

MEMORANDUM

TO: Randy Recklaus, Village Manager

FROM: Charles Witherington-Perkins, AICP
Director of Planning and Community Development

DATE: May 5, 2020 – Revised May 13, 2020

SUBJECT: Downtown Pedestrian Zone/Outdoor Café - Coronavirus Relief

Background

The Coronavirus Pandemic is having a significant impact on the economy, and in particular the Downtown businesses. During the current closure, the Village has taken numerous steps to assist businesses, including but not limited to, deferral of fees and licenses, development of signs, and promotion of curbside pickup. In anticipation of a phased reopening of the economy, it is anticipated that at some point businesses will be allowed to reopen with significant limits on capacity and requirements for social distancing. The Village has received communication from Downtown restaurants and other businesses, with concerns over their ability to continue to survive, at a reduced capacity without some measures from the community.

The Downtown restaurant group specifically asked for increasing seating capacity on the streets in Downtown. For several years, cities globally have begun giving back streets to citizens and customers. These are some areas that Arlington Heights have been exploring, including curb less streets, closing streets and urban islands. Many communities are now closing streets to provide improved social distancing, as the economy begins to reopen. The Downtown sidewalks are too narrow for social distancing and outdoor dining.

It is currently unknown what types of restrictions will be in place for restaurants and other businesses once the current stay at home order expires on May 31st. However, Staff believes it is prudent to plan ahead in anticipation of a phased reopening in June so that our business community can hit the ground running once a phased reopening is authorized.

Business Assistance/Accommodations

The restaurant group that provided recent communication to the Village have broken down their business needs into short term and interim term measures. The following has been identified and accommodated:

Short term

- Curbside pickup: The Village has created curbside pickup zones and signage and continues to allow curbside pickup for restaurants and other businesses and has promoted this through social media and multiple direct e-blasts.
- Liquor: The sale of packaged liquor has been approved by the Liquor Commissioner.
- Abatement of Fees: Deferral of fees and licenses has previously been outlined in prior reports, as well as, a proposal to abate 25% of the liquor license fees for 2020/2021.
- Food Service Rules: The restaurants have requested suspension or elimination of the rules that require food service to be provided in order to provide full liquor sales.

Interim term measures

- The most significant request for interim term measures, is to increase capacity on the streets to allow for social distancing and increasing outdoor dining, while still maintaining a healthy environment. This will also be necessary for other businesses, such as retail and salons and other service uses that will not be able to allow as many people into their business at any given time. Allowing additional space in the public right-of-way for customers to wait or eat in a social distance manner, would help all businesses Downtown.

Discover Downtown Pedestrian Zone/Outdoor Café – Cost TBD

Various Village Staff have been exploring a number of options to assist increasing outdoor dining, while providing a minimum of six feet of space between tables, and allowing for adequate pedestrian movements to adhere to what is anticipated to be a new normal for social distancing. Options considered have been as follows:

- a. **Full street closures of Vail and Campbell Street** as illustrated in the attached exhibit.
The following are some initial criteria and characteristics of this concept.
 - Full closure anticipated from June 1 through August 2020 or whenever any anticipated State restrictions on internal restaurant seating are eliminated.
 - Options for closed sidewalks or open sidewalks have been evaluated, and it is recommended that the existing sidewalks in the area shown be closed as a pedestrian zone, and be allowed for outdoor dining for the restaurant that fronts on that section of sidewalk and to spill out into the street. An 18-foot-wide pedestrian zone running down the middle of the street, would allow for pedestrian movement and appropriate social distancing. The pedestrian zone is also adequate for ingress and egress of emergency vehicles if needed.
 - Open carry out zone dining area would be provided in Harmony Park for those restaurants Downtown that provide carry out but are not within the pedestrian zone.
 - Open areas of the public right-of-way in front of non-restaurant businesses within the pedestrian zone, would allow for adequate spacing for customers waiting to enter those businesses.
 - Curbside pickup areas would be designated at the entrances of the pedestrian zone at Vail and Campbell Street, as well as approximately a dozen spaces designated for 5-minute curbside pickup in Parking Lot E.
 - It is not recommended that this concept be considered for short term closures and reopening, due to the cost and work involved in closing the streets.
 - Loading, deliveries along with other elements such as hours of operation would need to be coordinated and scheduled.
- b. **Urban island/closed parking lanes**, this is a concept that has been growing in popularity. The concept is closing and eliminating on-street parking in front of restaurants, building a deck to level the parking area with the height of the sidewalk and allow dining where a vehicle would have otherwise parked. Attached are some graphic renderings of this example. This would allow for a limited amount of additional seating and allow for the public to walk along the sidewalk, while still maintaining full regular access on the streets. The negatives of this approach are, potential increase costs to build the decking, the need for restaurant servers to cross pedestrian paths on the sidewalk to access and the fact that it would not provide large amounts of additional seating. However, it would still be a viable option in certain locations as a last resort if no other options were available.
- c. **Half street closures**, this concept is to close half of the street, including the drive aisle and parking lane and allow a single lane of traffic and parking for a one-way system on a short-term basis. This would allow dining areas to extend into the parking lane and driving lane and would provide some additional seating capacity. The negative of this approach would be it could be somewhat confusing for drivers to navigate a scaled down narrower one-way street system.
- d. **Use of private parking areas** for additional outdoor dining. Under any of the scenarios above, private parking areas as illustrated on the exhibit could be used to socially distance outdoor dining tables for restaurants or adjacent to those private areas.

