



City of  
**TUSCALOOSA**

# SIDEWALK CAFÉS AND SHARED SPACES

## Design Guidelines



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- II. Permit Parameters
- III. Steps to Permitting
- IV. Design Guidelines
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## CONTACTS

### Revenue:

revenueoffice@tuscaloosa.com  
205-248-5200

### Planning:

planinfo@tuscaloosa.com  
205-248-5100

### Building:

planreview@tuscaloosa.com  
205-248-5110

### Engineering:

ocemail@tuscaloosa.com  
205-248-5380

### Fire:

fireprevention@tuscaloosa.com  
205-248-5420

### Waste Water:

ocemail@tuscaloosa.com  
205-248-5900

### Health Department:

205-562-6900



# PURPOSE

A sidewalk café is defined in Section 21-28 of the Code of Tuscaloosa as “the temporary location and use of tables and chairs and other associated equipment and furnishings on the public sidewalk or right-of-way for the purpose of serving food and/or drink to patrons and operated as an extension of and adjacent to a business in a district in which a sidewalk café shall be an incidental activity of the business.”

In order to operate a sidewalk café, a sidewalk café permit must first be obtained. **This packet is intended to assist businesses in the steps to receiving a sidewalk café permit, as well as provide specific guidelines that summarize the sidewalk café ordinance regulations.**

# PERMIT PARAMETERS

All businesses must meet the below parameters to qualify for a sidewalk cafe permit. Other design guidelines apply.

## ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

To use the sidewalk for a sidewalk café, access requirements must be met for other uses:

- » Maintain a clear travel path of at least 6 feet wide for unobstructed pedestrian traffic.
- » Comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.
- » Keep curb ramps, crosswalks, doors, driveways, fire escapes, fire hydrants, and fire department connections free from obstructions.
- » Keep furniture and appurtenances fully within the approved areas.

## APPURTENANCES

Appurtenances such as tables, chairs, trash receptacles, umbrellas, and planters must stay fully within the approved areas.

## SIGNAGE

In addition to permitted signage allowed in Division 10 of the Tuscaloosa Zoning Ordinance, one sandwich board/A-frame sign may be used in conjunction with the sidewalk cafe as approved by the city. All signage must meet the requirements of the Tuscaloosa Zoning Ordinance unless otherwise specified within these guidelines.

## SERVING ALCOHOL

All businesses wishing to serve alcohol must meet all Alabama ABC requirements and obtain City Council approval. Glass bottles containing alcoholic beverages other than wine are prohibited within the sidewalk cafe area.

# STEPS TO PERMITTING

1

When a business submits for a business license, they need to specify that they would like to also purchase a sidewalk café license. If an establishment would like to allow alcohol within a sidewalk café area, proper licensing is required.

»» Forms included in this packet: Sidewalk Café application and Designation of Agent.

»» Contact the Revenue Division for the alcohol license application.

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Reference the Design Guidelines on page 7 of this packet for ideas and design requirements.

»» You will be required to provide photos/examples of all appurtenances proposed to be used, including but not limited to borders, planters, umbrellas, tables, chairs, and trash receptacles.

3

Fill out a sidewalk café application, which is included in this packet. If serving alcohol, approval by City Council is required for an alcohol license initiated through the Revenue Division of Accounting & Finance.

# 4

Submit a site plan for the sidewalk café space you plan to use. This plan can be hand drawn or a digital drawing, but must be drawn to scale. An example site plan is provided on page 13 of this packet as well as graph paper for hand drawn plans. The site plan must include:

- »»» The location of your business in relation to the sidewalk, street, and city fixtures including but not limited to trees, grates, poles, signs, landscaping, and adjacent buildings.
- »»» The area where a sidewalk café can operate must be adjacent to the business and may not extend parallel in either direction beyond the outside front wall of the business and/or side wall of the business if a corner lot.
- »»» A sidewalk café can only operate on a paved surface.
- »»» Clearly label the space you plan to use within the public right-of-way.
  - »»» All sidewalk cafes must be located within a border unless otherwise approved. This border must be separated from the remaining sidewalk area by an approved bollard and chain divider or other approved barrier, unless otherwise permitted by the city. Provide an outline of the border and location of barrier with dimensions on the site plan.
  - »»» A minimum of six feet shall be provided at all times from all obstacles (light poles, street trees, etc.) for continuous unobstructed pedestrian traffic. Provide these measurements on the site plan.
- »»» If you are using the shared space for seating or dining, specify how many tables, chairs, and other appurtenances you will use and specify their locations on the site plan.
  - »»» All appurtenances, including planters, trash receptacles, and umbrellas, must be located fully within the border of the sidewalk café.
  - »»» Umbrellas must maintain a minimum clearance of 7 feet.



