

# Our City, Our Spaces!

A Materials, Tools, and Equipment Library for  
Neighborhood-Led Activities in Washington, DC

September 2021



Metropolitan Washington  
Council of Governments

District of Columbia  
Office of Planning



# Acknowledgments

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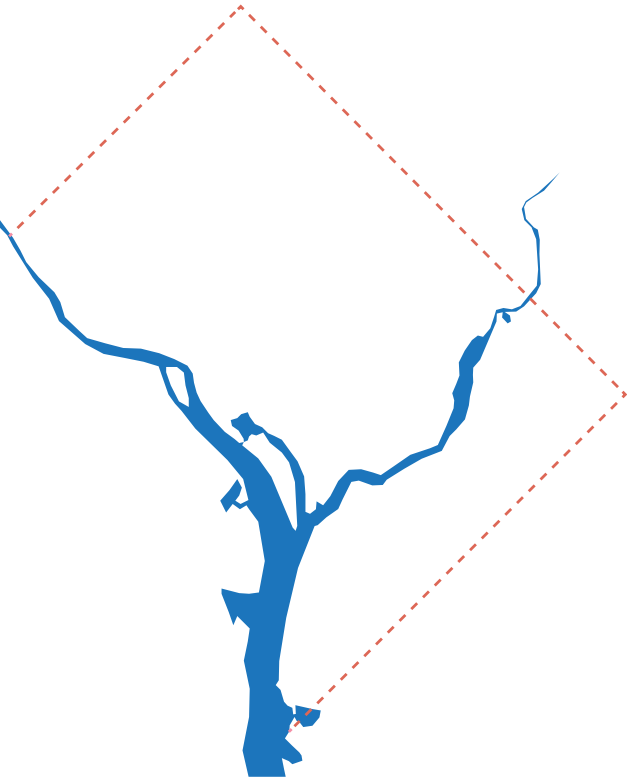
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# 01

## Introduction

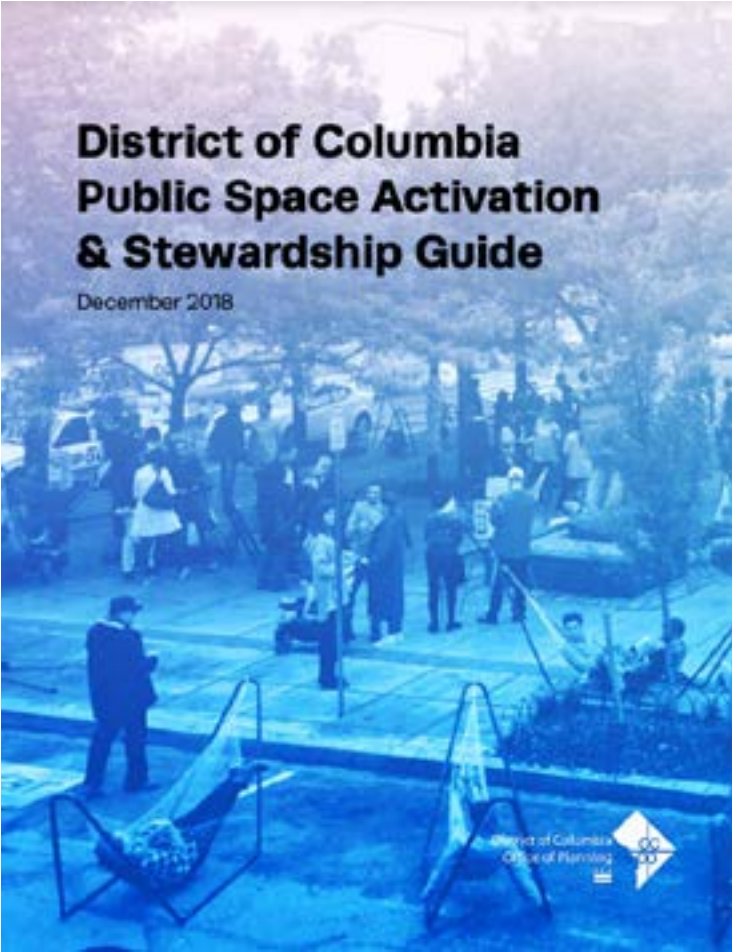




# Public Space, Public Life DC

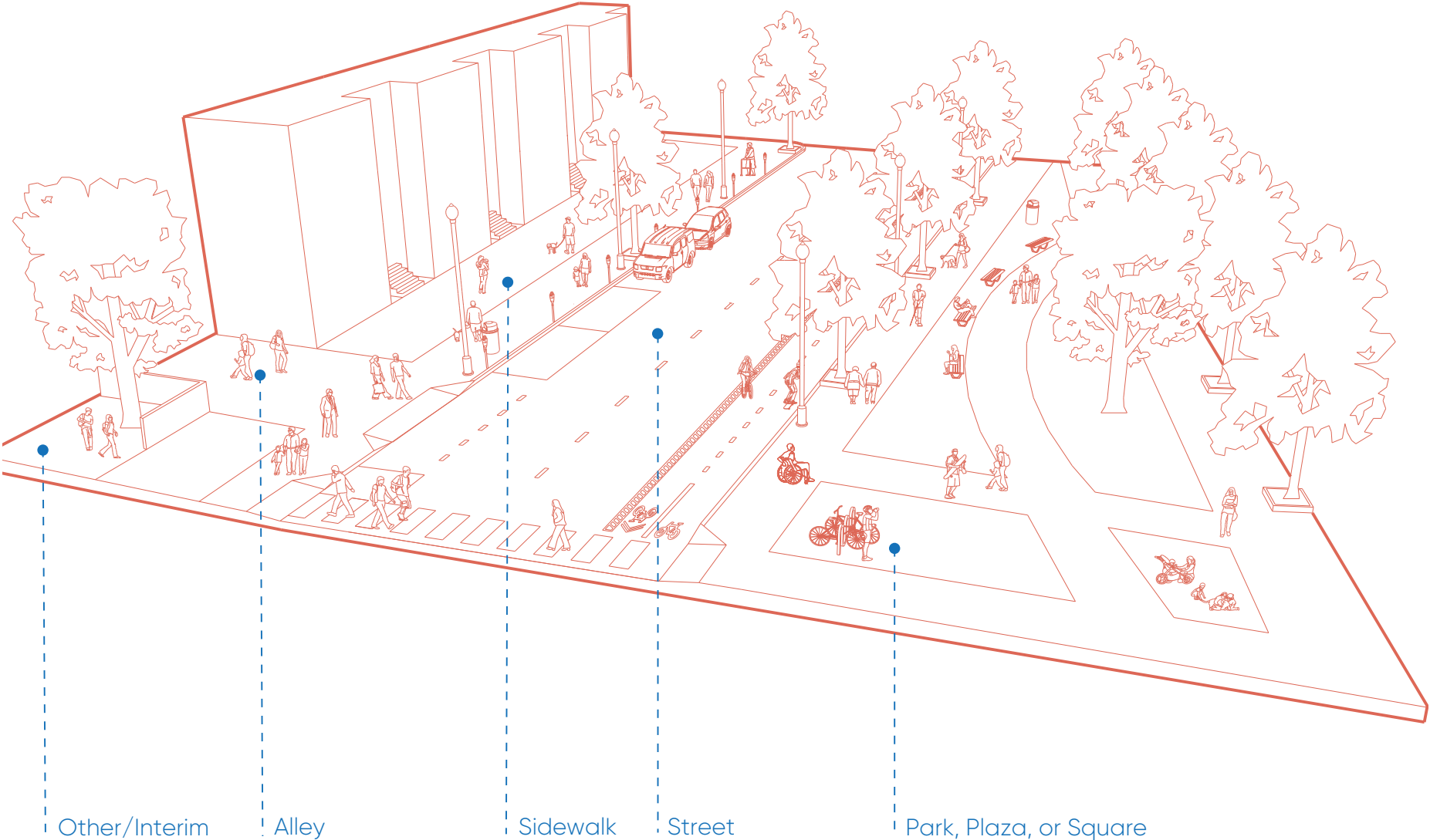
From the alley to the block, the District’s public spaces are full of potential for community gatherings. Transforming a vacant lot into a pop-up community play space for the day can bring neighbors together, strengthen community bonds, and create a sense of place. The **Our City, Our Spaces! A Materials, Tools, and Equipment Library for Neighborhood-Led Activities** provides guidance to the people of Washington, DC on how to create social events in their neighborhoods and public spaces. The goal of this document is to demonstrate how to grow the idea of a community gathering into a reality, providing inspiration and details on the many public spaces that exist in the District and activity types that can happen within in them.

With this toolkit, community residents and organizations can enhance social, cultural, and physical improvement activities in their neighborhoods. Included are 56 materials, equipment, and tools to create daytime and nighttime community activities within the District’s public spaces. There are also recommendations for developing a physical materials, tools, and equipment library to move this guidance from the page to the pavement!



[Public Space Activation and Stewardship Guide](#)

# The District’s Most Common Public Spaces





# 02

## Public Spaces + Neighborhood Activities



No Kings Collective 8th Anniversary  
Photo: DC Office of Planning

# Public Space Types

Public space is where we gather and find amusement, as well as rest, learn, and express ourselves. Sidewalks, plazas, parklets, alleys, streets, and parks are public spaces found throughout the District. These spaces are not static. They evolve and respond to the dynamism of their different neighborhoods and city life, with natural ebbs and flows of daily, seasonal and annual activity. Accessible public space is what make cities great, offering a gathering place for people of all backgrounds, races, ages, and physical or mental abilities to participate.

This section provides brief descriptions of the most common public space types found within neighborhoods throughout the District, including:

- **Sidewalks + Plazas**
- **Parklets**
- **Alleys**
- **Street Closures**
- **Other / Interim Open Spaces**
- **Parks**

## Sidewalks + Plazas

### Overview

Sidewalks are the backbone of public life in the District. In addition to being a space for pedestrian travel, wide sidewalks provide space for outdoor dining, small-scale gatherings, markets, seating, landscaping, bicycle/scooter parking, and other social activities/programming. Plazas provide open space alongside civic or commercial buildings. To create plazas, the District re-purposes street space or parking lots into areas for human activity.

Programming on Sidewalks and Plazas brings economic and social activity to the community. They also support pedestrian activity and can increase access to public transportation. Note: A permit may be required. For more information, refer to the [DC Public Space Activation and Stewardship Guide](#) or contact the [District Department of Transportation \(DDOT\)](#).

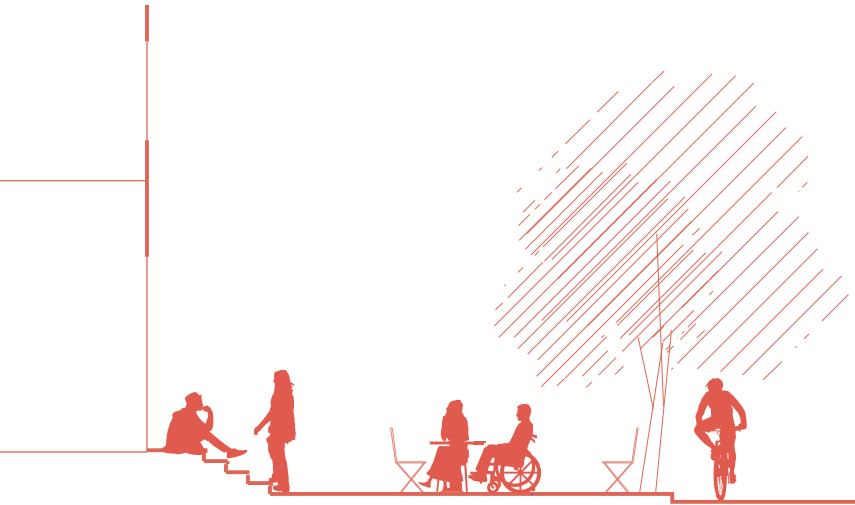


Illustration: Example of a sidewalk activation.

## Parklets

### Overview

Parklets are an extension of the sidewalk into the street, exchanging curbside street space for additional public space. They most often feature public seating, landscaping, and other amenities (art, games, bicycle parking etc.). DDOT’s Parklet Program allows parklets to be installed year-round, although very short-term projects may also be installed to add curbside programming, support community events, and/or test community support for a more permanent parklet in a specific location over one day or weekend.



Illustration: Example of a temporary parklet.