In conclusion of these options outlined, the Staff feel if the Village is to do anything to help increase capacity for the restaurants to bring significant revenue to Downtown and improved social distance options for retailers and service uses in the zone, that a full street closure as identified in the memo and attached exhibits is the best option from an implementation point of view.

Implementation

If the Board concurs with an approach of providing additional safe dining capacity Downtown, several implementation measures need to be developed, including, but not limited to the following:

- a. Public Works would need to facilitate street closure and construction of ADA ramps to access each block from the street.
- b. The Police Department would need to develop a plan to monitor capacity, loading, deliveries, etc.
- c. Appropriate signage would need to be developed, designed, and fabricated.
- d. The Village would need to procure or rent table and chairs for the open dining at Harmony Park and placed at the required spacing for social distancing. The Village would only be providing seating for this area, restaurants would be responsible for setting up and securing their own areas.
- e. The designated area for each restaurant within the pedestrian zone, would need to be delineated on the pavement.
- f. Restaurants would need to provide fencing and delineation for their outdoor dining zone. The Village does own some fencing and is continuing to explore fencing options. Restaurants would need to provide tables, chairs, and seating adhering to social distancing guidelines. Restaurants would be encouraged to install landscape plantings in pots and other themes to energize their outdoor dining space. Restaurants would be responsible for maintaining and cleaning their designated areas and would be encouraged to add ambiance with plantings and other elements.
- g. Non-restaurant uses within the pedestrian zone would be allowed outdoor displays and setup established safe spaced waiting zones for their customers.
- h. The Village reserves the right to make changes and adjustments as necessary at any time in order to address issues that may arise.

Non-Downtown Restaurant Dining

The Village has already received some questions regarding restaurants outside of the Downtown to create similar concepts within their parking lots. Staff is in the process of developing some simple criteria to follow and proposes to temporarily wave the minimum parking requirements and administratively approve outdoor dining for restaurants outside of the Downtown within their parking lots that adhere to these standards. (See separate attachment for details)

