



City of San Marcos Pilot Program

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS MANUAL

A how-to on pedestrian-oriented public space



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PARKLETS INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In cities across the country, there is a movement afoot to reclaim and repurpose underutilized spaces for people through the use of parklets. Parklets are the reuse of on-street parking spaces or unused portions of right-of-way to provide amenities and green space for the general public. Parklets are intended as aesthetic enhancements to the streetscape and can incorporate seating, plantings, bike parking, and art, providing an economical solution to the need for increased public open space. The City of San Marcos has enacted a Pilot Parklet Program allowing 5 total parklets within a one-year period subject for review by the San Marcos City Council.

WHAT ARE PARKLETS?

Parklets are generally one parking space long and are built out of semi-permanent materials installed in a way that does not require reconfiguring the roadway or pouring concrete. By not requiring a concrete base, parklets are a fast and less expensive way for the City to bring sidewalk improvements to a neighborhood. Parklets are used to encourage pedestrian oriented development and have been shown to increase the economic activity of the neighborhood. While parklets are funded and maintained by businesses, residents, and community organizations, they are intended to provide benefits to all uses of the public rights-of-way.

ORIGINS

The parklet initiative was first introduced in San Francisco in 2009 through a city-wide Park(ing) Day. The program encouraged citizens to design and install a temporary park within a parking space resulting in 975 “parks” in 162 cities across 35 countries and 6 continents. The San Francisco Planning Department led the initial effort to install a Parklet Pilot Program known as *Pavement to Parks*. In order to avoid a lengthy permit process, it defined this project as “removable” in character and implemented a unique design and construction guidelines manual.



BENEFITS & PURPOSE

Parklets have significant implications for cities. By increasing pedestrian activity and encouraging pedestrians to linger in an area longer parklets encourage economic growth. San Francisco’s first parklet, sponsored by *Mojo Bicycle Café*, featured a simple design with bright red tables, silver chairs, and three bike racks. The results were impressive:

- ❖ 37% rise in weekday evening pedestrian traffic;
- ❖ 14% increase in the number of people walking their bikes within the study area;
- ❖ 10% rise in positive public perception of the area’s community character. As more cities and downtowns become aware of these advantages, it can be expected for parklets to continue to grow in popularity. With this, the trend of reclaiming space for people will continue to grow, one parking space at a time.

Parklets have the potential to increase commercial and residential occupancy, encourage pedestrian traffic, and highlight the character of the neighborhood.

APPLICATION

PRE-APPLICATION

Prior to submitting an application, applicants are required to schedule an appointment for a Pre-Development meeting with the Planning and Development Services Department to verify the viability of the location and proposed elements. Parklets should be proposed in areas where they are likely to be used and active. The results of the Pre-Development meeting do not guarantee approval of the Parklet location and design.

APPLICATION AND PROCESS

After the Pre-Development meeting, the applicant may begin the process of completing the application and supporting materials. A completed application will include the following:

1. City of San Marcos Parklet Application
2. Application Fee submitted with Application
3. A map, survey, drawing, aerial photograph, site plan or similar information showing the footprint/outline of the proposed parklet, including dimensions of parklet, property lines, existing sidewalk width, existing parking stalls/alignment and all existing sidewalk furniture and obstructions; e.g. fire hydrants, utility poles, street trees, etc.
4. A description of type(s) of elements proposed to be placed in the parklet; e.g. tables, chairs, benches, planters/landscaping, bicycle parking, etc.
5. Final dimensioned site plan including all details, plant species, furniture types, etc.
6. City of San Marcos License and Maintenance Agreement
7. Proof of Insurance as required
8. Documentation of support from abutting property/business owners is **required**. Additional documentation of community support is encouraged.

The application package, including all supporting materials, should be submitted to the City of San Marcos Permit Center. The application will be reviewed by City Staff to determine if the application meets all designated requirements. Additionally, reviewing staff will analyze aspects of the application and plans such as enhancement of streetscape, location, community support, and maintenance plan.



