

# Draft Long-term Recommendations for Safe Start Permitting

Updates to Outdoor Dining, Vending, Merchandise Display,  
and Street & Sidewalk Activities Programs

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**Seattle**  
Department of  
Transportation



# Our Vision, Mission, Values, & Goals

**Vision:** Seattle is a thriving equitable community powered by dependable transportation

**Mission:** to deliver a transportation system that provides safe and affordable access to places and opportunities

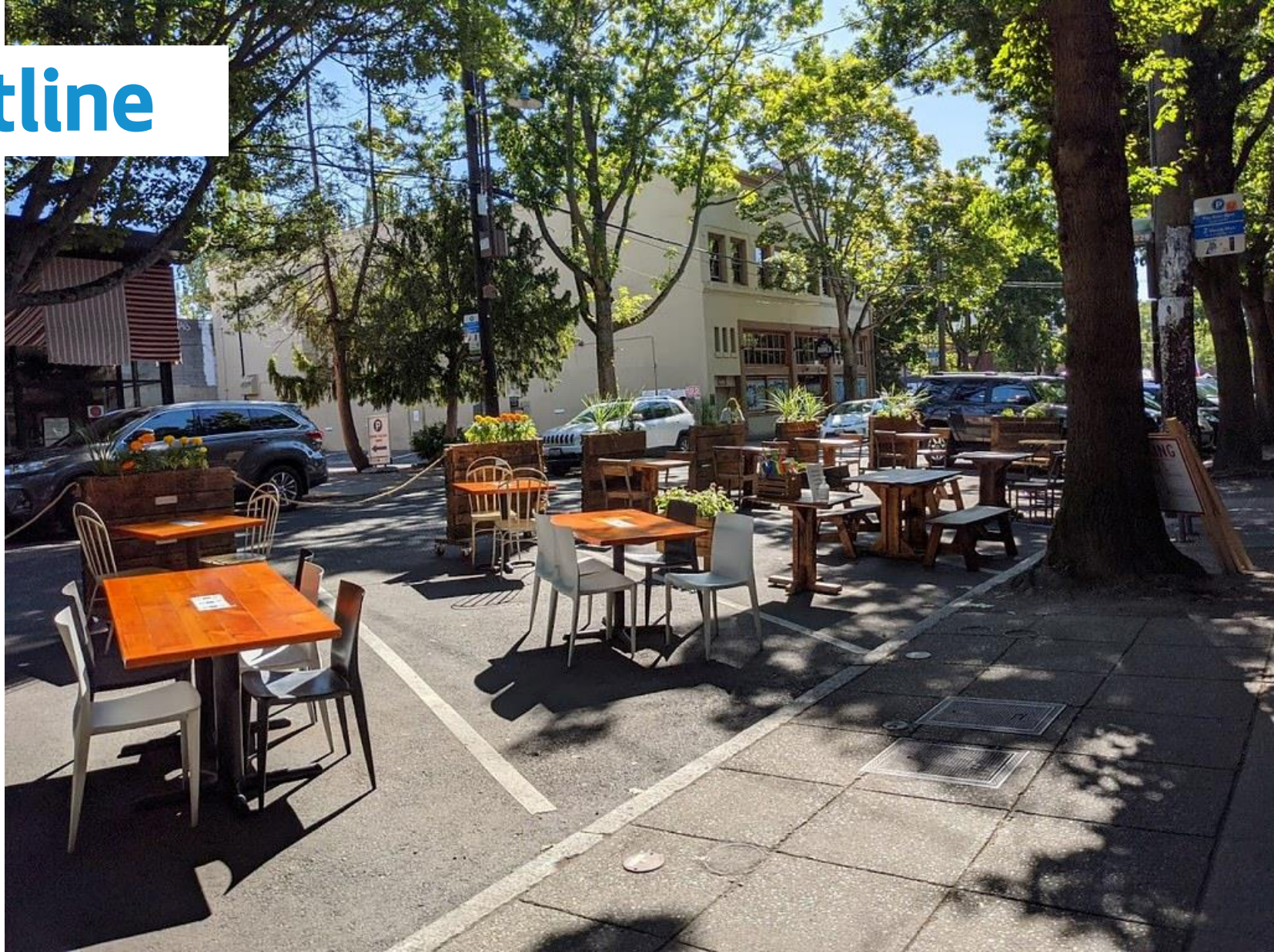
Committed to **6 core values:**

- Equity
- Safety
- Mobility
- Sustainability
- Livability
- Excellence



# Presentation outline

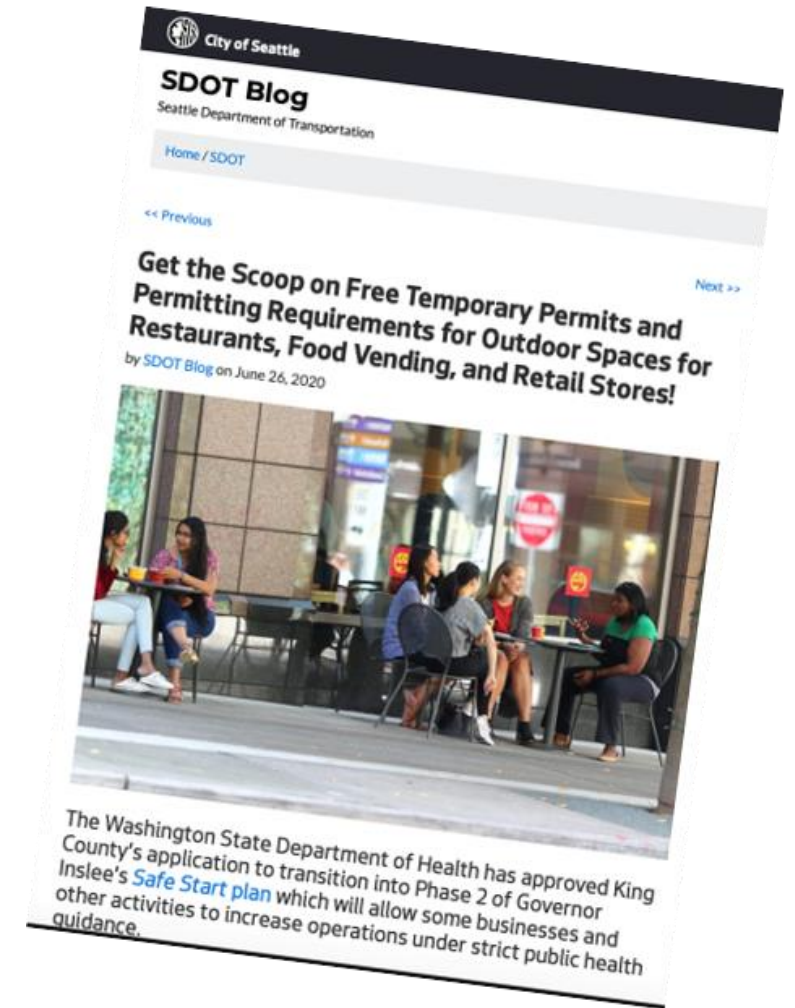
- Background
- Timeline
- Mission & Themes
- Recommendations