# Alleys

## Overview

Washington DC's street network is supported by a network of small alleyways that run along the side and back of residential and commercial properties. While most often used to facilitate deliveries, services, or parking access; alleys can often be intimate spaces with low traffic volumes, especially on nights and weekends. They also offer unique built features and provide a myriad of opportunities for small-scale programs, projects, and events. Examples include movie nights, neighborhood clean-up/planting events, games, art installations, and communal meals.

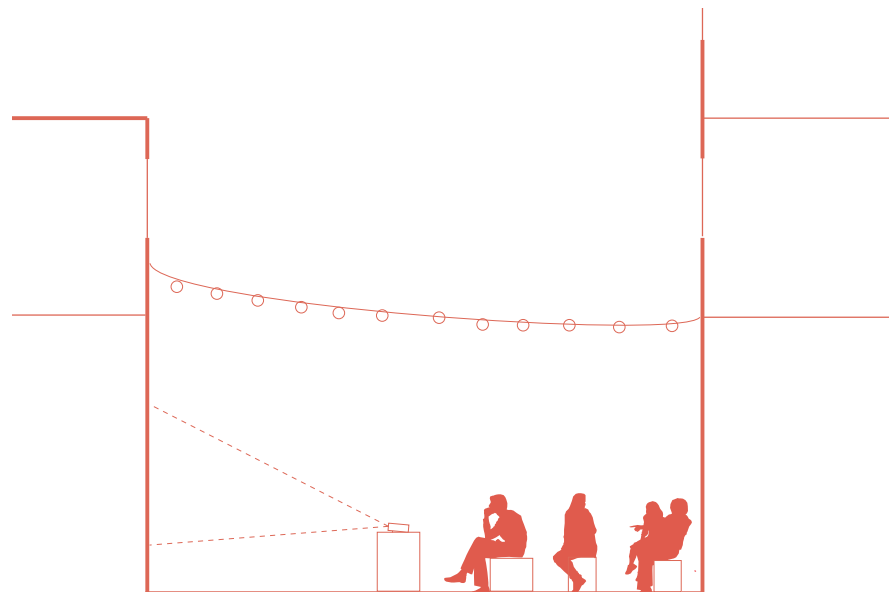


Illustration: Example of a movie screening in an alley.

# Street Closures

## Overview

Street closures temporarily restrict through-traffic so that safe spaces can be created for neighborhood activities, such as block parties or other local community events. Street closures may be programmed once a year or on a more regular/seasonal basis. Cookouts, music, social gatherings, and informal games are the most common activities, although more specific, themed neighborhood programming may also be organized.



Illustration: Example of a block party on a temporary street closure.

# Other/Interim Open Spaces

## Overview

Other / interim open spaces can include vacant parcels or small strips of land owned by District agencies such as the Department of General Services (DGS), Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), DC Public Library (DCPL), or the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) . Such spaces may be programmed for a range of community events and activities that support the District’s public life goals. Note: For more information, refer to the [DC Public Space Activation and Stewardship Guide](#) or contact DDOT.

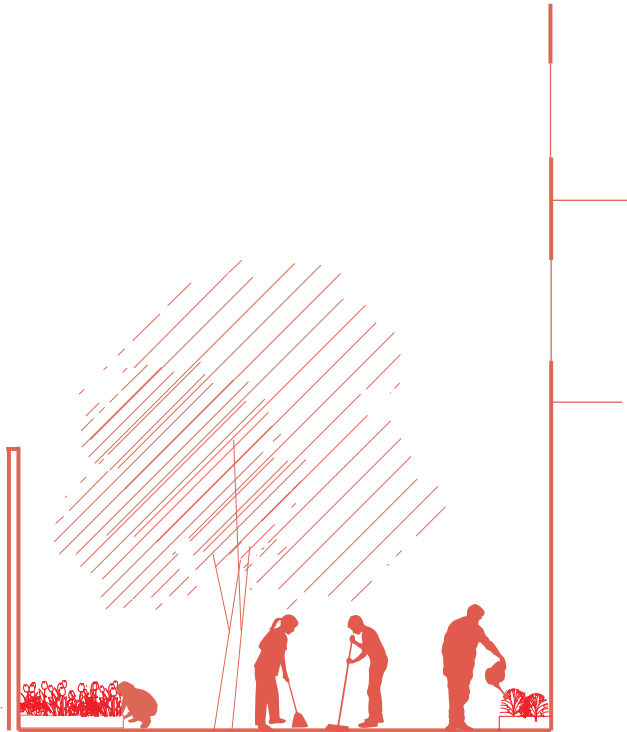


Illustration: Example of a community clean-up in an interim open space.

# Parks

## Overview

Perhaps the most traditional of public spaces, parks are anchors for social, mental, and physical wellness. All properties in the District under the jurisdiction of the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) facilities and small triangular parcels of land under the management of District Department of Transportation (DDOT) provide opportunities for neighborhood-led events and activities. Please check with local agencies to determine whether a small triangle park is under local or federal jurisdiction to understand the correct process for permitting community events.



Illustration: Example of a cookout in a park space.



Columbia Heights Civic Plaza  
Photo: DC Office of Planning



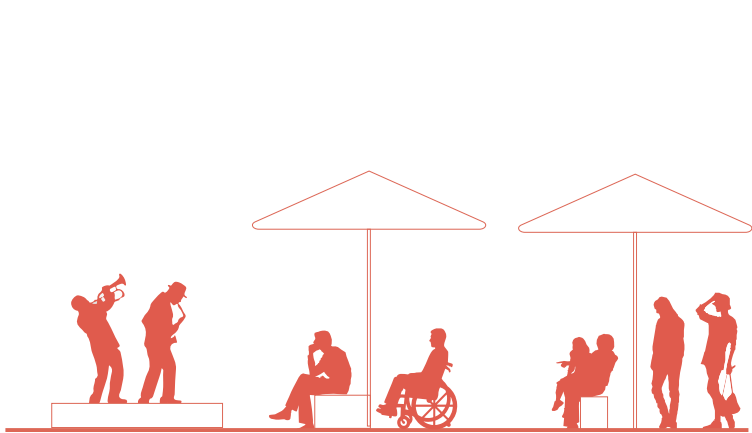
# Neighborhood Activities

The ways in which a community activates their public spaces does not have to be one-size-fits-all. A broad range of neighborhood activities bring life to the District's public spaces that include but are not limited to the following four areas:

- Culture + Heritage
- Play + Socialization
- Demonstration Projects
- Small-Scale Commerce

## Culture + Heritage

Gatherings that celebrate music, art, architecture, food, and cultural history.



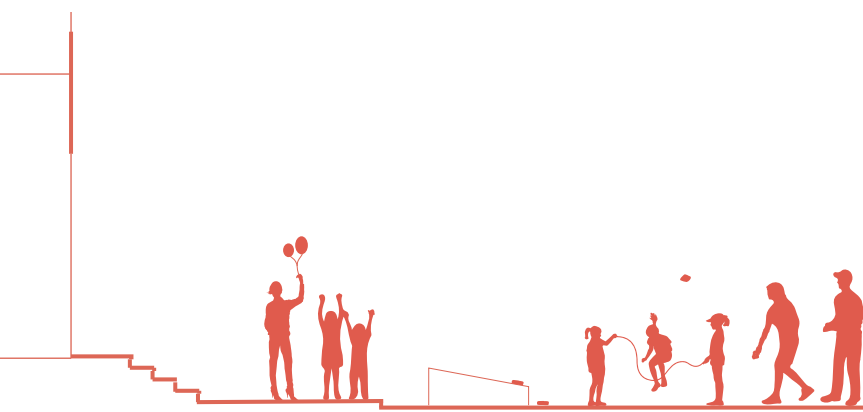
## Demonstration Projects

Tree plantings, murals, neighborhood clean-ups or graffiti removal efforts, and the creation of a demonstration plaza or bikeway.



## Play + Socialization

Informal pick-up sports, block parties, games, and social meet-ups / gatherings.



## Small-Scale Commerce

Common activities include small-scale merchants/entrepreneurs selling food, drinks, and arts and crafts.





# 03

## Materials, Tools + Equipment



Riverside, CA Public Space Activation Materials  
Photo: Street Plans



# Introduction

This section provides an overview of 64 different type of common and relatively low cost materials, tools, and equipment that can be used to support neighborhood-led activities in public space. The content is organized into the following three categories.

- **Materials**
- **Tools**
- **Equipment**

The purpose of this section is to provide basic information and guidance for each item, including cost, source, use, and a short descriptive overview. By no means exhaustive, the content included should be considered a departure point rather than a definitive guide to all potential materials.

Each material application is subject to District permitting rules to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of visitors and residents. For more guidance see the District’s Public Space Activation & Stewardship Guide, which serves as the predecessor and companion to this document.



# Materials



## Duct Tape

**COST:** \$5 – \$15 per roll

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, craft store

**USE:** Pavement or sidewalk markings, signs, tape art, mural paint-to lines, general material / tool repair

**OVERVIEW:** Duct tape has a wide variety of applications; select quality and color to suit specific needs. The stronger the tape, the more expensive but longer-lasting.



## Painter’s Tape

**COST:** \$3 – \$5 per roll

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, paint store

**USE:** Pavement or sidewalk markings, street or wall murals

**OVERVIEW:** Painter’s tape is a low-cost and easy to remove alternative to duct tape when marking areas to be painted in the public realm.



## Electrical Tape

**COST:** \$3 – \$10 per roll

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Insulating/adhering electronic equipment and wires.

**OVERVIEW:** Electrical tape is a critical material for public realm programming that includes the use of electronic equipment (microphones, amplifiers, computers, projectors, etc.)



### Reflective Tape

**COST:** \$8 – \$10 per roll

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, craft store

**USE:** Parklets, traffic control elements for physical improvements, street closures etc.

**OVERVIEW:** Use tape to enhance night-time visibility, especially for public space activity elements placed within the street.



### Traffic Tape

**COST:** \$55 – \$60 per roll

**SOURCE:** Traffic supply company

**USE:** Pavement or sidewalk markings

**OVERVIEW:** Standard foil-backed traffic tape is reflective, non-slip, and easy to apply. Available in standard white and yellow colors.



### Tempera Paint

**COST:** \$10 – \$15 per gallon bottle

**SOURCE:** Craft store, toy store

**USE:** Pavement or sidewalk markings, street or wall murals, re-painting buildings, signs

**OVERVIEW:** Tempera paint is available in powder or liquid form. It can be applied straight from the bottle. Tempera paint will wash away with a good soaking rain or can be removed with a hose.



### Spray Chalk

**COST:** \$7 – \$12 per can

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Pavement or sidewalk markings, street or wall murals, athletic field markings

**OVERVIEW:** Temporary spray marking chalk that comes in a wide variety of colors. Fades with exposure to wind, water, and sun.



### Sidewalk Chalk

**COST:** \$10 – \$20 per pack

**SOURCE:** Craft Store, toy store, hardware store

**USE:** Pavement or sidewalk markings, wayfinding and information, art and cultural events, programming for kids

**OVERVIEW:** Available in every color imaginable, washes away with rain. Set with hair spray for longer lasting results.



### Plastic Bucket

**COST:** \$3 – \$10 per bucket

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, general store, paint store

**USE:** Paint, materials storage or display

**OVERVIEW:** 5-gallon buckets may be used to store and mix paint as well as to hold water to clean brushes, extensions polls, roller frames etc. Buckets may be re-used for other material storage.





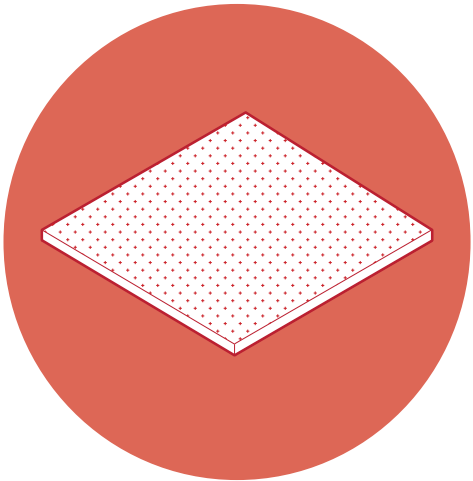
### Plastic Dropcloth

**COST:** \$2 – \$15 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, paint store

**USE:** Surface protection from paint spills, drips, and drops

**OVERVIEW:** Place underneath paint supplies to protect surfaces. Dropcloths may be upgraded to more durable/reusable cloth or tarpaulin products.