APPROVAL

Once City staff determines an application is complete and meets the standards set forth by the City of San Marcos Streetscape Improvements Manual, Planning and Development Services Department will either approve the parklet administratively or forward the request and application to the City of San Marcos City Council for final approval.

Parklet applicants must work through the following outlined process in order to receive approval to begin the construction of a Parklet. There are two types of parklet approvals:

1. **Approval of parklet by City Council:** An application for approval of a parklet in a parallel **parking area** of a street shall be considered by the City Council after a public hearing on the application. Parklets are only permitted in parallel parking spaces.
2. **Approval of parklet Administratively:** The City Manager or the City Manager's designee shall designate appropriate locations eligible for the installation of parklets and may approve applications for a parklet in areas of right-of-way that are **not designated for parking**.

DURATION

Approved parklets will be permitted for one full year after their installation and must be designed for easy de-installation. All approved parklets are temporary installations and are subject to removal with any violation of the permit, maintenance, or general procedure. Parklets are subject to annual review and must obtain a renewal permit and pay associated renewal fee.



DESIGN

The parklet design and location shall conform to the following design guidelines, as well as any additional standards made part of the approval of the individual parklet. Additional requirements and further details can be found in *Ordinance 2015-01*.

1. LOCATIONS

Parklets are allowed in parallel parking spaces or within unused right-of-way.

2. CORNER LOCATIONS

The proposed parklet site shall be located at least one parking spot from a corner or protected by a bollard, sidewalk bulb-out, or other similar feature, if located at the corner.

3. SPEED LIMIT

Parklets are permitted where the posted speed limit is 30 mph or less. Streets with higher speed limits may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. STREET SLOPE

Parklets must be situated on streets with a running slope (grade) of five percent or less.

5. BUFFERS

Parklets shall be required to have reflective tape, soft hit posts, wheel stops, and depending on proposed location, may require edging such as planters, railings, or cables to protect users from street traffic. Parklets must be situated a minimum of 2 feet from the nearest edge of traveled way. Planters used as edging features are required to be large, durable, and not easily removed. All edging and buffering mechanisms will require City approval. Parklets located in unused portions of right-of-way require curb stops per City specifications.

6. UTILITIES

Parklets shall not be allowed in front of a fire hydrant, or over a manhole, public utility valve, or cover. Curb and roadside drainage shall not be impeded by the parklet. The platform should allow for easy access underneath the platform and curbside drainage may not be impeded. A gap of 6" should be maintained between the body of the deck and the curb to facilitate the movement of water.

7. ADA REQUIREMENTS

All elements of Parklets shall be constructed and/or installed to conform to the applicable provisions, rules, regulations, and guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

8. DESIGN FOR EASY REMOVAL

Parklets are temporary in nature and must be designed for easy removal. All removable furniture must be locked or stowed each night.

9. PARKLET DECKING

Parklet decking must be flush with the curb and may not have more than ½" gap from the curb. A minimum 36" ADA accessible entryway to the parklet must be maintained for all parklets. Platforms shall not exceed a 2% cross slope. Decking will need to be constructed of durable material capable of withstanding weather elements. Deck installation shall no damage sidewalk, street, curb, or any aspect of the public right-of-way.

10. EDGING

All edging shall be visually permeable. All rails must be capable of withstanding a 200 lb horizontal force.

11. MATERIALS

Materials should be high quality, durable, waterproof, and capable of withstanding heavy use and exposure to the elements. Loose particles such as sand or loose stone are not permitted within the parklet area. All furniture must be designed for outdoor use.

