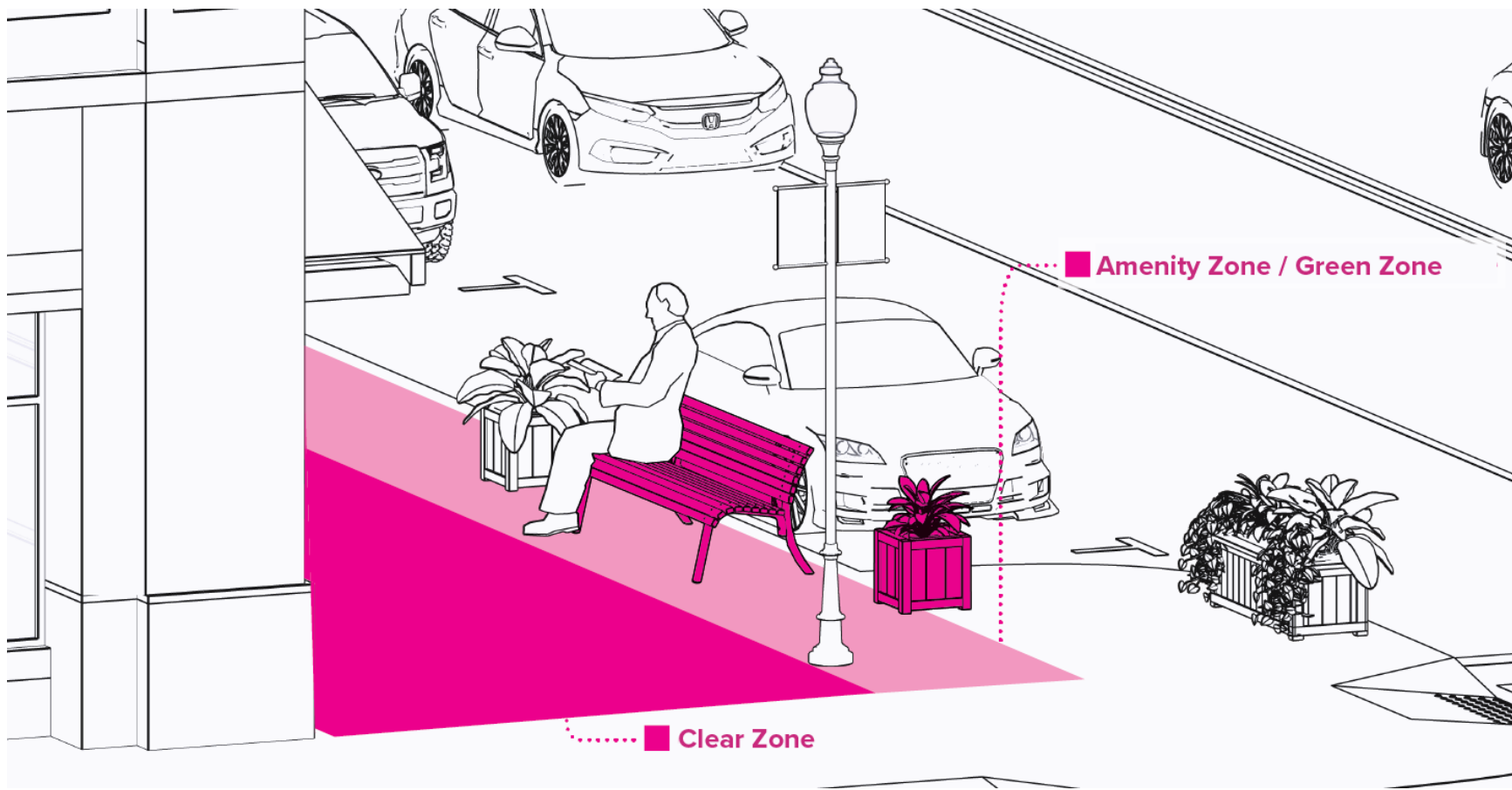
- Must not block a fire hydrant
- Cannot obstruct other street furniture, plantings, or signage unless permitted
- Five percent of seating (where provided) must be accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Must not be installed over street drains unless accommodations for water flow are made



Seating in open spaces creates a more welcoming space for people to hang out.



Benches invite people to sit and stay.



Decorative Signs

Neighborhoods across Charlotte use different types of signs, including street sign toppers, street banners, decorative signs, and monument signs, to help support neighborhood identity. The City supports many different types of signage that can be installed on public and private property (with the consent of the owner.).