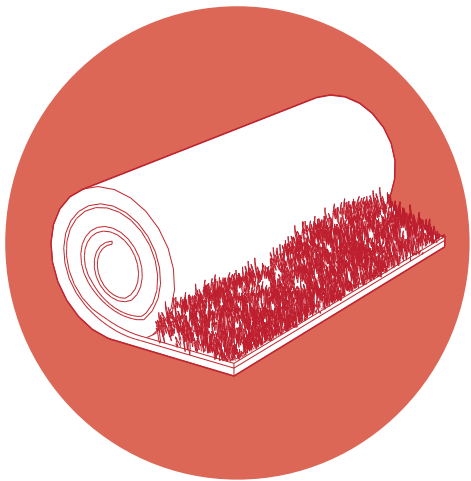
### Astro Turf

**COST:** \$.75 – \$3.50 sq./ft.

**SOURCE:** Gardening supply, hardware store

**USE:** Soft surface for parklets, social and artistic events and activities

**OVERVIEW:** Synthetic grass sold in standard rolls. Typically used to add visual greenery to an event or project; available in custom rolls measured to meet spatial needs.



### Sod

**COST:** \$.25/sq. ft.

**SOURCE:** Gardening supply, hardware store

**USE:** Use to create a natural, soft green surface for demonstration parklets, plazas, and pocket parks

**OVERVIEW:** Upside: easy, and cheap solution for creating a soft, comfortable, and visible green surface. Not easily re-used.



### Garden Soil

**COST:** \$4 – \$15 per bag

**SOURCE:** Gardening supply, feed store, or hardware store

**USE:** Community plantings of all types

**OVERVIEW:** For small projects, individual bags may suffice; for larger jobs obtain soil efficiently and less expensively through bulk supplier. Select soil type per intended use (i.e. – potting soil vs. raised bed soil).



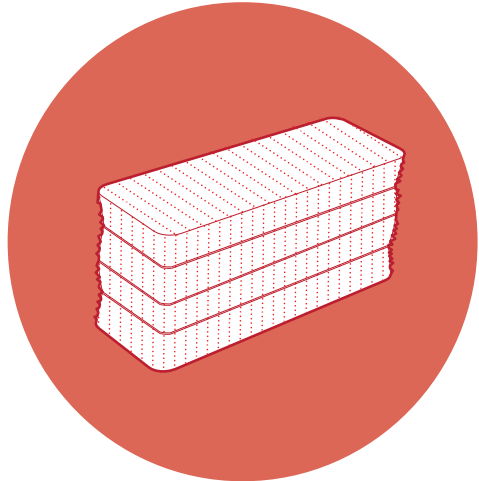
### Plants/Flowers

**COST:** Varies

**SOURCE:** Gardening supply, hardware store

**USE:** Beautification for all projects, events, and activities

**OVERVIEW:** Plants/Flowers can be borrowed or purchased, and used as a greening and beautification element for barriers, parklets, memorials, improvement / beautification projects, etc.



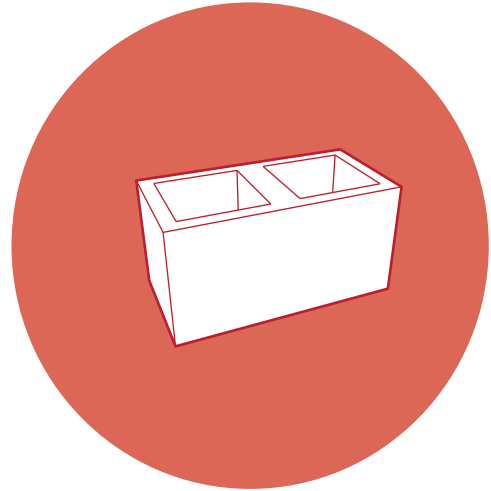
### Hay Bale

**COST:** \$10–\$40 / per bale

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, gardening store, feed store

**USE:** Seating, barriers

**OVERVIEW:** Cheap and relatively easy to transport if a large vehicle or drop-off can be arranged. Hay bales are great for short-term projects, especially as seasonally appropriate seats for temporary public spaces. Use gloves when handling.



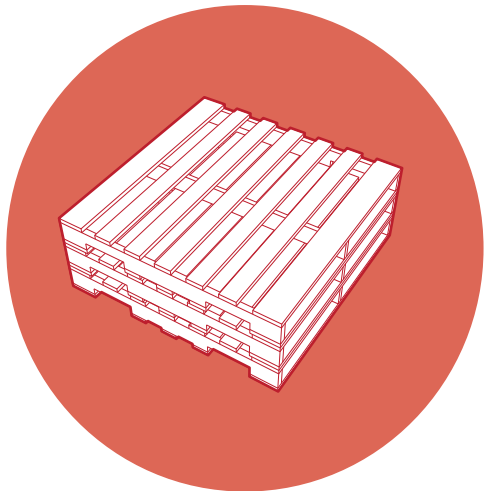
### Cinder Block

**COST:** \$1.25 – \$4/block

**SOURCE:** Lumberyard, hardware store, construction supply

**USE:** Seating, planters, gardening, 10x10’ tent weights

**OVERVIEW:** Create simple and affordable benches using cinder blocks and 4”x4” beams; may also be used as planters and be painted various colors to improve aesthetic value.



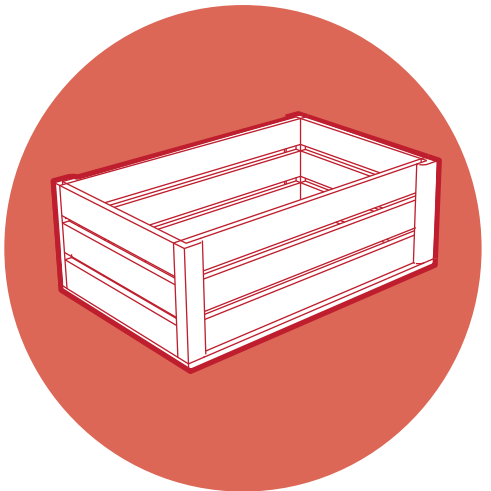
### Shipping Pallets

**COST:** \$1 – \$10 or free!

**SOURCE:** Reclaim from construction sites, big box stores, purchase from pallet suppliers

**USE:** Seating, planters, signage, stage, parklets, barriers

**OVERVIEW:** Shipping Pallets are wooden or plastic platforms that are relatively light, durable, and movable. They can be broken apart for various uses. Heat-treated (“HT”) pallets are the safest to use.



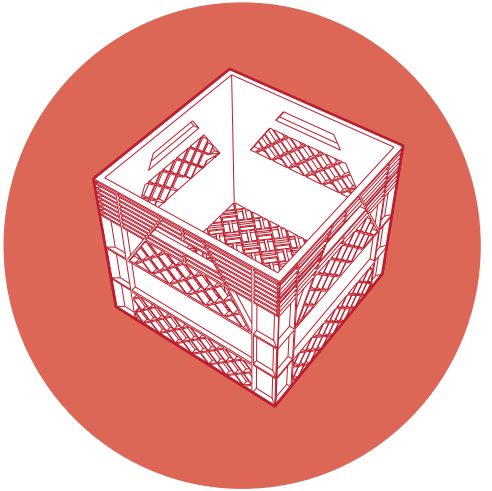
### Wooden Crate

**COST:** \$9 – \$15 per crate

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, craft store

**USE:** Planter, market display, seating

**OVERVIEW:** Lightweight, stackable wooden crate of various sizes, which can be used for displays or as a planter.



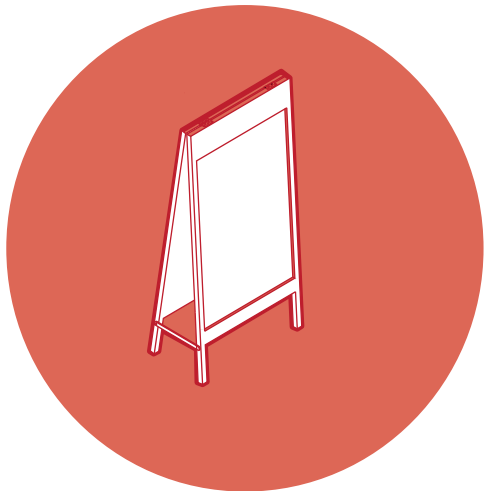
### Milk Crate

**COST:** \$5 – \$15 per crate

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, big box retailer, online suppliers

**USE:** Seating, retail display, planters

**OVERVIEW:** Highly durable, light plastic containers that may be re-purposed for a number of uses; easily movable and stackable (though not collapsible!).



### Signs

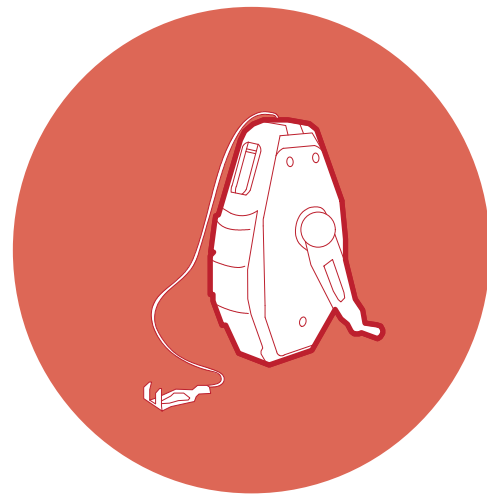
**COST:** Varies

**SOURCE:** Print shop

**USE:** Wayfinding or information

**OVERVIEW:** Depending on intended duration, budget, and purpose, opt for paper, Coroplast, or metal signs. To ensure safety/function, anchor/affix signs with weights, sandbags, wire locks, zip ties, or similar.

# Tools



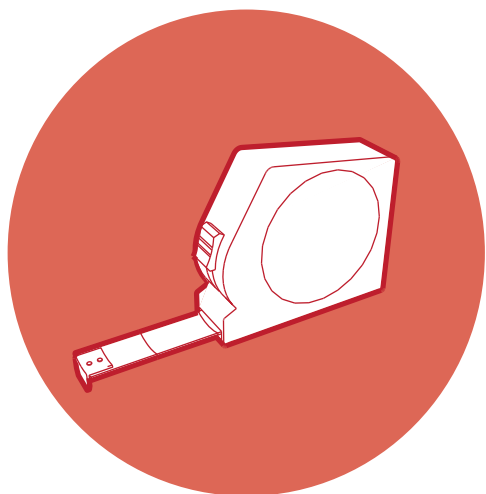
## Chalk Line

**COST:** \$5 – \$20 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Site layout

**OVERVIEW:** Tool for creating straight guide lines for any / all project striping / markings placement of public space.



## Tape Measure

**COST:** \$10 – \$30 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Measuring / laying out public space elements

**OVERVIEW:** Assists with laying out all measurements for various project elements (striping distances, marking locations, barrier spacing, height adjustments, sign placement etc.).



## Scissors

**COST:** \$5 – \$10 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, craft store

**USE:** Various

**OVERVIEW:** From opening boxes of supplies, to cutting zip ties, string, and various types of traffic tape, scissors have many applications for the set up and break down of public space activities.



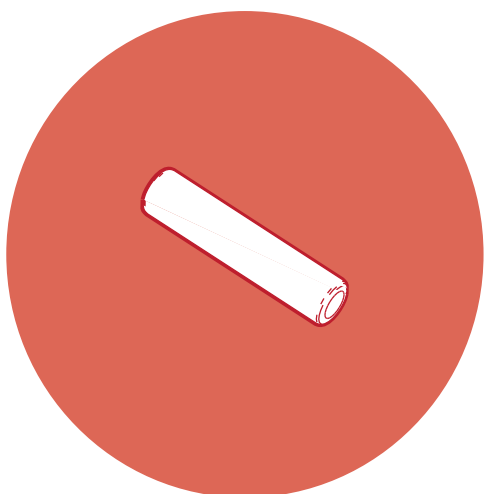
## Roller Frame

**COST:** \$3 – \$5 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, paint store

**USE:** Pavement or sidewalk markings, street or wall murals, re-painting buildings, signs

**OVERVIEW:** Efficiently applies paint to asphalt, concrete or other surfaces. For improved experience, use with roller extension poll.



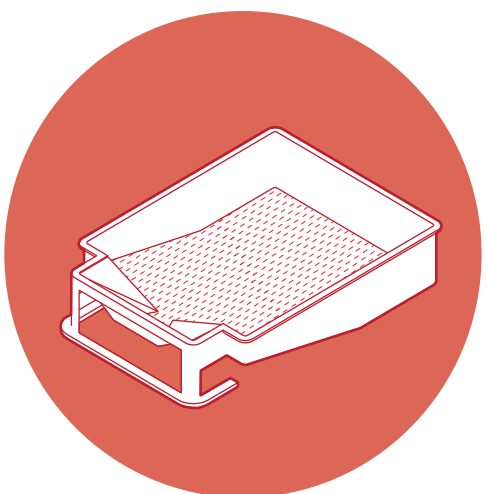
## Roller Brush

**COST:** \$8 – \$10 per brush

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, paint store

**USE:** Pavement or sidewalk markings, street or wall murals, re-painting buildings, signs

**OVERVIEW:** To apply paint evenly to surface, roll brush in tray until paint is evenly distributed. Purchase replacement brushes when painting rough surfaces, like asphalt.