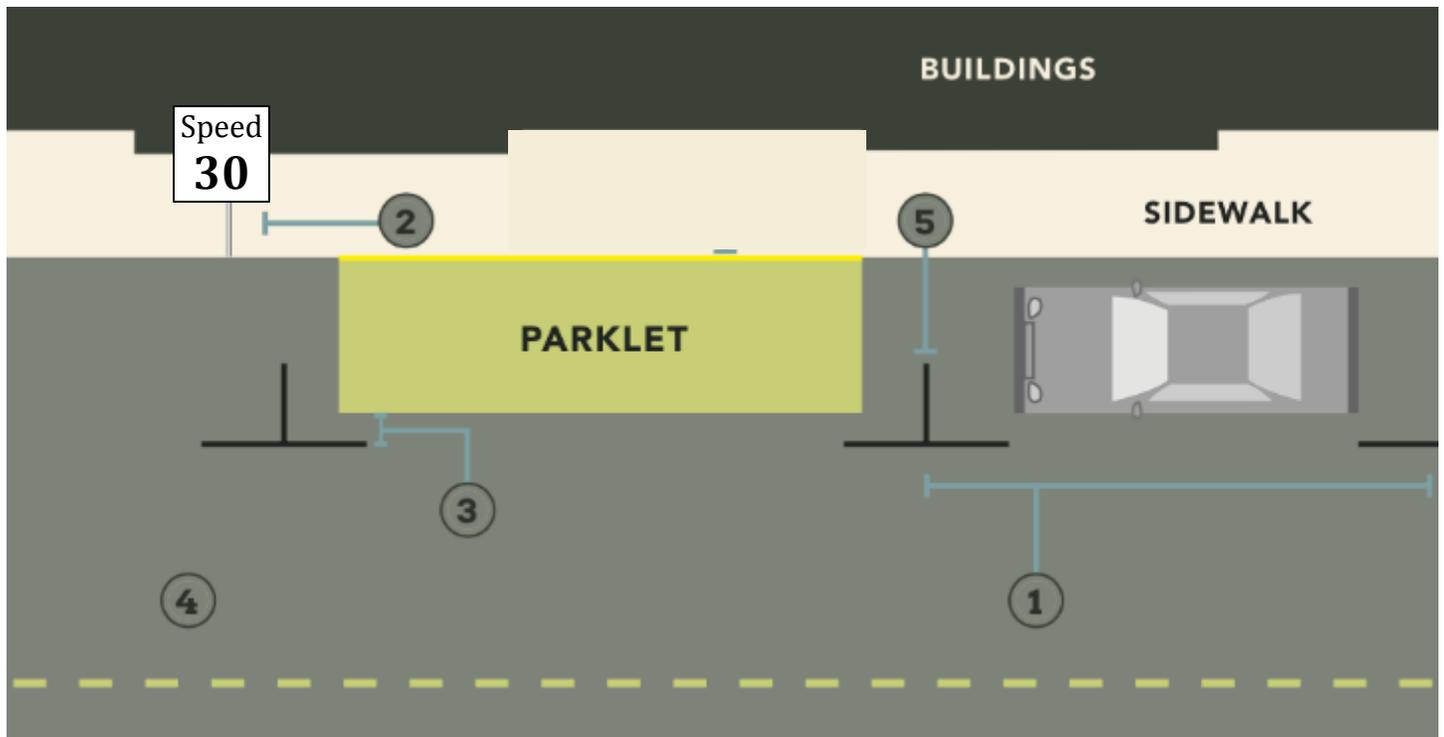
12. VISUAL DESIGN

Parklet designs must maintain a visual connection to the street and not obstruct sight lines to existing businesses or roadway signage. While not visible from the sidewalk, the parklet's back is highly visible from across the street. Large blank walls, therefore, are discouraged.

DESIGN, cont.

PLACEMENT GUIDELINES

Diagram of design standards.



1. Located at least one parking stall from a corner (*If located at corner, parklet must be protected by a bollard, sidewalk bulb-out, or other similar feature*).
2. In an area with a posted speed limit of 30mph or slower.
3. Minimum of 2 feet from the nearest edge of traveled way.
4. Street has a grade of no greater than 5%.
5. Must have reflective tape, soft hit posts, wheel stops, and additional edging such as large planters to provide safety buffer.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERMIT HOLDERS

Parklets permit holders are responsible for the following. Additional requirements and further details can be found in *Ordinance 2015-01*.

