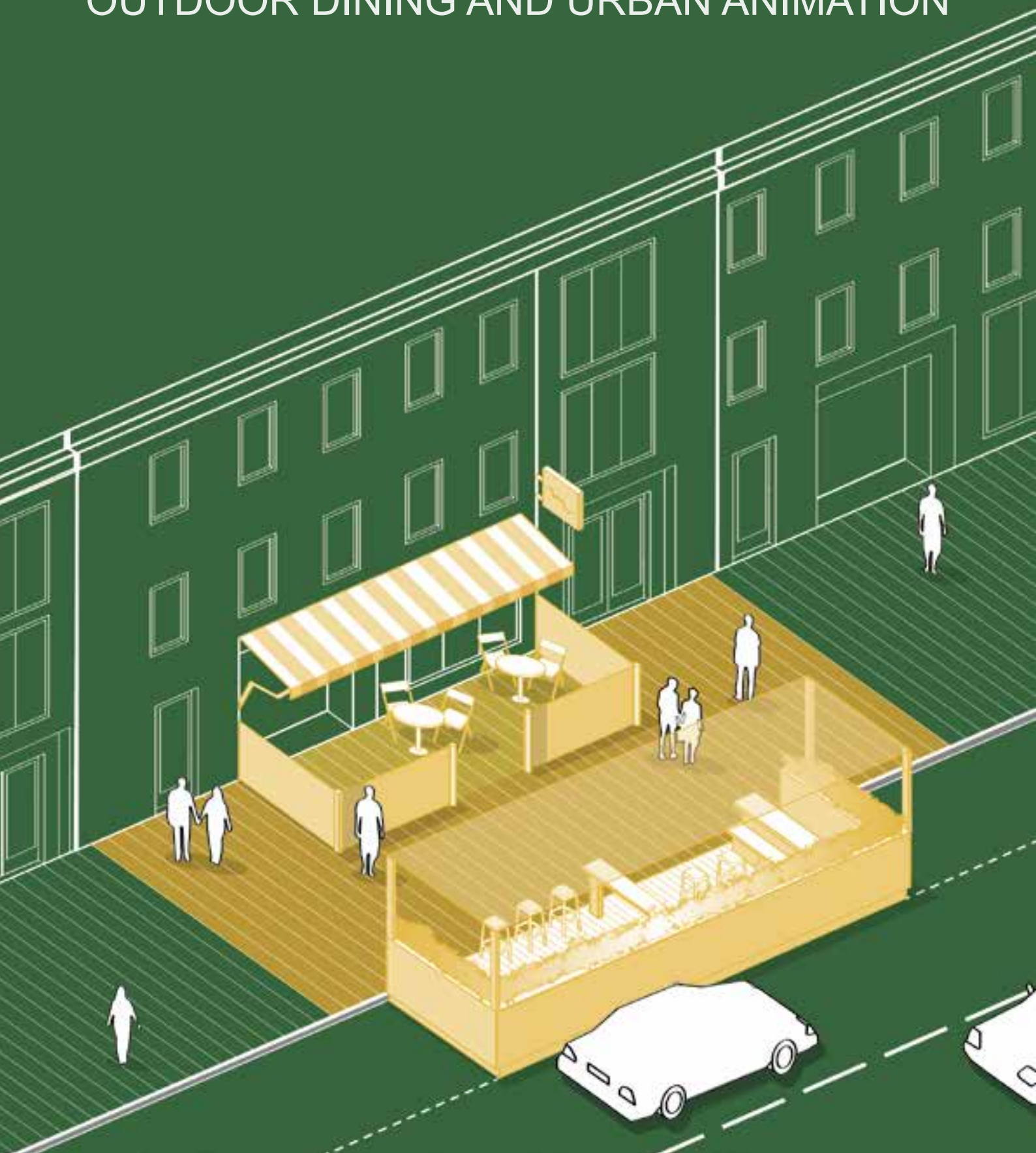


# BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES OUTDOOR DINING AND URBAN ANIMATION



*Disclaimer:*

*The content in these Guidelines provides an overview of best practice approach to Outdoor Seating and Urban Animation. It is not intended to address every single step of the process and businesses are advised to consult with their Local Authority and other relevant bodies as well as undertaking their own research and analysis and obtaining their own professional advice.*

*Examples and references contained within are for illustrative purposes only.*

*No responsibility for loss occasioned to any person or body acting or refraining from action as a result of the content of these Guidelines can be accepted by Fáilte Ireland or BDP.*

Produced by

**BDP.**

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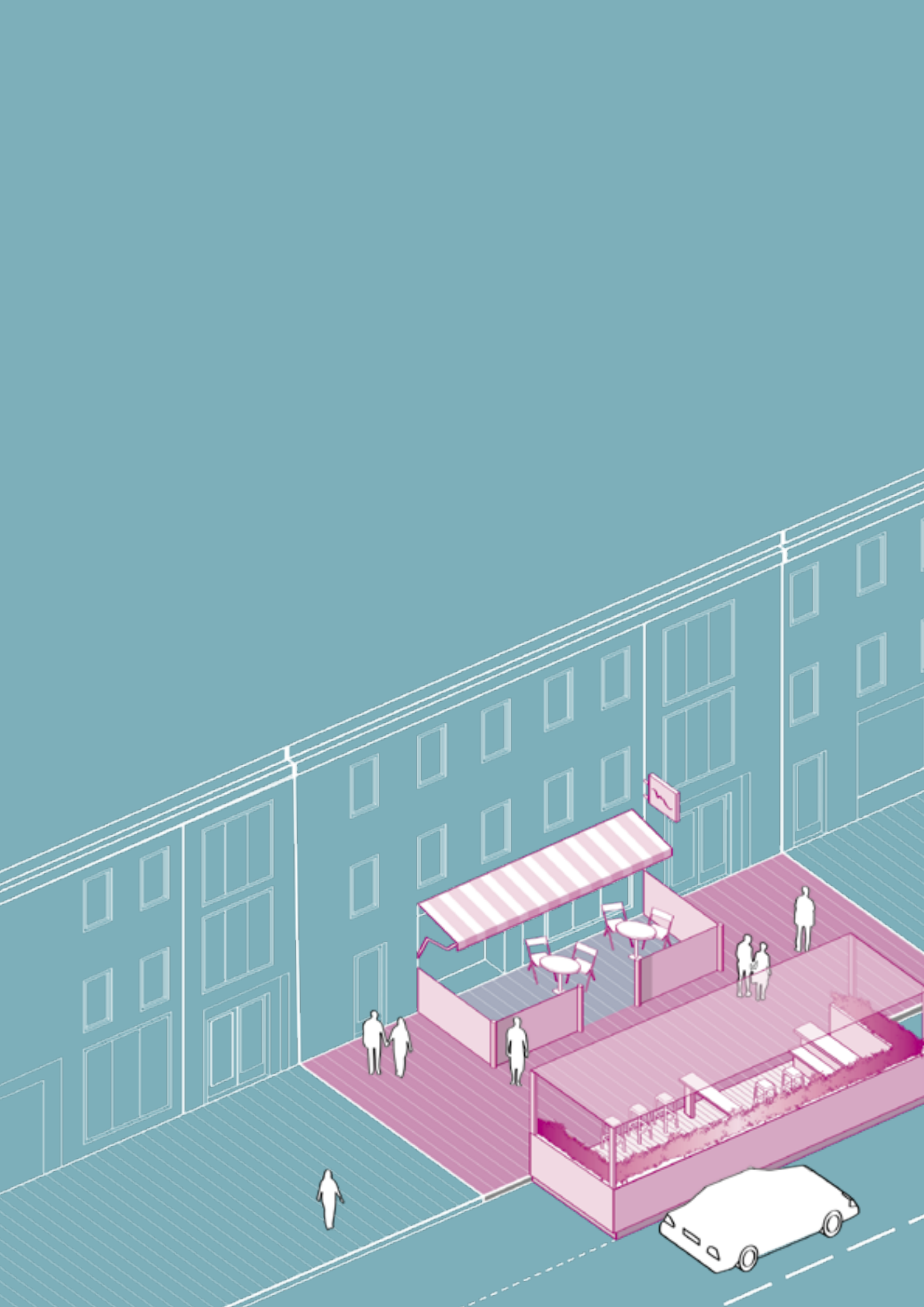
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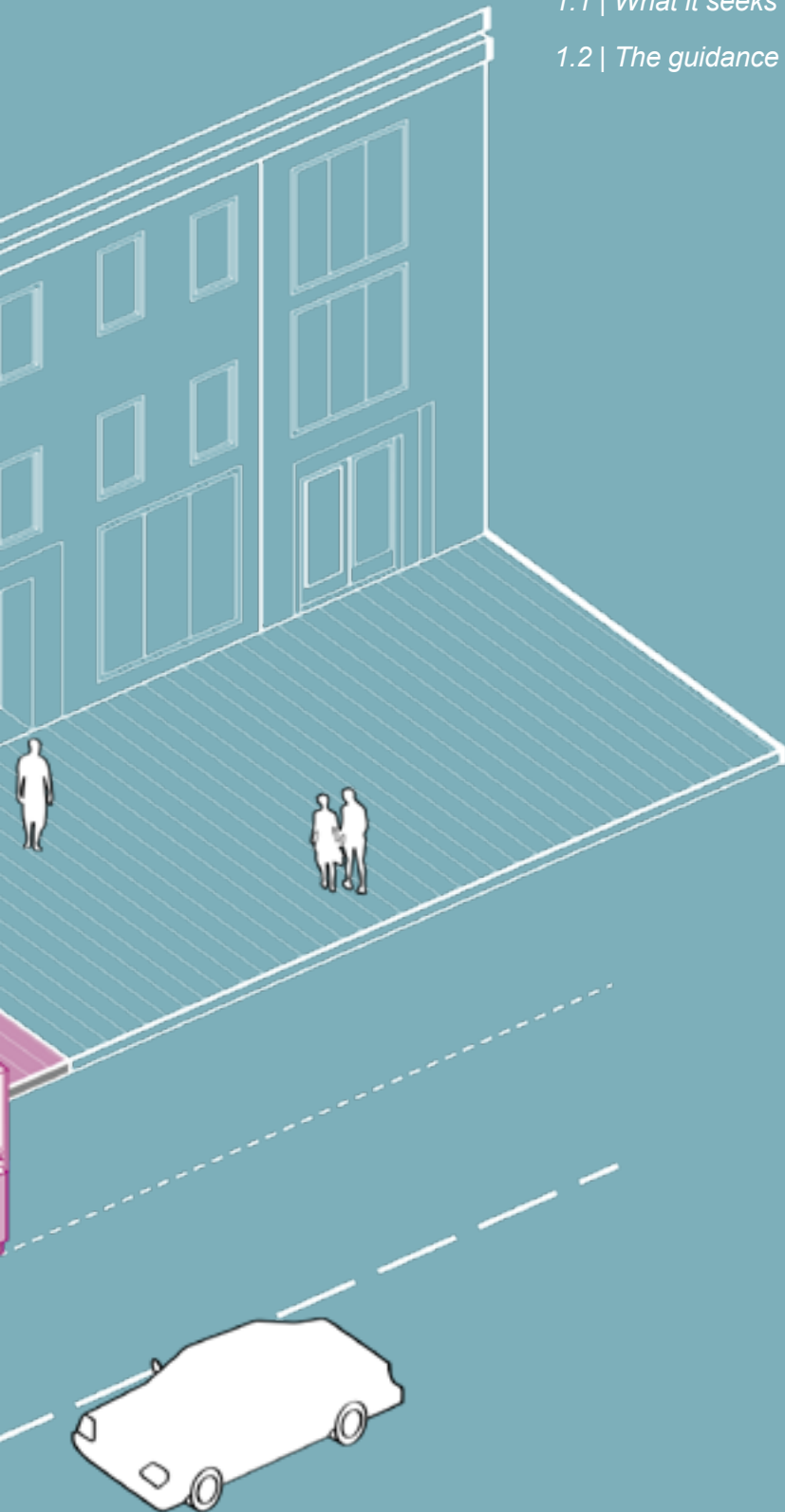
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# 1.0 Purpose of the Report

*1.1 | What it seeks to achieve*

*1.2 | The guidance*



## 1.1 WHAT IT SEEKS TO ACHIEVE

Local authorities in Ireland are charged with the management of the public realm. This includes elements such as safety, flow of people, accessibility, protection of historic buildings and presentation among many other elements. Nearly all of the guidance that follows in this document will require specific engagement with local authorities ranging from simple permissions right up to full planning permission. In addition, anytime there is an intervention in the public realm it needs to be fully assessed for accessibility purposes to ensure full compliance and the safety of all users. It is imperative, if you are proposing to use the public realm, that you engage with your relevant local authority at the earliest possible stage. They will be happy to hear your ideas and provide advice as well as guiding and assisting you in implementing your vision.

The guidelines included in this report respond to the Covid-19 Levels set out in the Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19. In particular, the Plan for Living with COVID-19 highlights that outdoor spaces are safer than indoor spaces, in terms of being less susceptible to high transmission rates of Covid-19.

This guidance aims to ensure that businesses accommodate a wide range of users in outdoor design responses, including consideration of both current and potential users. This document also sets out “what looks good” through diagrams and existing precedents of streets and public spaces.

There is an opportunity for local authorities to work alongside businesses to develop recovery initiatives for the public realm, to ensure the short and long term economic and social sustainability of local areas. These guidelines aim to assist this process by setting a clear vision and guidelines for the creation of engaging and animated outdoor spaces and streets surrounding and adjacent to businesses.



Image credit | Cork City Council

## 1.2 THE GUIDANCE

→ The vision statement is to:  
*“Provide an attractive, coordinated and inviting external environment through enhanced public streets and spaces, which enable and encourage people to safely and comfortably dine, enjoy and spend time in the public realm, and allow businesses to flourish.”*

A set of guiding principles are set out below to support the vision statement.

The guidelines include sections on understanding how public streets and spaces can be adapted in response to the Covid-19 roadmap for Ireland.

The best practice guidance includes:

- Layout, character and illustrations of various street activation scenarios.
- Guidance on seating, shelter, containment, planting, lighting, heating and signage.
- Other significant considerations such as flexibility of use and art installations.
- A checklist for implementing public realm improvements.

The guidelines aim to inspire creative and unique public realm responses that help shape enjoyable user experiences. It is an aim of the guidelines to help businesses think about how their design responses can collectively contribute to the formation of a destination, where people choose to spend time and return to.



### Placemaking & identity

Creation of attractive and vibrant places to live, work, visit, spend time and invest in. Promotion of external additions facilitating a greater sense of identity for an area.



### Biodiversity & air quality

Consideration of sustainable and green infrastructure, with provision of links to biodiversity and good air quality. Promotion of walking and cycling, and inclusion of upcycled interventions.



### Facilitating environments

Creation of interventions that respond to current needs and are also adaptable for the future, particularly in response to fluctuating Covid-19 roadmap levels in each region or area of Ireland.



### Planned & spontaneous events

Consideration of other complimentary uses in addition to outdoor dining. Dependent on the type of space or street, they could be used flexibly and interchangeably for dining and event space.