PERMITTED LOCATIONS

- Private property (does not require a Placemaking Permit)
- Public right-of-way (subject to CDOT review)



A fun geometric design celebrating the Winterfield neighborhood



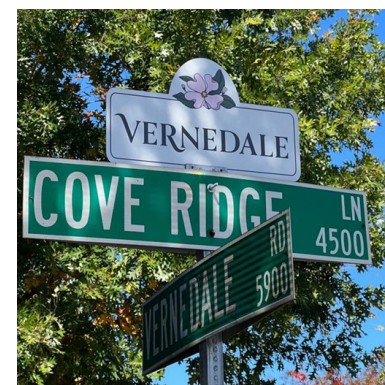
Neighborhood sign features an historic home within the Camp Greene neighborhood



Owl themed metal sign visible along the roadway



Simple historic neighborhood sign attached to a telephone pole



The Venedale neighborhood sign incorporates a flower as identification of the neighborhood.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

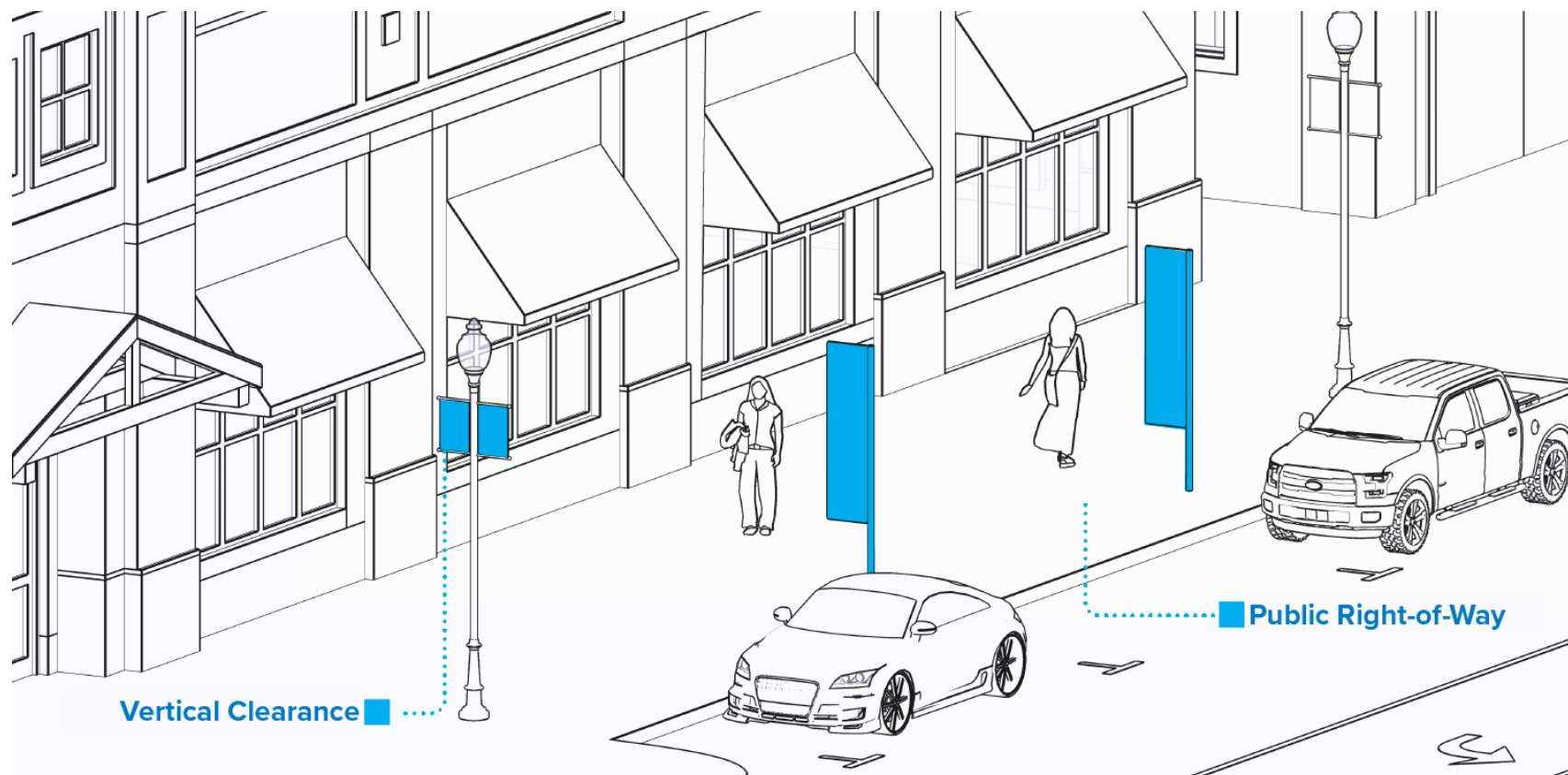
Private Property

- Signs on private property (e.g.: monument signs) do not require a Placemaking Permit. They are regulated by the Charlotte Unified Development Ordinance [Article 22](#), and may require a [Mecklenburg County Sign Permit](#).