- Keep parklet free and open to all members of the public.
- Keep parklet well maintained and in good repair with daily cleaning.
- Keep parklet free of debris, grime, and graffiti.
- Water and maintain all parklet vegetation.
- Provide pest control as needed.
- No table service or alcohol in the parklet.
- No smoking in the parklet.
- Amplified music is prohibited in parklets.
- Provide trash and recycling receptacles

TRASH & RECYCLING REQUIREMENTS

Provide pre-approved trash and recycling receptacles in accordance with City standards. Scheduled pick-up of receptacles will need to be contracted through the City. Receptacles are encouraged to be designed creatively considering the design meets the following guidelines:

- Receptacles must be no larger than 18 gallons
- Trash receptacles shall be black in color; recycle receptacles shall be blue in color.
- Shall be constructed of durable, waterproof materials
- Shall include a cover



Ex: appropriate color scheme



Ex: creative design



Ex: covered enclosure

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For additional information on parklet origins, design, and inspiration from other cities, please view the San Francisco Parklet Manual V.2, <http://pavementtoparks.sfplanning.org/parklets.html>



SIDEWALK CAFÉS

INTRODUCTION

Sidewalk Cafés and restaurant seating help to enliven the sidewalk environment, encourage economic development, and to activate the space in the public right-of-way. Guidelines have been established to balance safety, aesthetics, accessibility, and commercial prosperity. The City of San Marcos encourages sidewalk cafés to increase public use, enjoyment and safety. With proper design and management, sidewalk cafés can be a great way to encourage walking, add vitality to the street and promote local economic development.



PRE-APPLICATION

Prior to submitting an application, applicants are required to schedule an appointment for a Pre-Development meeting with the Planning and Development Services Department to verify the viability of the location and proposed elements and to verify the applicant is in good standing with operating a Food Establishment Permit. The results of the Pre-Development meeting do not guarantee approval of the Sidewalk Café location and design.

APPLICATION AND PROCESS

After the Pre-Development meeting, the applicant may begin the process of completing the application and supporting materials. A completed application will include the following:

1. City of San Marcos Sidewalk Café Application
2. Application Fee Submitted with Application
3. License and Maintenance Agreement
4. Proof of Insurance as required
5. Property Owner Authorization
6. Detailed Site Plan
7. Supporting design materials i.e. fence/barrier details, planter boxes, types of chairs/tables.
8. Installation method of fencing/barrier and tables. If bolting of barrier is proposed, removal method will need to be submitted to the City for approval. A surety bond is required for the estimated cost of removal.

The application package, including all supporting materials, should be submitted to the City of San Marcos Permit Center. The application will be reviewed by City Staff to determine if the application meets all designated requirements. Additionally, reviewing staff will analyze aspects of the application and plans such as enhancement of streetscape, location, community support, maintenance plan, and compliance with Texas Food Establishment Rules.

SIDEWALK CAFÉS Cont.

APPROVAL

Once City staff determines an application is complete and all City departments determine that the application, plans, and associated documents meet the standards set forth by the City of San Marcos Streetscape Improvements Manual, the permit will be administratively approved. A Conditional Use Permit for on-premise consumption of alcohol may require additional review processes.

ALCOHOL

If on-premise consumption of **alcohol** is proposed, the establishment must conform to all TABC requirements and submit for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application to the Planning and Development Services Department. Please contact 512.393.8230 for additional information.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

Sidewalk cafés must meet the following design requirements. Additional requirements and further details can be found in *Ordinance 2015-01*.