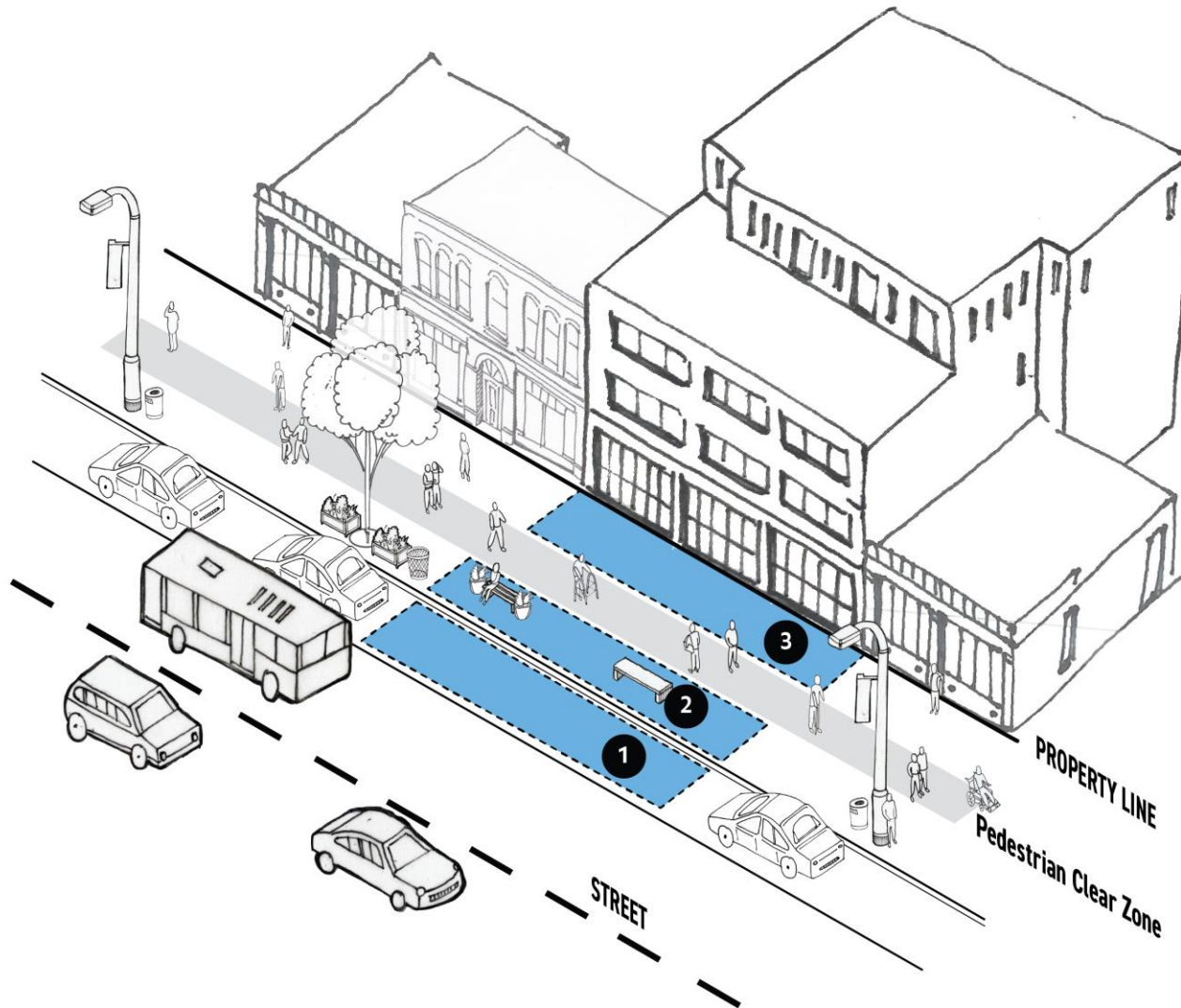


# Safe Start program background

- Began in Summer 2020
- Expanded SDOT's outdoor dining, vending, merchandise display, and street closure permitting options to support businesses during the pandemic
- Streamlined & free permits
- Program ends in 2023
- Received \$300k in federal recovery funding to support the program
- Issued 300+ Safe Start permits to-date