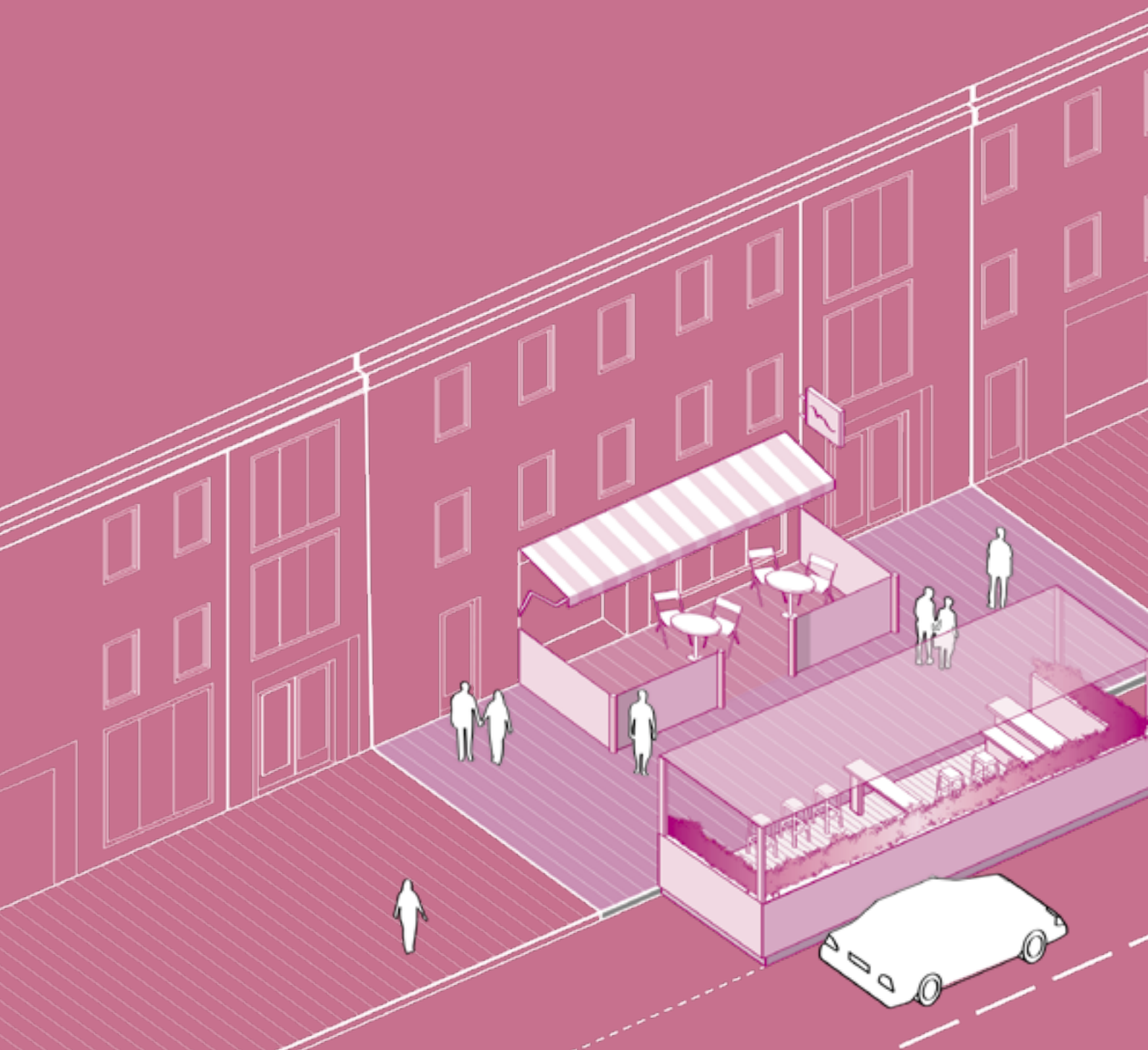
### Function & mix of uses

Accommodation of logistics movements and street functions, such as servicing, delivery and emergency services vehicular access arrangements. Promotion of a mix of uses in the public realm.



### Well-being & biophilic design

Creation of relaxing spaces that promote public safety and mindfulness, where people are able to socialise safely and confidently, and feel connected to the natural environment.





# 2.0

## Activation scenarios

2.1 | *Layout, character and context*

2.2 | *Effective use of space*

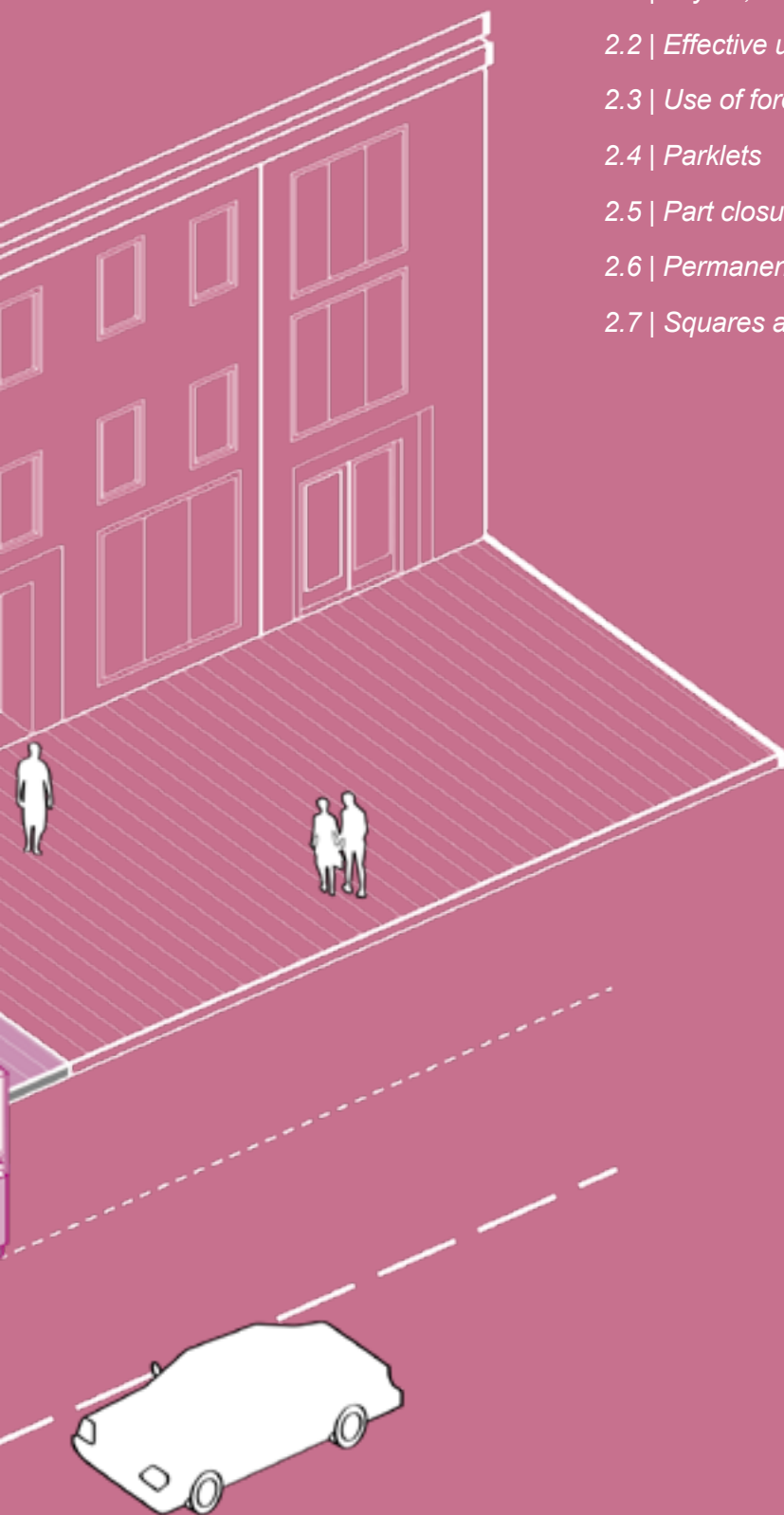
2.3 | *Use of forecourts*

2.4 | *Parklets*

2.5 | *Part closure of roads*

2.6 | *Permanent or temporary pedestrian streets*

2.7 | *Squares and open spaces*





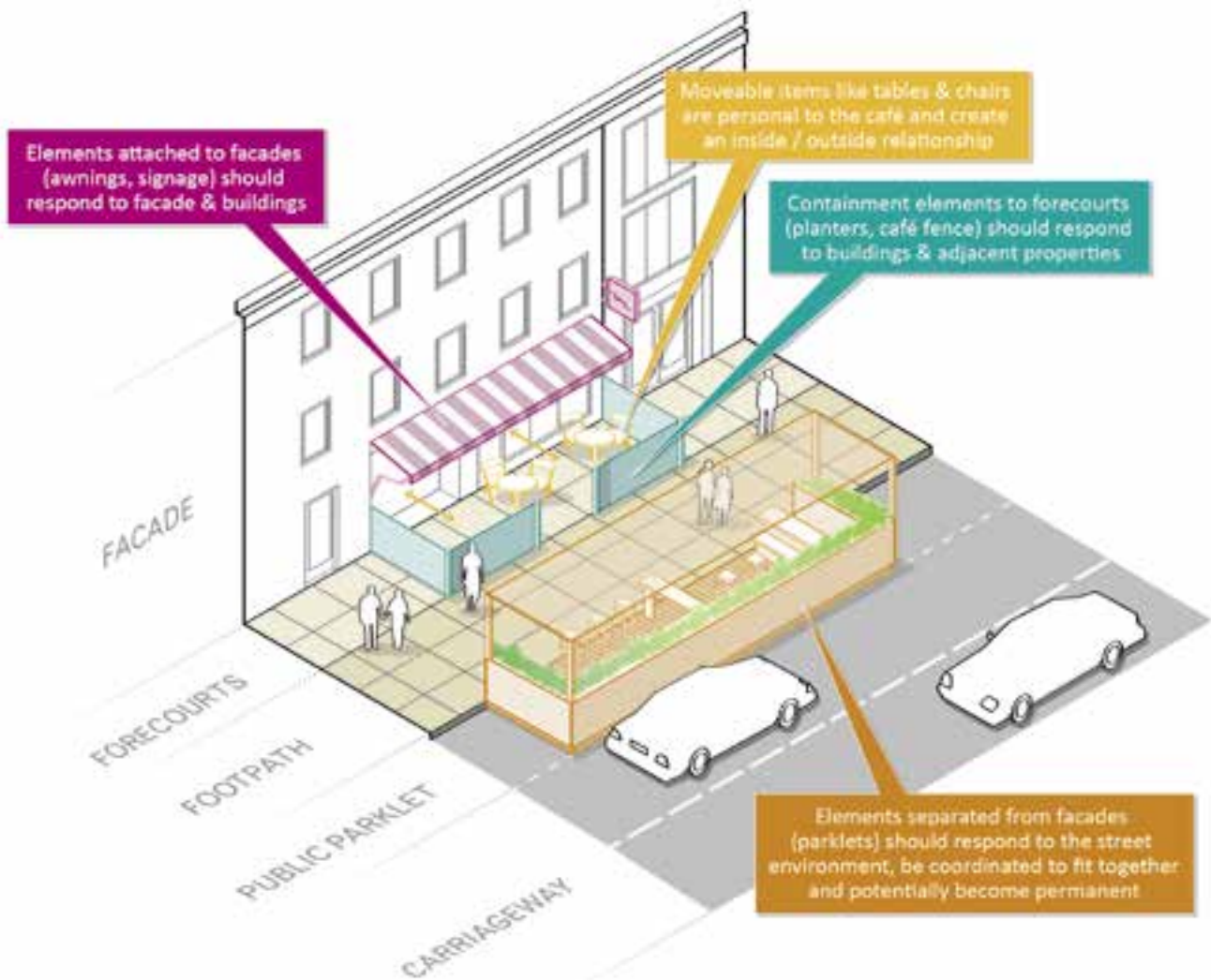
2.1 LAYOUT, CHARACTER & CONTEXT

→ For any proposed outdoor intervention, the street layout and surrounding character and context will need to be carefully considered early on in the design process.

Interventions should respond to street layout by considering how wide business forecourts are, how much pavement space is available for pedestrians and cyclists to pass through, whether there are under utilised parking spaces that can be used as parklets, and how many lanes of carriageway there are. Street interventions should be kept a sufficient distance from roadways to ensure users are kept safe and to ensure accessibility.

It is important for public realm interventions to respond to the character of the existing building façades of businesses. Therefore awning and signage should not interfere with windows or significant features on the front elevation, and should be fitting in terms of material and colour choice. Similarly, new tables and chairs should aim to respond to the interior of the business.

The surrounding character and context of the wider area should also be carefully considered. For example, businesses may be located on market streets requiring pavement space on set days, or within an area of conservation requiring a heritage sensitive approach in the public realm.



2.2 EFFECTIVE USE OF SPACE

It will be important for businesses to make the most effective use of the space they have available. Overall, interventions must adapt to the specific conditions of the area and provide tailored responses to ensure their suitability.

The different ways in which businesses can achieve effective use of outdoor spaces include:

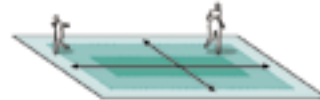
- Ensure they are adaptable to the different Covid-19 roadmap levels, as this will also aid a post Covid environment.
- Provide a variety of seating and standing areas that are best suited to the business and location.

- Adapt to different uses as spaces can be used for various activities including dining, events, and relaxation, or for food stalls and markets.
- Be inviting and aesthetically engaging. This can be achieved through implementation of greenery and planting, attractive lighting, sufficient heating, and sheltered areas to cater for year round outdoor activities. In turn, this will encourage visitors to spend more time in such spaces, which will have economic benefits in terms of ensuring a consistent flow of customers for local businesses.
- Optimise the space available and provide only what is required i.e. clutter and unnecessary features that take up a large amount of space should be avoided, particularly where street space is restricted.



**SEATING OR STANDING**

Design the best suited outdoor terrace set up. Consider making it a standard or flexible seating area, an informal standing area or a mix of all.



**RATIONAL LAYOUT**

Tailor & rationalise your outdoor space setting, being aware of the spatial constraints e.g. terrace dimension, pedestrian flow.



**ADAPTABILITY**

Ensure the space is adaptable and responsive to the various levels of the COVID-19 Roadmap. Plan alternative set up including other possible uses e.g. performance space, food stalls, etc.



**MOVEMENT & ACCESS**

Consider the entry points of the business, the movements in and around the seating space. Make sure accesses are maintained at all times to allow comfortable movement.



**INVITING & ATTRACTIVE**

Add value to the space by using planting, colourful elements, inviting warm lighting, etc. Ensure comfort by providing weather protection & comfortable furniture.



**FUNCTIONALITY**

Ensure there is enough space for the targeted use and seating arrangement, that the space is clutter free and optimised, making it easy to serve, set up and circulate.

## 2.2 EFFECTIVE USE OF SPACE

- Interventions should be easily set up, disassembled and stored.
- Effectively plan entrance and exit points, routes around seating and standing areas, and pedestrian routes through and adjacent to the space.
- Ensure comfortable movement and access is possible from routes in the wider area.
- Ensure layouts are rational and specific to each space or setting. They may consider the typical and likely pedestrian, cyclist and vehicle flows present before, during and after Covid-19.
- Ensure accessibility for all users including those with disabilities.
- Where space allows, consider a collective approach with other businesses.

In addition to the elements highlighted in the diagram, businesses must also respond effectively to the constraints of their area or site, which can include:

- Very little pavement or road space available that can be used for dining or event space interventions due to narrow historic streets.
- The business may be located in an Architectural Conservation Area that has a defined character that should be adhered to.
- Functionality of the street, access routes for servicing, deliveries and emergency vehicles .
- Fully accessible pedestrian and cycle routes needs to be retained or enhanced.



Image credit | Cork City Council

## 2.3 USE OF FORECOURTS

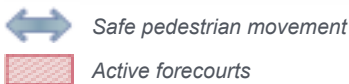
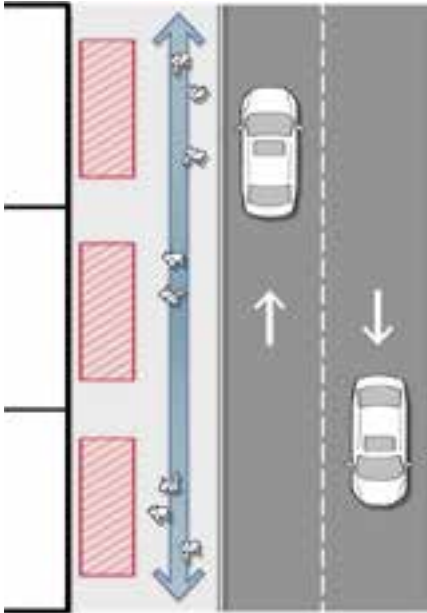


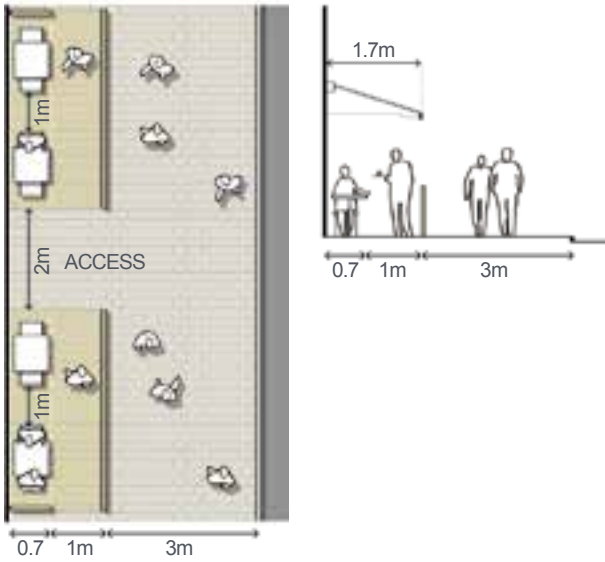
Image credit | Cork City Council

Forecourts are the most common type of space used by businesses as outdoor seating areas: they are easy to operate and can significantly boost the appearance and attractiveness of a café or restaurant. The inclusion of key features such as awnings, planting and quality furniture can further increase usage.

