



FURNISHINGS & OTHER AMENITIES

FURNISHINGS & OTHER STREET ELEMENTS

PRINCIPAL CONSIDERATIONS

Furnishings and other pedestrian amenities make places more inviting and comfortable. Street elements like benches, seat walls and newsracks support a wider range of activities than would otherwise occur. This is also true of less common elements, such as kiosks – small free-standing structures that have flower stands, magazine stands, information services, and other micro-services and businesses.

Street elements help create attractive settings. When furnishings, lighting, signage and other elements have a consistent look, they also help promote a distinct and memorable sense-of-place.

By increasing activity in public places, street elements enhance public safety, and can be designed to discourage inappropriate behavior. Public welfare is also enhanced by providing trash receptacles and restrooms, and by maintaining clean environments.

When combined, well-designed and appropriate elements will also promote Downtown as a social and economic center, by allowing people to rest or read, enjoy carryout, socialize, or simply watch passersby.

Facing Page: *When designed for pedestrians, streets provide important public space where community life can occur, as is the case along Santa Barbara's State Street. Staff photo.*

POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Policy 6.1, Prioritizing Active Places. Prioritize street elements in locations where high levels of pedestrian activity occur, while maintaining adequate pedestrian flow and access.

- a. Prioritize the following locations for new and renovated seating and amenities: Shattuck Avenue, Center Street, Allston Way and University Avenue, and other locations where pedestrians tend to converge, such as near intersections and in front of major destinations. Curb extensions, plazas, and other larger spaces are ideal opportunities for seating and amenities.
- b. Street trees and street lighting should define a principal rhythm within which street elements may be placed. The location of amenities should be secondary to the requirements and rhythm of street lights and street trees..
- c. Street elements are best situated either immediately adjacent to buildings or in the curbside “amenity zone” alongside street lighting and street trees.
- d. A clear path of travel shall be maintained on all streets. Furnishings and other elements should not conflict with wheelchair access, swinging car doors, transit stops, or access to fire hydrants. Frontages with commercial and cultural destinations should be complemented with a path of travel that is at least six feet clear. All streets shall comply with Berkeley's Municipal Code, Federal guidelines, and Department of Public Works procedures.



Figure i.1. Seating. *Downtown offers seating that is well used but generally inconsistent with the traditional look of other public improvements (top). Benches, seat walls, and other amenities offer opportunities to create a distinctive sense of place, as has happened in downtown Santa Barbara (below).*



Figure i.2. Outdoor Dining. Outdoor dining can happen in line with street trees, or can be located adjacent to building fronts.

Policy 6.2, Seating. Seating and other features should be designed for the public's enjoyment and safety. Seating and other street elements should be used to call attention to scenic, artistic, and historic features.

- a. At major social nodes, integrate seating with other street elements, such as planter/seat walls and benches around trees or kiosks. Public art should also be used as an opportunity to offer amenities (see "Public Art").
- b. Seating should generally face the main flow of pedestrian traffic, or be perpendicular to it. Significant exceptions are at bus stops where benches and transit shelters will face the curb. "L"-shaped seating should be used occasionally to create social spaces for a few people.
- c. Seating should be clearly visible from streets and well lit. Where seating is used occasionally, it should be designed to discourage lying down.
- d. Where sidewalks are immediately adjacent to traffic lanes with vehicles speeds exceeding 20 miles per hour, consider using attractive metal fencing to protect pedestrians and discourage jaywalking.
- e. If possible, locate seating under trees and awnings.
- f. The orientation of seating may be varied to direct views toward the Bay, the Hills, public art, and architecture of merit.

- g. Integrate opportunities for persons who use wheelchairs in all public seating.

Policy 6.3, Visual Consistency. The aesthetic character of street elements should establish a consistent appearance and reinforce Downtown’s historic character, with exceptions made where appropriate.