Sign Posts in the Public Right-of Way

- Posts should typically be hollow aluminum. CDOT can provide guidance on other materials.
- Signs should be mounted 7 feet from the bottom edge of the sign to the ground surface. CDOT may alter this requirement on a case-by-case basis.

- Located generally between the curb or edge of pavement and the closest public right-of-way (property) line. If a sidewalk with a planting strip exists, the sign should be located in the planting strip. CDOT will provide additional guidance on where to locate sign posts.



Decorative Signs & Banners

- Signs cannot be used for commercial advertising or for promoting any political or social advocacy organization or political or religious message.
- One illustration of a corporation or business sponsoring the cost of a sign for an applicant shall be allowed per sign and the total illustration of the sponsor shall not exceed 15% of the total banner space in the design.

- Banners can only be attached to street light utility poles.
- Signs cannot be attached or affixed to poles with traffic signals.
- CDOT will provide guidance on installations limitations and requirements.

NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

- Uptown street banners and light pole banner requirements and permits are managed by [Charlotte Center City Partners](#).

Sculptures, Wall Murals & Other Art Installations

The City encourages the installation of art, including sculptures, as a way to create unique places and celebrate neighborhoods. Wall murals and other public art installations can showcase the creativity and input of local artists and residents. Art installations help make streets and neighborhoods more attractive and unique, and the process of creating them encourages communities to work together to create vibrant art projects in their neighborhoods.

PERMITTED LOCATIONS

- Vertical structures in the public right-of-way (e.g.: bridge columns, walls, etc.)

PROHIBITED LOCATIONS

- Locations that create hazards for motorists, pedestrians, or bicyclists.
- Locations in which a project may obscure, mimic, or confuse pavement markings or regulatory devices
- CDOT will provide guidance on these and other areas in the public right-of-way that may impact site selection for your project.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

- Projects shall not include words, logos, commercial speech or advertising.
- Projects may not mimic traffic control devices such as crosswalks or street signage.
- Projects must minimize yellow and white paint to avoid looking like traffic control devices.
- CDOT will provide guidance on specific locational requirements for your project.

NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

- Each art installation will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis to determine if it could potentially create adverse distractions or vehicular or pedestrian movements that could interfere with traffic flow or compromise safety.
- Projects on NCDOT right-of-way will be reviewed by NCDOT's Right-of-Way Art Committee as designated by the Secretary of Transportation.
- Projects that require streets to be blocked or closed during installation are allowed and subject to specific installation requirements. CDOT will define applicable requirements on a case by case basis.



The Urban Arboretum Trail in Charlotte highlights local artists' work



The Living Pillar at the West End



Mural on side of building at Sugaree Place



Wall murals brighten up the space at an I-77 underpass



This Oaklawn mural gives a pop of color amongst the trees



Building mural at Rita's Italian Ice and Frozen Custard



Wall mural featuring J. Charles Jones



Even Higher Sculpture at West Trade Street. Artist: J. Stacy Utley and Evoke Studio

Street & Sidewalk Murals

Murals on city streets and sidewalks are a fun way to make your neighborhood unique and celebrate what makes it special. Several location types are eligible for Paint the Pavement projects:

- **Intersections**—Murals painted in the intersection of low traffic volume streets.
- **Crosswalks**—Murals painted within existing crosswalks.
- **Midblock**—Murals located between two intersections.
- **Live-Ends**—Murals painted in dead-end streets or cul-de-sacs.
- **Sidewalks**—Murals painted on public sidewalks.



Flower mural on Romany Road



Rea Farms parking lot mural



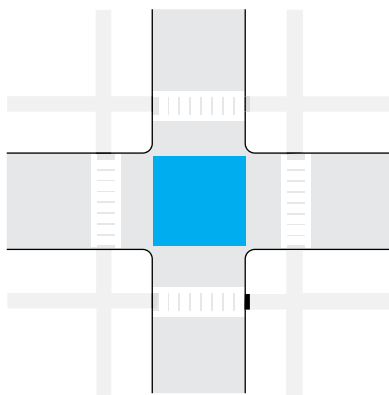
Black Lives Matter Street Mural in Uptown Charlotte



Barringer Drive plant mural

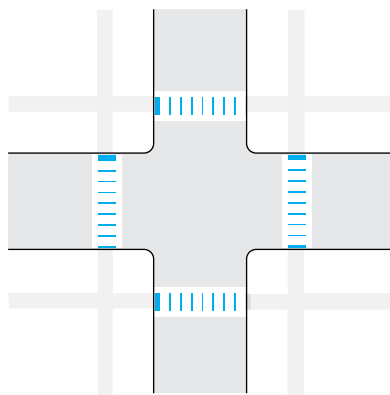
PERMITTED LOCATIONS

Note: City staff will help applicants determine specific eligibility criteria (e.g.: traffic volume, City or NCDOT right-of-way, etc.)