- The minimum necessary space required on a main road to implement and accommodate an appropriately distanced forecourt display is considered to be 4m in width, from the building façade to the pavement kerb-line.
- The 4m minimum width requirement can be reduced where there is very low through flow of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles e.g. in narrow historic lanes, shared spaces and where there are alternative means of passing by the forecourt area.

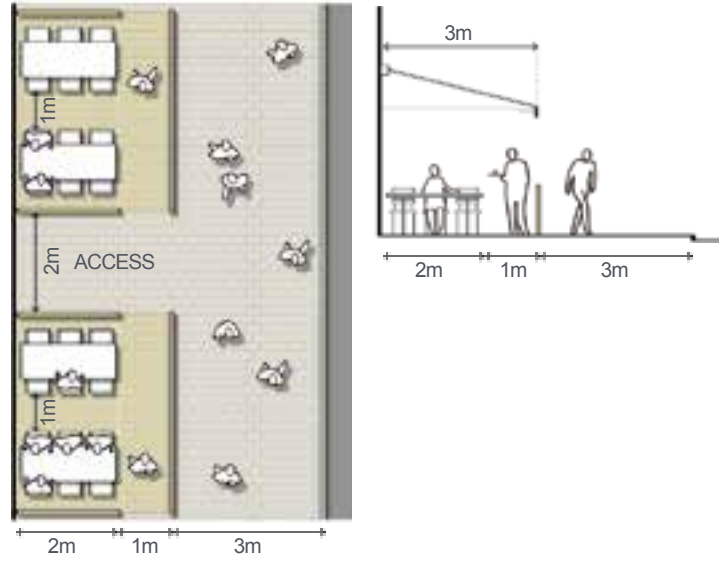
- In contrast, for streets with a high through flow of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, and where businesses do not have a minimum 4m width available, other types of scenarios to implement outdoor seating space should be explored and considered.
- Windproof retractable awnings attached to buildings will help ensure outdoor seating, standing areas and circulation corridors are sheltered. Awnings should also be in alignment with street level containment elements.
- Tables to be spaced with a minimum of 1m between them.
- A 2m wide obstacle free zone at business entrances and exit points should be retained.
- Possibility to open the containment element at each end of the forecourt to allow one way circulation along the corridor.

2.3 USE OF FORECOURTS



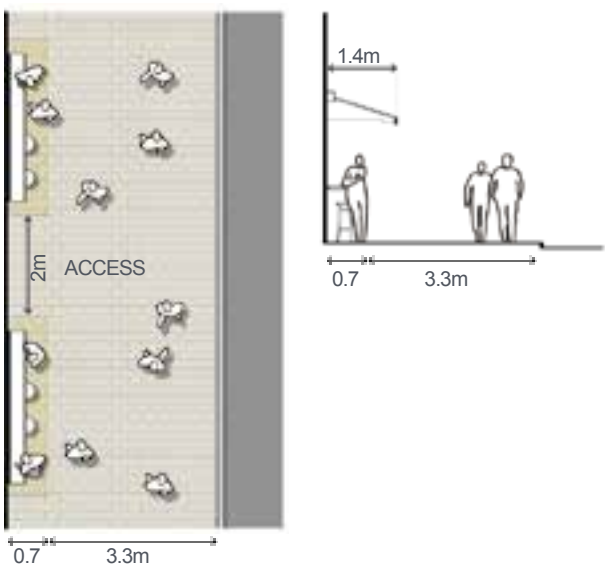
**Case 01 | 4.7m wide space + Seating**

Single row of 2 person tables with containment element, circulation corridor and awning.



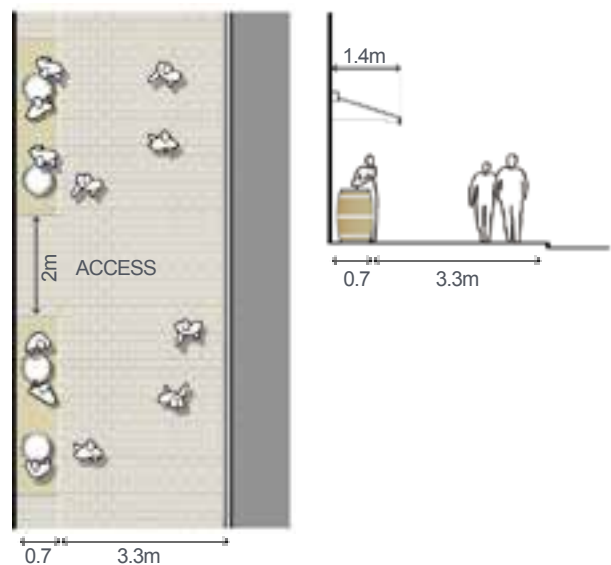
**Case 02 | 6m wide space + Seating**

Maximised seating capacity with containment element, circulation corridor and awning.



**Case 03 | 4m wide space + Flexible seating**

Flexible seating/standing with high narrow bench, stools and awning.



**Case 04 | 4m wide space + Standing**

Flexible standing only with tall informal tables e.g. barrels, sheltered by awning.

## 2.4 PARKLETS

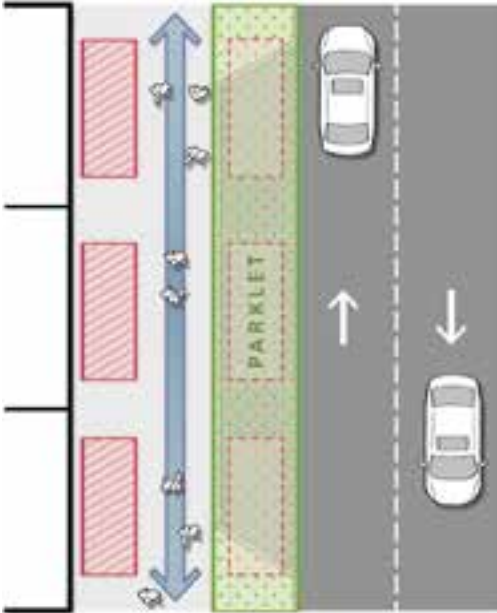





Image credit | Cork City Council

-  Safe pedestrian movement
-  Active forecourts
-  Socialising area: seating, play, events, parklet, etc.

In some Irish cities, parklets have recently been introduced to create vibrant streets, support local businesses and provide an attractive place for the local community and visitors alike to dine and relax in. They are an effective intervention which helps to boost the vibrancy and appeal of businesses.

Parklets have been created in a number of urban centres and in some of them 'Parklet Partner' schemes have also been set up to help promote and manage them. Such schemes are run by the local authority who agree to fund and install the infrastructure for the parklets, and they work with 'Parklet Partners' (could be businesses or community groups for example) who are responsible for the day to day maintenance of the structures.

For Parklet Partner schemes, parklets are kept in place for a year and then evaluated at the end of the one year period to identify whether they should be kept for another year, be

replaced by a more permanent seating arrangement, or moved elsewhere. It is anticipated that similar schemes could be rolled out elsewhere in Ireland, using shared lessons learned and relying on consultation and collaboration between local authorities and communities.

Some of the benefits of parklets are:

- They provide an enhanced sense of community pride and ownership, particularly where a community association acts as the 'Parklet Partner'.
- They effectively support local businesses as they provide an attractive form of outdoor seating space.
- Parklet interventions are beneficial in terms of providing green infrastructure.
- They can be constructed from natural and recycled materials, such as wood, making them a sustainable design response.

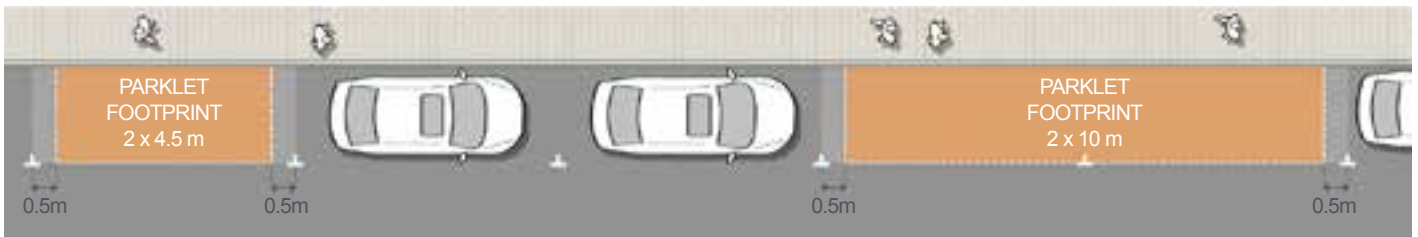


2.4 PARKLETS

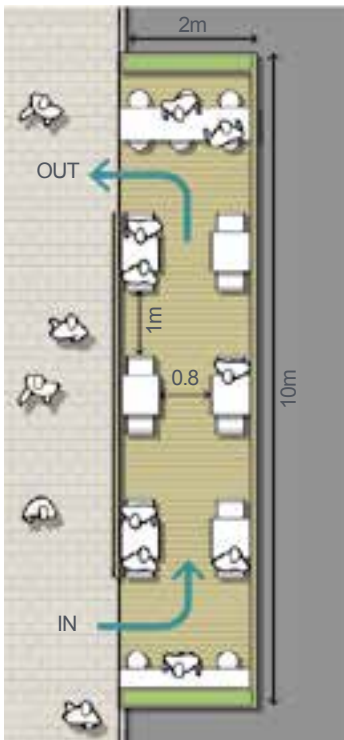
➔ Guidelines for parklets on parallel parking bays, based on the average parking dimension of 2 x 5.5m.

- Parklets sit along the kerbline and typically occupy the full width of parking bays.
- Where possible, parklets should be extended to cover the length of more than 1 parking bay, in order to maximise and make more efficient use of space. A single parklet can be used by 2 or more businesses.

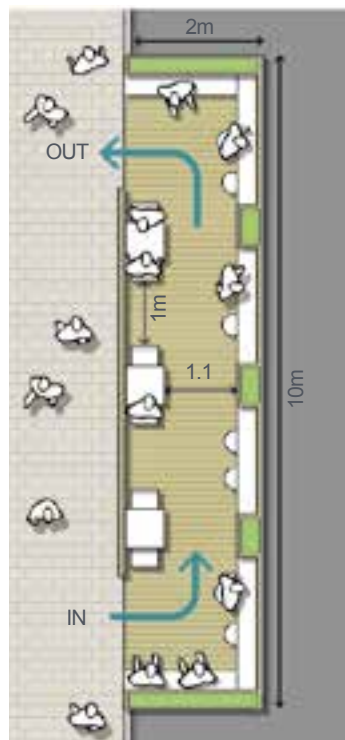
- A buffer zone of a minimum of 0.5m is to be retained to allow sufficient space for vehicular movement at each end of the parklet.
- Parklets should be located at least one parking bays distance from junctions and street corners to avoid disrupting traffic and guarantee users' safety.
- Parklets are to be located away from active driveways, delivery and loading bays, to allow the continued functional operation of streets.



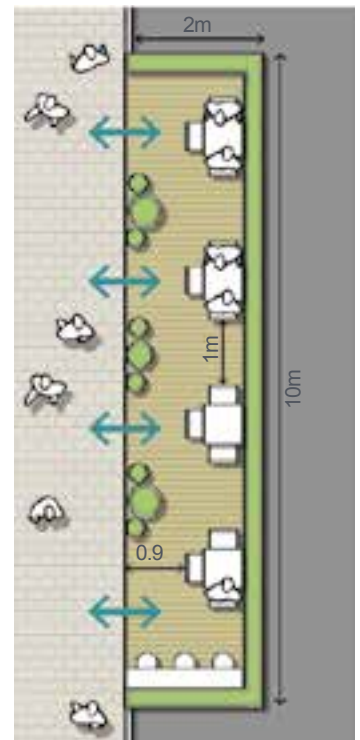
**Case 01 |**  
2m wide space  
Formal seating



**Case 02 |**  
2m wide space  
Flexible seating



**Case 03 |**  
2m wide space  
Formal seating & planting



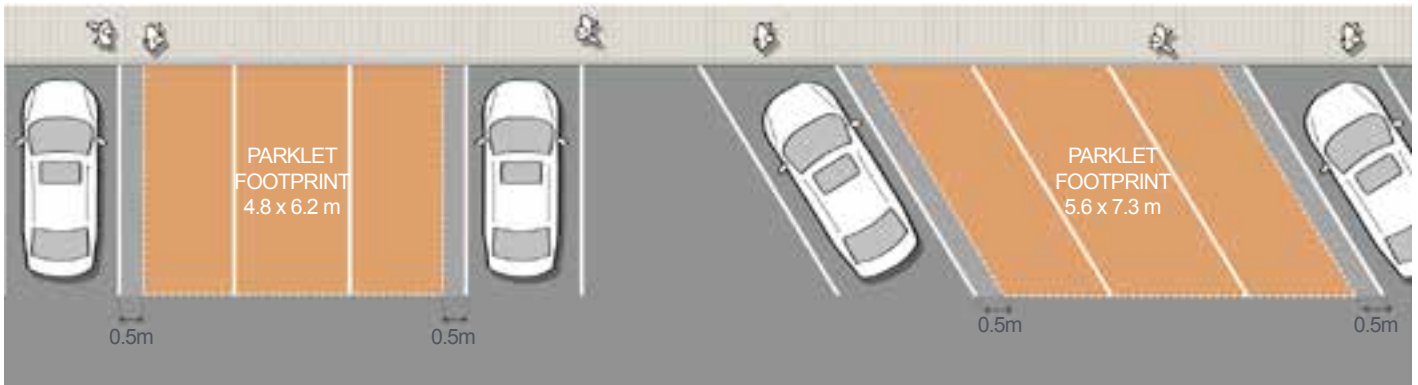
2.4 PARKLETS

➔ Guidelines for parklets on perpendicular and echelon parking bays, based on the average parking dimension of 2.4 x 4.8m.

- Parklets sit along the kerbline and occupy the full length of the parking bays.
- A buffer zone of a minimum of 0.5m is to be retained to allow vehicular movement and guarantee the users' safety.

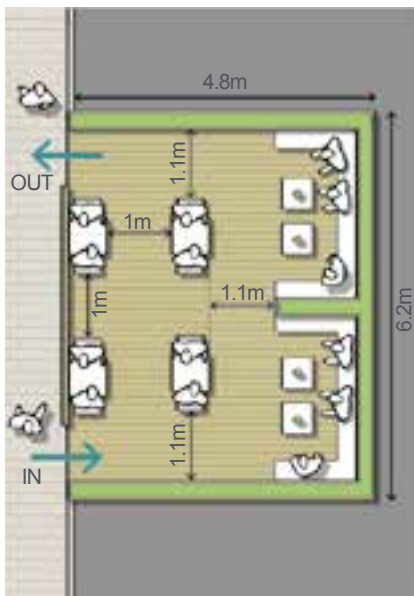
- The parklet should be extended to a minimum of 3 parking bays to maximise its presence on the street and usage capacity.

The sketch examples on the next page show how an existing parklet can be progressively improved in terms of layout and quality, through the addition of certain components to become a more permanent feature.



Case 01 |

Mix of formal seating & informal low tables, benches and planting at the back of the parklet.



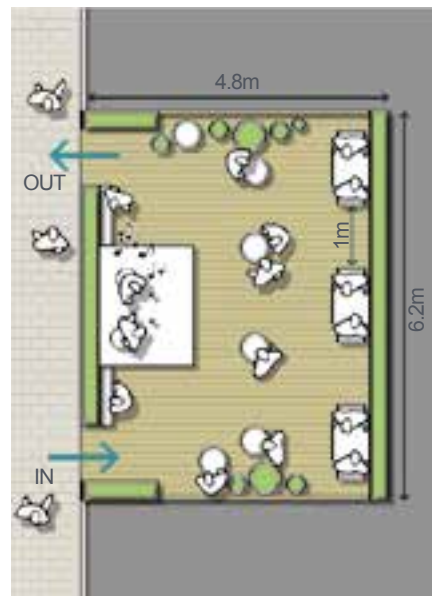
Case 02 |

Seating booths on both sides with a small performance space & central informal standing area.



Case 03 |

Performance space surrounded by an informal standing area with planting and seating at the back.