## Roller Tray

**COST:** \$3 – \$8 per tray

**SOURCE:** Hardware, paint store

**USE:** Pavement or sidewalk markings, street or wall murals, re-painting buildings, signs

**OVERVIEW:** Used for holding paint to be applied by roller brushes. Metal or steel trays are reusable if paired with a plastic liner. For best performance, use tray and roller brush of the same width.





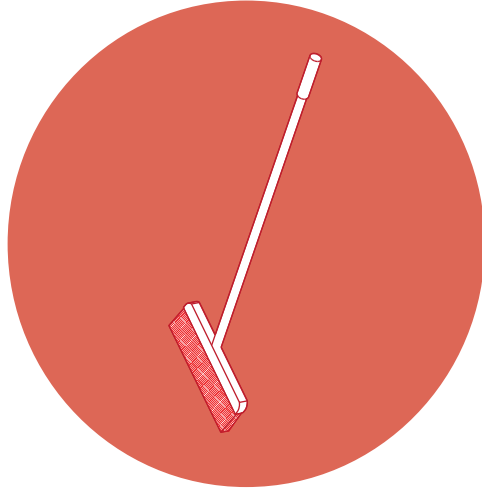
### Stencil

**COST:** \$50 – \$200 per stencil

**SOURCE:** Print shop, fabrication lab

**USE:** Wayfinding and information messaging on ground and vertical surfaces

**OVERVIEW:** Stencils may be from cardboard, wood, plastic, or vinyl. Material selection, complexity, and size will impact cost.



### Broom

**COST:** \$10 – \$20 per broom

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Site cleaning / preparation

**OVERVIEW:** To clear debris (dirt, leaves, trash, etc.) on pathways, sidewalks, paver, and asphalt surfaces. A more physically taxing but quieter and non-polluting option than leaf blower.



### Push Broom

**COST:** \$10 – \$25 per broom

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Site cleaning / preparation

**OVERVIEW:** To clear debris (dirt, leaves, trash, etc.) on pathways, sidewalks, paver, and asphalt surfaces. A more physically taxing but quieter and non-polluting option than leaf blower.



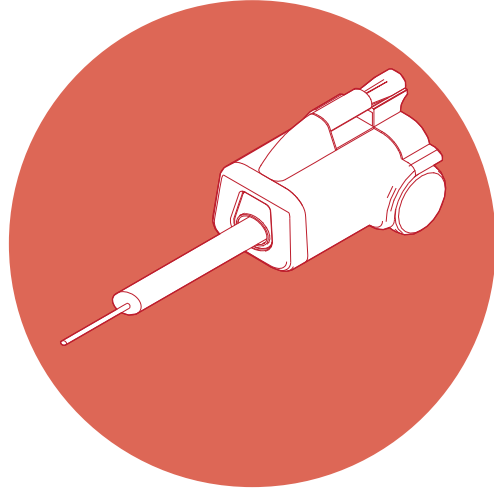
### Trash Can

**COST:** \$40 – \$110 per can

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Trash storage and removal

**OVERVIEW:** Trash/recycling cans are an essential component to any public gathering, especially if it involves food and drink. For ease of use, consider cans that stack or that have wheels.



### Power Cleaner

**COST:** \$150 – \$1,500 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, industrial tool supply company

**USE:** Surface cleaning (concrete, asphalt, cinder block, brick, etc.), site preparation, project removal

**OVERVIEW:** Where water is readily available, power cleaners provide an efficient way to clean surfaces before or after project installation.



### Hammer

**COST:** \$10 – \$20 per hammer

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Art installations, street furniture, parklet decking, signage, raised garden construction

**OVERVIEW:** A key tool for constructing physical elements for use in the public space.



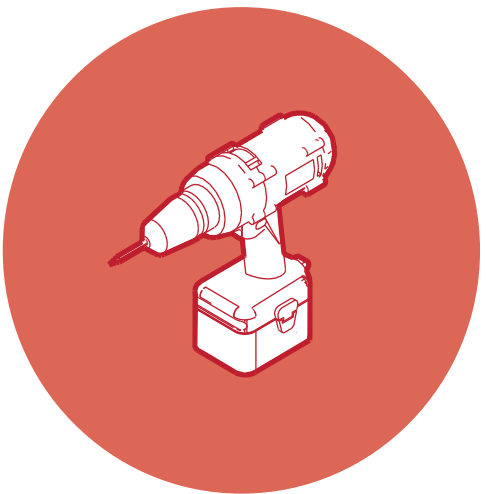
### Mallet

**COST:** \$5 – \$12 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Art installations, raised garden construction, traffic control assembly

**OVERVIEW:** A key tool for constructing physical enhancements; may also be used for assembling temporary traffic control, like delineators.



### Power Drill

**COST:** \$20 – \$80 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Assembling / installing public space elements

**OVERVIEW:** Essential for assembling project elements, drilling holes to anchor protected bike lane elements (armadillos, delineator posts), or various other project tasks.



### Trowel

**COST:** \$5 – \$10 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Gardening and landscaping

**OVERVIEW:** Key tool for planting, gardening, and maintaining plants or other landscape elements.



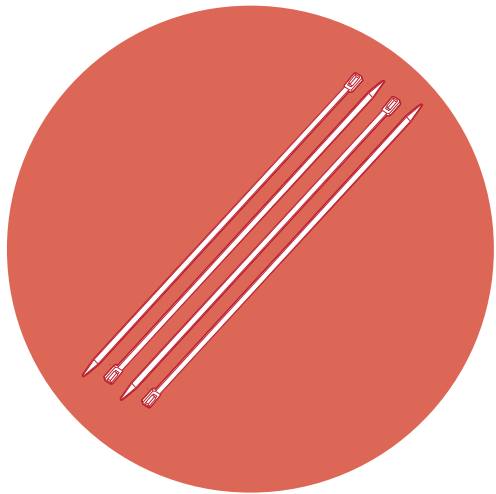
### Shovel

**COST:** \$10 – \$40 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Landscaping / gardening, debris / snow /ice removal

**OVERVIEW:** Shovels of various types are useful tools to have on hand for a variety of physical improvement and landscaping projects. Metal shovels are more durable than plastic, especially when removing snow, ice, and heavy debris.



### Zip Ties

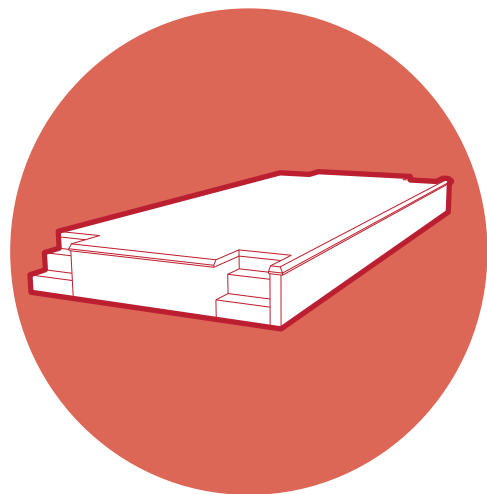
**COST:** \$5 – \$14 per pack

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, craft store

**USE:** Signs, banners, material organization

**OVERVIEW:** Provides a quick way to affix project elements like wayfinding and information signs to tables, sign posts, lampposts, A-frames etc.

# Equipment



## Performance Stage

**COST:** \$300 – \$3,000 per unit

**SOURCE:** The Stage Depot

**USE:** Artistic performances, speeches, outdoor movies, presentations

**OVERVIEW:** Available in a wide variety of sizes and heights. Select models that are easy to assemble/disassemble, and are relatively easy to store.



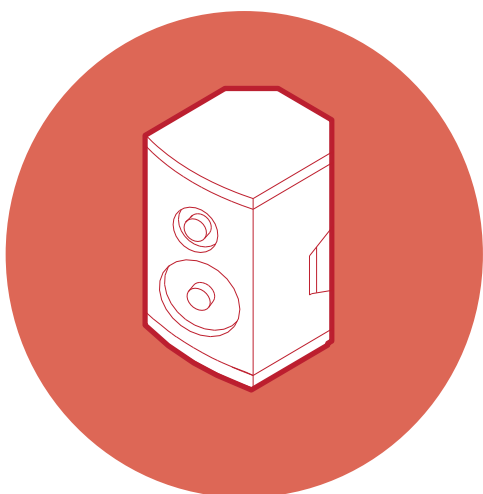
## Microphone

**COST:** \$170 – \$400 per unit

**SOURCE:** Electronics store

**USE:** Artistic performances, speeches, presentations

**OVERVIEW:** Used for events and activities where personal sound amplification is required. Wireless microphones increase range wherever obtaining a direct electricity source is challenging.



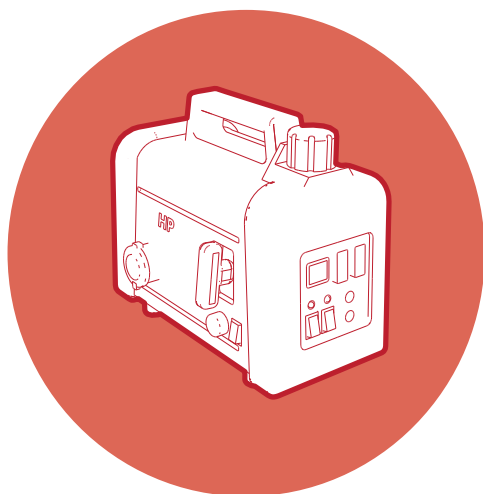
## Speaker

**COST:** \$170 – \$400 per unit

**SOURCE:** Electronics store

**USE:** Performances of all types, speeches

**OVERVIEW:** Used for events and activities where sound amplification is required. Wireless speakers increase range wherever obtaining a direct electricity source is challenging.



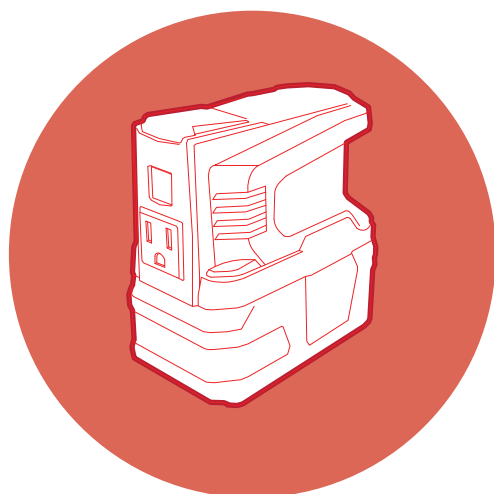
## Generator

**COST:** \$800 – \$2,000 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Electricity generation for events and activities

**OVERVIEW:** Useful for bringing power to locations where there is none. Best paired with a long extension cord if noise generation is going to interfere with event experience.



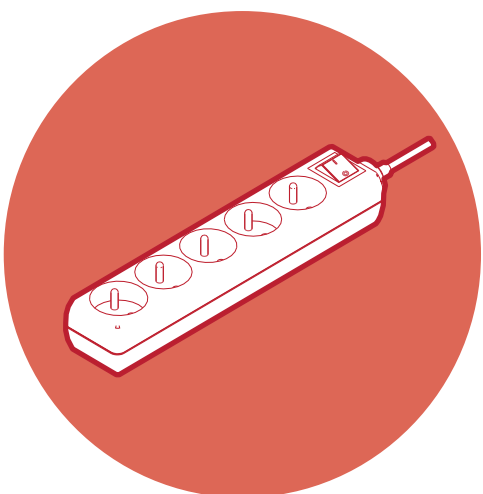
## Battery Generator

**COST:** \$550–\$1600

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Electricity generation for events and activities

**OVERVIEW:** Similar to a regular generator, useful for bringing power to locations where there is none. Best paired with a long extension cord if noise generation is going to interfere with event experience. A battery generator does not use any fuel and is more environmentally friendly.