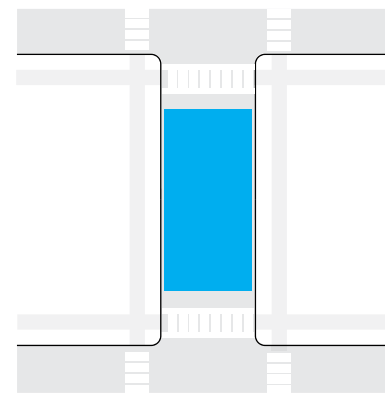
1. Intersection Murals

- » Streets with less than 10,000 vehicles per day.
- » Intersections with stop signs.



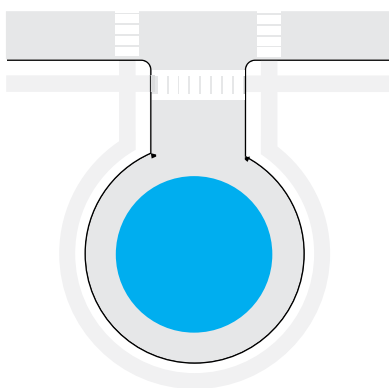
2. Crosswalk Murals

- » Streets with less than 10,000 vehicles per day.
- » Any existing, marked crosswalk on streets that meet the criteria above.



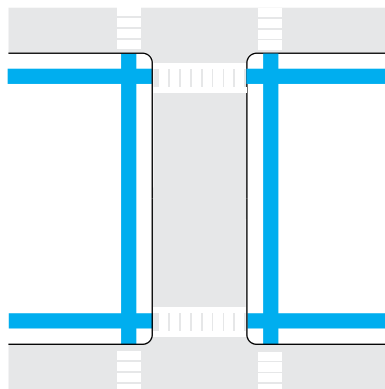
3. Midblock Murals

- » Streets with less than 10,000 vehicles per day.



4. Live-Ends

- » Any dead-end or cul-de-sac on a City-maintained street.



5. Sidewalk Murals

- » All sidewalks within the public right-of-way on City or NCDOT-maintained streets.



Wyanoke Avenue mural in Chantilly Park

PROHIBITED LOCATIONS

In addition to the locations identified below, street murals are prohibited in NCDOT right-of-way, any other portions of the roadway in which a project may obscure, mimic, or confuse pavement markings or regulatory devices, and any other location deemed inappropriate by the CDOT Director or their designee.

Note: City staff will help applicants determine public right-of-way eligibility.

1. Intersection Murals

- » Streets with 10,000 or more vehicles per day

2. Crosswalk Murals

- » Streets with 10,000 or more vehicles per day
- » Shared use crosswalks (colored with green markings)

3. Midblock Murals

- » Within 200 feet of an intersection
- » Portions of the roadway that include school zone markings or railroad markings

4. Live Ends

- » No additional prohibited locations

5. Sidewalk Murals

- » Tryon Street in Uptown may not be an appropriate location because of specific streetscape design requirements for those

corridors. City staff will help applicants determine if a proposed mural location is appropriate.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

- Must comply with the CDOT General Considerations for Art in CDOT right-of-way Memorandum. Key requirements include:
 - » Words, logos, commercial speech or advertising are not allowed.
 - » Paint may not mimic traffic control devices such as crosswalks or street signage.
 - » Yellow and white paint shall be minimized to avoid looking like traffic control devices.
 - » Designs must include sufficient blank space (non-painted areas) to ensure adequate roadway grip to ensure areas are not slippery when wet. Alternatively, the paint may be mixed with walnut shells or “shark grip” grit (chewed up plastic pieces) to add grit and prevent a slip hazard. These materials are readily available and City staff can help guide applicants seeking to use them.

NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

- Paint must be low toxicity latex paint and must be lead-free. Proposed paint materials must be submitted to CDOT for review and approval.
- All materials must be used in compliance with all State and Federal regulations and according to manufacturer’s specifications.
- Applicants should have a plan for material and equipment use as well as safe procedures when working with youth. A good resource is the Art and Craft Safety Guide of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- Applicants must clean up and dispose of paint in an appropriate manner. Paint may not be disposed of in the city storm drains, city sewers or waste containers.
- Paint shall be applied in a precise, high-quality manner. Accidental spills, paint drips and messy edges must be cleaned up.
- The applicant is responsible for all maintenance, repair, and removal including touch-ups, graffiti removal and repainting due to street maintenance or utility cuts. The applicant is responsible for repainting after significant wear or completely removing the paint at the end of the permit period using a method approved by the CDOT.