2.4 PARKLETS



**Step 01** | Simple layout including a deck, coloured gazebos and small tables.



**Step 02** | Same simple layout with gazebos of matching colour.



**Step 03** | Narrow planters define the whole perimeter of the parklet, adding interest and intimacy to the space.



**Step 04** | Diverse seating layout including benches, barrels and high tables to allow flexible uses.



**Step 05** | Considerate & diverse layout with permanent and qualitative cover.



**Step 06** | Different levels of lighting, including uplighting of trees, catenary lighting and individual table lights bring further quality.

## 2.5 PART CLOSURE OF ROADS

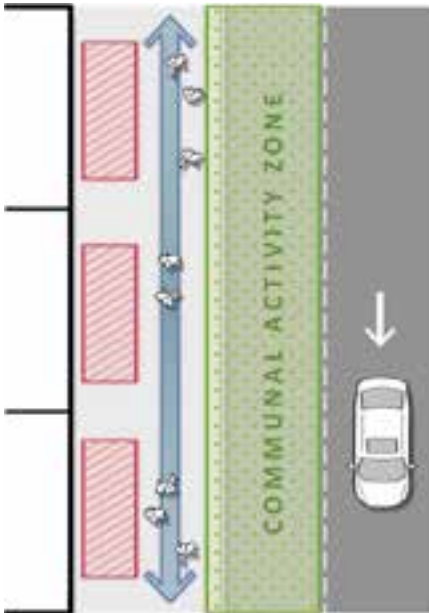





Image credit | BDP

-  Safe pedestrian movement
-  Active forecourts
-  Socialising area: seating, play, events, parklet, etc.

Temporary or permanent part closure of roads is a good option where the aim is to maximise pedestrian friendly space, support local businesses along a street section, promote events and festivals, or where forecourts and parklets are not viable solutions.

Part closure consists of closing down one of the lanes on a trafficked street, to reduce vehicular circulation to a single one way lane. A greater part of the streetscape is therefore dedicated to pedestrian activities, resulting in the creation of a more comfortable and friendly environment where people are likely to dwell.

The pedestrian space gained is a linear stripe of approximately 2.5-3m that can run along the full length of a street, or just a section of it. It allows for a variety of uses including simple outdoor seating areas and gathering and performance spaces, art interventions, food trucks, etc. The businesses along one street section can opt for communal management of

the outdoor area where several businesses share the same seating, gathering and performance areas, or an individual management where each business has its own dedicated space.

To guarantee public safety and to allow emergency vehicles to circulate, it is recommended that a 0.5m wide buffer of free space is retained from the carriageway central line to the usable space. Also a 3.5m wide route needs to be maintained at all times for emergency vehicle access.

2.5 PART CLOSURE OF ROADS

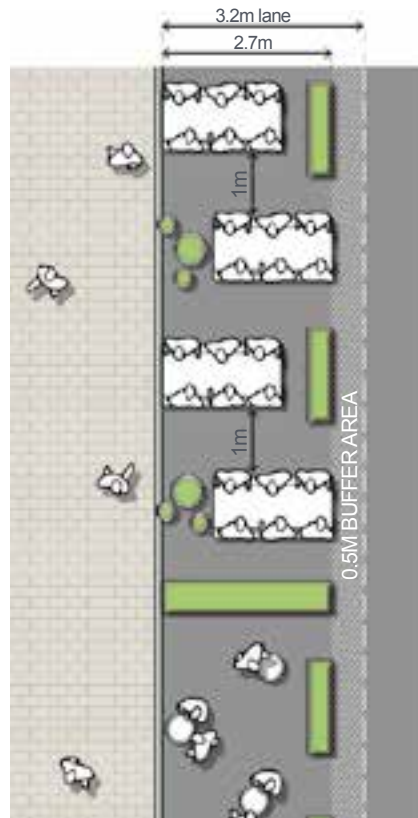
**Case 01 |**

Communal containment with barriers and pots. Each business has its own seating area.



**Case 02 |**

Communal containment, picnic tables and informal standing areas shared between various businesses.



**Case 03 |**

Series of rooms: communal informal area & performance space. Business specific formal terrace.



Image credit | BDP



Image credit | Dublin City Council

## 2.6 PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY PEDESTRIAN STREETS

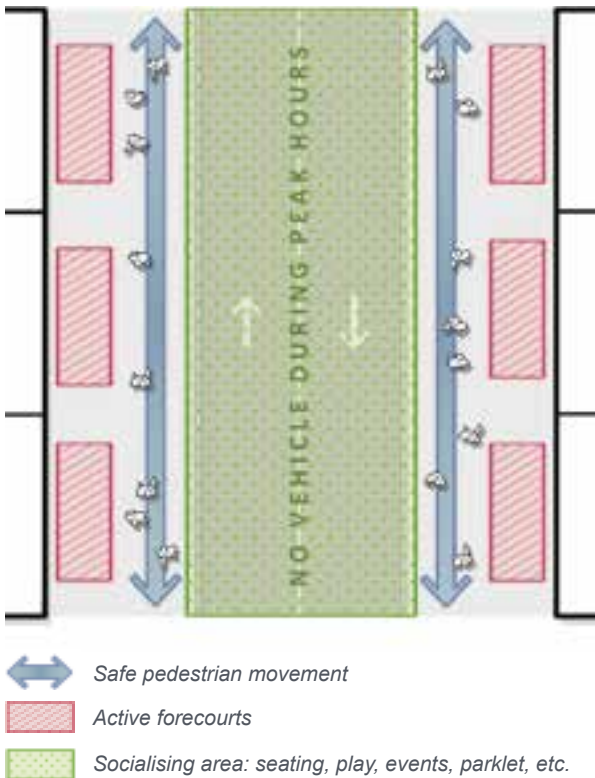



Image credit | Cork City Council

 This scenario looks at full closure of a street to vehicular traffic to dedicate its entire width to pedestrians and recreational uses, retaining only emergency vehicle access. This car free environment is the most likely to attract people and encourage those to dwell in the space, supporting local businesses and making larger events and markets possible.

The benefits of pedestrian streets are:

- Opportunity to combine classic forecourts on both sides of the street with a central strip of mixed uses that may include outdoor seating, gathering spaces, play spaces, performance areas, art installations, etc.
- Creation of a safe environment for people to dwell and spend time.
- Opportunity to create 'outdoor rooms' or dedicated spaces

for specific simultaneous activities.

- Maximum space gained for pedestrians, making physical distancing between users easier and more efficient.
- The use of green infrastructure can be maximised.
- This scenario can be permanent or temporary, allowing a good degree of adaptation to businesses' and users' needs.

Consultation and collaboration between businesses and local authorities is strongly encouraged to understand the potential of the street and to comply with traffic and safety requirements.

The pedestrianisation of a street, whether temporary or permanent, needs to be carefully designed. Some of the determining factors are the definition of desired uses, furniture management and storage, land ownership, emergency traffic routes and accessibility, and functionality. The possible layout options are endless, therefore each project is to be considered on a case by case basis.

## 2.7 SQUARES &amp; OPEN SPACES

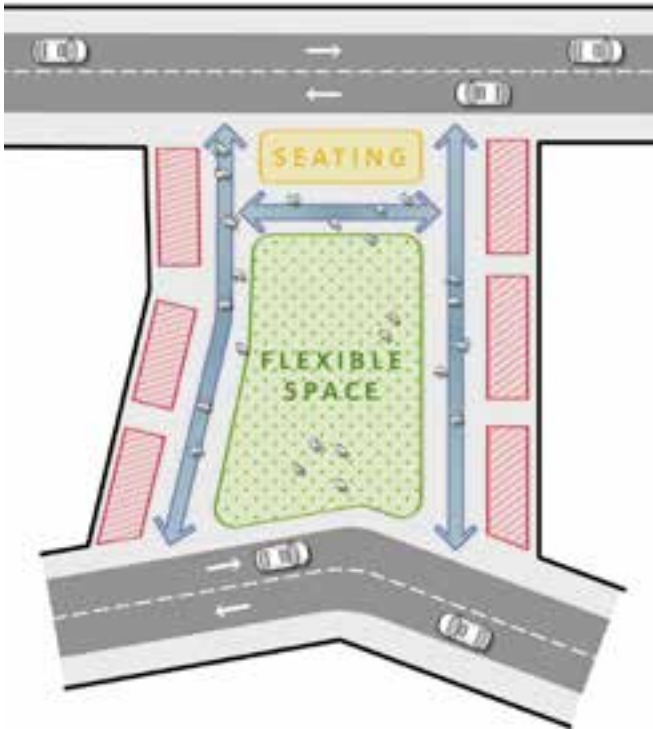


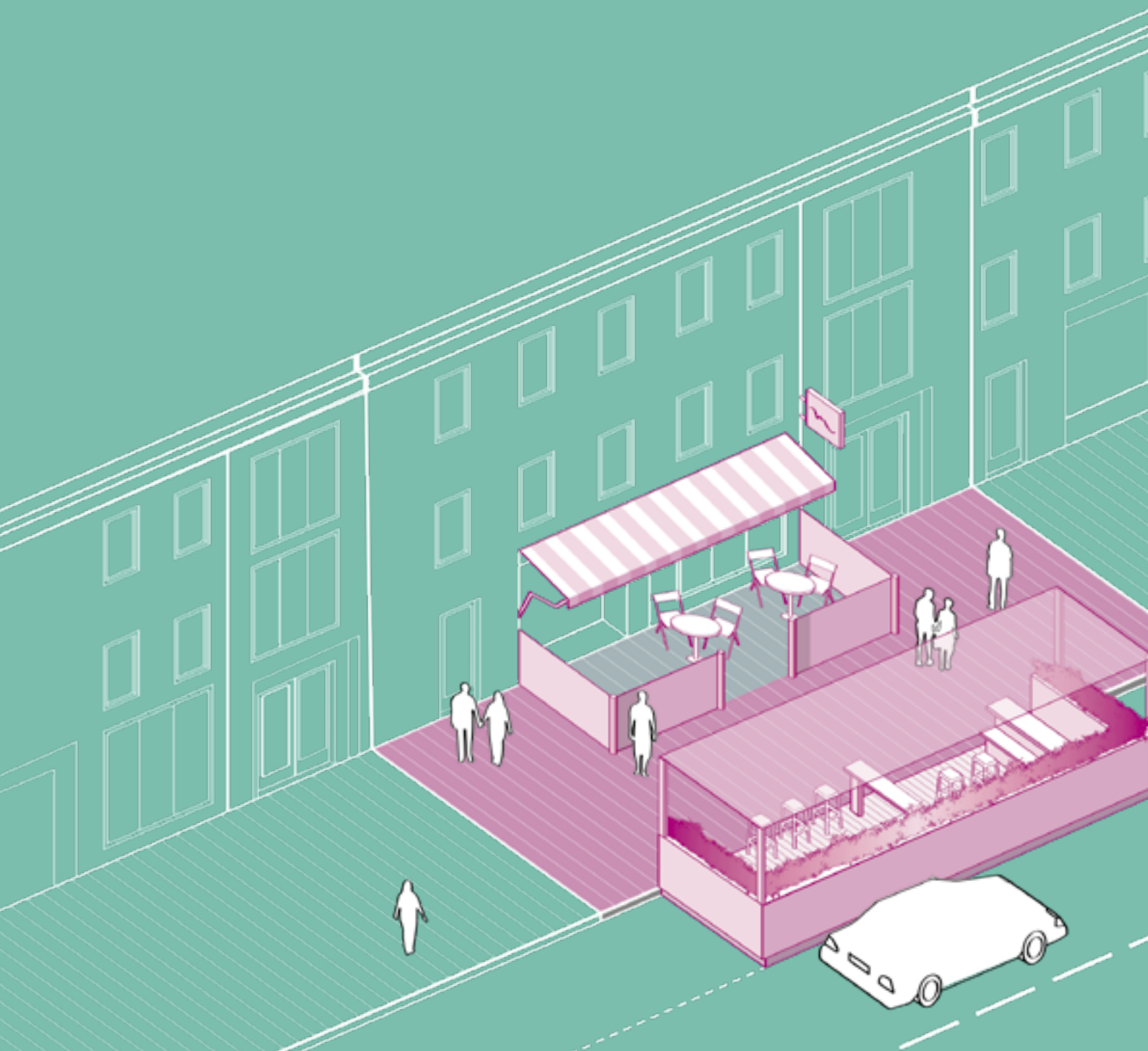
Image credit | BDP

Squares and open spaces naturally offer maximum flexibility, enabling a combination of a wide range of recreational uses. They are generally highly sought after spaces, sometimes offering quiet pedestrian friendly environments, and sometimes vibrant settings for local events.

This permanent layout should allow for a sufficient degree of flexibility so that temporary uses such as festivals, events, markets, and exhibitions can be successfully installed in the space without compromising its functionality or legibility. The space should be functional and attractive both with a normal everyday and special event set up.

Squares and open spaces offer the opportunity to combine classic forecourts on the perimeter of the space adjacent to the built frontage, with a central area that can be read as a single space or as a series of sub-spaces dedicated to specific uses.

Good practice in terms of design relies on the provision of a permanent spatial layout for the whole space, that includes the sensible location of urban street furniture, seating and lighting elements, pedestrian and emergency accesses and services.





