

# THE BENCH PROGRAM COOKBOOK

a handy little guide to  
starting and managing  
a bench program  
in your community





# Contents

ABOUT THE EERC.....	<b>1</b>
Introduction.....	<b>3</b>
Chapter 1: The Message.....	<b>5</b>
Chapter 2: The Bench.....	<b>9</b>
Chapter 3: The Plaque.....	<b>17</b>
Chapter 4: The Location.....	<b>21</b>
Chapter 5: The Foundation.....	<b>29</b>
Chapter 6: The Maintenance.....	<b>33</b>
Chapter 7: Program Costs.....	<b>39</b>
Chapter 8: The Timeframes.....	<b>43</b>
Chapter 9: The Marketing.....	<b>45</b>
Afterword.....	<b>47</b>

Eastside Easy Rider  
**COLLABORATIVE**

Visit our website for additional information and resources:

[www.eastsideeasyrider.org](http://www.eastsideeasyrider.org)

or

Call the Hopelink  
Mobility Coordinator:

Phone: 425.943.6712

Fax: 425.644.9956

Email: [mobility@hope-link.org](mailto:mobility@hope-link.org)

# ABOUT THE EERC

The Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative (EERC) is a partnership of transportation service providers, human service agencies, city staff, and other community stakeholders working together to identify and initiate coordinated, creative, and sustainable ways to assist special needs populations in East King County attain a better quality of life by increasing their individual and collective transportation options.

As the regional mobility coalition in East King County, The Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative (EERC) works to improve regional mobility awareness and access for special needs populations in east King County through education, advocacy, coordination, and collaboration.

The EERC pursues its mission by providing education, tools, and advocacy to address the mobility needs, challenges, and opportunities of special needs populations in East King County. The Coalition identifies, monitors, supports, and initiates solutions to assist special needs populations in East King County attain a better quality of life through increasing awareness of and access to relevant transportation options wherever possible. The EERC meets with community members, service providers, stakeholder groups, agency staff, and elected officials in order to ensure that access to necessary transportation services and options for mobility challenged populations throughout the Eastside is and remains a regional priority.





# Introduction



## Welcome to the Eastside Easy Riders Collaborative's guide to creating a Bench Program in your community!

The purpose of this document is to create a framework to assist you in creating a bench program in your community, your neighborhood, or wherever you think it might work best. While we can't give you a complete guide to every situation you may encounter in your planning, we hope that this guide will help you find the resources you need.

In order for people to stay active and independent, getting outside is a great first step. But who wants to take that first step if there's no place to take a rest? The prospects can be daunting.

Benches can add beauty and convenience and encourage people to pursue health at their own pace. By providing frequent stopping/resting places, you are encouraging people to take a walk. Whether it's in the woods, around the block, getting to public transportation or just visiting your downtown businesses, benches can be a real help to all.

The Eastside Easy Rider's Collaborative hopes that this guidebook provides you with useful information and guidance on developing your own bench program in your community.





# Chapter 1: The Message

---

In order to begin a successful bench program the individual, group, or agency interested in pursuing this venture must be able to answer at least the following questions. Carefully consider each of these questions and take into account your own aspirations and limitations. Doing this will result in a more thorough and organized approach to improving your community.

## Why start a bench program in your community?

You probably already know the answer to this question; it's probably the reason you picked up this guidebook to begin with. Perhaps there are seniors in your community who need a place to rest as they walk to the store, children heading to school in need of a safe place to relax while waiting for the bus, or perhaps you simply want to encourage walking and pedestrian activity at street level for reasons of safety and livability. These are some examples of good reasons to begin a bench program in your community. You may have multiple reasons you want to improve your community with benches. What's yours?

## How many benches are you hoping for?

Be realistic. Consider both the needs in your community you want to fill by installing a program of this nature as well as the resources available to you (both current and anticipated resources). Sprucing up a park or two in your neighborhood is a far simpler task than installing public seating on a citywide scale, for example. The size – both in terms of geography and population – of your community, as well as the financial, time, and political resources available should also be taken into consideration. Additionally, it's good to think about what kind of benches need to be installed in order to accomplish your goal. All of these

factors must be considered in order to find a final number of benches that can be realistically obtained, installed, and maintained.