- Paintings in the public right-of-way become City property. The City has the absolute right to change, modify, destroy, remove, relocate, move, replace, transport or restore the artwork located within the City right-of-way in whole or in part, in city’s sole discretion. The maintenance and repair of the painting is the responsibility of the applicant per the completed Temporary Infrastructure Agreement between the applicant and the City.
- Projects on Tryon Street require coordination with [Charlotte Center City Partners](#)
 - » See “Tryon Street Mall Use Application”

Note: Applicants are advised that the visual images are not intended to create a forum for public expression. The City right-of-way is a closed public forum. The City reserves the right to control what is depicted in the city’s right-of-way.



Uptown Farmers Market street mural painting on South Davidson Street

Signal Cabinet Wraps

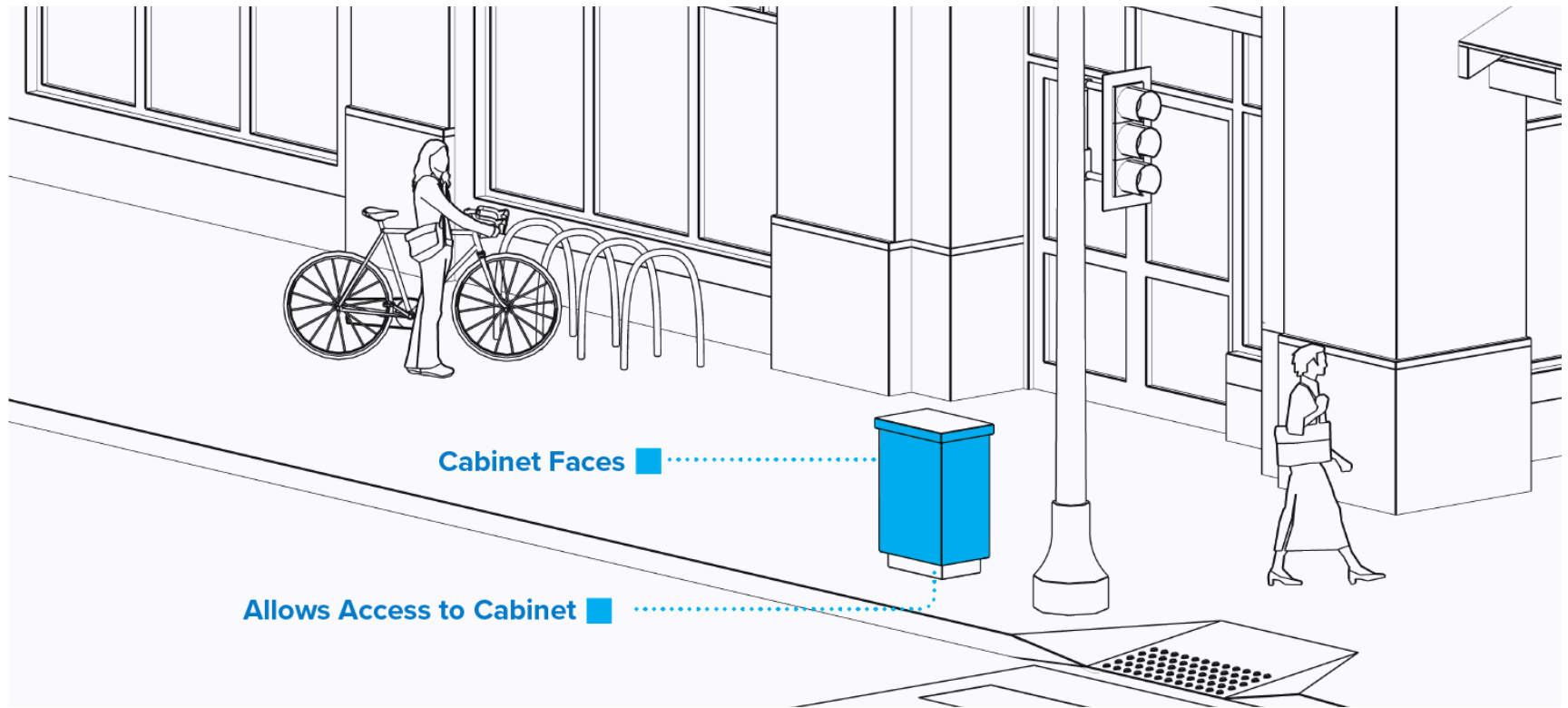
Every traffic signal (sometimes called “traffic lights”) at a signalized intersection has a control cabinet. These cabinets are generally grey metallic boxes in highly visible locations. Signal cabinets on City maintained streets are eligible for communities to decorate. City staff will help applicants determine eligibility based on the Traffic Signal Maintenance Responsibility Map maintained by CDOT.