## Power Strip

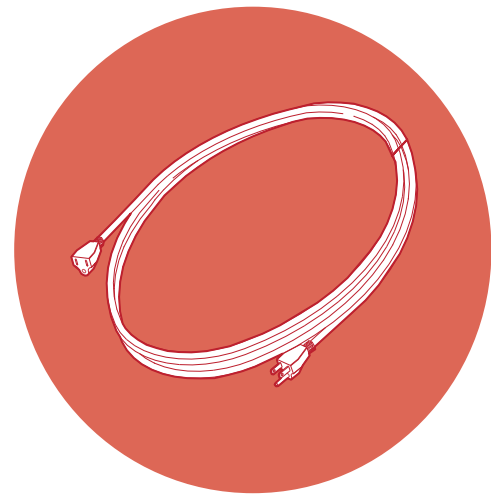
**COST:** \$5 – \$40 per unit

**SOURCE:** Electronics store, hardware store

**USE:** Events and activities where electricity is required

**OVERVIEW:** Provides an efficient way to access electricity where source availability is limited. Most often paired with an extension cord to maximize reach. For best results, select a weatherproof strip intended for outdoor use.





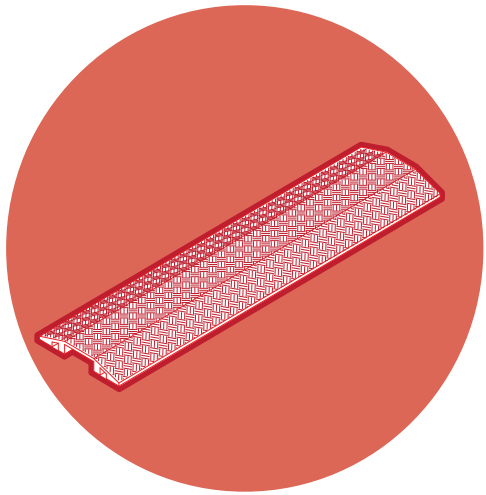
### Extension cord

**COST:** \$5 – \$50 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, Electronics store

**USE:** Events and activities where electricity is required

**OVERVIEW:** Extension cords come in a wide range of lengths; weatherproof options should be selected for all outdoor applications.



### Extension Cord Cover

**COST:** \$15– \$30 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, electronics store

**USE:** Block parties, events

**OVERVIEW:** Easy to install, adhesive shapes to cables to create a low profile of cords. Protects cords on the ground and keeps floor area safe from tripping hazards. Cord cover can be easily cut to desired length.



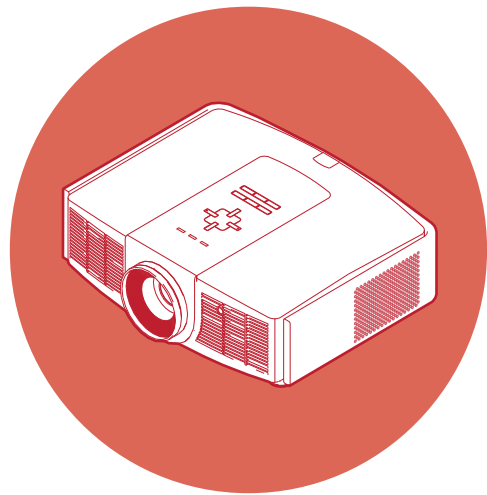
### Wifi Hotspot

**COST:** \$150 – \$1,500 per unit

**SOURCE:** Electronics store, big box retailers, computer store

**USE:** To provide wireless access to the internet

**OVERVIEW:** Having internet access can support programming for any number of public space activation types and can draw people in to use a space.



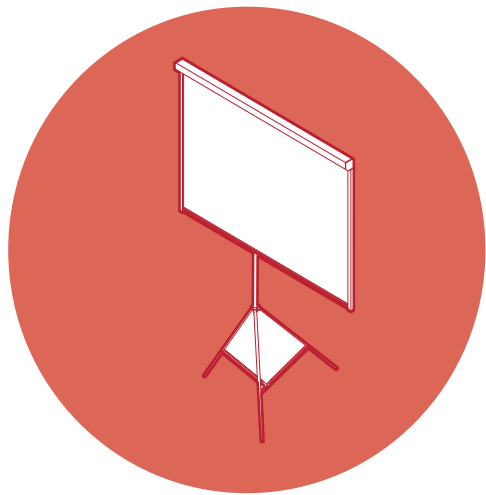
### Projector

**COST:** \$80 – \$550 per unit

**SOURCE:** Electronics store

**USE:** Movies, projection art, public presentations

**OVERVIEW:** Projection is an increasingly common part of social and artistic events, entertainment, and a variety of social activities.



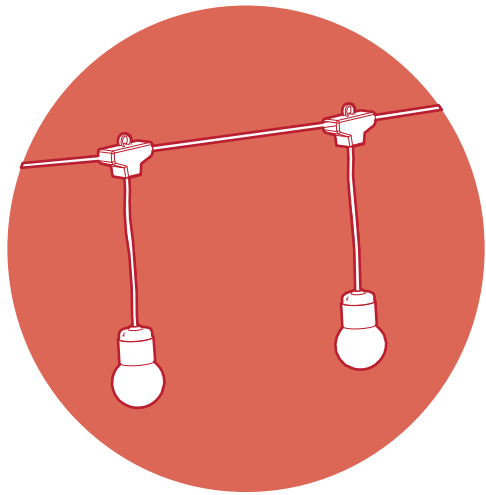
### Screen

**COST:** \$20 – \$90 per unit

**SOURCE:** Electronics store

**USE:** Project art, movies, presentations, artistic performances

**OVERVIEW:** Useful for a range of events and artistic activities, especially where the use of a blank wall is not feasible. For best results, select weatherproof screen; stakes and weights available for windy conditions.



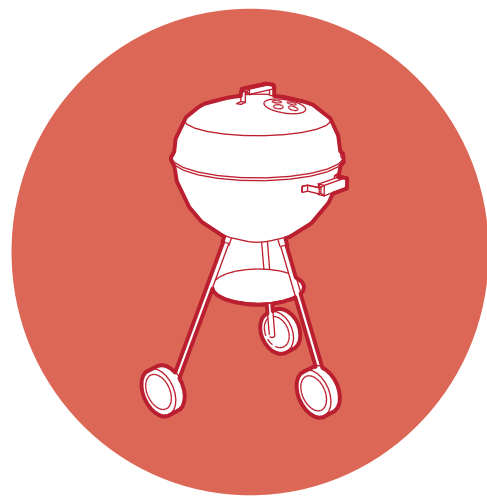
### String Lights

**COST:** \$25 – \$50 per string segment

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, big box retailers

**USE:** Evening events and activities, including parklets, food gatherings, art and cultural performances, public seating, holiday celebrations

**OVERVIEW:** String lights are a cheap way add light and ambiance to any public space.



### Charcoal Grill

**COST:** \$90 – \$180 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Block parties, social or cultural gatherings with food, markets.

**OVERVIEW:** Grills, and the smells they emit, are a great way to draw people into public space. Grill placement and operations should follow all safety regulations.



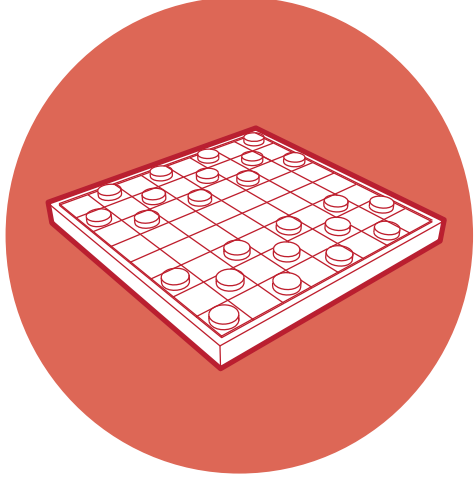
### Cooler

**COST:** \$25 – \$200 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Block parties, social or cultural gatherings with food, markets, social and cultural events.

**OVERVIEW:** Not only the primary way to keep food and beverages cold, coolers can also double as seating for entrepreneurs.



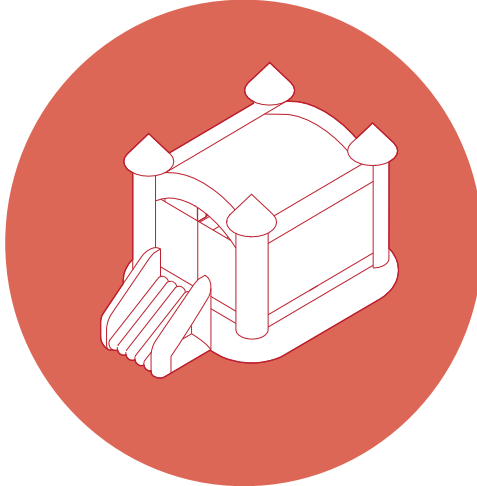
### Games

**COST:** \$25 – \$250 per unit

**SOURCE:** Big box retailers, entertainment stores

**USE:** Any event/activity that could benefit from interactive games.

**OVERVIEW:** Games increase social and physical activity in public spaces. Game pieces / condition should be monitored for function and safety.



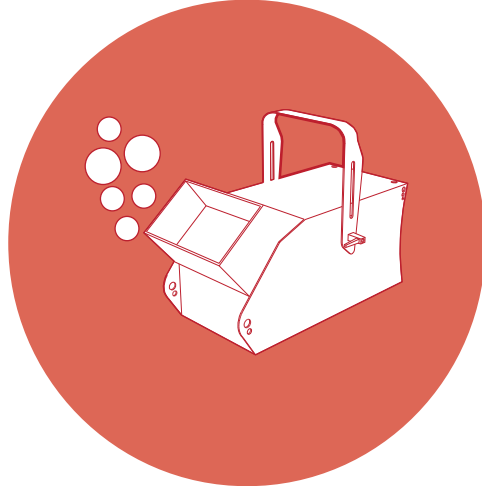
### Bounce House

**COST:** \$400 – \$3,000 per unit

**SOURCE:** Online retailers, big box retailers, party supply rental

**USE:** Any event/activity that could benefit from physical activity / programming geared towards families.

**OVERVIEW:** Bounce houses provide a great way to program block parties, small-scale festivals, family events.



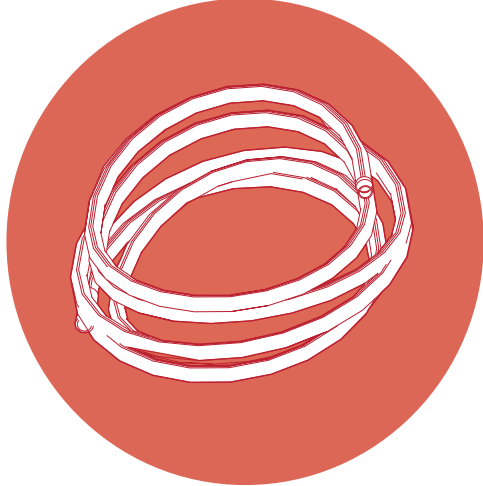
### Bubble Machine

**COST:** \$30 – \$1,000 per unit

**SOURCE:** Electronics store, big box retailers, online retailers, party store

**USE:** To enliven public events, parties, or other gatherings, especially geared towards children/families.

**OVERVIEW:** Brings atmosphere / fun to any event; most bubble machines require a power source.



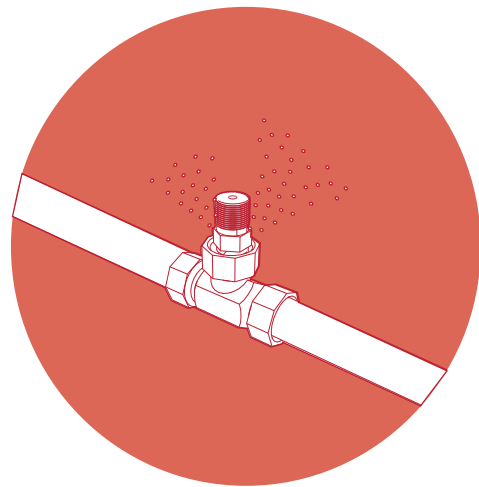
### Hose

**COST:** \$30 – \$1,000 per unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, garden supply store, big box retailer

**USE:** Any event or stewardship activity with a landscaping/ planting component; cleaning surfaces; summer time fun/ cooling.

**OVERVIEW:** Hoses available in various lengths and with multiple attachments. Water source required.



### Water Mister

**COST:** \$10 – \$70 per system

**SOURCE:** Hardware store, big box retailer, online retailer

**USE:** Provides gentle mist for cooling at any public gathering or event during warm weather.

**OVERVIEW:** Where a water source is available misters provide a low cost way to both cool and entertain people within the public realm.



