In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City and County of Denver created the Temporary Outdoor Expansion program to allow restaurants and bars to expand outdoor seating and service areas into the public right-of-way and on private property (such as parking lots). The program has been an overwhelming success and Mayor Michael Hancock has extended it through October 2022. The City stands ready to help you with your outdoor expansion and make the approval process as easy as possible. To that end, this Design Manual is a guide for existing and prospective program participants.

How Can a Temporary Outdoor Expansion Benefit My Business?
There are numerous benefits to businesses that choose to participate in the outdoor expansion program, some of which are highlighted below along with testimony from program participants.

1. Introduction

ENHANCE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

EXPAND CAPACITY AND POTENTIAL SALES

INCREASE VISIBILITY OF YOUR BUSINESS

CREATE A FOCAL POINT FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

WHAT ARE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS SAYING?

“It seems like everyone wants to sit outside and the Temporary Outdoor Expansion Program created more opportunities for it!” - Calley McCue, Wynkoop Brewing Company/Cherry Cricket

“Additional seating helped us reduce losses during the pandemic. When we get back to full capacity, we think the increased seating opportunities will help us make up for shortfalls incurred during COVID-19.” - Matt LaBarge, Sputnik

“My patio helped signal to potential customers that we were open for business. The patio drew attention to my restaurant.” - Greg Gallagher, Canopy Bar

“We coordinated our patio with our neighbors to provide a similar look. The patios made our block feel like a destination.” - Matt DeGennaro, Charcoal Bistro
Purpose of this Design Manual
This TOE Design Manual is meant to serve as a comprehensive “guidebook” to applicants interested in participating in the program. Specifically, this Design Manual is intended to:

» Help applicants determine if an outdoor expansion is right for their business
» Illustrate the range of options available
» Assist customers in navigating the conceptualization and approval of their expansion
» Provide guidance on maintenance and management
» Promote optimal design solutions that maximize benefits to business and customers
» Reduce perceived barriers to participation in the program

References to Other Program Information
In addition to this introductory Design Manual, applicants should be aware of the following resources that outline detailed rules, requirements and other information:

Temporary Outdoor Expansion Program Website (including liquor license information)

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) Guidance

Building and Fire Department Guidance

For more information, contact:
Brad Johnson, Senior City Planner
Community Planning & Development
brad.johnson2@denvergov.org
2. Design and Management

What is Possible?
There are a wide array of options available. Based on the unique features of your business and location, you can choose which approach is best for you. Available options are identified below, however please note that approvability will depend on specific characteristics of your site and location.

**SIDEWALK OR TREE LAWN (RIGHT-OF-WAY)**
- You can expand onto the sidewalk and/or into the tree lawn.
- You must maintain enough width on the sidewalk (5-8 feet) to allow pedestrians to safely pass.
- This expansion type is the easiest to approve in the public right-of-way.

**PARKING LANE (RIGHT-OF-WAY)**
- You can expand into the on-street parking lane in front of your business.
- These expansions have additional safety considerations and requirements.
- You should coordinate with your neighbors to identify and address any concerns.

**TRAVEL LANE/FULL STREET CLOSURE (RIGHT-OF-WAY)**
- Businesses can expand into vehicle travel lanes.
- These expansions require a more rigorous approval process.
- Typically sponsored by organizations representing multiple businesses.
- Sidewalk access must be maintained even if access is also provided within the street.
» Outdoor expansions can be combined to create a layered experience for customers.
» In the first two example photos to the left, seating on the sidewalk is combined with seating in the parking lane.
» In the third example photo to the left, a full street closure combines elements on the sidewalks, parking lanes and travel lanes to create a single, integrated temporary plaza space.

» Expansions can be approved on private property like parking lots or landscaped areas
» These are often easier for the City to approve because they do not impact the public right-of-way
» These can be placed within a required off-street parking area even if it removes required parking spaces.
Optimizing Your Temporary Outdoor Expansion

Each layout is different and program participants are encouraged to think creatively about their design, but there are some elements and considerations that are applicable across the board. Based on careful studies of over 15 expansions and conversations with numerous program participants, this section identifies key design considerations and elements that can help you optimize your installation.

Integrate the Expansion with Its Surroundings

Your patio can benefit greatly from careful siting. Placing a patio to integrate with the primary restaurant and other features will ensure it complements the main businesses space. Specific considerations for siting and integration are below.

**Utilize Existing Elements**

- Consider how your patio can be sited and designed to take advantage of existing elements. This can reduce costs.
- Where feasible, incorporate existing street trees, fences, bike racks and other existing elements.
- These features can provide shade, a sense of enclosure/definition, visual interest and other benefits.

**Coordinate with the Adjacent Building**

- Site your patio to coordinate physically with the critical elements of the main building.
- Align an patio with the primary entry, windows, or existing permanent outdoor seating to maximize visual connection from the patio to the main building and generate activity.
- If you cannot site your expansion adjacent to the features described above, consider locating it adjacent to a wall with art or other visually interesting features.
Maximize User Comfort and Safety
Features like heating, shade and water misters can help keep your customers comfortable while also providing visual interest, character and branding.