# Public Space Management 101



1. Curbspace
2. Furniture Zone
3. Frontage Zone

# Public Space Management 101



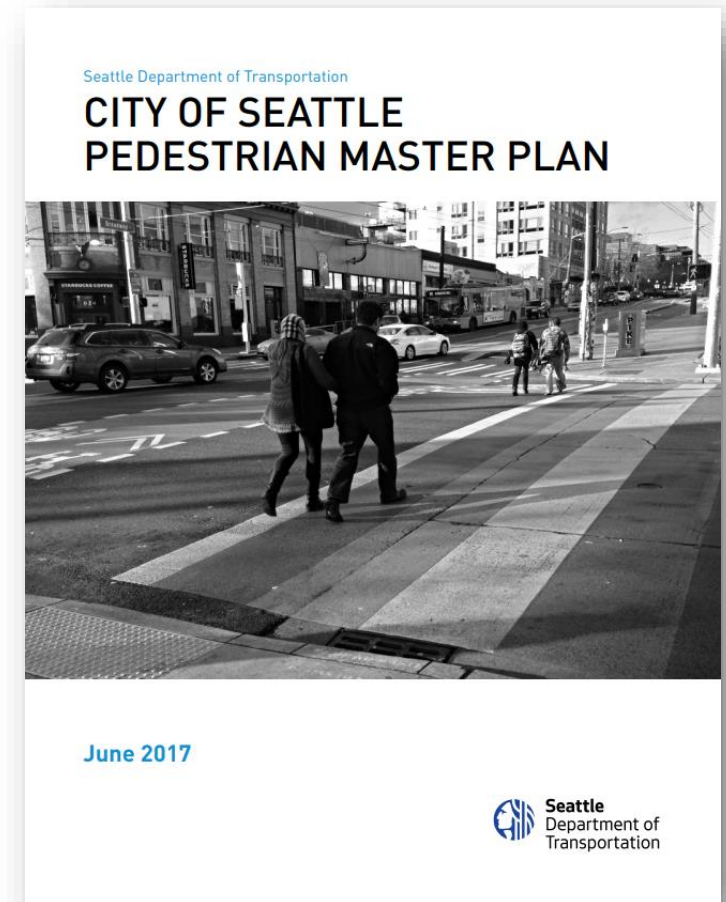
Municipal Code



Director's Rules

# Policy support

- To align with Seattle 2035 Comp Plan
- To fulfill the vision of the Pedestrian Master Plan:
  - Seattle is the most walkable and accessible city in the nation
  - Ensure our standards reflect the increasing demand for sidewalk space
- To align with Transportation Equity Framework
- To align with climate goals



*"Develop a more vibrant city by creating streets and sidewalks that generate economic and social activity, adding to the city's overall health, prosperity, and happiness" - Seattle 2035*

# Timeline





# Safe Start outreach to-date



## Surveys

- General survey with over 10,000 responses
- Surveys to participating and non-participating businesses
- Surveys and interviews with vendors



## Community Meetings

- Disability rights groups
- Business advocacy groups
- Internal stakeholders
- Transportation advocates



## BIPOC-focused Outreach

- 2020 RET on Title 15
- Our Transportation Equity Workgroup
- 1x1 interviews with BIPOC stakeholders, businesses, and community groups



## Evaluations

- Safe Start 1.0
- Seattle Together Streets
- Market Streets

# Safe Start outreach to-date

## Support for Safe Start Permits:



**90%**

Cafés in the  
curb space



**90%**

Sidewalk cafés



**90%**

Street closures  
for dining and  
shopping



**89%**

Food trucks or  
carts in curb  
spaces



**83%**

Food carts on  
sidewalks



**65%**

Sidewalk retail  
displays



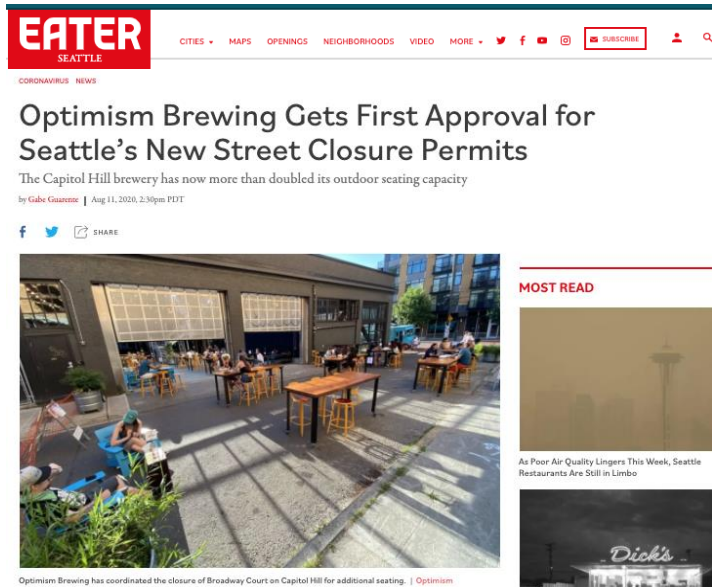
**59%**

Retail displays  
in curb spaces

Source: Summer 2021 public and business community survey regarding the Safe Start street use permitting program.