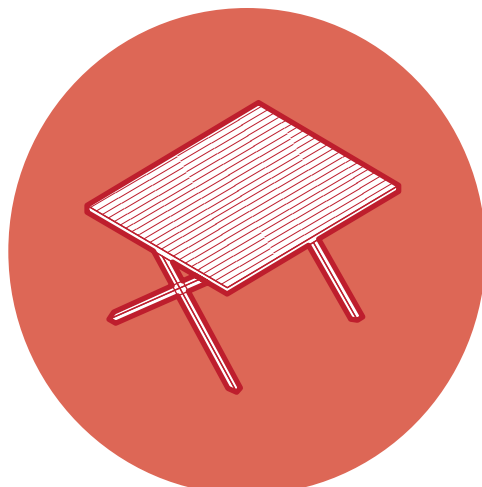
### Chairs

**COST:** \$15 – \$120 per chair

**SOURCE:** Outdoor furniture supplier, hardware store, big box retailer

**USE:** Seating

**OVERVIEW:** Folding tables chairs may be found in steel, aluminum, or wood. Movable chairs may require a maintenance partner who is willing to be responsible for set-up and storage each day.



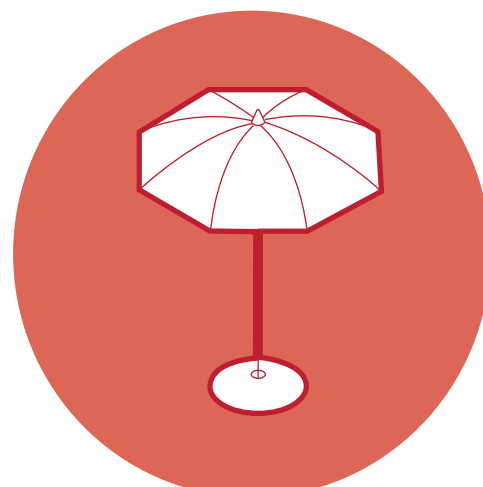
### Folding Table

**COST:** \$20 – \$165 table

**SOURCE:** Outdoor furniture supplier, big box retailer, hardware store

**USE:** Usable surface for eating, small-scale commerce, tabling

**OVERVIEW:** Folding tables allow flexible use of space, as they can be used individually or together to accommodate large groups/ specific types of programming.



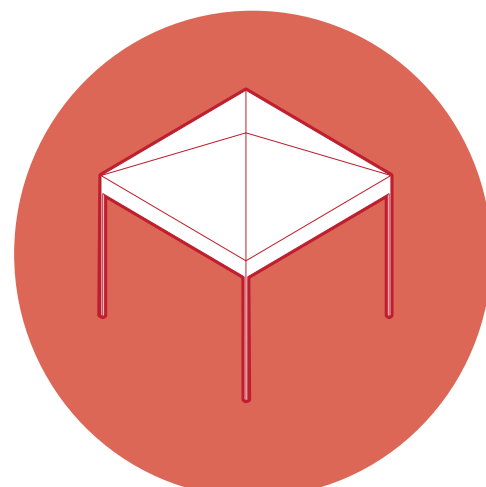
### Movable Umbrella

**COST:** \$50 – \$120 unit

**SOURCE:** Outdoor furniture supplier, hardware store, big box retailer

**USE:** Weather protection

**OVERVIEW:** Movable umbrella with base provides shade – a critical element in sunny public spaces. Best when colorful and paired with movable chairs.



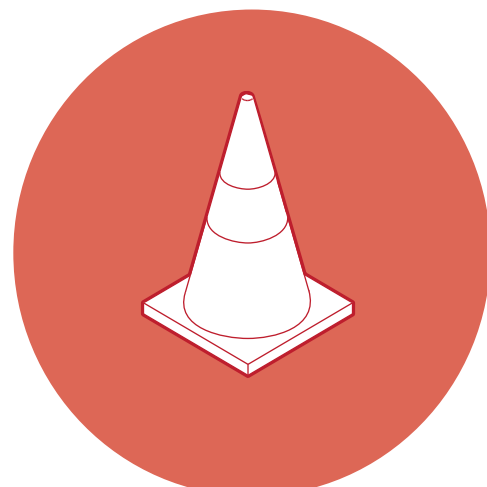
### 10'x10' Tent

**COST:** \$60 – \$350 per unit

**SOURCE:** Outdoor furniture supplier, hardware store

**USE:** Weather protection, small-scale commerce, tabling

**OVERVIEW:** To ensure safety and function, anchor tents with weights (sandbags, cinder blocks) or similar); may be aligned end-to-end for continuous protection or used at discrete locations.



### Traffic Cone

**COST:** \$12 – \$22 per cone

**SOURCE:** Traffic supply company

**USE:** Street closures, block parties, art installations, physical improvements, temporary parklets

**OVERVIEW:** Standard traffic cones are available in various sizes. Highly flexible in terms of use for traffic control during project installation and/or as a barrier element for short-term demonstration projects.





### Wave Delineators

**COST:** N/A

**SOURCE:** Saris

**USE:** Street closure/block parties, art installations, physical improvements, temporary parklets

**OVERVIEW:** An attractive barrier element for short-term demonstration projects, like sidewalk extensions or protected bike lanes. Some applications may require reflective elements to be added, like cones or tape.



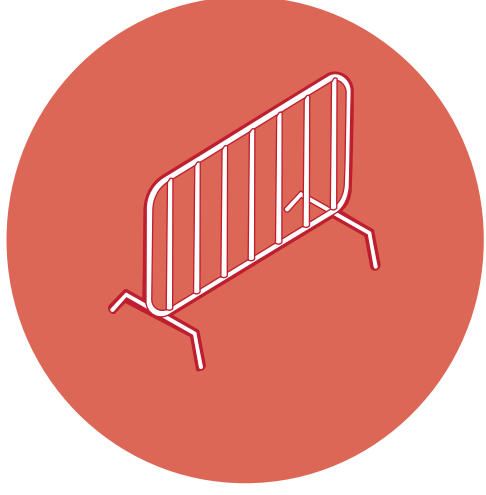
### Type 2 Barricade

**COST:** \$35 – \$60 per barricade

**SOURCE:** Traffic supply company

**USE:** Street closure/ block parties, art installations, physical improvements, parklets

**OVERVIEW:** A commonly-used traffic control barrier, these barriers can be used for temporary street closures or to post temporary signs.



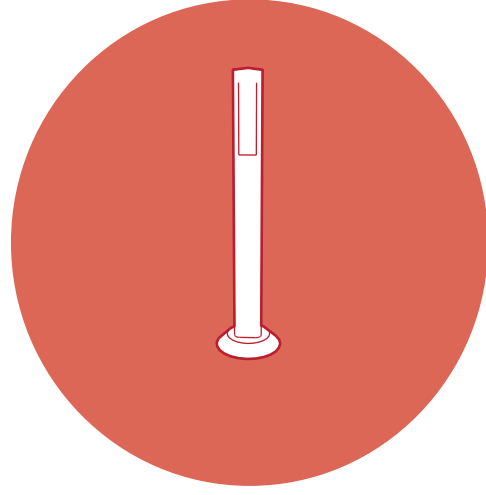
### French Barricade

**COST:** \$70 – \$100 per barricade

**SOURCE:** Traffic supply company

**USE:** Street closures, block parties, art installations, physical improvements

**OVERVIEW:** Effective but difficult to store/move around in bulk; French barricades are not reflective so consider how and where they are used at night or adding reflective tape, cones, signs, delineators, etc.



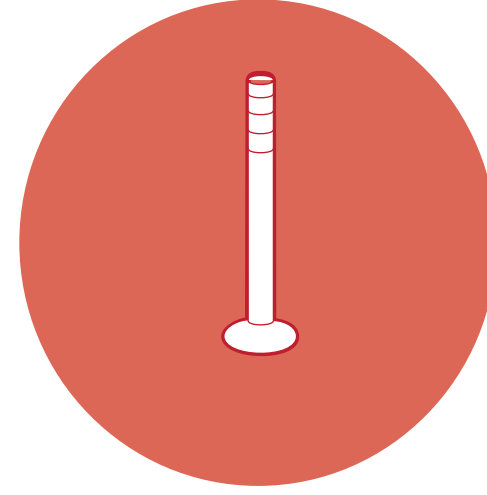
### Flexible Delineator

**COST:** \$20 – \$40 per unit

**SOURCE:** Traffic supply company

**USE:** Street closures, block parties, physical improvements, parklets

**OVERVIEW:** Standard reflective delineator post, available in multiple colors; temporary applications may use an epoxy adhesive rather than bolts to affix to asphalt or concrete.



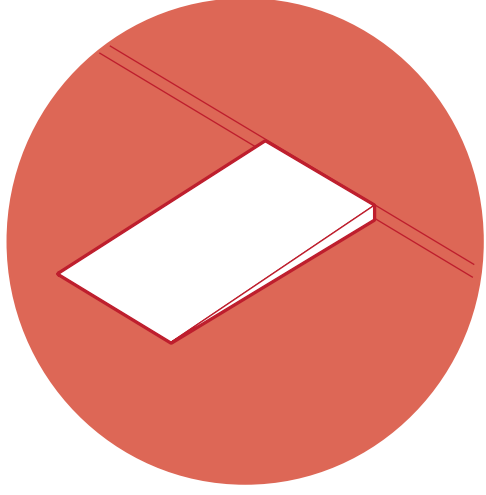
### Delineator Tube

**COST:** \$15 – \$18 per unit

**SOURCE:** Traffic supply company

**USE:** Street closures, block parties, temporary physical improvements, temporary parklets

**OVERVIEW:** Consider transport needs and capacity; delineators do not nest as easily as traffic cones. Contractors may be willing to donate the temporary use of their traffic cones.



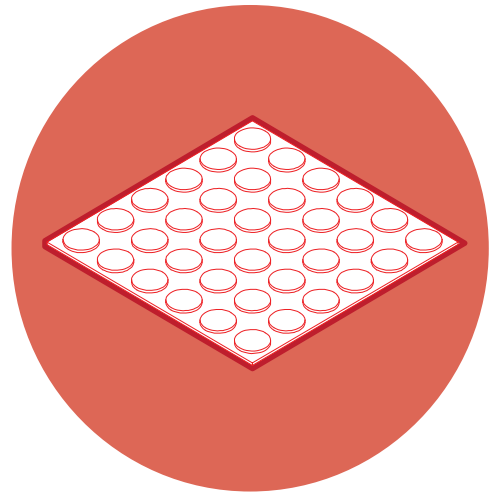
### Portable Curb Ramp

**COST:** \$90 – \$170 per unit

**SOURCE:** Traffic supply company

**USE:** Parklets, physical street improvements, events

**OVERVIEW:** Lightweight, easy to deploy, suitable for wheelchair, scooter users, and people on foot. Check dimensions carefully to ensure ADA-compliance. May need to be epoxied or otherwise secured to the curb to prevent being dislodged.



## Tactile Tiles

**COST:** \$60-\$75 per 1' x 1' unit

**SOURCE:** Hardware store

**USE:** Street closures, street closures, temporary physical improvements, temporary parklets

**OVERVIEW:** A raised, truncated dome pad is used to notify the visually impaired of a street change. The visually impaired can feel the pad with their feet and tapping cane, and beveled edges reduce tripping hazards.



Accessible Platform at Outdoor Dining  
Photo: DC Office of Planning



# Vision for Materials, Tools + Equipment Access

Many of the ideas in this document make for a effective strategy for activating public spaces. However, to bring these concepts from the page to the streets, a more direct method for distributing materials and equipment is needed. The establishment of a materials, tools, and equipment library, a physical place to store items for community sharing/borrowing, would improve access to the items that can enable a wide range of public space activities.

The **Better Block in A Box** developed by Better Block and distributed across the country; the **Pop-Up Projects Mobile Support Unit** developed by Local Motion in Burlington, Vermont; and the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) **Go Human Materials Pod** offer precedents for the storage and lending of public space materials. All three models contain necessary materials for carrying out public space enhancement and activities within a singular storage container, which can then be transported to the selected site for the event. This model works well for larger events such as street fairs or in highly-trafficked public spaces (plazas, squares, parks) but without a local steward to manage and operate the deployment may become cumbersome.

Tool libraries found in communities across the United States provide another good precedent. For example, the **Berkeley, CA Tool Library** allows community residents to rent up to 10 tools from the library. The tools are housed within the public library, and citizens can check tools out using a library card.



Go Human pod and plaza activation  
Photo: Street Plans

## Recommendations

Building out a library of materials and equipment that community partners can access will require funding and coordination with various District agencies and partners. However, the following recommendations provide direction for the development of a unique, scalable program that supports the equitable distribution of materials and equipment for neighborhood activities in public spaces across the District.

