



PUBLIC SEATING

Public seating creates more accessible and inviting streetscapes for all users, especially those with mobility challenges, by providing places to rest and enjoy the street environment. They may include benches, chairs, seat-walls, and other fixed structures that provide seating for pedestrians to relax.

USE

- Public seating, aside from that associated with transit stops, is generally limited to areas with higher concentrations of pedestrian activity, public parks, plazas, or other open spaces, and/or where there is other demonstrated need.
- Seating locations should be carefully evaluated to ensure that they will be visible and regularly used to enhance security.

DESIGN

- Public seating is generally located in the parkway zone of the street but may be located in the frontage zone parallel to the building line, facing the sidewalk.

- Seating may take any number of forms, including the traditional bench-type seating, chair or stool type seating, or unique artistic seating.
- Seating may be aligned parallel or perpendicular to the curb. Seating parallel to and along the curb should be oriented toward the sidewalk and away from traffic (except in the case of seating provided at transit stops which may orient toward the street and transit service).
- Seating must not impede or encroach upon the pedestrian clear zone. It should be placed in such a way that use does not block major pedestrian movements, building entries, loading zones, or other street functions.
- When public seating is provided perpendicular to the curb, it is recommended that at least two seats be provided facing one another. For seating other than bench-type seating, it is recommended that at least two seats be provided. Cluster groups of seating to face each other to allow for small groups to converse.
- A 3-foot minimum clear zone shall be provided to the sides and front of the seat to provide ADA accessibility and clearance for wheelchairs. Seating along the curb line should maintain two feet of clearance from the curb.
- Seating should not be located within five feet of fire hydrants and should generally maintain four feet of clearance from other street fixtures.

- Benches and seats shall have a seating depth of at least 18 inches.
- Design benches, rows, or individual seats with breaks, arm rests, or other elements that provide an interrupted seating edge to discourage furnishings from being used as a feature for purposes other than sitting (e.g. skateboarding, sleeping).
- Provide a mixture of seating types, where multiple street furnishings are used in close proximity, to accommodate different users' needs. Include both backed and backless bench seating and seating both with and without armrests.
- Street furnishings shall be cast-in place or otherwise fixed into the street to prevent unauthorized removal.
- Standard manufactured designs that are readily replaceable should generally be used unless there is an explicit maintenance agreement in place for unique fixtures.

Seating and street furniture can be integrated as protection for street trees, bio-retention planters, and native plantings.

Trees should be used to shade seating areas.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Consider opportunities to integrate seating into building walls or other street elements in areas where sidewalk dimensions are constrained.
- Concrete seat-walls can integrate metal banding or obstructions to discourage use for recreational activities (e.g. skateboarding) while still allowing use as seating.
- Do not place seating on top of utility covers, vaults, or infrastructure elements that require access.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

- Street furnishings and public seating should be of a standard type that is consistent throughout the city or neighborhood and easily and reliably procured. Non-standard seating should only be used when there is a clear and established maintenance agreement in place.
- Street furnishings should be constructed from long lasting and durable materials and finishes.
- Seating should be regularly inspected for damage to ensure it is safe and comfortable for all users.
- Seating may be removed during winter months if the parkway zone is commonly required for snow storage.