# 3.0

## Responsive design to the components

3.1 | *Seating*

3.2 | *Cover & winter proofing*

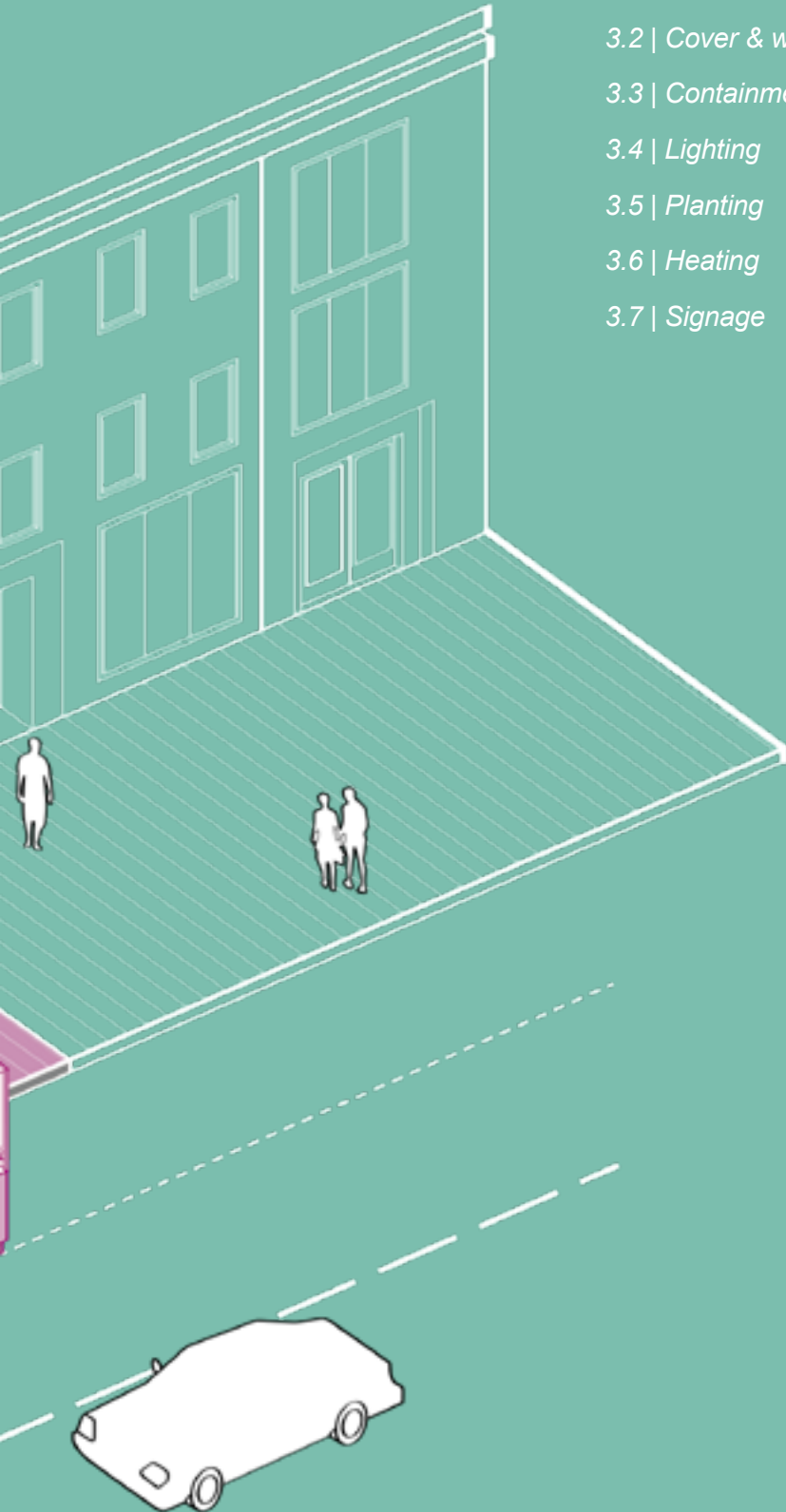
3.3 | *Containment*

3.4 | *Lighting*

3.5 | *Planting*

3.6 | *Heating*

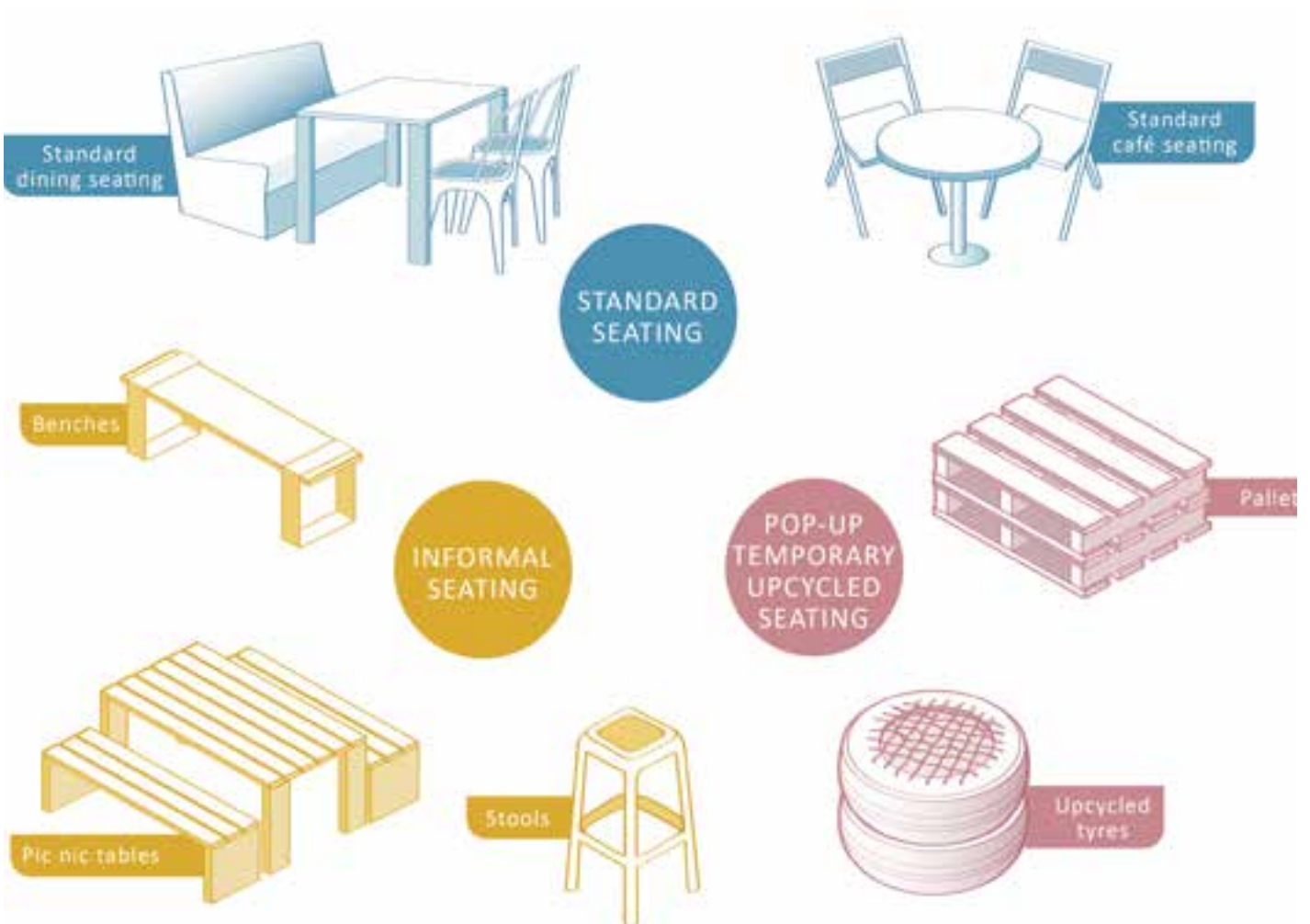
3.7 | *Signage*



## 3.1 SEATING

Comfortable, inviting and sheltered seating areas are key to the successful activity of businesses. Weather resistance and adaptation to the climatic conditions, sturdiness of the furniture, style and appearance should be considered.

- **Surrounding context** | Consider the character of the area and street to ensure the style of the furniture is appropriate.
- **Relationship to businesses' interiors** | The design, colour, style and branding where applicable, could be consistent with interior seating or patterns.
- **Strategy** | Each business owner should define a clear seating style and general atmosphere and identify target clients for their business to enable them to select appropriate seating and furniture.
- **Distances** | Sufficient spacing of a minimum of 1m is necessary between tables for people to socialise safely.



### 3.1 SEATING

- **Manual handling** | For loose seating, furniture should be as light weight as possible to allow staff and customers to move them around as and when required. Alternatively, static seating should be heavy enough or fixed so as to be retained on the street and not manually moved.
- **Folding & Stacking** | This will assist with ease of storage where necessary.
- **Storing** | Consideration should be given for the need to store the seating off the street and sufficient storage space to be able to do so.
- **Lifespan** | Seating should be of a high quality to ensure a long lifespan.
- **Sustainability** | Upcycled and ideally locally-sourced materials such as tyres, pallets, wood and hay bales can be used where possible as a fun, pop up alternative to standard seating types.



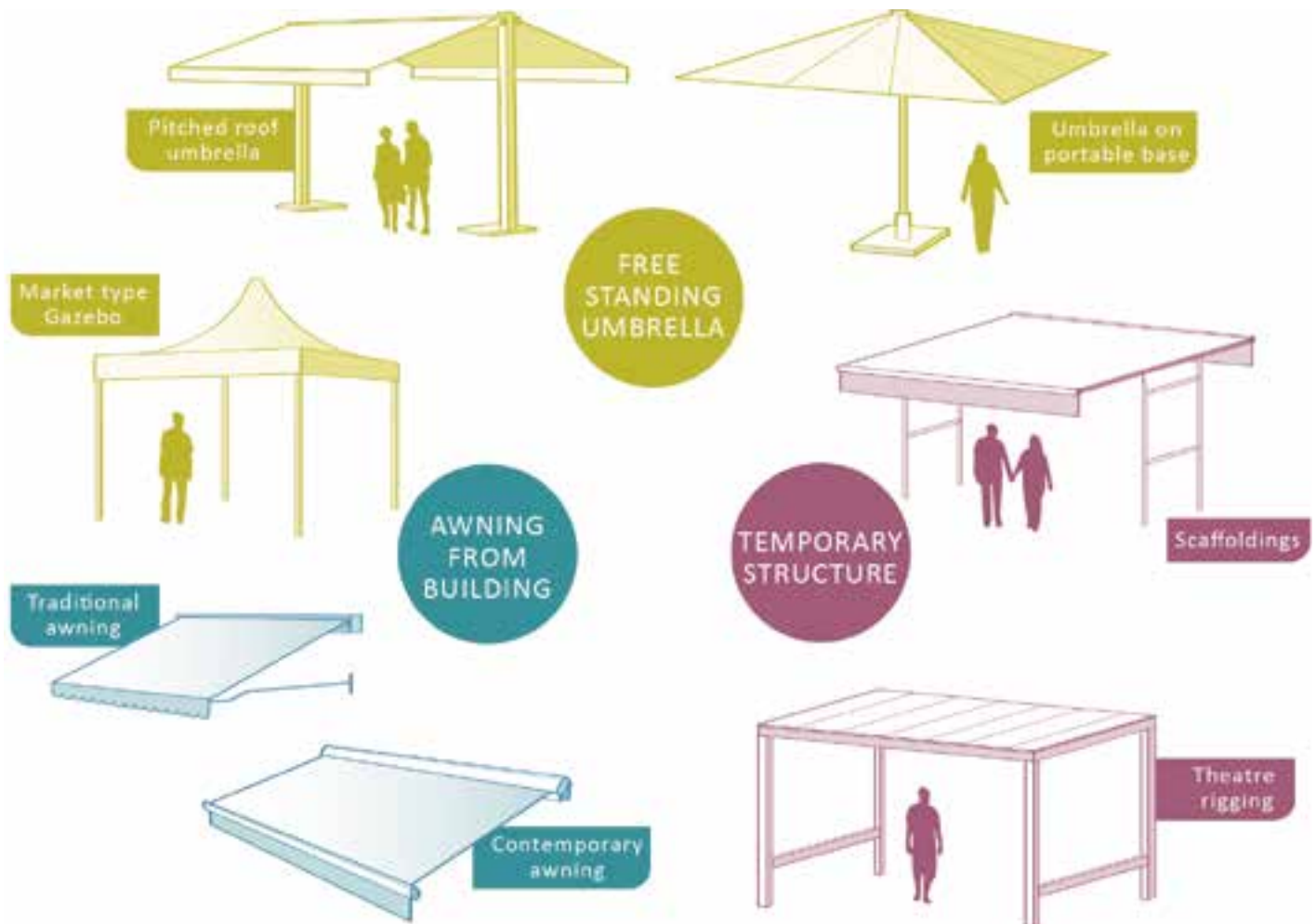
Image credit | Top left: Hassell - All other images: BDP

## 3.2 COVER &amp; WINTER PROOFING

In order to be usable throughout the year, the outdoor terraces should be efficiently sheltered from the bad weather using awnings, umbrellas, gazebos or other structures. Additionally, other methods of winter proofing such as heating and use of blankets should be considered. Businesses should liaise and consult their local authorities to seek guidance.

- **Safety** | All covers should be fit for purpose, installed correctly and safely. Regular maintenance should be carried out to guarantee robustness and stability.

- **Use of awnings** | Where the seating area is directly adjacent to the building façade, the use of an awning that covers the whole of the seating area is preferred.
- **Use of umbrellas** | Where the seating area is separated from the building façade, the use of free standing umbrellas, gazebos or temporary structures should be considered.
- **Fixing and stabilising** | Where freestanding umbrellas are used, consideration needs to be given to the weighted base to ensure they are stable and that the base is not a trip hazard. Seating blocks can be incorporated around the bases both securing the umbrella and allowing it to have a dual purpose.



## 3.2 COVER & WINTER PROOFING

- **Manual handling & installation** | Covers should be easy to move around and have simple installation methods.
- **Storing** | Covers should be foldable so that they may be easily stored away when not required. Sufficient space on the business premises should be identified for the storage of covers. This is in response to overnight and seasonal periods when covers will not be required. For example, during the warmer months it may be preferable to remove some covers so that customers are able to access direct sunlight, or when conditions are too windy.
- **Lifespan** | Covers should be designed using high quality materials to ensure a long lifespan. In turn, this ensures an economically and environmentally sustainable solution.
- **Temporary or permanent** | Businesses will need to liaise with their local council for further guidance and advice in relation to temporary and permanent structures.

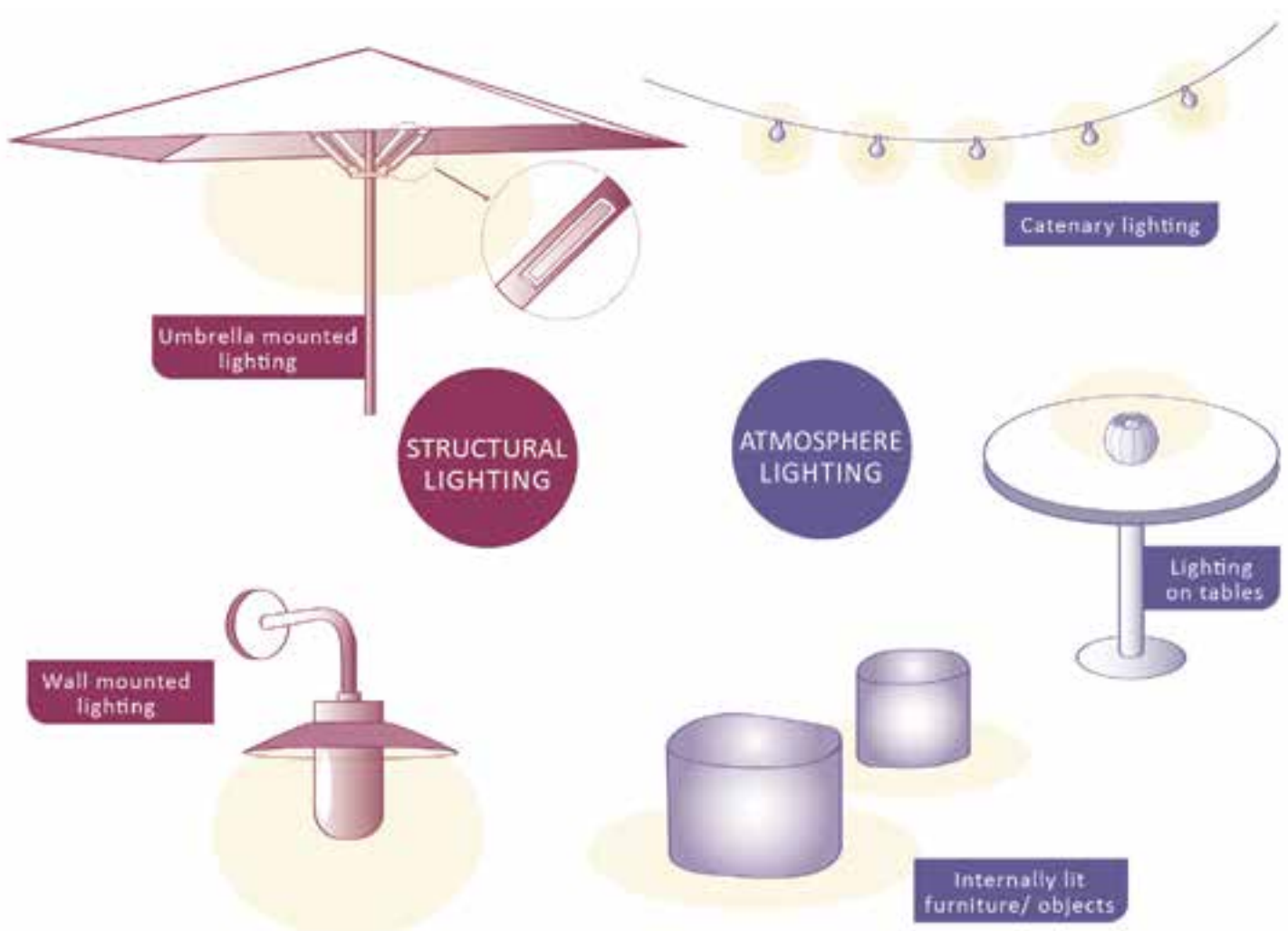


Image credit | Bottom left: 108 Bar & Brasserie - All other images: BDP

## 3.3 LIGHTING

Lighting is an essential component in creating a successful outdoor seating area, in terms of both safety and atmosphere. An appropriate level of lighting should be provided to ensure the functionality of the space. Subtle interventions and the use of feature lighting should also be considered to create an inviting, relaxing or intimate atmosphere.

- **Strategy** | Consideration should be given to the most suitable lighting effect for your business, carefully balancing functionality and atmosphere. The temptation to over light should be resisted, as a more relaxing and inviting atmosphere for dining is created through lower levels of lighting.
- **Multiple sources** | It may be appropriate to use a mix of lighting techniques to add visual interest - e.g. catenary lights fixed to the underside of a cover structure, free standing feature lights where space allows, and lights on tables.



### 3.3 LIGHTING

- **Feature lighting** | The emitted light should be warm in colour. Lighting can be used to both create ambient levels and highlight features. Significant features in particular may be good to highlight.
- **Location** | Lighting can also be integrated with furniture, or used to uplight a business premises.
- **Ease of fitting** | Light weight fittings can be easily secured to the cover structure, and removed as and when necessary.
- **Electrical connection** | Direct cable feeds need to be ascertained from the building frontage and safely suspended and secured at a high level to attach onto the cover structure, well above head height.
- **Type of light** | All light sources should be LEDs and energy efficient. Over lighting of streets and spaces should be avoided, as this may contribute to light pollution and detract from the atmosphere of spaces.
- **Generators** | Generators cannot be used, unless for special events where higher levels of power are required.