- Must be associated with a restaurant with kitchen facilities for the preparation of the food to be sold, the primary business of which is the on-premises sale of prepared food.
- The kitchen facilities must be a permitted Food Service Establishment in good standing.
- Must be located on a sidewalk abutting and within the span of the façade of the restaurant.
- Must not interfere with visibility for drivers at street corners.
- Must be open to the air.
- Must contain removable tables, chairs, planters or other appurtenances that should be locked or stowed nightly.
- Chairs, tables, and outdoor appurtenances must be durable, waterproof, and built to maintain weather.
- Must have a minimum of 6 feet clearance along sidewalk.
- Amplified music is prohibited in Sidewalk Cafés.
- Cooking appurtenances are prohibited within the sidewalk café.
- Propane heaters are allowed on a case-by-case basis subject to Fire Marshal approval.
- All elements of Sidewalk Cafés shall be constructed and/or installed to conform to the applicable provisions, rules, regulations, and guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Any proposed signage must comply with Sign Ordinance. Advertising on umbrellas sidewalk cafés is prohibited.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERMIT HOLDERS

Sidewalk cafés must meet the following requirements. Additional requirements and further details can be found in *Ordinance 2015-01*.

- Permit holders are responsible for all maintenance within the sidewalk café.
- The permit holder is responsible for ensuring all activities on the sidewalk stay within the approved area.
- Food trays, carts, receptacles for dirty dishes, etc. shall not be placed or stored on any portion of the sidewalk.
- Must use non-disposable dishes, silverware, and linens to prevent items from blowing off tables.
- Sidewalk café must be free of debris, grime, and graffiti.
- Planter boxes within sidewalk cafés must be watered and maintained.
- Sidewalk café must contain removable tables, chairs, planters or other appurtenances that should be locked or stowed nightly according to City standards and best methods. Bolting of fence/barrier is allowed with City approval.
- The permit holder must provide for at least one trash receptacle that is emptied during the day and every night.
- No smoking in the sidewalk café.

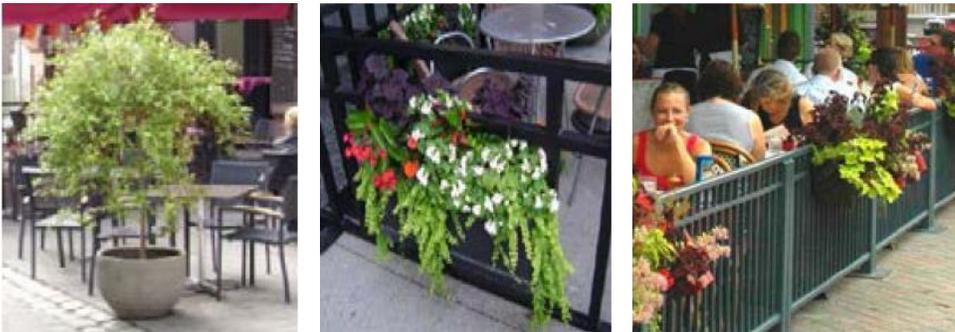
SIDEWALK CAFÉS Cont.

BARRIERS

If fences, planter boxes, or other barriers features are proposed surrounding the sidewalk café, ensure that they do not cause damage to the sidewalk and are constructed and artfully designed. Barriers help define the sidewalk café area while also maintaining transparency and aesthetic design.

- Fencing must not exceed 42" in height.
- Fencing must be generally transparent. Solid sheet fencing surfaces are not permitted.
- Fencing must be constructed of high-quality finish materials. Fencing should be constructed with a railing, rope, or other horizontal element; posts with pointed tops are not permitted.
- Landscaped planters may be used as a fencing device.
- Stand-alone fencing mechanisms must have a flat base. Rounded fence bases are prohibited.
- All fencing required for the purposes of on-premise consumption of alcohol will require TABC approval.
- All sidewalk café barriers and appurtenances must be maintained to the standards of the original permit for the duration and life of the sidewalk café.

Allowed barriers: planter boxes, movable pots, rod iron, flat footing



Prohibited barriers: chain link, unstable sectional fencing, waste receptacles, rounded barriers, cables.