- 1 Establish a Materials + Equipment Pilot Program**  
Align agency, philanthropy, and community partners behind the creation of a Public Space Materials and Equipment Library pilot to support and enhance neighborhood-led activities in public space.
- 2 Develop and test two distribution strategies for public space materials and equipment**  
Test a fixed location (library basement, a purpose-built shed, etc.) as well as one mobile solution (shipping container, box truck or sprinter van, etc.). The cost for developing each library will depend on exact location, scale, number of materials, and the distribution/management model, but could range from \$50,000 to \$100,000, not including ongoing costs or staff management, material and equipment maintenance and replacement. Prioritize ADA accessibility in the pilot strategies.

- 3 Bring These Tools to the People!**  
Office of Planning and partners should create a neighborhood roadshow to brings the contents of the District of Columbia Public Space Activation & Stewardship Guide; Our City, Our Spaces; and resulting materials and equipment library pilot information to community events and meetings. The neighborhood roadshow could partner with community organizations to hold meetings with residents. These meetings can cover the dynamics of leading neighborhood activities in public spaces and how to use the materials suggested in the guide. A special emphasis should be placed on reaching communities located within the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) Equity Emphasis Areas.
- 4 Analyze, Select, Scale Materials + Equipment Library**  
Use community and partner feedback, economic analysis, and performance data to select preferred materials and equipment for a lending library model. This should include a sustainable funding and expansion/management plan to ensure the benefits are conferred District-wide, especially within TPB Equity Emphasis Areas. Ensure that ADA accessibility is a priority in any final designs for the lending library.



# 04

## Public Space Playbook

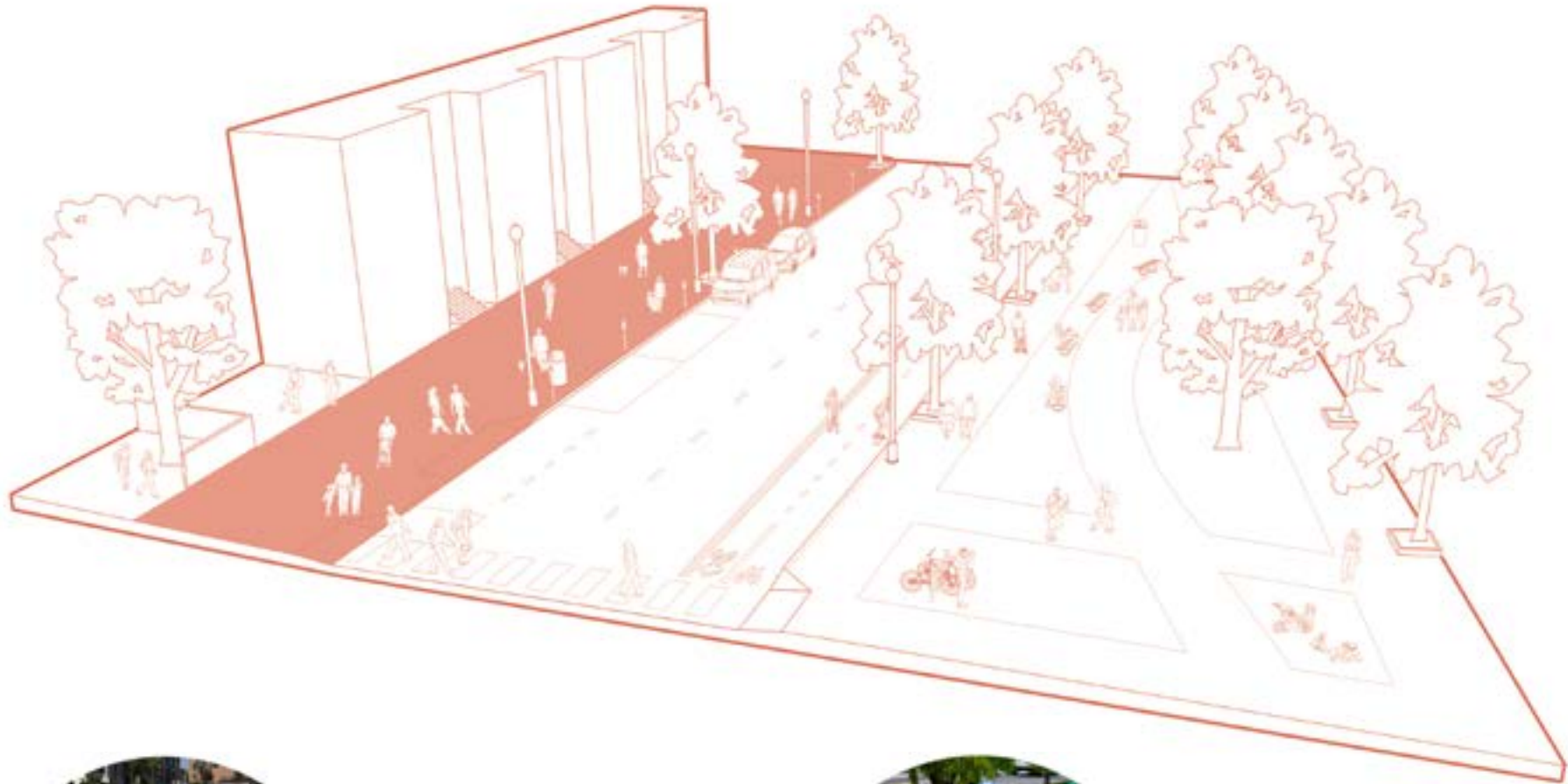
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Play Stop at Ward 7  
Photo: DC Office of Planning



# Sidewalks + Plazas



Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony  
Photo: DC Office of Planning



"The Chairs" in Anacostia  
Photo: DC Office of Planning



Commuter Jazz as part of the DC Office of Planning  
Crossing the Street event Ward 7, 2017  
Photo: Gehl Architects

## Activation Types Culture + Heritage



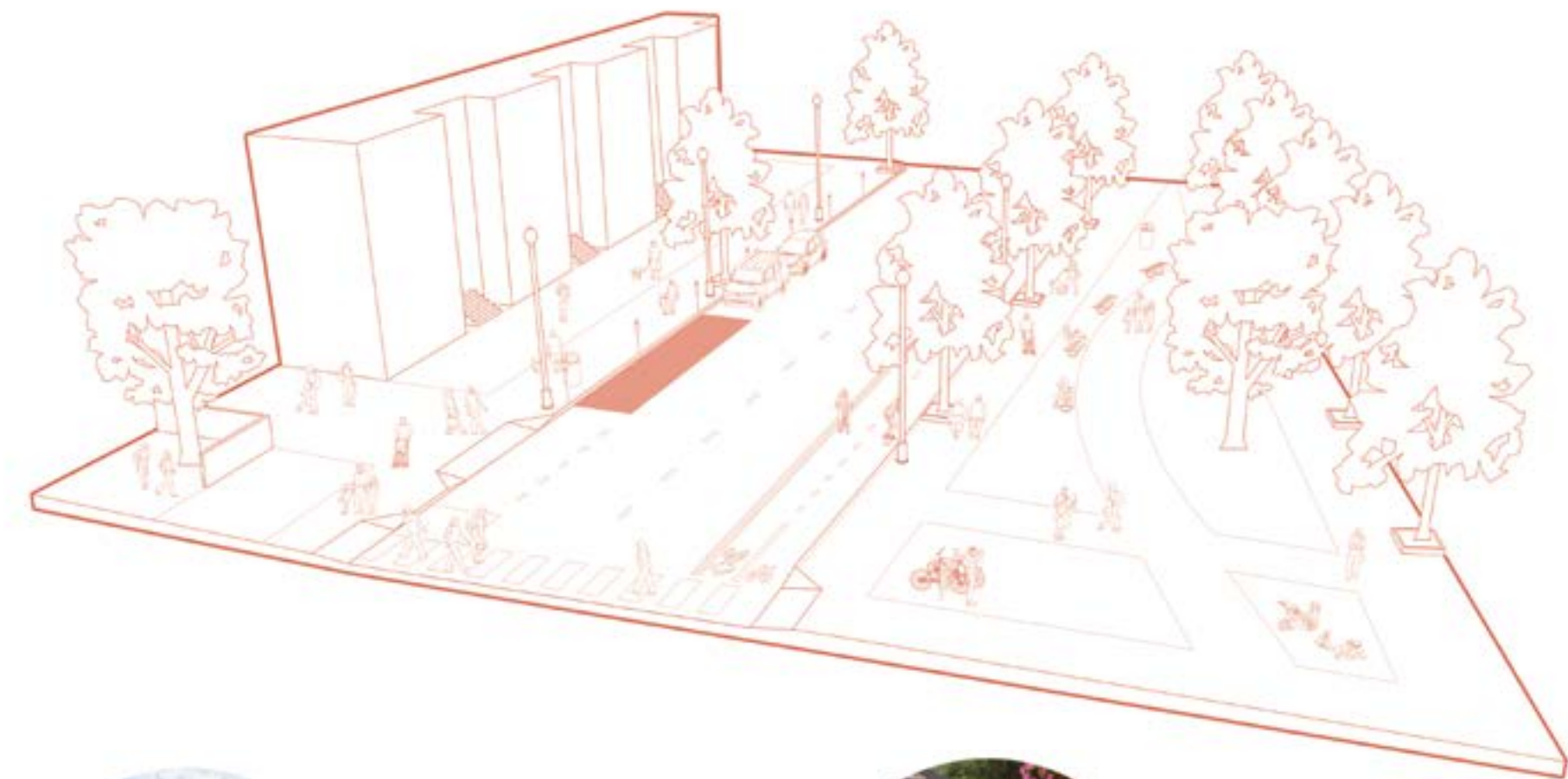
music performance

## Common Materials, Tools, Equipment

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1.  stage      | 2.  speaker     | 3.  chairs      |
| 4.  umbrellas | 5.  astro turf | 6.  microphone |



# Parklets



Outdoor Dining  
Photo: DC Office of Planning



Outdoor Dining  
Photo: DC Office of Planning



Okuplaza Festival as part of Office of Planning  
Crossing the Street event, Adams Morgan, 2016  
Photo: Ciudad Emergente CEM

## Activation Types

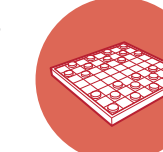
Play + Socialization




## Common Materials, Tools, Equipment

1.   
folding table

2.   
chairs

3.   
games

4.   
plants

5.   
portable curb ramp



# Alleys



Blagden Alley  
Photo: DC Office of Planning



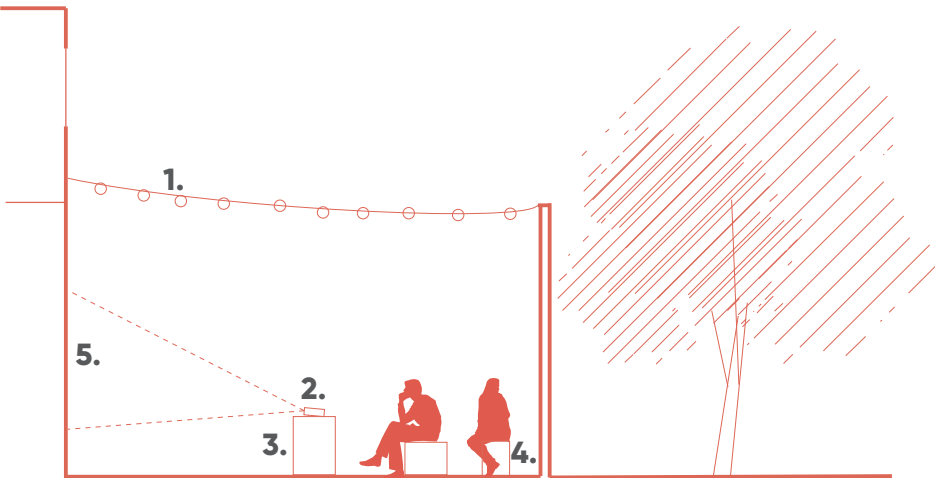
Blagden Alley  
Photo: DC Office of Planning