PERMITTED LOCATIONS

- Signal cabinets on City maintained streets. City staff will help applicants determine eligibility based on the Traffic Signal Maintenance Responsibility Map maintained by CDOT.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

- Signal cabinet covers are permitted only in the form of a vinyl wrap. Paint and other mediums are prohibited.
- Wrap must be installed by a City approved contractor; contractor is liable for any property damaged during installation.
- Wrap shall not interfere with ability to open the cabinet and access signal controls. Doors, vents, and key flaps must remain functional.





Signal cabinet wraps provide an opportunity for neighborhoods and local artists to beautify public spaces



W 4th Street signal cabinet at the Urban Arboretum Trail



FAQS

Q: I'VE GOT A GREAT IDEA FOR A PLACEMAKING PROJECT, BUT OUR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION DOESN'T HAVE DEEP POCKETS. WHERE CAN I GO TO FIND SOME FUNDING?

A: There are a variety of potential funding sources for placemaking projects. Your neighborhood/homeowners association is a good place to start. If that doesn't work, you might want to check out the criteria for getting a "Placemaking Grant" or a "Neighborhood Matching Grant" from the City of Charlotte. There are also plenty of private / non-profit organizations that you might approach with a funding request. See "Funding Opportunities" on page 46 for more.

Q: GETTING THE NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVED SEEMS LIKE A LOT. CAN'T I JUST INSTALL THE PLACEMAKING PROJECT ON MY OWN?

A: No. Bringing people together in public space is a primary goal of the city's Placemaking Program. This is true for the design, installation, and eventual enjoyment of your project. The Placemaking Process (outlined in on pg 8) is intended to be collaborative, involving your neighbors at several points along the way, including the installation of the project. We want to make sure the people who live and work near your project know about and support it!

Q: HOW CAN I SAFELY INSTALL MY PLACEMAKING PROJECT IF IS LOCATED IN THE STREET?

A: All placemaking projects located in (and sometimes near) the street will require some kind of traffic control to keep you and your neighborhood volunteers safe during installation. City staff will help you understand what is required for this. Most placemaking projects can be accomplished as part of a neighborhood block party. Information on requesting closure of the street or intersection under the [Block Party Permit process](#).

(If your placemaking project covers more than a single block or intersection, then you may need to apply for Special Event permit instead.)

Keep in mind, on busier streets (thoroughfares) and at signalized intersections you may be required to hire an off-duty police officer(s) to provide traffic control during the installation of your project. That can create additional expense for the applicant.

Q: IS USING A PROFESSIONAL ARTIST/ DESIGNER REQUIRED?

A: No, although it is recommended to ensure a high-quality finished product. Even if a professional is not involved, the same information regarding who will be doing the work and the proposed design is required.



Q: HOW DO I FIND AN ARTIST?

A: The Charlotte Urban Design Center launched the [Creative Pool program](#) as a pre-approval process to match local creatives, on a rolling basis, with placemaking project opportunities throughout Charlotte. Creatives selected from the pool may be commissioned to produce original works that range in scale and scope and/or collaborate with the city to provide design or management services for art elements. When creative services are needed, community members can directly select an artist or can share the opportunity with the artist pool to gather interested artists.

Q: WHAT IF MY PROJECT BECOMES DAMAGED AFTER IT'S INSTALLED?