### What is the area you have defined to create this program?

Like the questions above, being clear about your geographic scope is critical in setting out on a community enhancement program such as this. Perhaps your vision is just a one-time project to improve an area park and maintain those benches there. Perhaps you'd like to use your bench project as a pilot program with hope that it will eventually grow throughout your community? Regardless of your motivation, set a realistic goal for your initial efforts in terms of geography. You will need to be able to explain why your selected area (or areas) is in need of benches and how you selected it over others.

### Who will most benefit from this program?

While it's easy to see how installing more public furniture like benches can be a benefit to all members of a community, it's worth digging a little deeper than that. It will make your job easier if you are clear about what specific community need you are trying to fill. Is there a particular group that is in direct need of places to sit and rest in a community? Take the time to identify that group (or groups) and communicate with its members if possible to get firsthand accounts of their experiences. For instance: Does your community have a large senior population that would like to walk but is deterred by the lack of adequate pedestrian infrastructure? Being clear about those who can benefit most from your bench program will help inform and explain why the need is there.

### Who is going to be responsible for which elements?

Identifying stakeholders and roles in any program is a key to executing it successfully. Do you want your local government to run the program? Or would you like to see private parties initiate the program on their own? Or perhaps a hybrid public-private partnership is the way to go in order to share responsibility and

burden? Identifying who is important to this project is the first step to answering questions about where benches would go, how they will be maintained, and more.

If you want to go with the public sector, using your local government as the initiator of the bench program, be aware the process might be slow and potentially cumbersome. It will likely have to be considered and debated by public decision-makers and boards, as well as local planners, which can take time. It will also have to compete with other public projects that others may consider more important or pressing than a bench program when dealing with limited public resources. There will also be issues of whether your program is fair to all when going through the public sector – you must be able to explain in a democratic manner why one neighborhood will receive new benches while another won't, which can be difficult to do.

Going through a private group, such as a local Chamber of Commerce or perhaps a private land owner such as a grocery store or other large property, can often-times avoid the bureaucracy of going through local government. Because these groups are not held to the same responsibilities as local governments, they can often move more quickly and efficiently when they decide to act. But you must make the case to a private group about the benefit that benches on their property will bring. If you can convince a grocery store that it would increase its customer base if benches were put in on the far end of the parking lot so that seniors walking to the store could rest safely, perhaps a case can be made. It's critical to remember that even the most civically minded business or property owners all have a bottom line that they must consider before making any decisions affecting their capital costs.

Forming a public-private partnership is also an option for beginning a capital improvement project like a bench program. These arrangements can be creatively organized to sidestep many issues like cost or equity debates in order to expedite the program's implementation. New York City's Citibike program (<https://www.citibikenyc.com>) is one such example of a public-private project that became successful because of the specific arrangement and responsibilities divided up

between the public and private sector stakeholders. In the case of Citibike, the public sector identified the need for more multimodal transportation, did much of the research and planning for what a successful bike-share program would look like, and took steps to improve bicycle infrastructure on city streets. But the program itself was initialized and managed by a private limited liability corporation. This allowed the program to implement on a scale that would make the program successful while setting the stage for future growth, but resulted in the program not serving all areas of the city equally. The public-private partnership option also allows for cost sharing between both sectors, releasing some strain on local governments likely already struggling with their budgets and passing some costs on to the private sector, provided the benefit to their interests is also apparent.

### What do you want to name your program?

Finally, every good program needs a good name and branding. Think of something that is clear and catchy, and communicates the mission of your bench program. Depending on how big a program you want, proper name recognition and branding may be more or less important. Letting the community know what's going on can be a very valuable tool for building public support. Based on your available resources, you may want to consider hiring a marketing firm to assist with this process, as they often have expertise in developing branding and outreach campaigns that can effectively and efficiently inform the public.

## Chapter 2: The Bench

---

Where can you find suitable benches for installation?  
Who are some Washington State vendors?

Benches can be located and purchased from a variety of locations and vendors. While many basic models can be purchased at a hardware store like Home Depot or a similar scale store that carries large-scale hardware, for commercial grade benches the standard avenue is typically through a specialty vendor, often found online. The easiest way to find the online vendors is to do a search for “site furniture” rather than “benches.” Some of these vendors include companies like Sightlines ([www.sightlinesinc.com/](http://www.sightlinesinc.com/)) or Northwest Playground ([www.nwplayground.com/](http://www.nwplayground.com/)), many of which have business operations available online. Another is Fairweather Site Furnishings (<http://fairweathersf.com/benches/>). At these commercial grade bench producers, one can expect to find benches built to last a long time, suitable for public infrastructure, as opposed to private use which usually inflicts significantly less wear and tear on the bench.

