



How To: Create a Sidewalk Cafe

Downtown Austin Alliance Toolkit

OVERVIEW

Sidewalk cafes help bring life to the street adding value and vitality to downtown Austin. In order to facilitate more sidewalk dining, the Downtown Austin Alliance has worked to change state law enabling non-contiguous sidewalk café dining, worked with the City's Right of Way Management team and restaurateurs to help expedite the permitting process.

ENABLING LEGISLATION

State Law now allows for liquor serving restaurants (51% of sales directly related to food) the ability to have a non-contiguous sidewalk café. The TABC will enforce the sidewalk café laws based upon the restaurant's sidewalk café license granted by the City of Austin.

SIDEWALK CAFÉ CLASSIFICATIONS

The City has two categories of sidewalk café permits – temporary and permanent. The following briefly describes each category and the process to obtain a permit.

- **Temporary Sidewalk Café** – This classification is for sidewalk cafés that can provide daily outdoor seating (up to 10 tables) designated by balustrades, planters or stanchion-type cording off that designates the café zone, but none of the elements of the café are permanent fixtures. Each day the restaurant has to set-up and breakdown the café and none of the sidewalk café furniture can be left overnight. In order to have a café zone, there must be a pedestrian clearance, the City prefers 6,' and the pedestrian zone is contingent upon the existing sidewalk width in front of the proposed restaurant/café. Obtaining this permit is easier and cost effective than the permanent café license. The process takes no longer than 1 month to complete.
- **Permanent Sidewalk Café** – This classification is for a permanent sidewalk café that has more permanent fixtures, with daily outdoor seating of 11 tables or more that do not have to be moved in and out daily. In order to have a permanent café zone, there must be a pedestrian clearance, the City prefers 6,' and the pedestrian zone is contingent upon the existing sidewalk width in front of the proposed restaurant/café. A bit more complicated process, this application requires site planning, potential engineering and costs more because of the permanence of the dining zone. This application process takes no more than 60 days to complete.

SIDEWALK CAFÉ PERMIT APPLICATION PROCESS

The City's department of Transportation/Right of Way Management Division manages the sidewalk café permit process.

CONTACTS

City of Austin, Department of Transportation/Right of Way Management Division
505 Barton Springs Road, Suite 800, Austin, TX 78704, (512) 974-1495

DIRECT CONTACTS

- Andy Halm, Property Agent, (512) 974-7185, andy.halm@ci.austin.tx.us
- Gregory Pepper, (512) 974-7282, gregory.pepper@ci.austin.tx.us

SUPPORT

If this process and it does not proceed as anticipated, the City's Small Business Development Program will offer you expedited service at no charge. Contact – Randi Jenkins (512) 974-7611, randi.jenkins@ci.austin.tx.us