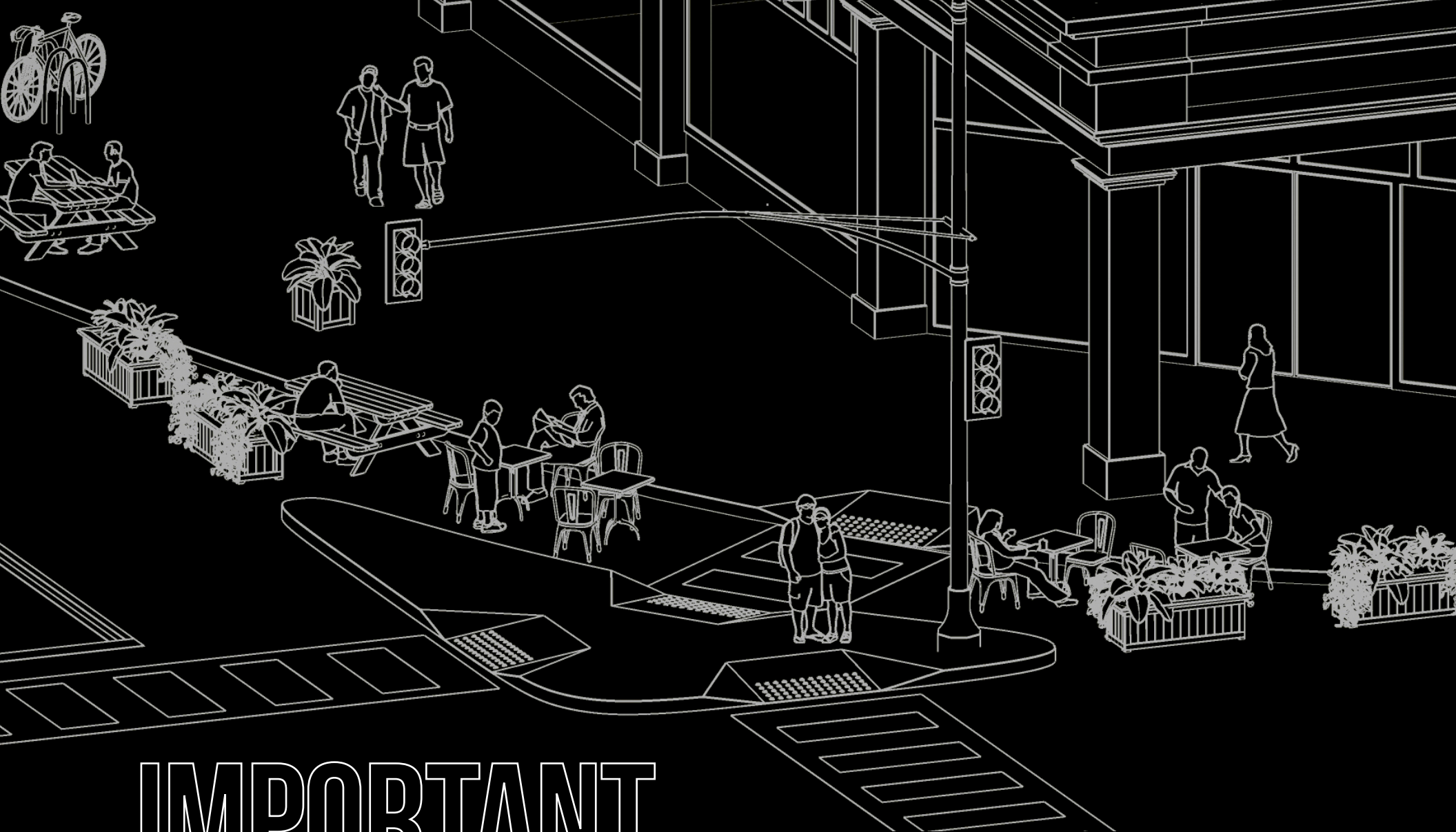
A: The maintenance and repair of all placemaking projects is the responsibility of the applicant per the completed Placemaking Permit between the applicant and the City. The applicant is responsible for all ongoing maintenance, including touch-ups, graffiti removal, and repainting/repair due to street maintenance or utility cuts. The applicant will bear the cost of all maintenance, repair and removal. Placemaking projects that are left unmaintained or in disrepair may be removed by the City in the city's sole discretion.

Q: WHO OWNS MY PROJECT ONCE IT'S INSTALLED?

A: Any sort of placemaking installation in the City right-of-way or on City property becomes City property. The City has the absolute right to change, modify, destroy, remove, relocate, move, replace, transport or restore any placemaking installation located within the City right-of-way in whole or in part, in the city's sole discretion. The maintenance and repair of the placemaking project is the responsibility of the applicant per the Placemaking Permit between the applicant and the City.

Q: I'VE GOT A GREAT PLACEMAKING PROJECT IDEA, BUT IT DOESN'T SEEM TO "FIT" WITHIN ONE OF THE PLACEMAKING TOOLS DESCRIBED IN THIS GUIDEBOOK. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

A: Great! Contact the Urban Design Center to let us know what you're thinking. We know that sometimes creative placemaking ideas might not fit into the categories described in the Placemaking Toolbox. If there's a way we can do it, we'd love to help you get a Placemaking Permit and make your idea a reality.



IMPORTANT RESOURCES

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

There are a variety of funding sources available to support community-driven placemaking projects in the City of Charlotte. This section describes potential public and private funding sources that might be available to support your project.

PLACEMAKING GRANT

The City of Charlotte’s Placemaking Program launched in 2018 with the mission of using urban design and placemaking to transform underutilized public spaces into vibrant places for people. The Charlotte Urban Design Center (UDC) in the City of Charlotte’s Planning, Design & Development Department is leading the effort with their own projects while also creating opportunities for neighborhoods to use placemaking to promote community collaboration and accomplish public space goals.