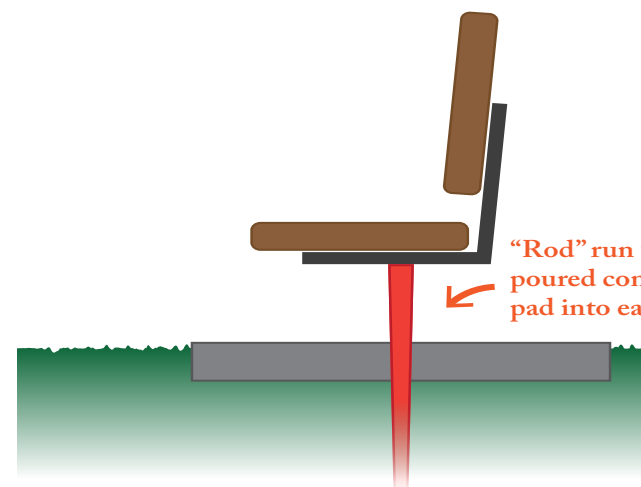
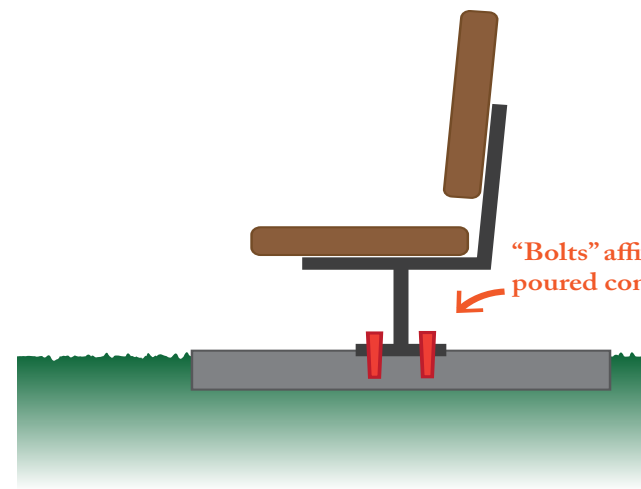
What are typical price ranges for benches?

Benches can range in price significantly. Like most products, the price of a bench is a combination of materials and labor (not installation, which will be an additional cost), as well as shipping. The typical range of bench pricing from a commercial vendor is anywhere between \$200 and \$600. Obviously materials and assembly quality improve as price increases. Bulk purchases as well as shopping around can yield significant savings. Shipping is where costs can significantly increase if you’re not careful. If benches are purchased from a non-local vendor, you can reasonably expect to pay the same amount in shipping charges as the

bench itself (two- to six hundred dollars per bench). This is a great reason to shop locally before exploring options with distant vendors.

### What are some of the ways they can be affixed to the ground/foundation? What are some of the methods used?

This gets a bit technical so bear with us here. Benches can be affixed to the ground any number of ways. The most popular methods of securing bench foundations in the greater Seattle area (and in most urban metro regions) are either the traditional or “rod” style or the “boltdown” style. Both types of foundations use concrete as a foundation base, though a boltdown style bench does not technically have to. In rod style foundations the bench support rods puncture through a concrete slab which can rest on top of, at grade with, or below the ground surface. With boltdown style benches, a concrete slab is poured as a foundation (just like with rod style) but instead of the bench’s support rods piercing through the concrete and into the ground, they are usually only the length necessary to have the bench sit at its desired height on top of the concrete slab which is poured at surface grade and remaining unburied. The bottom of bench’s support rods (where they make contact with the foundation) have widened feet or pedestals flaring outwards from their base. Those feet rest on the concrete pad and are then literally bolted into the concrete slab on which the bench is placed. The boltdown style tends to be more popular in urban settings, as it allows for easier replacement and isn’t inferior in terms of structural soundness to the more labor-intensive rod style method of affixing a bench to its foundation. Because of the boltdown style’s method for securing the bench



to its foundation, it can be affixed to surfaces like stone or asphalt (asphalt concrete), in addition to concrete.

Are there different styles of benches? What are the benefits of one type of bench over another? What types of materials stand up best to the weather in your area?