5

Provide photos of the exterior of your business and the sidewalk areas to be utilized.



6

Provide a Designation of Agent form (included in this packet) if the applicant is not the owner of the property.



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Submit the required documents in person or via email to [revenueoffice@tuscaloosa.com](mailto:revenueoffice@tuscaloosa.com).

»» The Revenue Division will forward all documents to be reviewed by the appropriate city staff.

»» After all applicable approvals have been received, the Revenue Division will issue a sidewalk cafe license.

This license is renewed annually with your business license.

»» Failure to comply with these guidelines or operating outside of the approved site plan may result in revocation of your sidewalk café permit.



# DESIGN GUIDELINES

The design of each sidewalk café must comply with the following guidelines, which contain requirements for furniture and other appurtenances considered acceptable by the city for sidewalk cafés.

## BARRIERS

Area barriers must be used to separate the dining area from the sidewalk and must be permanently affixed to the sidewalk unless otherwise approved by the city. All barriers must be maintained in good visual appearance, without visible fading, dents, tears, rust, corrosion, or chipped or peeling paint. If a business wishes to serve alcohol outdoors, barriers must meet the Alabama ABC requirements.

Barriers shall run in a continuous straight line perpendicular to the building wall to connect to the outer barrier of the approved area, which shall be parallel to the building wall and run in a continuous straight line except for a break for an entrance.

# Approved Barrier Design

## *Sectional Fencing*

Sectional fencing (generally defined as rigid fence segments that can be placed together to create a unified fencing appearance) is a desirable solution for sidewalk café barriers. Sectional fencing must be made of metal (aluminum, steel, iron, or similar) or wood. Composite material may be used if approved by staff.

## *Ropes or Chain Rails*

Rope or chain-type barriers (generally defined as enclosures composed of a rope or chain suspended by vertical elements such as stanchions) are permitted if they meet the following guidelines:

- Rope or chain diameter must be a minimum of one inch in order to maintain detectability by the visually impaired.
- Vertical support posts (stanchions, bollards, etc.) must be constructed of wood or metal (aluminum, steel, iron, or similar), and must be affixed unless otherwise approved by the city.

## *Planters*

Planters as barriers may be used in place of other barrier designs as specified in these design guidelines.

# Prohibited Barrier Design

## *Fabric Inserts*

Fabric inserts (whether natural or synthetic fabric) of any size are not permitted to be used as part of a barrier.

## *Chain Link and Other Fencing*

The use of chain link, cyclone fencing, chicken wire, or similar materials is prohibited. Materials not specifically manufactured for fencing or pedestrian control (including but not limited to buckets, food containers, tires, tree stumps, vehicle parts, pallets, etc.) and not expressly permitted elsewhere in these guidelines, may not be used as components of a barrier.

## PLANTERS

Planters may be used in addition to or in place of other barrier designs. If not an integral part of the barrier of the sidewalk café, planters must be located fully within the approved barrier area.

All planters must have plants contained within them. If the plants within the planter die, the plants must be replaced or the planter removed from the public right-of-way. Empty planters, or planters with only dirt, mulch, straw, woodchips, or similar material are not permitted.

## UMBRELLAS & SUNSHADES

Appropriately designed and sized umbrellas are permitted for use within sidewalk café areas. Umbrellas must be free of advertisements, solid in color, and fully contained within the sidewalk café barrier. The lowest dimension of an extended umbrella must be at least seven feet above the sidewalk surface in order to provide adequate circulation space below. Umbrella and sunshade fabric must be suitable for outdoor use, and must be canvas-type. No plastic fabrics, plastic/vinyl-laminated fabrics, or any type of other rigid materials are permitted for use as umbrellas. Tents and tarps are not permitted.

## FURNITURE & FIXTURES

A wide range of furniture styles, colors, and materials are permitted. All furniture and fixtures must be maintained in good visual appearance, without visible fading, dents, tears, rust, corrosion, or chipped or peeling paint. All furniture and fixtures must be durable and of sufficiently sturdy construction as to not blow over with normal winds. Glass tabletops are not permitted. Furnishing type, finish and color must be uniform in design.

Furniture and fixtures must not be secured to trees, lampposts, street signs, hydrants, or any other street infrastructure by means of ropes, chains, or any other such devices, whether during business operating hours or at times when the business is closed.