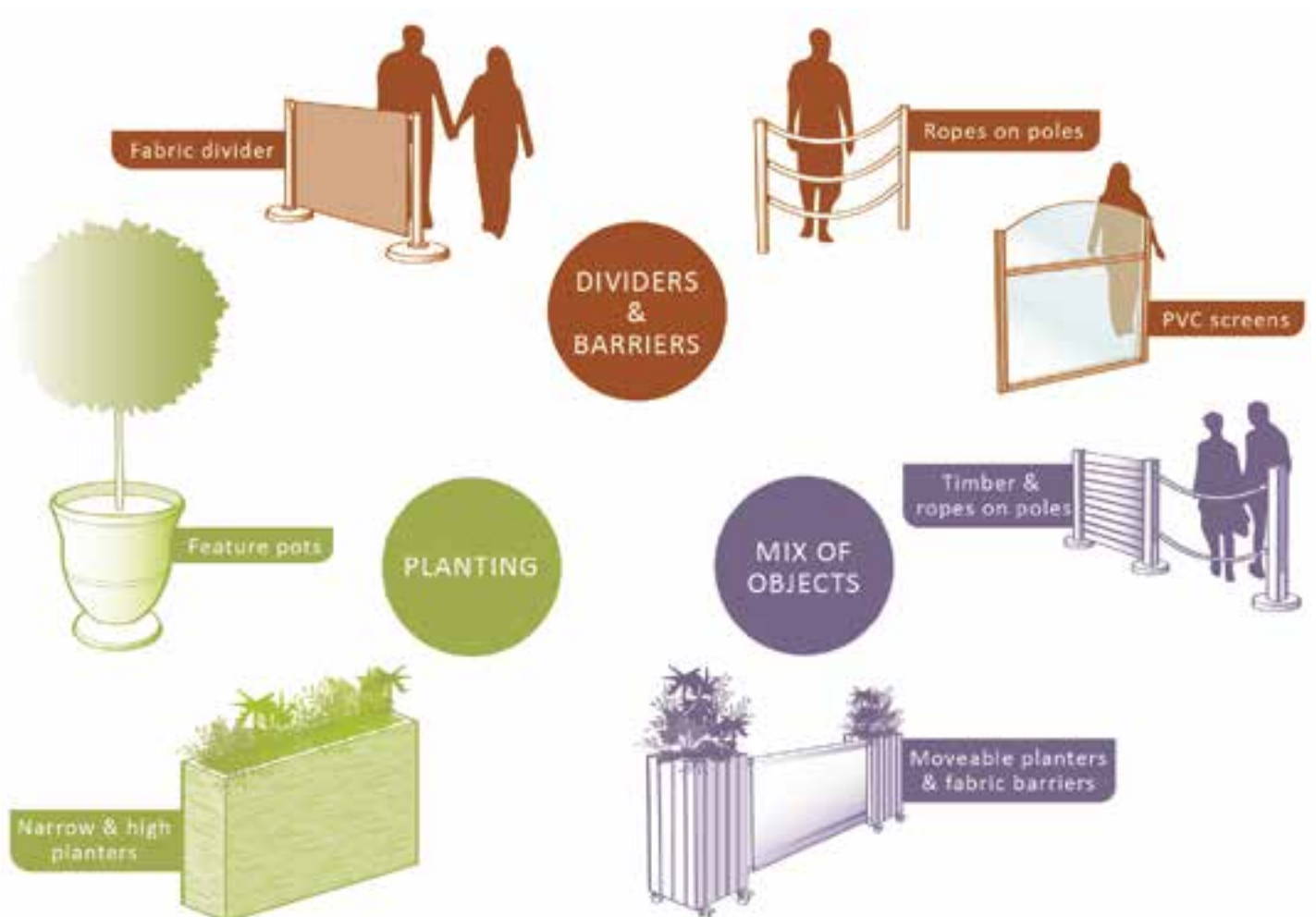


Image credit | Top left: BDP - Top centre: Cork City Council - Top right: BDP - Bottom left: Hypedome 2020 - Bottom Right: BDP

## 3.4 CONTAINMENT

Containment elements are used to mark the boundary of a dining area, a forecourt or an event space. Their appearance, materiality and quality can have a great impact on the public realm and can significantly contribute to the creation of a vibrant and attractive atmosphere.

- **Sight lines** | Containment elements should not restrict the view for seated customers. The ability to people-watch and engage with surroundings from inside the contained area will create more interesting and attractive spaces for customers.
- **Free movement** | The containment elements should not become obstacles on the street. Generally barriers should be approximately 1.2m high.





### 3.4 CONTAINMENT

- **Space availability** | Dependent on the amount of space available on the pavement or street, different containment measures should be considered. For example, a few small moveable planters could be used to demarcate outdoor dining, or more sturdy fabric and glass dividers could be used to cordon off event spaces.
- **Manual handling & safety** | Containment elements should be easy to handle, install and disassemble. Equally, they should be stable and free-standing.
- **Storing** | Business owners should consider their available space so that containment elements could either be easy to store away, or are able to become a permanent part of the public realm and building façade.
- **Sustainability** | The use of planters is considered to be a sustainable design response. Green infrastructure can help to reduce carbon emissions as well as creating a pleasant and attractive natural environment for visitors to urban streets. Planting is a long term response that can be kept and maintained over a long period of time, and is therefore both financially and environmentally sustainable.

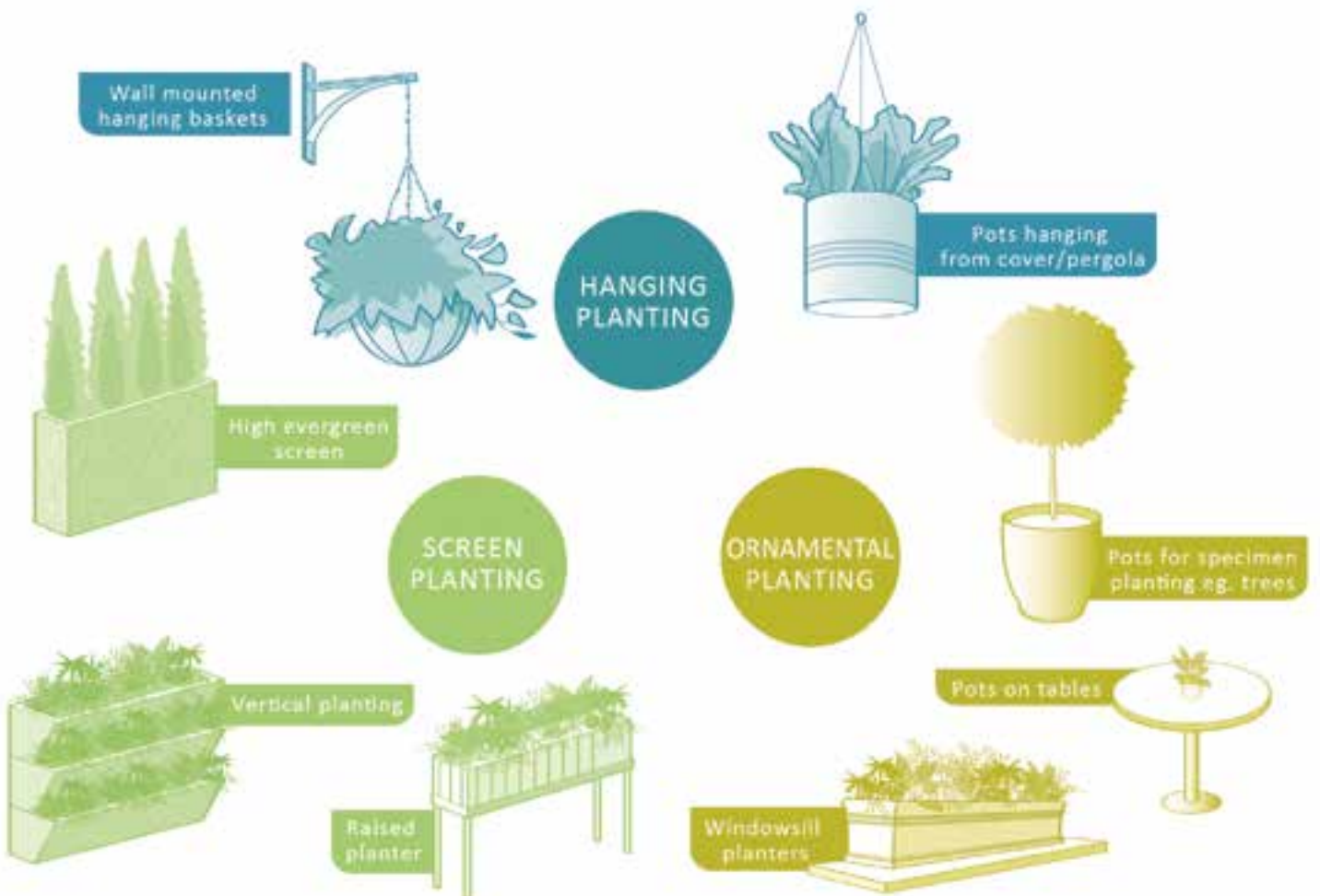


Image credit | All images: BDP

## 3.5 PLANTING

There are many forms of planting which can be used to create an attractive and welcoming dining experience. Options include linear plants to create a boundary for containment areas, pots for specimen planting, smaller plants for table arrangements and hanging plants from overhead structures.

- **Sightlines** | Heights and visibility should be carefully considered with clear sightlines maintained.
- **Pedestrian access** | Sufficient space for pedestrians will need to be retained and considered prior to implementation of planting.
- **Small spaces** | On narrower streets small-scale planting interventions will be more appropriate, such as hanging baskets, windowsill planters and small plant pots on tables.
- **Larger spaces** | Where more space is available, consider larger scale interventions such as raised planters, vertical planters, and larger potted plants.
- **Evergreen or perennial** | When selecting plant types, those with long lifespans or evergreens should be prioritised, to ensure the external environment remains lively and vibrant all year, and reduce the need to regularly purchase new plants.



### 3.5 PLANTING

- **Colour & seasonal change** | Planting adds colour and vibrancy, contributing to a more animated street life. This is particularly important during the winter months. Different types of plants should be chosen that flower during different seasons.
- **Senses** | Planting can engage the senses, for example flowers can provide an appealing scent which can effectively counteract the smell of vehicle fumes. Brightly coloured plants can provide visual interest in outdoor areas.
- **Robustness** | Planters, pots and hanging baskets should be robust and high quality to ensure their longevity.
- **Maintenance & watering** | Ongoing maintenance including regular watering will need to be provided to ensure plant longevity.
- **Manual handling & safety** | Planters and pots should be stable and free-standing, hanging baskets should be securely fixed. Consideration should be given to how larger planters can be easily moved using a small pallet truck or a forklift.

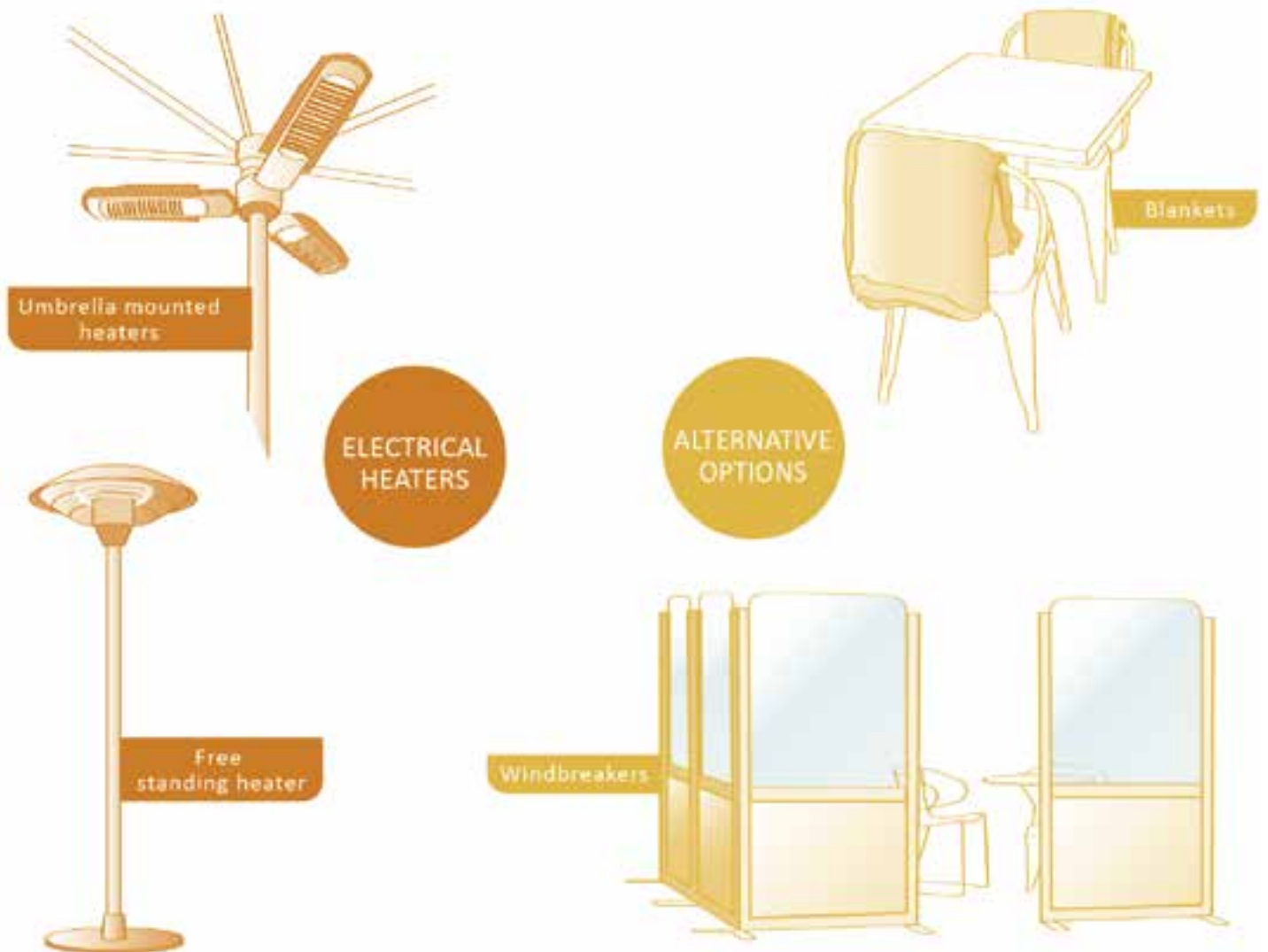


Image credit | Bottom left: Hassell - All other images: BDP

## 3.6 HEATING

→ The provision of outdoor heating can help businesses maintain all year round activity in their outdoor spaces, regardless of the weather conditions. Nonetheless, other more sustainable solutions, such as blankets and wind barriers should be considered first, or used in conjunction with heating devices.

- **Reasonable use** | Outdoor heating should only be used where there is no other option and in response to demand.
- **Spacing** | Heaters should be spaced out to deliver an even level of heating to outdoor areas.
- **Regulations** | Consult with your local authority to find out more about local fire regulations, heaters must be electric, gas is not permitted.



## 3.6 HEATING

- **Ease of fitting** | Heaters should be easily installed and disassembled, to adapt to changing social and seasonal conditions. They will also require sufficient storage space.
- **Timers** | Heaters should operate with timers. After a reasonable period of time, they should automatically switch off. Heaters should be available for short bursts, rather than left on for long periods.
- **Efficiency & sustainability** | Where possible, the most sustainable, energy efficient heating option should be chosen before investing in electric heaters.



Image credit | Top left and Top right: Sfuso Gastronomica Italiana. Photography Daniele Idini - Bottom left: 20140702\_Sweden\_0086\_Stockholm by Dan Lundberg - Bottom right: BDP

## 3.7 SIGNAGE



Signage can help reinforce the identity of a business or of a street or space as a whole and can create a strong sense of place. Good signage should engage visitors and make spaces more legible and memorable, hence businesses are encouraged to independently or collectively create friendly, welcoming signage.

- **Branding a business and/or street** | Creative and positive signage can be used to promote an individual business, a street or a space. Consultation between adjacent businesses can be a good approach to deliver collective responses where appropriate.
- **Location** | Excessive signage should be avoided. New signage should be incorporated in appropriate locations only, where it doesn't affect free pedestrian movements and key sight lines.