**PROVIDE SHADE FROM THE SUN**
» Shade with umbrellas, shade sails or other mechanisms is often essential for customer comfort.
» Depending on location, you may be able to site your patio to take advantage of shade provided by existing trees or buildings.
» Shade devices can add color and visual interest.
» Be sure that a shade device is designed to withstand strong winds and other weather events, or that it can be quickly secured during inclement weather.
» Place a shade device so that it does not overhang a required pedestrian access route (on sidewalk) or a vehicular travel lane.

**DIFFERENTIATE THE GROUNDPLANE**
» Consider if the base, or groundplane, of your patio should be enhanced to improve customer experience.
» While existing concrete or asphalt paving is acceptable, some program participants use special materials or art on the groundplane to make it feel less like a parking area or street.

**CREATE A SENSE OF ENCLOSURE**
» Consider whether a sense of enclosure may help your customers feel more comfortable.
» Well-designed fencing, planters, barricades or other materials may be desirable to separate your area from the roadway, public sidewalk or parking areas.
Create Vibrancy and Visual Character

Landscaping, accent lighting, art and other similar visual elements can be added to enhance customer experience, generate visual interest and express a desired aesthetic.

**INTEGRATE LANDSCAPING**

» Landscaping can greatly enhance an expansion.

» Use landscaping to soften the space, add visual interest, create screening from roadways/other elements or reduce odor/noise.

» Freestanding planters or landscaping (real or artificial) integrated with other TOE elements are effective approaches.

**CREATE VISUAL VARIETY**

» Consider a variety of elements to make your area more visually interesting and attractive to customers.

» Varying a limited number of forms and elements creates layered visual interest without appearing cluttered.

**ADD ART**

» Integrate art if possible. Partnering with artists is a great way to add visual character while also showcasing local creativity.

**ADD LIGHTING**

» Integrate lighting to enhance safety, add ambiance and increase visibility of your business.

» If your area will be operated at night, place lighting elements to enhance safety and visibility by illuminating steps, entryways, pedestrian routes and dining areas.
Choose Expressive, Durable and Sustainable Elements
Tables and chairs, platform structures, planters, delineation features and other elements are often used. These elements can serve functional purposes and add vibrancy and interest, but can be vulnerable to deterioration. Choose features to express your brand while making sure they are built to withstand the elements.

CUSTOMIZE YOUR FURNISHINGS
» Consider choosing elements that add to the visual appeal, interest and branding of your space.
» Coordinate color schemes or paint raw wood materials to add visual character.

EXPRESS A SENSE OF PERMANENCE
» Consider materials that will make your space appear more intentional and permanent.
» If possible, avoid plastic chains, plastic buckets and other materials that appear temporary.

USE METAL FURNISHINGS
» Use metal furnishings that can withstand weather elements.
» If possible, use rust resistant or rustproof materials.

USE FINISHED WOOD FURNISHINGS
» If you choose wood materials, be sure they are finished so they do not crack and splinter over time.

CONSIDER SUSTAINABLE FURNISHINGS
» Where feasible, use locally sourced and/or reclaimed/recycled materials. Avoid plastic materials if possible.
Promote Accessibility and Inclusivity
Consider how persons with limited mobility or disabilities will access your space. If curbs, raised platforms, steps, wires or other elements present access challenges, mitigate these issues to ensure your area is inclusive to all. Access on public sidewalks, ADA ramps and crosswalks must always be maintained.

ADDRESS ACCESS CHALLENGES
» Consider how you can design your space to be accessible to all users.
» For example, provide ADA ramps to facilitate access from the sidewalk to an outdoor expansion in the on-street parking lane.
» Consider adding some ADA accessible seating.
» If you connect to building utilities, cover any wires that cross a pedestrian route with an ADA accessible device (cord cover) to avoid trip hazards and maintain accessibility.
» If you are building a structure in the parking lane, design it to be accessible for persons with mobility challenges by ensuring the surface is flush with the sidewalk or a ramp is provided.

SITE ELEMENTS TO MAINTAIN CIRCULATION
» Consider how your customers will move around and navigate between the outdoor area and the building/restrooms.
» You may need to create a path from the seating area to the building entry.

INTEGRATE PUBLIC AMENITIES
» For full street closures, consider adding public seating and other publicly accessible amenities so that the street functions as an inclusive public space.
» For full street closures, consider providing space between elements and/or in the center of the street to allow public access. This will enhance vibrancy and ensure the space can be enjoyed by all.
Meeting Minimum Safety Requirements for Expansions in the Right-of-Way

If your space is in the public right-of-way, you will be required to meet minimum safety requirements administered by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI). These requirements are intended to ensure the right-of-way is safely shared by your customers, drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and others.