- a. Street elements should have a traditional appearance, consistent with the early 20th-century look of many existing light poles. Metal elements are preferred over wood, and they should have a highly-durable low-luster forest-green enamel finish.
- b. Exceptions may be made to accommodate public art and features that promote environmental sustainability.
- c. Exceptions may also be made to help specific streets and plazas stand out, but exceptions should generally not be made where historic resources are concentrated: on Shattuck between Berkeley Way and Durant Street, and on University Avenue east of Shattuck.
- d. Avoid obstructions that unnecessarily obscure buildings, such as mesh on bus shelters.

Policy 6.4, Commercial Synergies. Restaurants should be encouraged to provide outdoor seating, where it can be accommodated -- and in ways that enhance the experience of the general public. Kiosks for food, flowers, magazines, crafts, and other small business activities are encouraged within Downtown parks, plazas and sidewalks, where they can be accommodated and if their on-going attractiveness is provided for.

- a. Review existing City policies and procedures that may pose barriers to outdoor dining on public property, and consider other private uses that might enhance Downtown streets and open space. Eliminate barriers to the extent possible, while also assuring that concessionaires pay their fair share of public maintenance costs.
- b. Encourage use of attractive metal fencing and terracotta planters to “corral” dining areas and enliven sidewalks. Wood and plastic boxes are generally discouraged unless especially durable and attractive.
- c. Allow food kiosks that are associated with Downtown restaurants. Encourage permanent (non-movable) kiosks where described under Major Projects, and give Downtown restaurants priority when selecting concessionaires.
- d. Develop standards and/or guidelines for kiosks so that they are made with durable graffiti-resistant materials, are aesthetically appropriate, and assure public health and hygiene.

Policy 6.5. Service Kiosks. Information kiosks and restroom kiosks should be installed at common arrival points in Downtown and to serve Downtown residents. Kiosks should not present a nuisance to nearby uses

- a. Locate a bathroom kiosk near BART and consider bathroom kiosks in other high-activity locations. Restroom kiosks should be located away from eating establishments and locations where outdoor dining exists or is anticipated.



Figure i.3. Kiosks. Information, restrooms, and amenities can be provided within public open spaces, through the use of small kiosks.

- b. Establish visitor information kiosks as described under Signage & Wayfinding.
- c. Install kiosks with “community bulletin boards” for use by residents of Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

Policy 6.6, Newsracks. Newsracks should be attractive, well used, and well maintained.

- a. Movable newsracks should be discouraged to the extent possible. Encourage the use of permanent newsracks.
- b. The City should replace “permanent” newsracks, and reduce the number of permanent newsracks so as not to exceed demand.
- c. Consider public-private arrangements in which a contractor would provide on-going management and maintenance, in exchange for advertising revenues.
- d. Newsracks should be consistent with the color and character of other street elements (see Visual Consistency).

Policy 6.7, Cleaning & Maintenance. Encourage a clean Downtown, with street elements that are attractive and well-maintained. Improvements and programs should maintain cleanliness, avoid clutter, and encourage recycling.”

- a. Provide frequent trash receptacles, especially in locations prone to littering such as near transit stops and fast-food restaurants. Where littering is clearly attributable one or more businesses, they should pay for and maintain nearby trash receptacles. Receptacles should have a capacity of at least 30 gallons.

- b. Public trash receptacles should be consistent with the color and character of other common street elements (see Visual Consistency). They should be designed for easy garbage pick-up and maintenance.
- c. Public trash receptacles should be durable and made of metal, and they should be consistent with the color and character of other street elements.
- d. Public restrooms should be maintained to high standards through the allocation of adequate City resources and through public-private cooperation.
- e. Consider ways to expand the capacity for cleaning and landscape maintenance through better coordination, greater efficiency and increased funding (see Operations & Maintenance chapter).
- f. Work with merchants and property owners to limit negative impacts from collecting trash from businesses, such as minimizing time that trash cans may be placed near curbs. Review and, if needed, strengthen Zoning to encourage interior trash-can enclosures for every business in Downtown.



Figure i.4. Newsracks. Assorted individual newsracks can be unsightly. Coordinated newsracks can be attractive but provisions should be made for their ongoing maintenance and management.