MATERIALS & FURNITURE

Tables, chairs, and outdoor appurtenances must be durable, waterproof, and able to withstand weather elements. All sidewalk café furniture and appurtenances must be maintained to the standards of the original permit for the duration and life of the sidewalk café. The following images outline allowed and prohibited material and furniture types:

Allowed materials: metals, finished grade wood, sturdy recycled materials

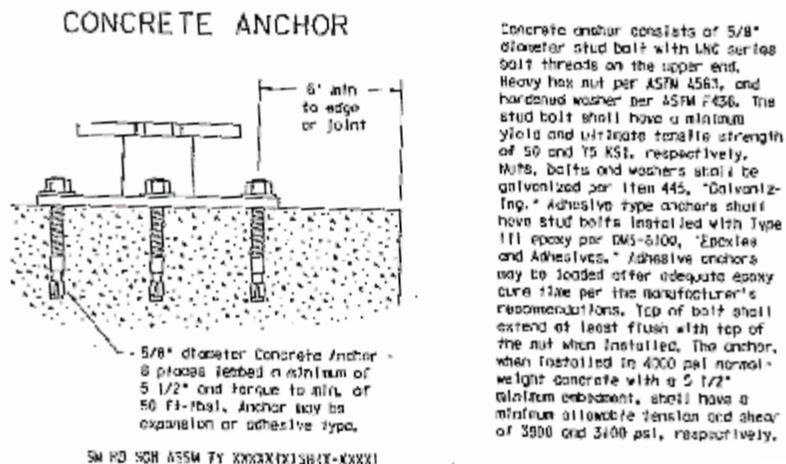


Prohibited materials: breakable plastics, unfurnished lumber, turf, sofas



INSTALLATION / REMOVAL

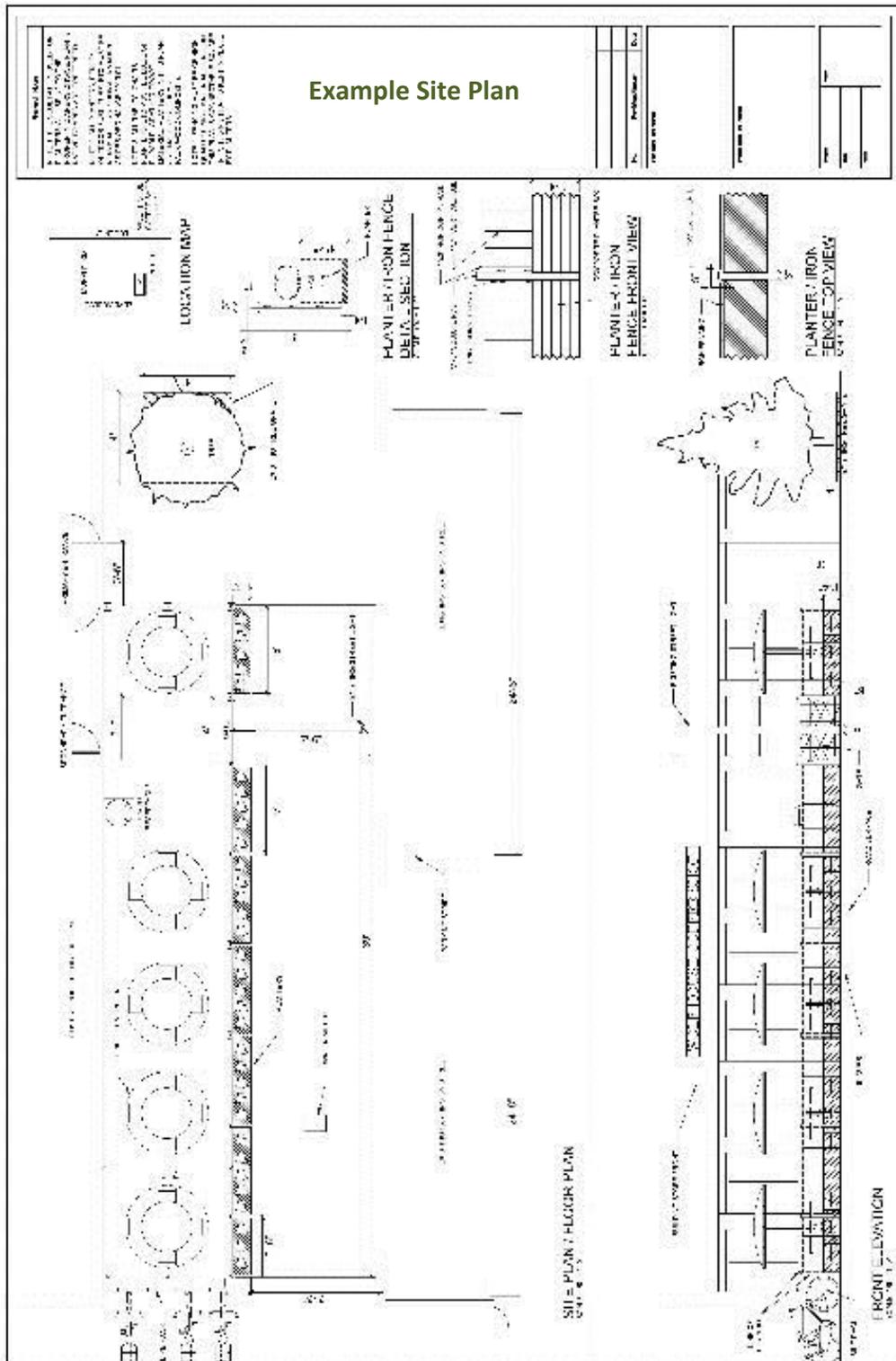
- Core drilling or setting of posts for sidewalk café fencing or additional apparatuses is prohibited.
- Bolting or stand-alone bases are permitted.
- Bolting must be **no greater than 2 inches in length and accompanied by an epoxy.**
- All bolts, bolting methods, and proposed layout of bolting location must be pre-approved by the City.
- If bolting of fencing is proposed, removal method will need to be submitted to the City for approval.
- If bolting is proposed, a surety bond will need to be submitted to the City for the estimated cost of removal in accordance with Ordinance 2015-01.
- Any bolting or damages to the sidewalk will need to be remediated. Sidewalk will need to be brought to original conditions.
- The below standard detail outlines City specifications