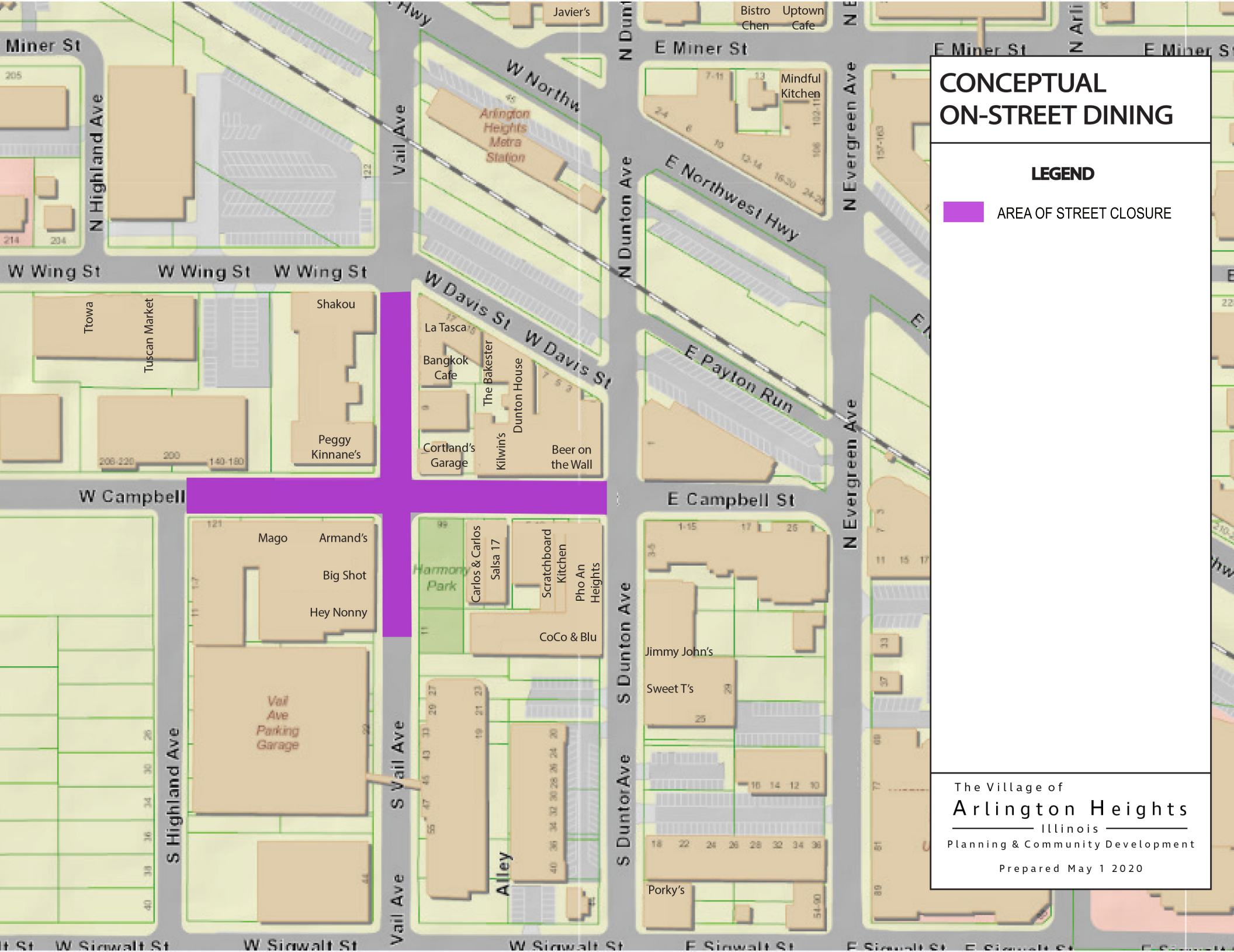
Next Steps

The following is a quick summary of next steps:

1. Received initial feedback from the Village Board regarding this concept by May 8th.
2. Conducted a Zoom meeting with the Downtown restaurant group on May 11th to discuss this concept.
3. Reach out to the non-restaurant businesses in this zone and conducted a Zoom meeting on May 12th to obtain their input on the assistance package and proposal street changes.
4. Made minor adjustments and report back to the Village Board in the Friday packet for May 15.
5. Present final concept and get direction/approval from the Village Board at the May 18th Village Board meeting
6. Pursue implementation, if allowable under State rules in place on June 1st.

Attachments

CW-P:Imp



CONCEPTUAL ON-STREET DINING

LEGEND

AREA OF STREET CLOSURE

The Village of
Arlington Heights
— Illinois —
Planning & Community Development









Prepared May 1 2020

CONCEPTUAL ON-STREET DINING

NOTES:

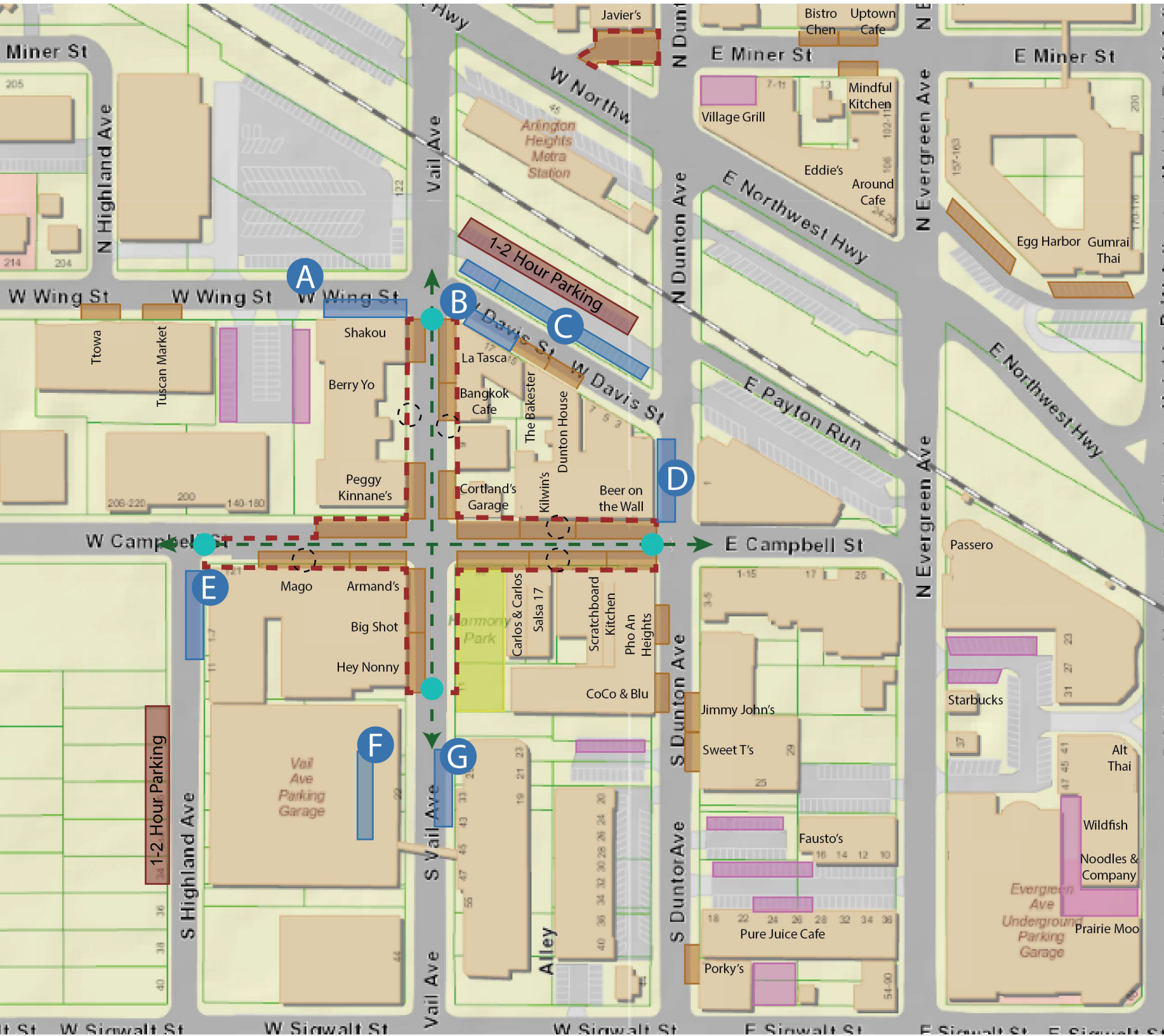
- 18' PEDESTRIAN/EMERGENCY ACCESS IN CENTER OF STREET
- RESTAURANTS ON WING STREET, DAVIS STREET, MINER STREET, AND DUNTON AVENUE TO UTILIZE ON-STREET SPACES ONLY
- BARRIERS AT THE ENDS OF THE CLOSED DINING AREA WITH GATEWAY FEATURE
- MINER STREET CLOSED BETWEEN EVERGREEN AVENUE AND NORTHWEST HIGHWAY
- REMOTE CURBSIDE PICKUP AREAS FOR RESTAURANTS ABUTTING CLOSED STREETS