## 3.7 SIGNAGE

- **The place should speak for itself** | A large amount of signage should not be necessary to make places look appealing and inviting.
- **Lighting** | Signage may incorporate lighting elements so they are visible during night-time hours. Lighting on signage can also be integrated with a wider lighting strategy for a district or street.
- **Temporary, seasonal & permanent** | Different types of signs are appropriate to different uses in the public realm. For example, chalk boards to highlight promotions, banners to advertise seasonal events and totems to advise on forthcoming events.
- **Creativity** | Signs can be unique and creative, different options should be explored in collaboration with the local authority where appropriate.
- **Use of graphics** | Clear and legible graphics should be used on signage to provide accessible information about the business.
- **Licensing** | Signage used for advertising may require a licence from the local authority.



Image credit | Left: Hassell - Right: Sfuso Gastronomia Italiana. Photography Daniele Idini.





# 4.0

## Other Considerations

4.1 | *Considering a changing environment*

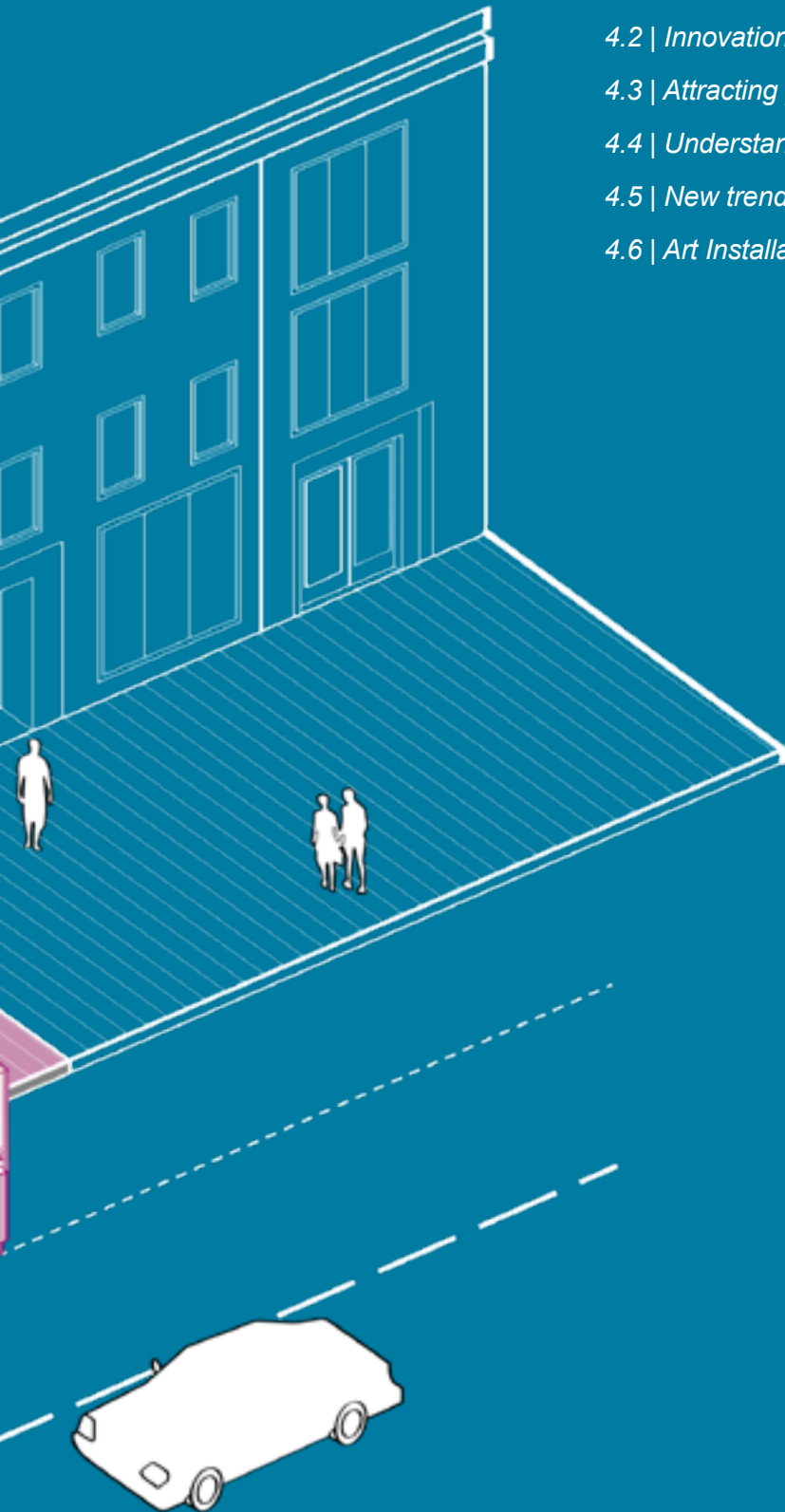
4.2 | *Innovation and creativity*

4.3 | *Attracting people back*

4.4 | *Understanding customer needs*

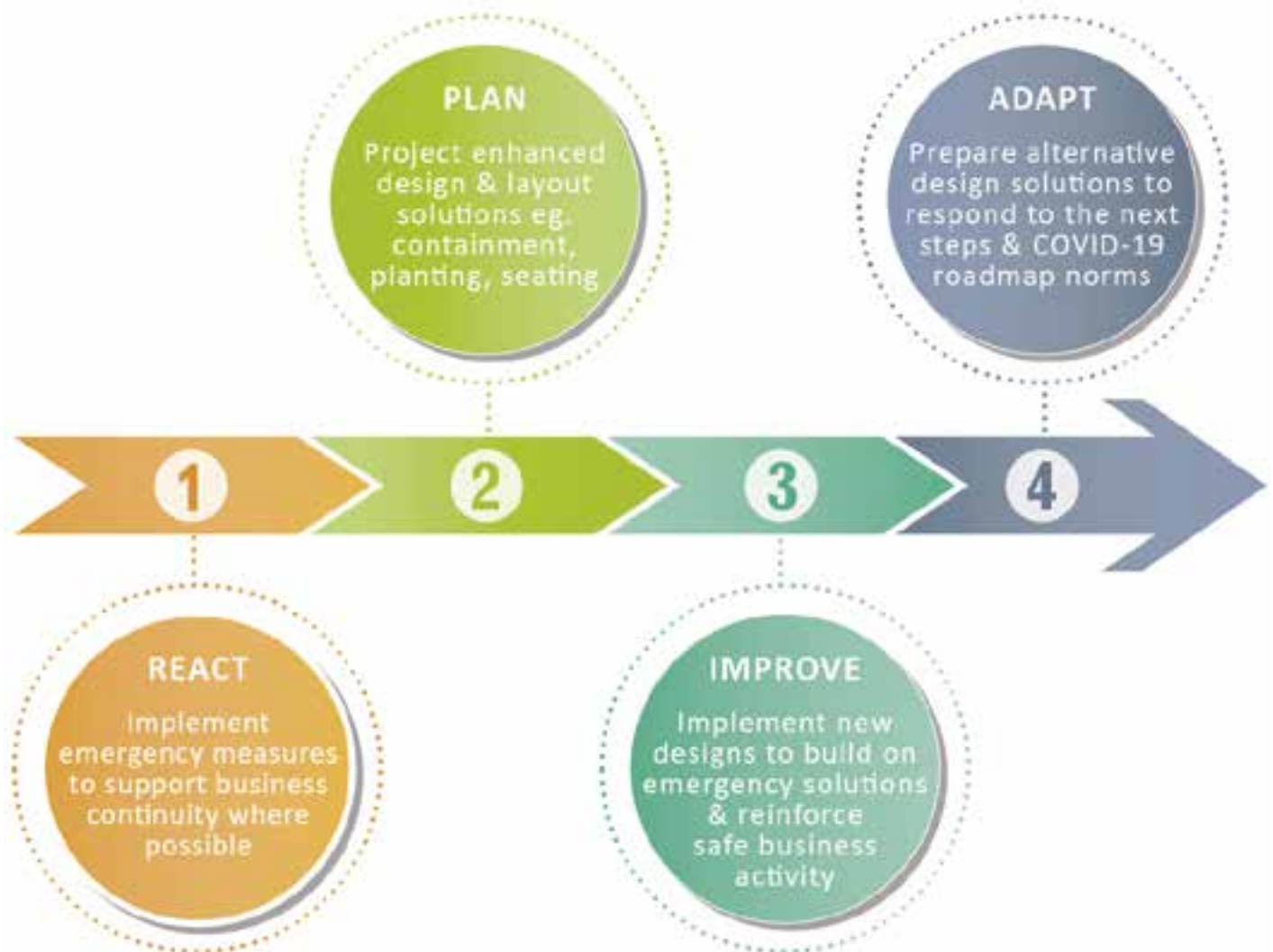
4.5 | *New trends and norms*

4.6 | *Art Installations*





## 4.1 CONSIDERING A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT



Across Ireland, different regions may be designated as different Covid-19 roadmap levels and as such, there is no singular design response that can be applied in each area. Further to this, it is likely that changes may be frequent and as a consequence, businesses in each region will need to be able to adapt to different restrictions at each level.

The diagram above sets out how the adaptation of the public realm can evolve to respond to the changing environment and provide an appropriate outdoor seating experience.

As we continue to live with Covid-19, businesses must further consider and plan how their interventions within the public

realm can be improved, towards an adaptive design solution that enhances the public realm and the urban area as a whole. Short term, quickly implemented measures, may run the risk of appearing temporary and inexpensive, thus contributing to street clutter, and subsequently detracting from the overall quality of the public realm.

## 4.2 INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

In order to create animated and vibrant places that people want to spend time in, innovative responses with unique and tailored features that reflect the character and identity of the place should be considered.

Creative thinking is encouraged, and where possible, interventions can utilise sustainable solutions such as using upcycled locally sourced materials.

Before installing any such interventions, liaise with your local authority to ensure that it is compliant with planning regulations.



Image credit | Top left: Hypedome 2020 - Top right & Bottom left: Street Pod - Bottom right: Willem Velthoven for Mediamatic Amsterdam

4.3 ATTRACTING PEOPLE BACK



As the Covid-19 roadmap levels decrease from higher to lower risk levels, it will be a significant challenge to attract people back into public streets and spaces. A good quality, well considered and safe public realm will play a major role in creating a positive user experience that will encourage people back into streets and spaces, and may help to promote return visits.

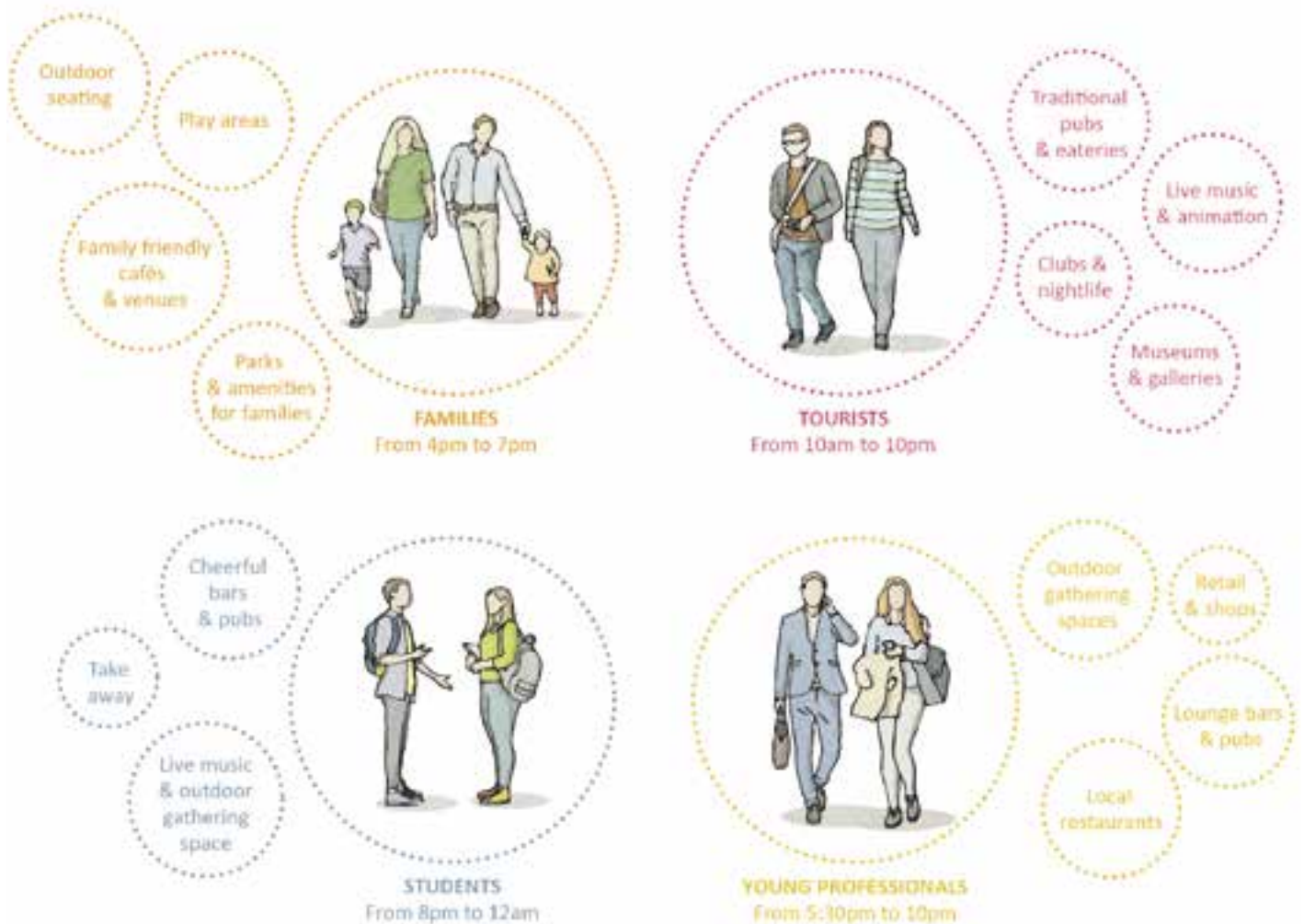
Creative, interactive and collaborative approaches to animation of the public realm will help to create interest and trade in Ireland’s path towards recovery in the later stages of the Covid period and beyond.

4.4 UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER NEEDS

→ The delivery of high quality outdoor spaces is dependent upon robust consultation processes. Effective and extensive consultation processes can ensure schemes are supported by local authorities, and the people for whom they are intended.

In addition, consider promoting aligned opening times for a variety of uses to maximise footfall and the interrelation between businesses and services.

User groups participate in the public realm at different times of the day and night. Different usage and temporal needs for each potential user group will need to be considered early on when designing and implementing a new intervention, to ensure all needs are catered for.



4.5 NEW TRENDS AND NORMS

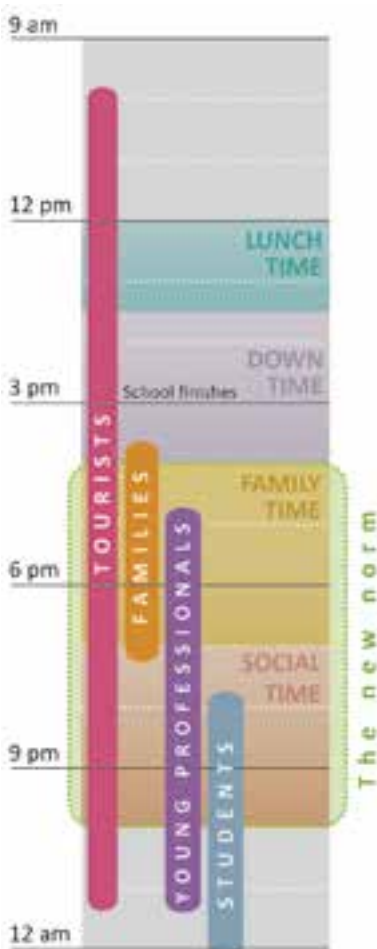
➔ In order to establish clear design responses to these new trends and norms, it is important to engage, consult and identify with current and potential user groups of outdoor spaces. This will ensure that all new behaviours and needs are captured and designed for in new interventions.

Due to Covid-19, various new trends and norms are being established that will have a significant impact on how and when public streets and spaces will be used. These may include:

**Time and availability** | With more people working from home, there is potential for increased ‘family’ and social time in the evenings. This may impact on the times of day customers choose to visit urban businesses.

**Continuation of social distancing and safe socialising** | This will impact how space is allocated and laid out, with increased circulation space so that everyone feels comfortable in their surroundings. Provision of enhanced hygiene measures e.g. hand sanitiser and sufficient hand washing facilities, is also part of safe socialising and can be integrated into public spaces.

**Outdoor space and wellbeing** | There is a heightened awareness and greater appreciation for being outdoors and the ability to access public and green spaces, as well as greater recognition of the importance of mental health and wellbeing. Outdoor spaces will therefore play a key role in providing areas where people can relax, be active and participate in events.