All furniture and fixtures must be located within the approved barrier area. Furniture and fixtures are allowed to remain outside at times when the business is closed. If seasonal conveniences will be provided (i.e. lighting, televisions, heaters, fans), their general location must be designated on the provided site plan.

Adequate space must be provided within the sidewalk café barriers to permit movement of patrons and waitstaff. Waitstaff may not serve patrons located beyond the perimeter enclosure. Six feet of unopposed pedestrian movement is required to be maintained at all times from all points of egress.

# SIGNAGE

All signage must be located within the barrier of the sidewalk café, and their general locations must be designated on the provided site plan. Businesses utilizing a sidewalk café may be allowed additional signage to indicate entrances to the sidewalk café area, as well as one A-frame sign that meets meetings the following:

- ▶▶▶ A-frame signs shall be designed to be portable, folding in nature and must be removed to the interior of a building or structure at the close of business each day.
- ▶▶▶ Such signs shall not exceed 12 square feet in area per side and shall be no greater than four feet in height.
- ▶▶▶ A-frame signs shall be located a maximum of 10 feet from the tenant entrance.
- ▶▶▶ All A-frame signs shall be constructed of wood, metal or other sturdy material.
- ▶▶▶ Such signs shall not be illuminated and shall not interfere with the 6 foot pedestrian way.

Banners of any type are not allowed to be placed on barriers, furniture, or any other appurtenances within a sidewalk café area.