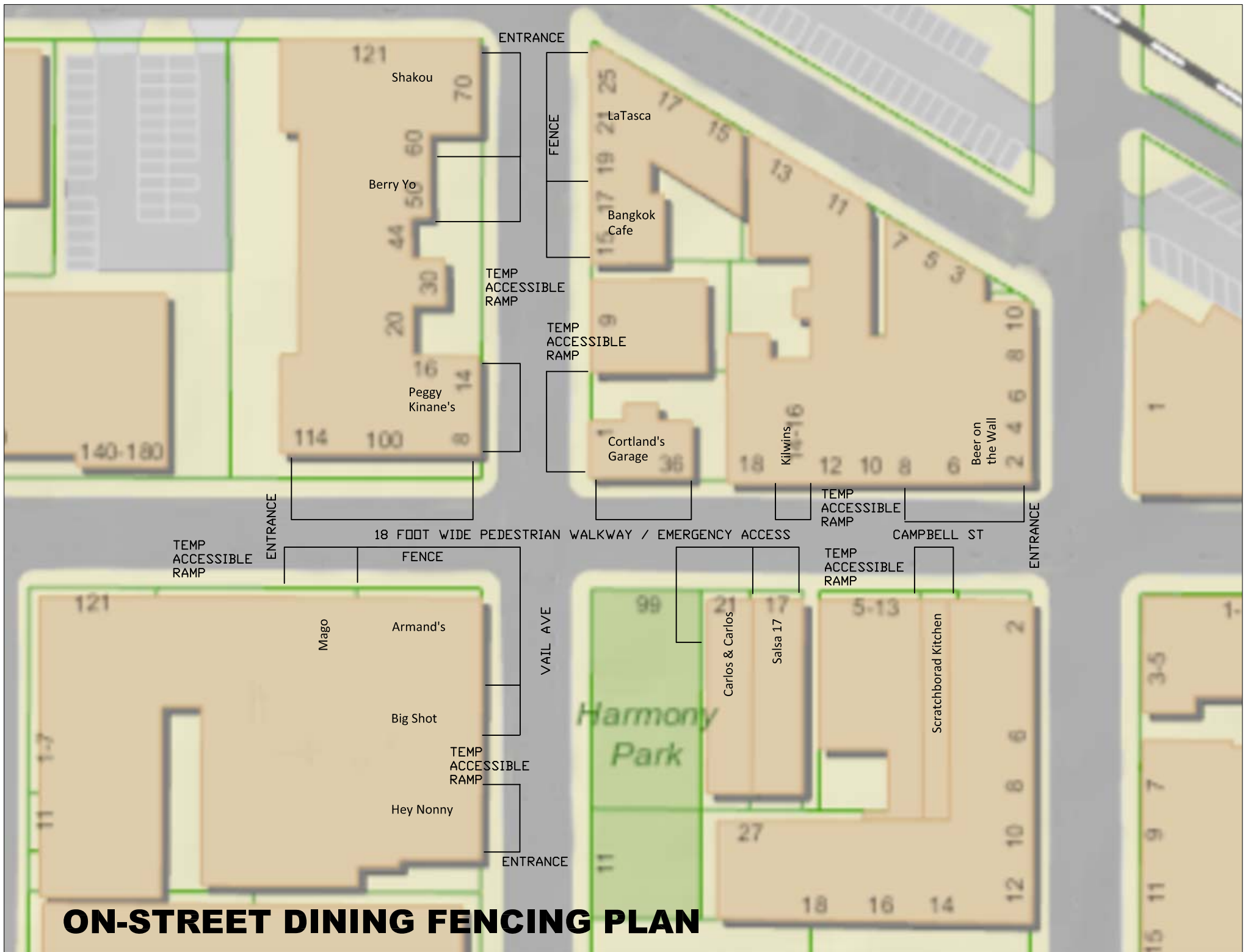
LEGEND

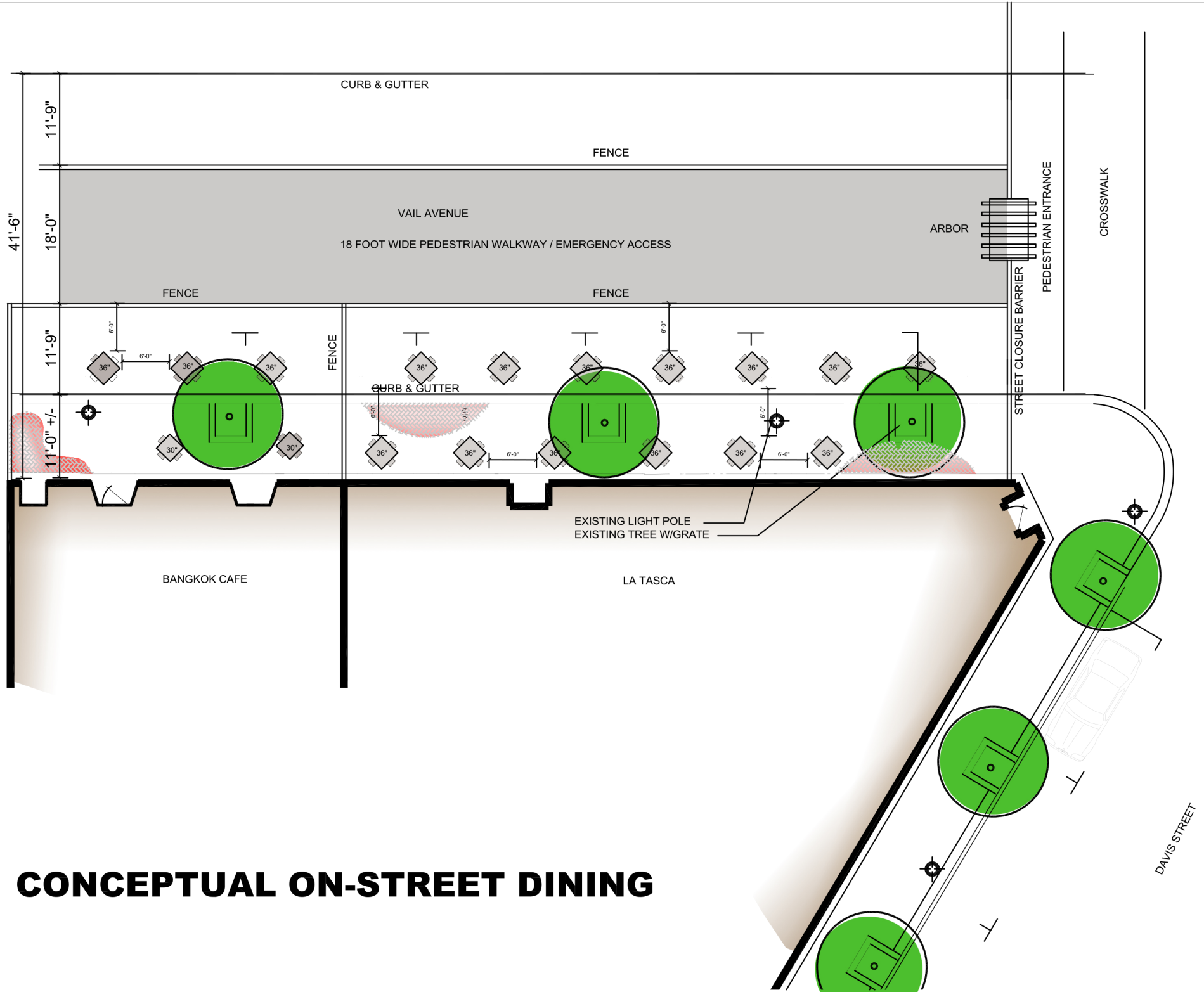
-  DINING AREA
-  ADA ACCESS RAMP (LOCATION TBD)
-  18' PEDESTRIAN/EMERGENCY ACCESS
-  CURBSIDE PICK-UP AREA
-  AREA CLOSED TO VEHICULAR TRAFFIC
-  BARRIER/ENTRYWAY
-  SHARED DINING AREA (PUBLIC)
-  SHARED DINING AREA (PRIVATE)