SITE PLAN

Your sidewalk café site plan should include the following:

1. Location of entrances and exits to the business hosting the sidewalk café.
2. Location and number of tables, chairs, seating area.
3. Location of any proposed curbside fencing (required if serving alcohol).
4. Location of fire hydrants, trees, utilities, above ground fixtures, doorways, and any obstructions.
5. Dimensions of the Host's building frontage.
6. Notations of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – compliant seating area.
7. Indicate how sidewalk café will be separated from pedestrian walkway.
8. Indicate detailed specifications and layout of any proposed bolting of barriers/fencing to sidewalk.



NEIGHBORHOOD GATEWAY FEATURES

INTRODUCTION

Neighborhood gateway features have the ability to provide entries for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Architecture, materials, and view may be highlighted to give residents a sense of identity and community.

DESIGN

Gateways should aim to highlight the architectural and natural character of the area. Each gateway should be reflective of its unique surroundings and design intent. Gateways should include some or all of the following:

- *Materials* such as wood and brick should be incorporated into the design that are durable in nature.
- *Landscaping* should be distinctive and utilize native plant species. Vegetation should be used to frame the scenic view and provide textural interest. All landscaping will need to be maintained and irrigated.
- *Lighting* is a unique and effective way of designing a neighborhood gateway. All Lighting is required to conform to Dark Sky Requirements. Please refer to the City of San Marcos Technical Manual for additional standards.

LOCATION & STANDARDS

- Gateway features and structures in the right-of-way must not prohibit access to utilities
- The height of the structure or feature must not exceed the allowable height of the zoning district.
- Structures or features must maintain a 10 foot setback between the edge of the Street or Sidewalk.
- Additional License and Maintenance requirements can be found within *Ordinance 2015-01*.

SIGNAGE

All signage within the public right-of-way will need to comply with Article 3 Sign Standards established within the Land Development Code.

SITE PLAN & PERMITS

Applications for structures within the right-of-way are required to submit the following permits:

- Building Permit
- Complete Site Prep Permit or Small Site Permit (depending on square footage of improvements)
- License and Maintenance Agreement