Film Screening  
Photo: DC Office of Planning



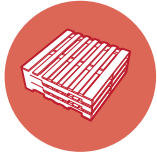


## Activation Types

Culture + Heritage

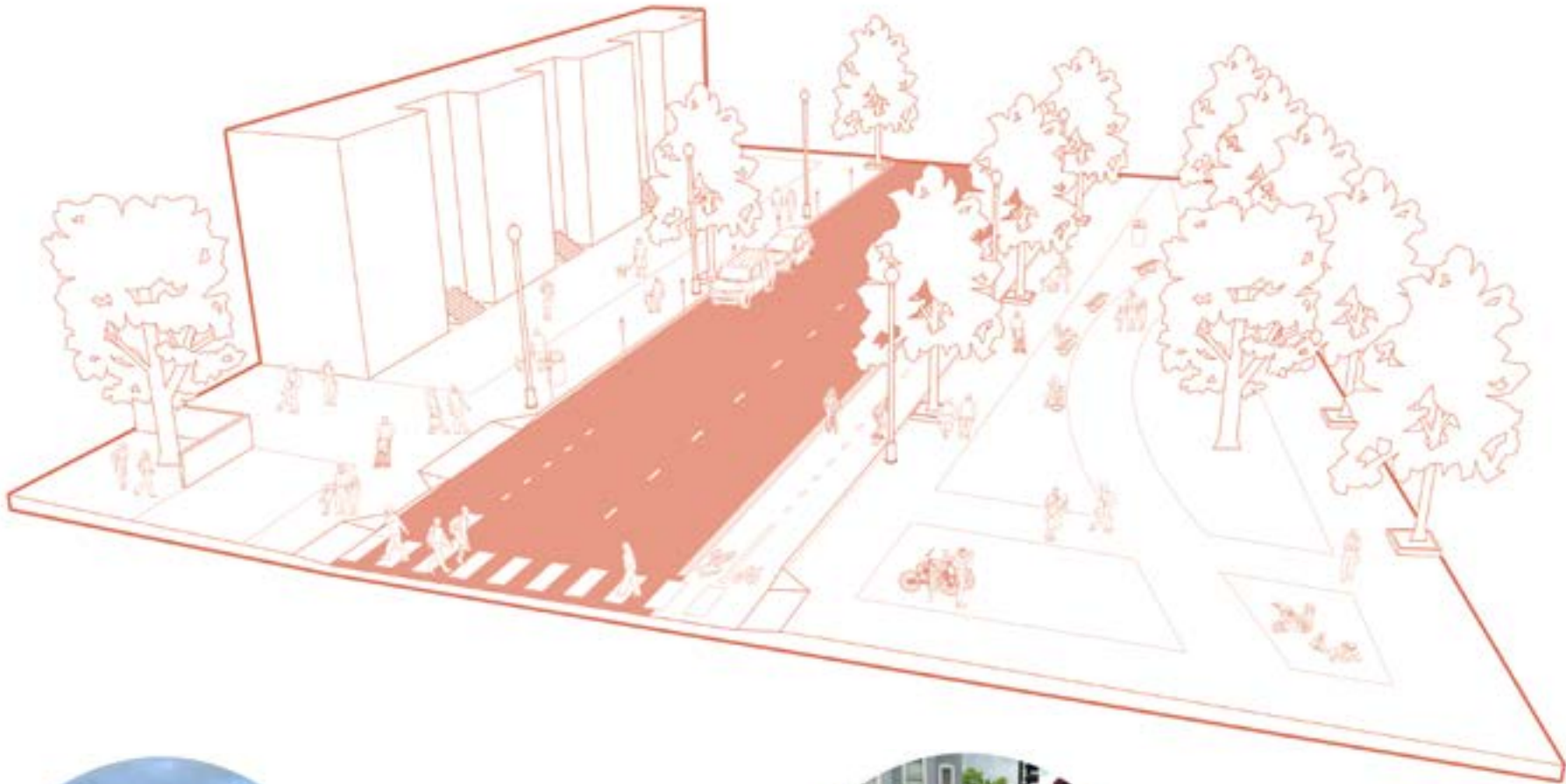


film screening

## Common Materials

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| 1. <br>string lights | 2. <br>projector | 3. <br>shipping pallets |
| 4. <br>chairs       | 5. <br>screen   |   |

# Street Closures



31st Street, NW  
Photo: DC Office of Planning



DC Funk Parade  
Photo: DC Office of Planning




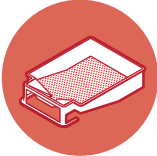




DC Open Streets, Georgia Ave, 2019  
Photo: DDOT

## Activation Types Demonstration Projects



## Common Materials, Tools, Equipment

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| 1.<br><br>french barricade | 2.<br><br>roller frame   | 3.<br><br>roller brush  |
| 4.<br><br>roller tray     | 5.<br><br>tempera paint | 6.<br><br>traffic cone |



# Other/Interim Open Spaces



Mid City East  
Photo: DC Office of Planning



Union Market, Parking Lot  
Photo: DC Office of Planning



Southwest Neighborhood Assembly  
Photo: DC Office of Planning


## Activation Types Demonstration Projects




community clean-up

## Common Materials


1.




broom
2.



trowel
3.



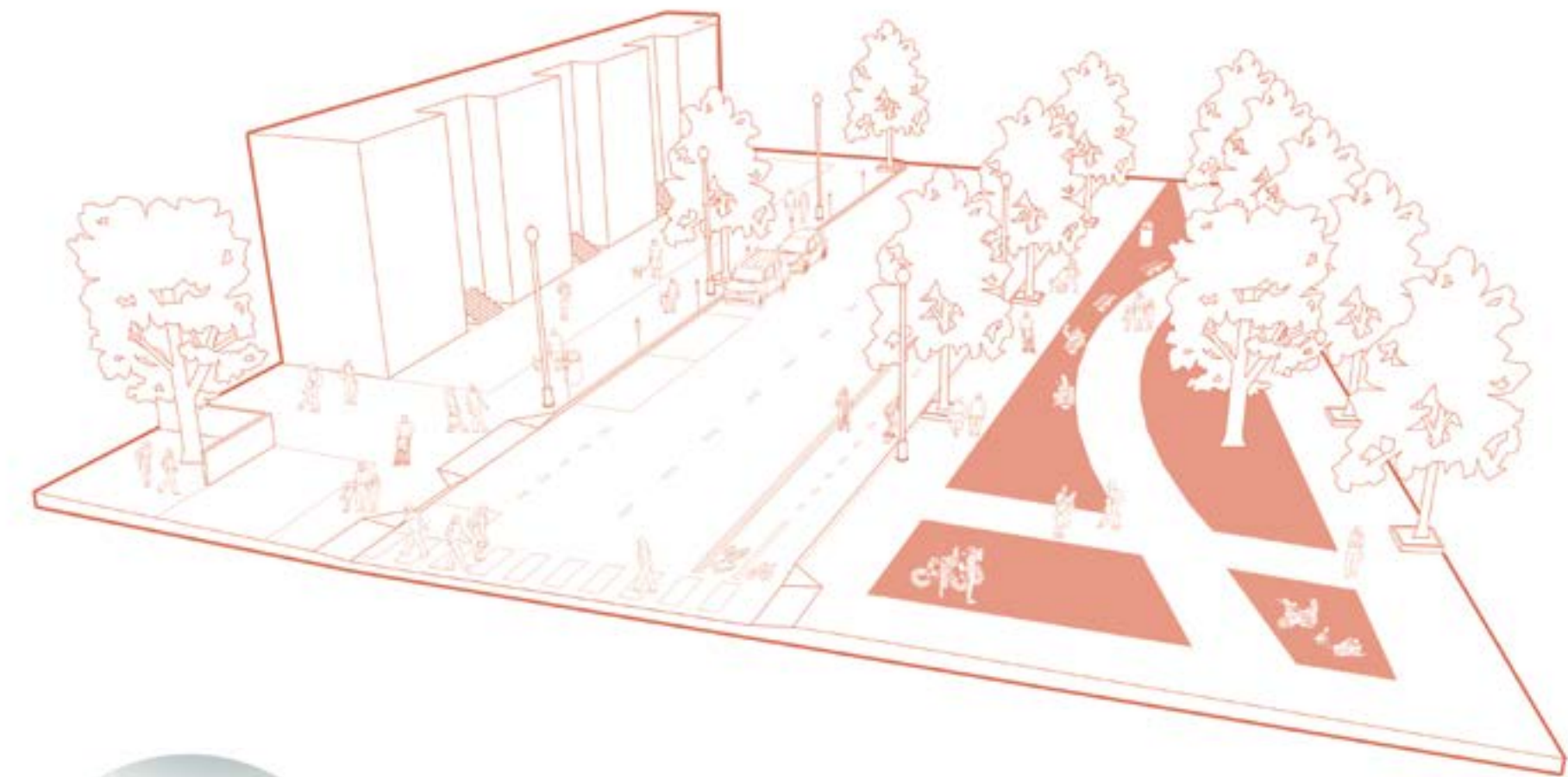
garden soil
4.



plants



# Parks



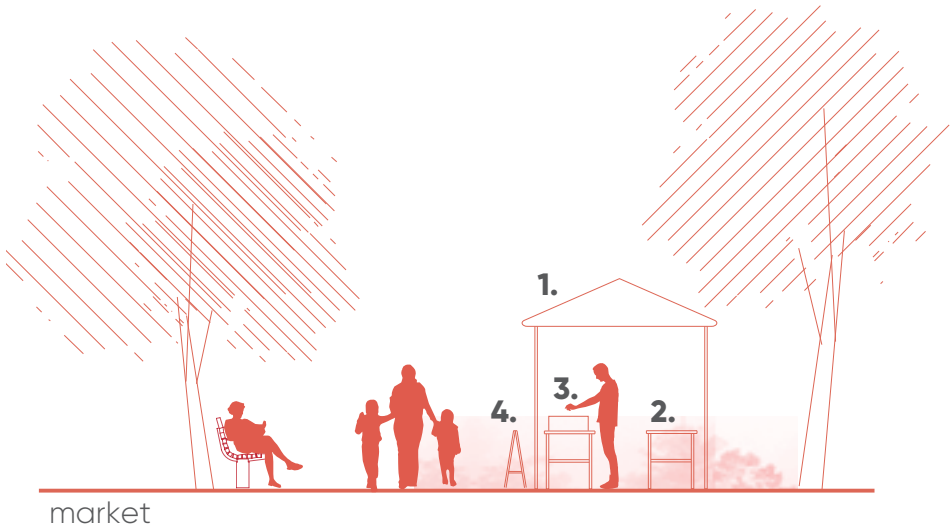
Kresge Event in Ivy City Park  
Photo: DC Office of Planning



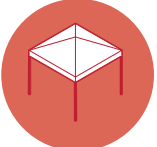
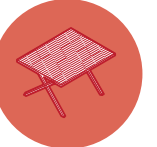
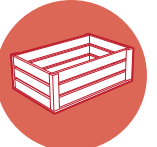

Market at Rose Park, 2020  
Photo: Friends of Rose Park

## Activation Types

Small-Scale Commerce



## Common Materials

- 1.  10' x 10' tent
- 2.  folding table
- 3.  wooden crates
- 4.  sign



# Useful Resources

**PLEASE SEE THE OUR CITY, OUR SPACES! APPENDIX FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON RESOURCES, RESEARCH, AND OUTREACH FOR NEIGHBORHOOD-LED ACTIVITIES.**

## **District of Columbia Public Space Activation and Stewardship Guide**

[https://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/page\\_content/attachments/2018.12%20DC%20Public%20Space%20Activation%20Stewardship%20Guide\\_web.pdf](https://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/page_content/attachments/2018.12%20DC%20Public%20Space%20Activation%20Stewardship%20Guide_web.pdf)

## **A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People With Disabilities**

<https://adata.org/guide/planning-guide-making-temporary-events-accessible-people-disabilities>

## **The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines, 2010 Standard (ADAAG)**

[http://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards\\_index.htm](http://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards_index.htm)

## **Tactical Urbanist's Guide to Materials and Design v.1.0**

[https://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/tu-guide\\_to\\_materials\\_and\\_design\\_v1](https://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/tu-guide_to_materials_and_design_v1)

## **Arts in the Right-of-Way**

<https://ddot.dc.gov/page/arts-right-way>

## **Park(ing) Day**

<https://ddot.dc.gov/page/parking-day-dc>

## **The District of Columbia Neighborhood Block Party Permit Guide**

[https://ddot.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddot/page\\_content/attachments/Edited%20Neighborhood%20Block%20Party%20Permit%20Guide.pdf](https://ddot.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddot/page_content/attachments/Edited%20Neighborhood%20Block%20Party%20Permit%20Guide.pdf)

## **Parklets Program Guidelines**

<https://ddot.dc.gov/page/parklet-program>



Mid City East  
Photo: Open City Projects