The Village of
Arlington Heights
Illinois
Planning & Community Development

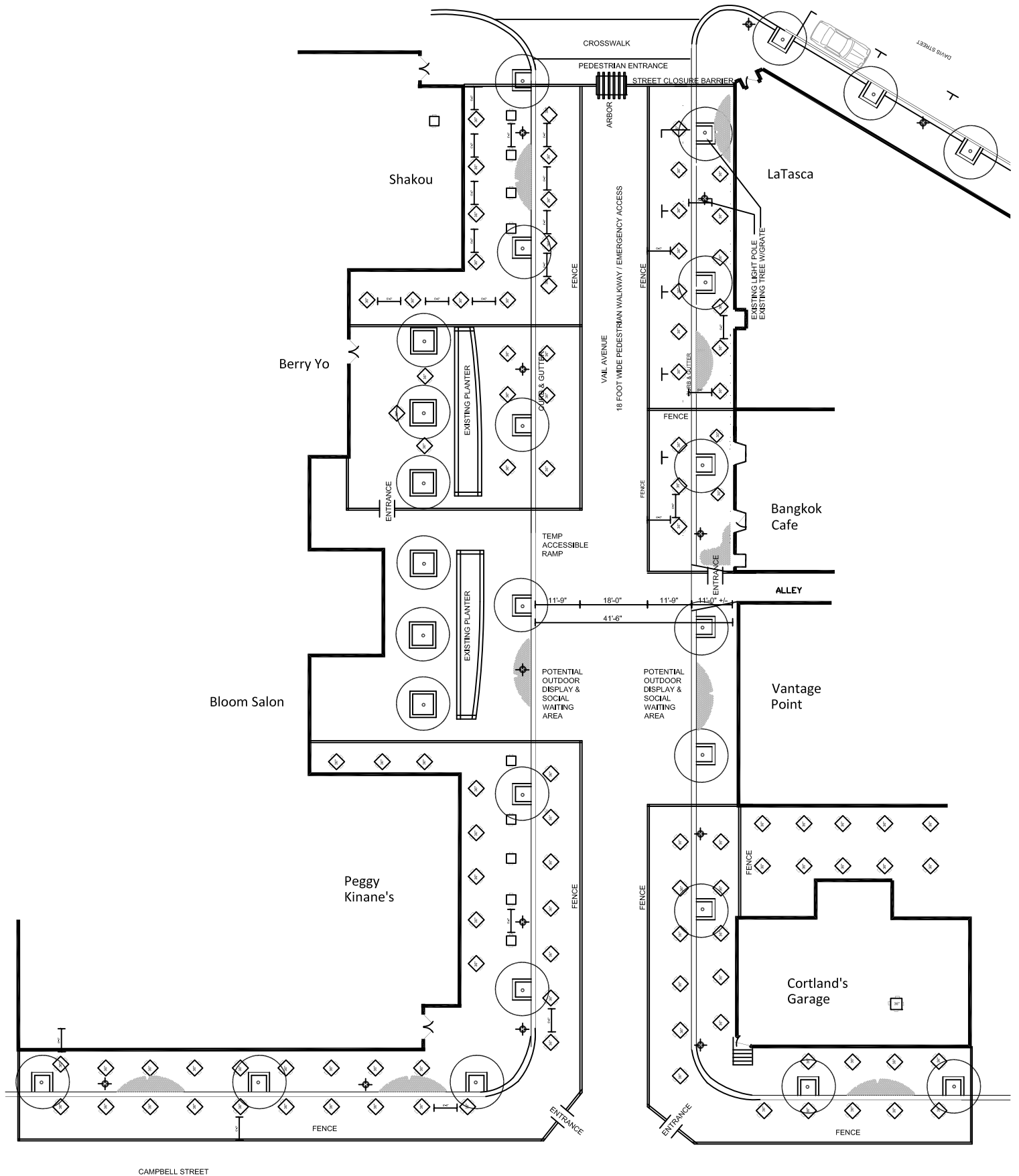
Prepared May 13 2020





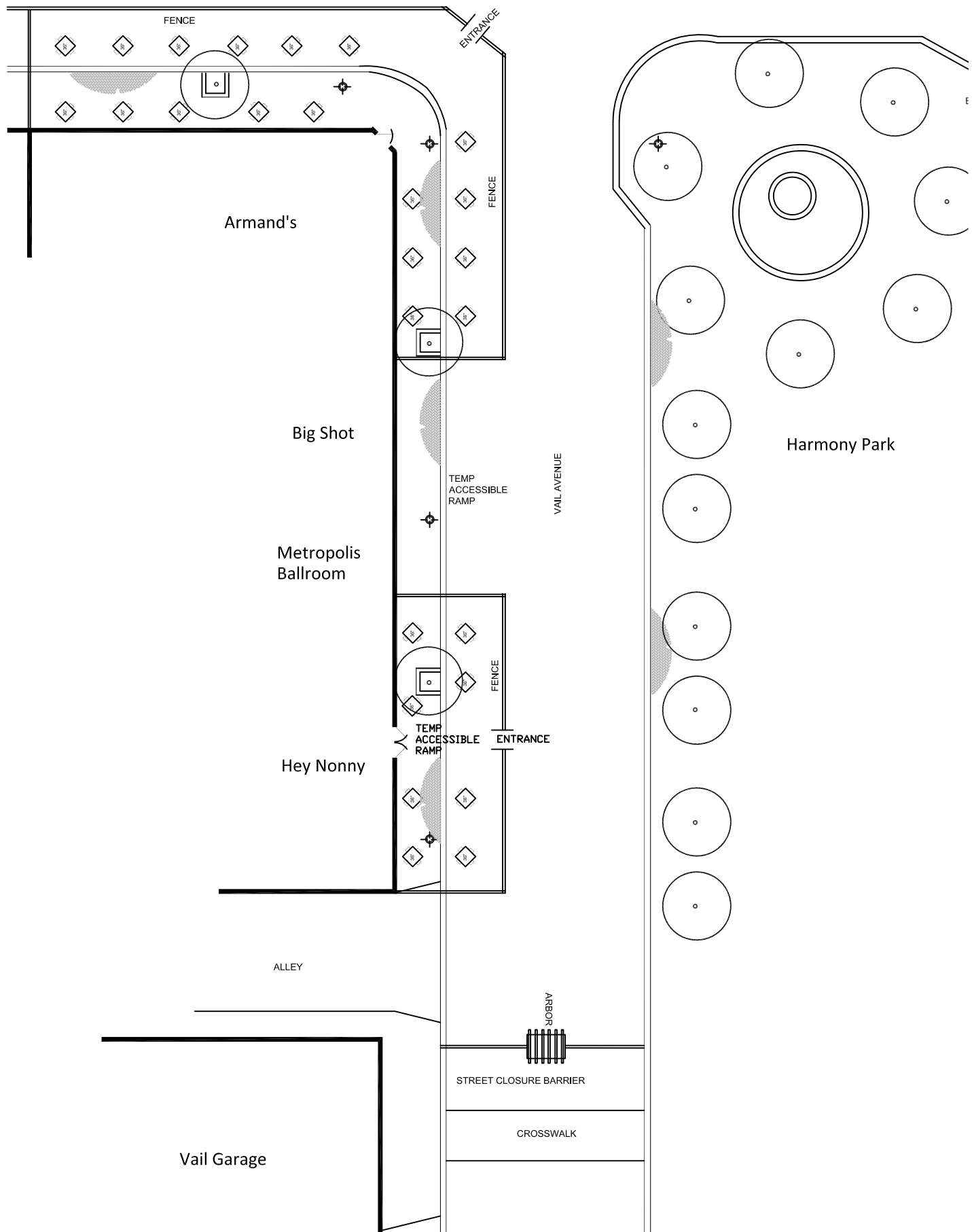


CONCEPTUAL ON-STREET DINING



ON-STREET DINING FENCING PLAN **Vail Ave - N of Campbell St**