## 4.6 ART INSTALLATIONS



Art installations have potential to be interactive features in the public realm that help to draw visitors to the area. Installations can animate and bring streets and spaces to life, while introducing new and exciting uses.

Art installations could include any of the following elements, dependent on the specific space or street:

- **Lighting** | Creative light installations.
- **Murals** | Colour schemes should be appropriate to their surrounding built context, and can be used to liven up unused buildings or community buildings for example.
- **Contemporary art** | This can include objects within a space such as sculptures, or may be integrated in street furniture and lighting.

Installations may also reflect sustainable principles by using recycled or upcycled locally sourced materials. Similarly, art can be used to promote biodiversity by incorporating plants or green elements.

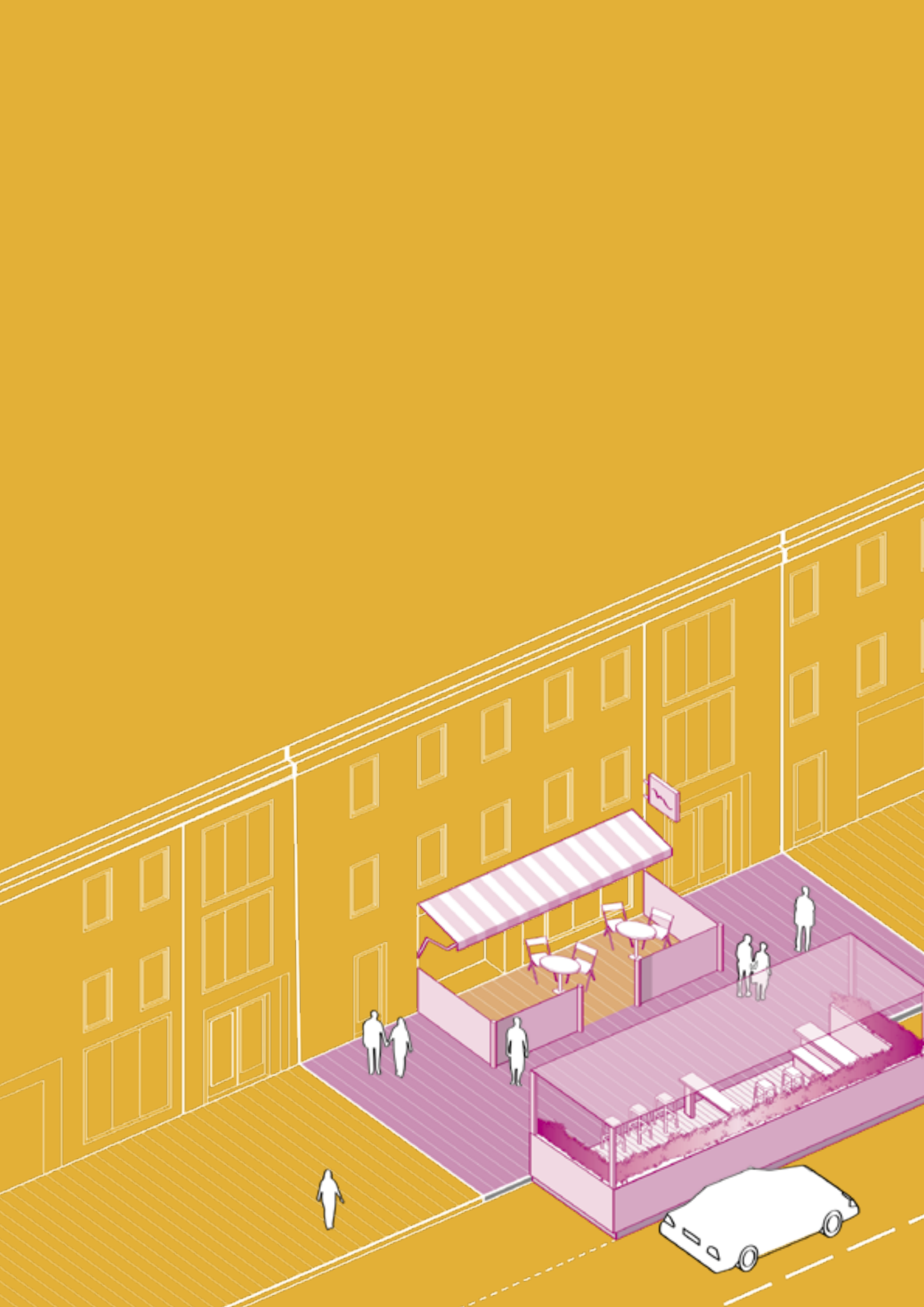


Image credit | Left: "Claude Cormier", by art\_inthecity - Top right: Light installation "Fancy a hot dog?" by a canvas of light - Bottom right: Alexandre Castonguay, "Roue de vélo" by art\_inthecity





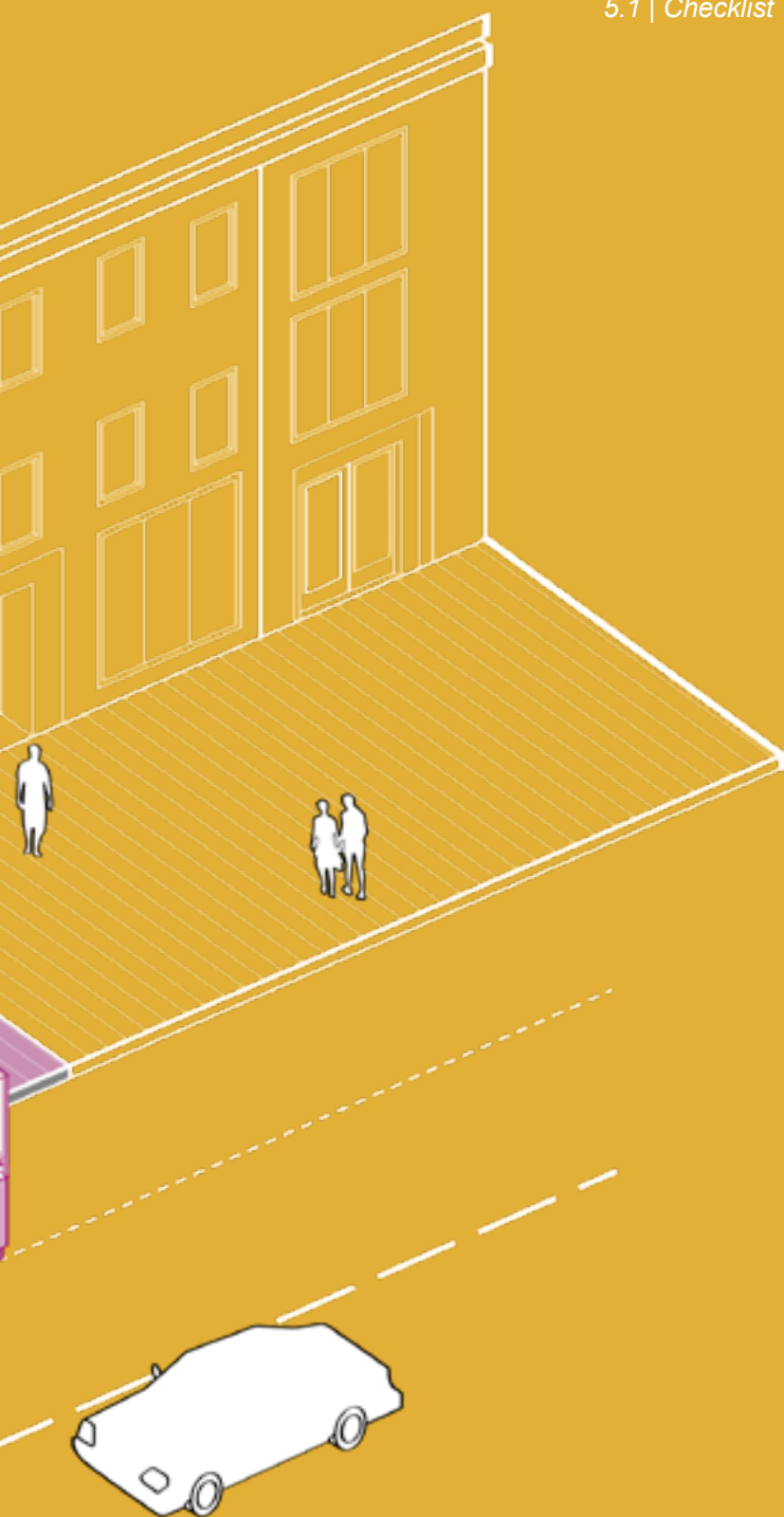
Image credit: KANVA 560km Marc Cramer



# 5.0

## Next steps & checklist

### 5.1 | Checklist

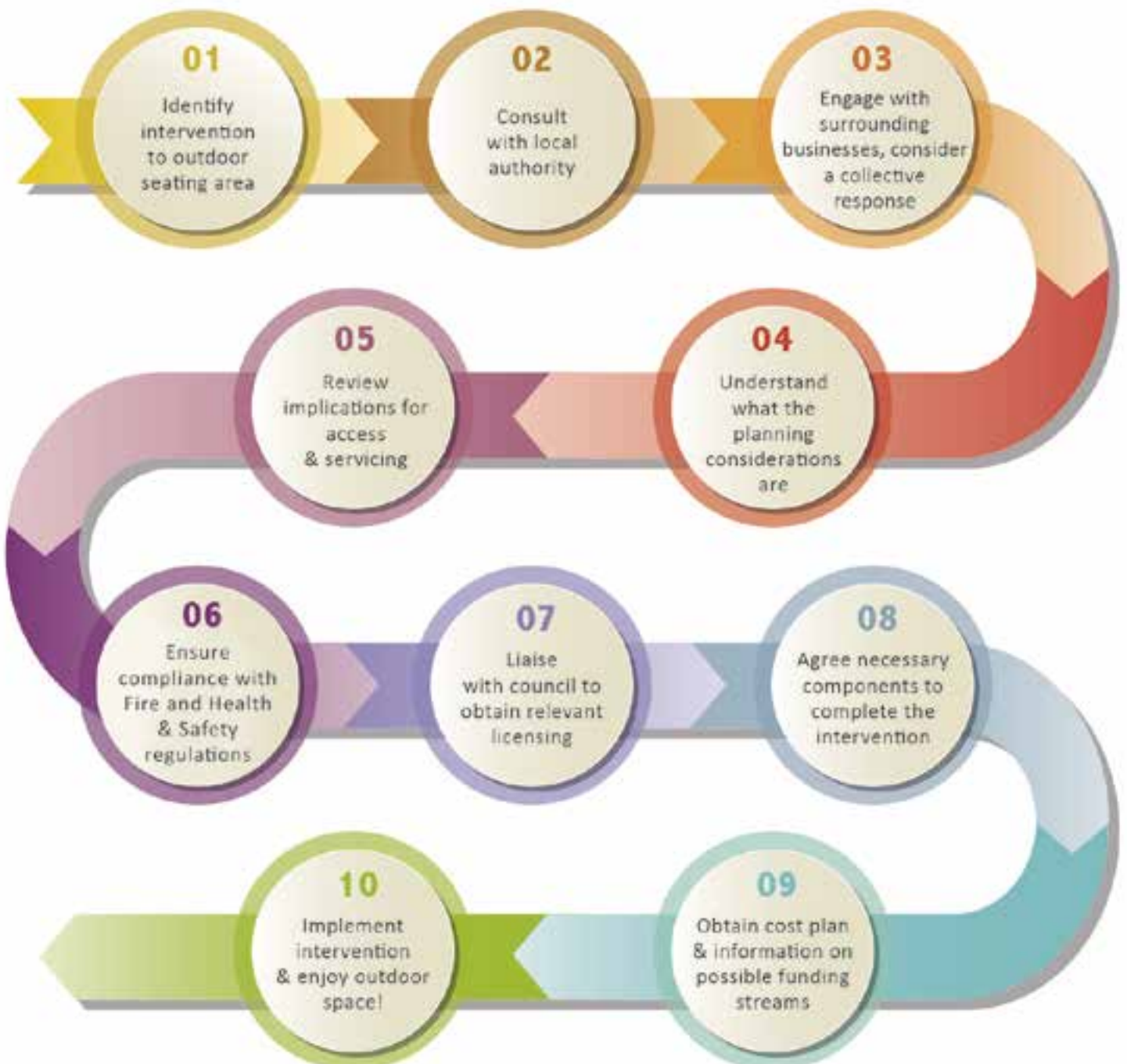


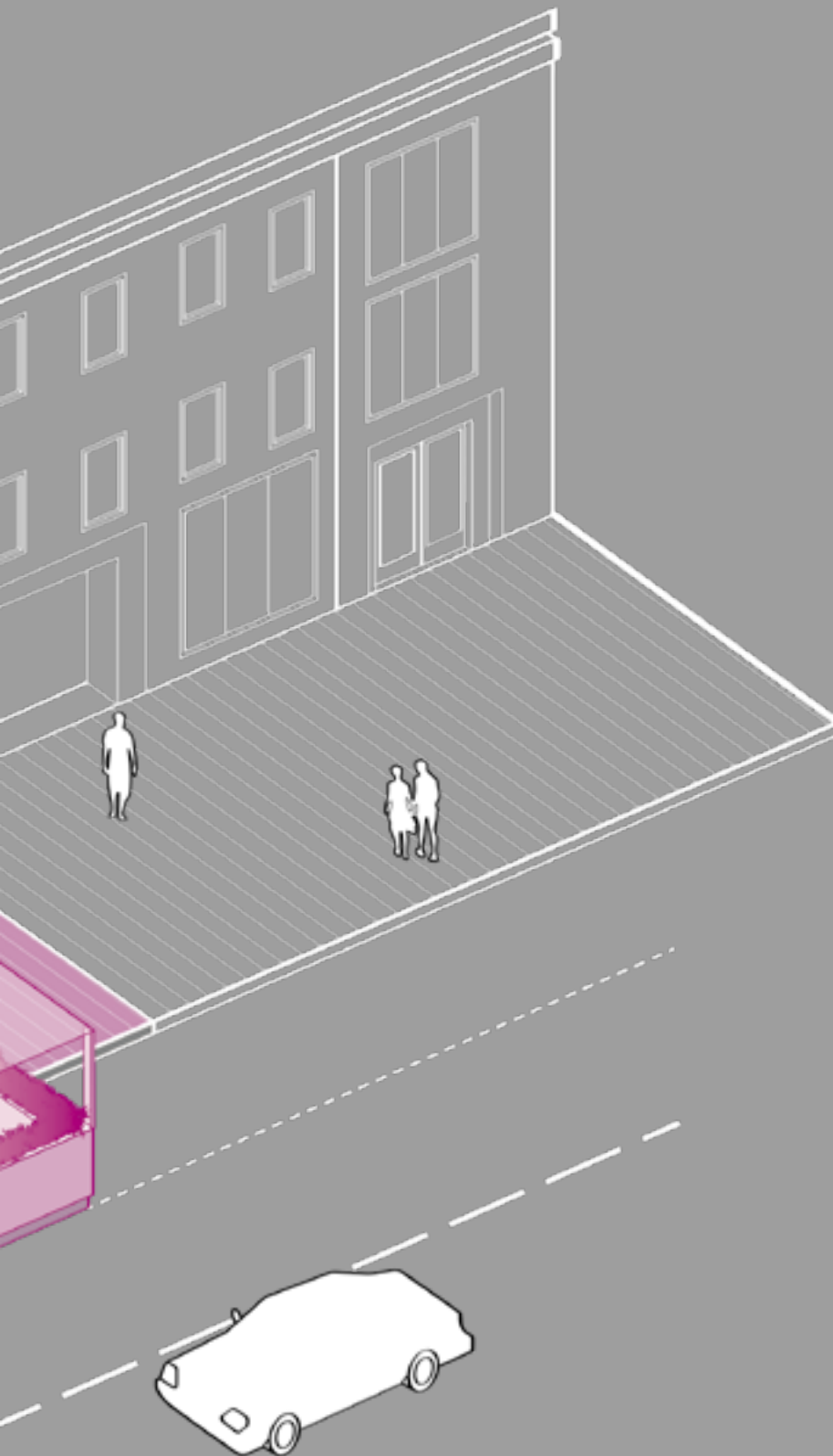
## 5.1 CHECKLIST



Here is a summary of the steps to identify, develop and implement interventions aimed at enhancing outdoor seating areas.

It is recommended that local authorities provide clear planning guidance on temporary structures and public realm improvements. Businesses intending to implement new outdoor interventions should seek to proactively engage with the local planning authority before installing any such intervention.







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