



Meeting Attendees

Subcommittee Members

Ed Abrahamson, Irvington, Co-Chair
Steve Cole
Garlynn Woodsong

Additional Participants

Sarah Figliozzi
Claire Adamsick, NECN Committees Coordinator

Portland Street Seats

The Street Seats program was inspired by the “Parklets” program in San Francisco. In 2012, there was a pilot program with three locations: Wafu on SE division; Oven & Shaker in the Pearl, and Mississippi Pizza. The pilot was followed by an online survey requesting public input. PBOT revised the process and its application guidelines. It approved 8 installations in 2013. Street seats projects are all funded and built by the business owners.

There are a number of design requirements, including that the platform may not extend beyond six feet from the curb line where there is parallel parking, There needs to be a vertical barrier between traffic lane and platform. Public seating (for non-customers) is also a component; businesses look for return-on-investment. The immediate adjacent property owners also need to financially support the installation.

In 2014, PBOT will help fund new construction for a maximum of 10 locations. When it comes to public engagement, the burden is typically on the applicant. However, the City has been more proactive, sending out mailer to homes/businesses within 200 feet of installation.

Ed says that his friend at Mississippi Pizza says the cost to operate and maintain his restaurant is almost equivalent to the cost of building and permitting the outdoor installation.

PBOT is involved in this program because it manages public right-of-way (it also manages Portland’s café outdoor seating program).

In the years to come, PBOT may be considering more stringent design requirements. Design has been relatively weak in past installations – spaces should add positive aesthetics to neighborhood spaces. PBOT will also be prioritizing applications that include additional public seating (not just for café/restaurant patrons).

Permits are annual; participants must resubmit for a renewal of their installation. Installations are year-round, or could be permitted for four months (seasonal installations).

Livability issues: PBOT has reached out to the City’s liquor licensing committee and to neighborhoods for feedback on current installations regarding cleanliness. Regarding noise issues on outdoor patios, the City is not involved with hours of operation. Noise issues are typically addressed through Good Neighbor Agreements (GNAs).



Street seats are significantly more expensive than the café outdoor seating program. There are no numbers yet on whether Street Seats have increased the vitality of businesses.

Higher-speed traffic corridors like Broadway: currently no applications.

Response to concerns about the parking spaces that are lost: PBOT feels that the public right-of way's purpose is not simply to move people; encouraging other activities is ideal.

Parking revenue: if an installation requires the removal of parking meters/paid spaces, the City will review what the block generates and estimate the amount a business must pay for lost revenue.

Safety: Street seats are not allowed at corners, visibility issues are considered with installations; vertical elements so they are visible to cars.

PBOT has no plans for public input on the program as a whole. The current public comment period for current applicants/renewals ends April 30.

Possible future topics:

NE Broadway road diet? Potential cycletrack, lane reduction, traffic calming,
Brian Scott – Main Streets program for the City; possible speaker

Next Meeting: May 29th, 1:00 p.m.