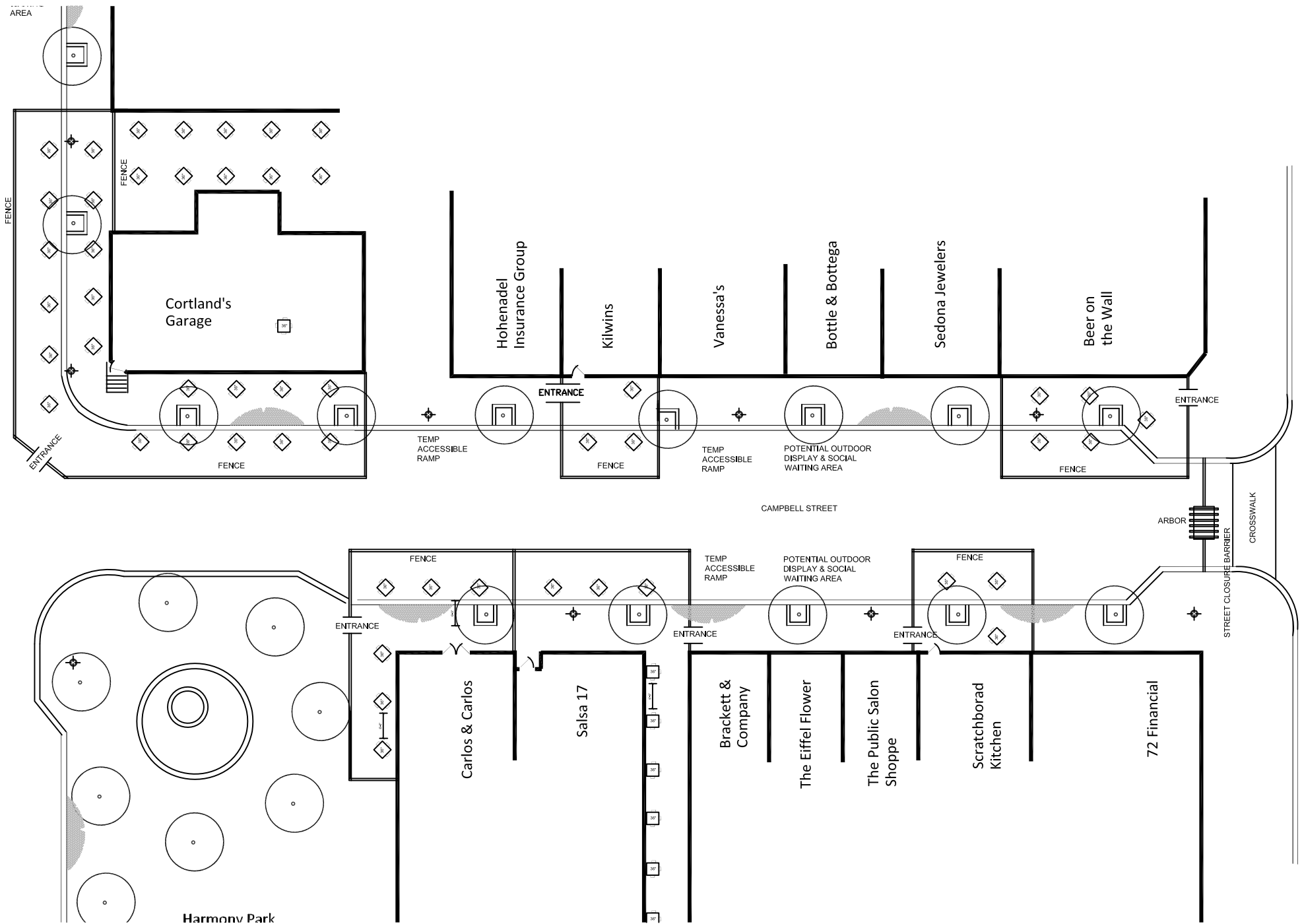




ON-STREET DINING FENCING PLAN

Vail Ave - South of Campbell St





ON-STREET DINING FENCING PLAN **Campbell St - East of Vail Ave**





EXAMPLES OF OUTDOOR DINING



NORTH VAIL AVENUE ENTRANCE EXAMPLE



Arlington

Alfresco