# APPENDIX

APPROPRIATE

INAPPROPRIATE

## Barriers



## Planters as Barriers



APPROPRIATE

INAPPROPRIATE

Furniture



Umbrellas & Sunshades

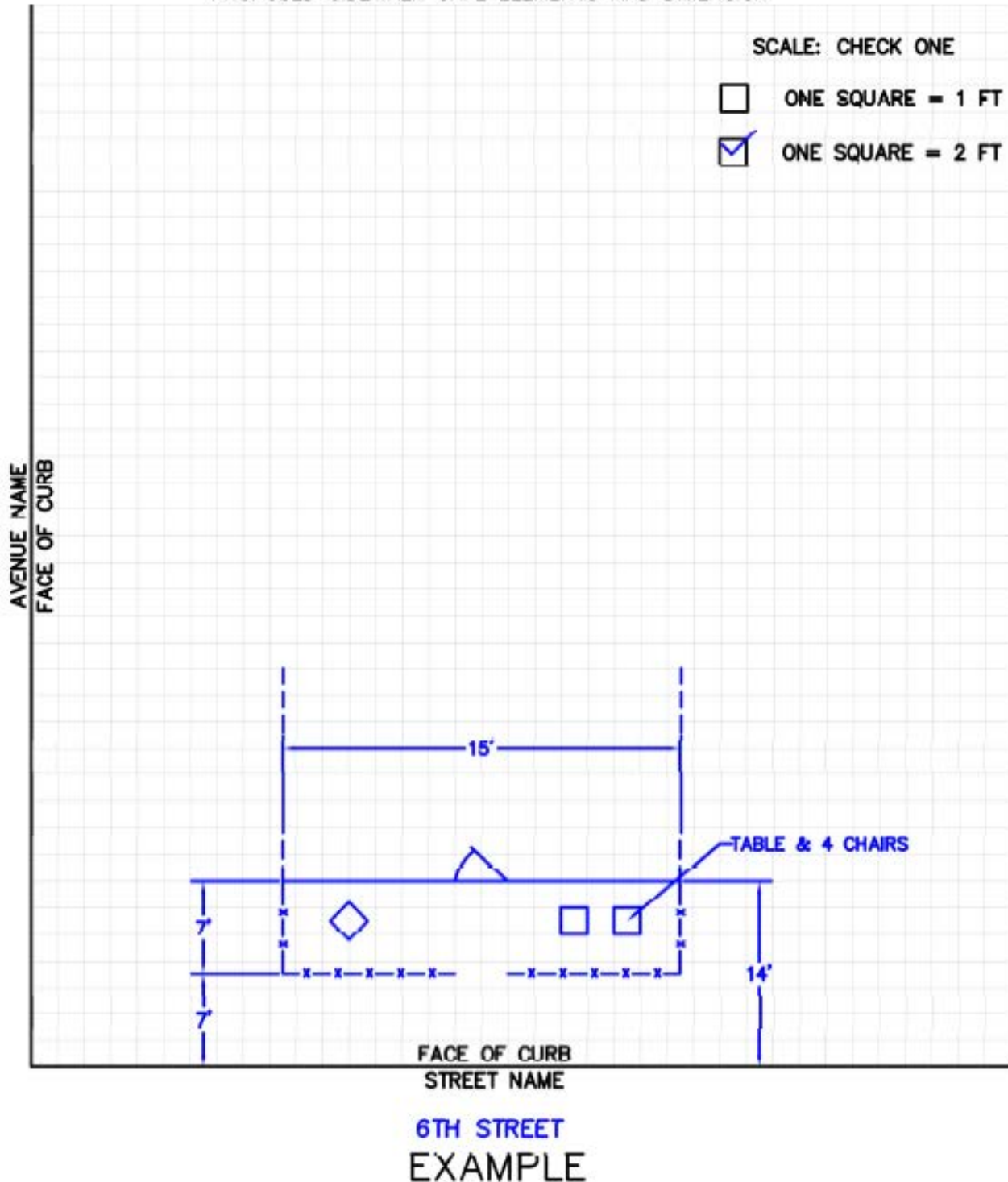


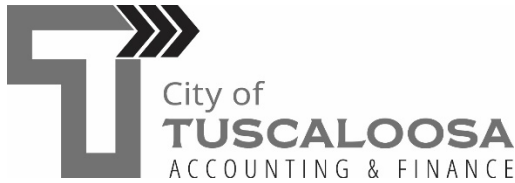
# Appropriate Site Plan & Sidewalk Cafe Documents

## SIDEWALK CAFE DIAGRAM

ADDRESS: XXXX 6TH STREET

INSTRUCTIONS: DRAW TO SCALE THE BUILDING WIDTH FACING THE STREET OR AVENUE, DIMENSION DISTANCE FROM FACE OF BUILDING TO FACE OF CURB SKETCH PROPOSED SIDEWALK CAFE ELEMENTS AND DIMENSION





# Sidewalk Cafe Permit Application

Revenue Division

The Sidewalk Cafe rules and regulations can be found in section 21-28 of the City Code of Tuscaloosa. The permittee must read and understand the rules and regulations before a permit can be issued. No person or place of business shall operate a sidewalk cafe in the City of Tuscaloosa on public property without a properly obtained permit. Such permit shall be renewed each year.

A Sidewalk Cafe Permit will be valid for one (1) calendar year and must be renewed beginning January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year along with the permittee's normal business license.

**Please submit to Revenue the following along with this application:**

1. A drawing depicting the location of proposed borders as well as existing street features, such as but not limited to light poles, street trees, and curbs. Six feet (6') of unobstructed pathway must be maintained at all times outside of the Sidewalk Cafe borders.
2. A description, photo, or drawing of the divider as specified in the Sidewalk Cafe Permit regulations.
3. A \$156.00 non-refundable check for the processing fee made payable to the City of Tuscaloosa.

**Business Information**

Name of Business \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Owner Information**

Business Owner Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business Owner Address \_\_\_\_\_

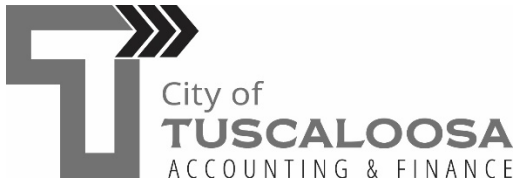
Business Owner Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Individual Applying for Permit \_\_\_\_\_

**I have read and understand the Sidewalk Cafe Permit regulations of the City of Tuscaloosa and do, hereby, agree to abide by the provisions of the regulation.**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Permittee Signature \_\_\_\_\_



# Sidewalk Cafe Permit Application

Revenue Division

Page 2

Name of Business \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Approvals Needed

### Planning Division

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Office of the City Engineer

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Tuscaloosa Police Department

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Tuscaloosa Fire Department

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Building and Inspections

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Infrastructure

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# SIDEWALK CAFE DIAGRAM

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTIONS: DRAW TO SCALE THE BUILDING WIDTH  
FACING THE STREET OR AVENUE. DIMENSION DISTANCE  
FROM FACE OF BUILDING TO FACE OF CURB SKETCH  
PROPOSED SIDEWALK CAFE ELEMENTS AND DIMENSION

AVENUE NAME  
FACE OF CURB

SCALE: CHECK ONE

ONE SQUARE = 1 FT

ONE SQUARE = 2 FT

FACE OF CURB  
STREET NAME



City of  
**TUSCALOOSA**

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