The program awards funding and technical support for residents to create and enhance community vibrancy, safety, and creative identity through:

- Activation of leftover and/or underutilized spaces;
- Streetscape improvements;
- Art and beautification efforts; and
- Creation of community gathering spaces.

Goals of the UDC Placemaking Grant are to:

- Provide opportunities for neighborhoods, individuals, and businesses to define the character and identity of their communities.
- Provide opportunities for residents and business owners to better leverage public and private land for community use in Charlotte.
- Provide opportunities for local artists to work with communities and enhance the city’s public realm.
- Activate our public spaces and infrastructure to create safer, more vibrant, and unique character in Charlotte’s neighborhoods.
- The Charlotte Urban Design Center launched the [Creative Pool program](#) as a pre-approval process to match local creatives, on a rolling basis, with placemaking project opportunities throughout Charlotte. Creatives selected from the pool may be commissioned to produce original works that range in scale and scope and/or collaborate with



Children playing at The Ritz @ Washington Heights

the city to provide design or management services for art elements. When creative services are needed, community members can directly select an artist or can share the opportunity with the artist pool to gather interested artists.

NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING GRANT

The City of Charlotte’s Neighborhood Matching Grants Program (NMG) awards funds to eligible neighborhood-based organizations to make neighborhoods better places to live, work, and play. Grant amounts range up to \$25,000, depending on meeting eligibility requirements outlined in the Guidelines.

The program, created in 1992 and housed in the Neighborhood & Business Services Department, has four primary goals:

- Build neighborhood capacity and participation.
- Allow neighborhoods to self-determine improvement priorities.
- Leverage resident involvement and resources to revitalize and reinvest in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods
- Stimulate the development of partnerships between the City and community groups.

The heart of the NMG program is the community match portion of the project. Matching city dollars means organizations and partners can pledge volunteer time, in-kind donations or services, and/or cash to match the grant funds they receive. This matching helps foster deeper connections between neighbors and strengthens the social fabric within communities.

The following types of neighborhood-based organizations are eligible to apply within the NMG program:

- Neighborhood Associations

- Neighborhood Coalitions
- Homeowners Associations (HOAs)
- Resident organizations in tax-credit funded rental communities

NEIGHBORHOOD / HOMEOWNERS’ ASSOCIATION

If you have a neighborhood and/or homeowner’s association, that may be an ideal source of funding for placemaking projects. Neighborhood / homeowners’ associations are often funded by member dues and are organized with the purpose of managing and investing in community improvements. Seeking funding through your neighborhood / homeowners’ association is also a great way to get neighbors involved in the design and installation of your project. Many neighborhood / homeowners’ associations in cities like Charlotte have played an active role in leading community-driven placemaking projects.

PRIVATE FUNDING

Private funding may be available to support your placemaking project. Private funding sources often have different application requirements and processes. Organizations in Charlotte that have been active in supporting placemaking / public art / public realm enhancements in the past include:

- AARP
- Arts & Science Council
- Foundation for the Carolinas
- Lowe’s 100 Hometowns Grant
- Major corporate sponsors (e.g. Bank of America, Blue Cross Blue Shield, etc.)

MATERIALS & CONSTRUCTION TIPS

Think about the durability of your materials. Untreated wood and straw bales might be fine for a weekend-long demonstration project, but they will not hold up to the wear and tear that public spaces experience.

Don't plan on using normal exterior house paint on your placemaking project. Talk to someone at a paint store about what you're planning to do, and the intended use of any surfaces you're painting. They can offer a recommendation for the type of product/durability/cost you should plan on.

Choosing the right paint is especially important for any street/sidewalk/bike lane murals. Regular paint will not work in these situations. There are a number of manufacturers that make road paint. It may come in a more limited variety of colors, but it is designed to hold up better to the wear and tear of cars, bikes, and foot traffic. Even then, any paint on streets or sidewalks will wear away eventually. City staff are available to help guide you in material choices.

For placemaking projects that require street closures, you should consider fabricating portions of your placemaking project off-site. That will minimize the amount of time required for the street to be closed while you install your project.

Good placemaking projects attract families and children and should be designed with this in mind. While nothing can truly be kid-proof, there are a variety of things that can be done to make placemaking projects more kid/family-friendly. Here's a short list of tips (many more child-friendly design resources are available online):

- Avoid sharp edges and protruding surfaces, especially between typical knee and waist heights for adults (a.k.a. head height for toddlers).
- Avoid dark colors and heat absorbing materials on any surface that is meant to be used as a seat, table, or play space.
- Shade is essential if you want people to sit and linger in your space.



Splash pad in Five Points Plaza