Depending on the characteristics of your street and the location of your space within the right-of-way, you may need to incorporate minimum safety features to protect users from nearby traffic. Key considerations are described below and more information can be found in DOTI’s Temporary Outdoor Expansion Guidance document: https://www.denvergov.org/files/assets/public/covid19/documents/temporary-patio-permit-guidance.pdf

On lower speed streets (at or below 25mph), lightweight traffic cones or other similar features will be required to alert drivers of the expansion in the on-street parking lane.

On higher speed streets (greater than 25mph) and in Downtown, a more significant barrier will be required to provide adequate safety barriers between an expansion in the on-street parking lane and vehicles in the roadway.
Managing and Maintaining a Temporary Outdoor Expansion

Before deciding on a design, applicants should think carefully about their maintenance and management responsibilities. This page identifies key maintenance responsibilities that applicants should consider.

- **Pedestrian Access**
  Ensure your space does not inhibit public access. If elements are moved by a customer, you will need to return them to their appropriate location.

- **Graffiti Removal**
  If your space has large blank surfaces, it may be vulnerable to tagging. Be prepared to remove it promptly.

- **Landscape Maintenance**
  If you integrate landscaping, create a plan to ensure landscaping is maintained. Artificial plants can be used to reduce this maintenance.

- **Safety Features**
  Many outdoor expansions are required to have safety features like traffic cones or barricades. If your space has these features, check daily to be sure they have not been moved or relocated.

- **Utility Access**
  Be prepared to disassemble your space quickly if the City needs to access the area for unplanned maintenance.

- **Cleaning/Snow Removal**
  You are responsible for cleaning your space and keeping it free of debris, including snow. You may need to set aside space to store snow. Please do not place snow in the street. If your space causes dirt, debris or snow on an adjacent property, be a good neighbor and address it.

- **Stormflow Maintenance**
  If your space includes a structure or places elements within the curb-to-curb area of the street, be sure it is not blocking stormwater flow along the curb and gutter.

- **Theft Prevention**
  If you plan to leave elements outside during off-hours, secure any items that may be vulnerable to theft.

- **Neighbor Coordination**
  Be a good neighbor. Check in with neighboring businesses to ensure your space is not causing unintended issues. If it is, work with your neighbor to address any challenges.

- **Repairs**
  Your space may require repairs over time. Regularly inspect any structures or elements to be sure they are in a good state of repair and if needed, repair them.

- **Weather Preparedness**
  Significant weather events can cause damage. Make sure your space is designed to withstand heavy wind, rain and snow. If it is not, design so that vulnerable elements can be quickly disassembled during inclement weather.

- **Daily Setup/Breakdown**
  If you use movable elements, consider the staff resources and time needed to move them in and out of your building each night. If you use propane tanks, keep them outside and employ “just in time” delivery so you do not have to store more than you need.
3. Getting Started and Getting Approved

What to Do Before You Contact the City

While not required, you may streamline your approval if you work through some initial design steps prior to approaching the City with your concept. Following these basic design steps can help you formulate your initial TOE concept and prepare you to answer questions that may be raised by City agencies.

Step 1: Consider Your Site and Constraints

» Consider the constraints that are present at your site.
» Vehicle circulation, loading/pickup areas, utilities, sight lines and street slope are all constraints that can impact design.

Step 2: Consult with Your Neighbors

» If your space is in the public right-of-way, tell your neighbors about your plans and ask if they have any concerns.
» If possible, attain letters of support from your neighbors.

Step 3: Identify Desired Elements

» Do an accounting of the key elements you would like to include in your outdoor expansion.
» This may include platforms, furnishings, landscaping, barriers and other similar features.

Step 4: Review this TOE Design Manual

» Review this TOE Design Manual to learn how your outdoor expansion can be optimized for your customers.
» Refer to the rules and requirements (see page 2 of this document for web links) for minimum standards and applicable rules.

Step 5: Develop an Initial Concept

» Develop an initial concept for your outdoor expansion.
» This can be done with a combination of text and illustrations that show the preliminary concept with basic dimensions.

Step 6: Consider Maintenance Challenges

» Review your concept against this Design Manual, including the maintenance challenges that your concept will present.

Step 7: Revise Your Concept and Proceed to City!

» If needed, revise your initial concept to take into account any changes and proceed to the City by clicking “Submit Your Proposal” at Temporary Outdoor Expansion website https://www.denvergov.org/Government/COVID-19-Information/Guidance-Resources/Businesses/Economic-Relief/Temp-Outdoor-License
**Key Considerations for Approval**

Temporary Outdoor Expansions require careful review by the City to ensure safety. In some cases, multiple City departments must review and inspect your space before a final permit can be issued. The graphic below identifies key factors that may impact the level of review. Applicants that choose to feature elements that require more extensive review should be prepared for a somewhat more involved review process. For more on specific requirements, review the detailed program rules (see links on page 2).

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Note: Follow the links on page 2 of this document for more details, rules and requirements related to these topics.