# What we heard



*"The community response has been fantastic - folks have genuinely been excited about our outdoor seating and I've heard countless times that we should make it a permanent installation. For the business, our sales yesterday were up 84% from the average of the last four Saturdays."*  
*Eden Hill Provisions*

*As a Columbia city resident, I thoroughly enjoy the open patio concept you provided in Columbia city. I am able to eat from my favorite local restaurants (tutta bella yum!) while feeling safe from COVID." –Resident*

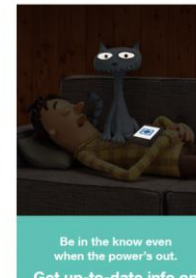
Opinion

## Party of two for the 'parklet'? Year-round outdoor spaces good for restaurants, city

Aug. 25, 2020 at 2:57 pm | Updated Aug. 25, 2020 at 2:57 pm



This computer generated rendering shows covered parklets can expand seating and dining options year-round for restaurants and cafes as they contend with... (Courtesy of Mackenzie) More



*We [both] loved it!!! It felt very European. We have plenty of space...It was wonderful to sit and be a part of the human race."*  
*–Resident*

# Safe Start 1.0 learnings

- People strongly supported the program
- Strong support for lowered costs and barriers
- We're viewed as a partner rather than burdensome process
- Public space activation still requires substantial investment of time and money
- Safe Start 1.0 effectively implemented many public space learnings from the 2020 Title 15 Racial Equity Toolkit (RET)
- People disliked impacts to parking and travel, impacts to sidewalks





# Safe Start 2.0 themes

- **Equity**

- Lower fees and lower barriers (RET, TEF Lab)
- Implement programs to support BIPOC-owned small businesses (TEF Lab)

- **Flexibility**

- Move rules from SMC to Director's Rules
- Implement Director's Rules that allow consistent decision making
- Evaluate and adjust

- **Collaborative Approach**

- Continue collaborative coaching for applicants
- Increase and improve educational tools
- Implement programs to build community capacity in permitting process





# Proposed changes: fees

- Will be reintroduced in 2023
- Focus on cost recovery
- Level set between curbspace and sidewalk cafes
- Nominal fees for public street & sidewalk activities and closures
- Exploring strategies to lower barriers for participation





# Proposed changes: outdoor dining

- Emphasize the public nature of the street, fit into and enhance streetscape
- DON Certificate of Approval if located in Landmarks or Historic Districts
- Visually permeable, attractive, durable, graffiti-resistant, and easy to clean and maintain
- Public space outside of business hours (can't lock up the space)





# Proposed changes: outdoor dining

## ***Design Standards***

- Allow tents and structures
- Allow sidewalk platforms in more cases
- Encourage curbside cafes to have platforms
- Set maximum length (40')
- Spaces should be open to the sidewalk and not fully enclosed
- Encourage simple designs with minimal equipment
- Seasonal cafes: platforms and overhead design elements discouraged for temporary or seasonal cafes.
- Cafes are temporary and should be easy to remove with no lasting impact to the public place
- Stamped drawings may be required in some cases





# Outdoor dining design standards

Overhead structures max 10' tall

Overhead weather protection allowed, walls must be transparent

8' vertical clearance required for umbrellas

42" max fencing height; transparency required where abutting pedestrian areas

Minimum 6' sidewalk clearance for pedestrians (8' on *Downtown Streets*)

Platforms encouraged but not required



# Proposed changes: vending



- Eliminate 50' buffer from food & flower businesses
- Remove limitation of max 2 vendors per block face
- Eliminate setbacks from high schools & parks
- New "trial" vending permit option
- Allow vending in Neighborhood Residential zones (detailed implementation to be addressed by Director's Rule)
- Remove codified barriers to other types of vending (merchandise, arts & crafts) and develop guidelines to be adopted by Director's Rule to try out new options incrementally



# Proposed changes: street closures

- Allow ongoing street closures to support business, with both full-year and seasonal options
- Single-business closures will only be allowed if public seating or community programming are provided
- Full-year or seasonal permits will be issued for public events
- Private street and sidewalk closures will be allowed for shorter duration events only



# Proposed changes: merchandise displays



- Transition merchandise displays located within building frontage zones to "guidelines only" (no permit)
- Furniture zone displays require permits (either seasonal or long-term)
- Curbspace merchandise display no longer allowed



# Questions?

## Stay in touch:



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