There are lots of different bench styles available! Benches can range from basic wood construction to metals – like aluminum or powder-coated steel – to concrete, stone, fiberglass, recycled plastic, and thermoplastic. Each has their own benefits. Most use metal support rods to connect them to the ground (usually made of aluminum or steel mixtures) regardless of the seat material, which is the part of the construction that typically varies. Concrete benches are the exception since their support rods can be attached to the foundation or ground without the use of bolts or rods.

For seat material, wood is often the cheapest option, treated with an insect repellent or coated with polyurethane coating to provide protection and prevent rotting. While relatively durable, climate and wear and tear do affect them more than the other options. This can be significant in regions that have higher humidity or moisture levels such as Seattle; their treated coatings can break down, causing the bench to rot with enough exposure. However, wood does have the built-in advantage of easy and affordable replacement, since you can replace degraded wood backing and seats often on an individual slat basis (depending on bench design). A new wood slat for the back or seat of a bench is pretty inexpensive compared to other options. The downsides: Wood is also the most vulnerable to vandalism and damaging, intentional or unintentional. Despite being treated, wood doesn't repel spray paint, markers, or other usual tools for vandalism well. Wood is also the easiest of the bench materials for vandals to physically damage by carving with pocket knives. Despite its relative inexpensiveness, make sure you calculate the savings of using wood alongside the cost to replace it if circumstances frequently require replacement.

Metal (aluminum or powder-coated steel), concrete, stone, fiberglass, recycled plastic, and thermoplastic benches typically stand up to environmental factors and vandalism significantly better than wood. But because they hold up better, they generally cost a lot more. And even though they tend to last longer, if you have to replace the backing on those kinds of benches, it costs more as well. Try to figure out the lifespan of the different types of benches so you can figure out the types you want to use. Stone or concrete benches are strong, durable options for benches. Both are very durable and the most resilient in standing up to weather, the public, and vandalism. Stone benches almost always sit directly on the ground or foundation and don't require connecting rods, Stone is one of the most expensive materials for a bench when compared to the alternatives. Constructing a bench with concrete is a more affordable option than stone. While concrete construction does require heavy equipment in the building process, it's still simpler to build and install than stone, but is a little less resilient, having some weaknesses stone does not. Concrete, if not mixed properly, can age and crack prematurely. Cracking in the concrete from either a poor mixture or simply age allows harmful elements and water to penetrate and begin degrading the material from the inside out. Concrete can also chip easier than stone; however chipping is usually minor and rarely requires immediate attention or repair. Concrete and stone construction also can be good homes for moss or algae to grow, particularly in damper climates, making the benches appear dirty or sometimes slick and potentially dangerous. This means that stone and concrete benches do require periodic inspection, more often than metal, fiberglass, plastic, or (properly treated) wood, to ensure moss and algae growth is not occurring.

Fiberglass and plastic benches are an affordable alternative, straddling the line in terms of cost and durability between wood and more expensive options. Often these benches are used in place of wood benches because of their durable nature when standing up to repeated use by the public and the elements. Repair and replacement costs for these styles of benches vary, but are usually low, falling comfortably between wood and the more expensive counterparts.

Whatever bench style you decide on will have its own pros and cons so make sure that you are going into this with realistic expectations about how long your



benches will last. This will also give you the ability to better forecast and manage your program costs.

### How big is a standard bench?

Most programs purchase benches in standard two-foot increments of length. So the standard bench sizes usually are four, six, or eight feet in length. Custom sizes can be manufactured by some bench builders, but custom fabrication will cost more.

### Arms or no arms on the benches?

Arms on benches, while an appealing and comfortable option often available, increase the price over benches without arms. Having strong arms on benches also makes them easier to use for seniors and people with disabilities since the arm rest can act as a handhold to assist with sitting and standing up. In fact, the ADA has a specific recommendation for benches to include arms in order to assist disabled users. Aside from comfort and support, arms on benches can have the added effect of preventing a person from sleeping on a bench. This is a desire in many communities, as benches are located on sidewalks, in parks and corporate plazas, at bus stops, and other communal/shared space. Strategic placement of bench arms or other ornamentation can inhibit a person from lying down horizontally on a bench, rendering the seat uncomfortable or otherwise not functional for lying down on.

While most communities want to prevent people from using public furniture for sleeping, some communities have taken the opposite tract. Vancouver, British Columbia – a major metropolitan area with a similar climate as the Seattle area – has actually installed a number of benches that convert from sitting furniture to a sleeping shelter, providing people with an option for shelter if they must sleep outside.

## Are there other concerns with bench installation that are usually considered?

Siting a bench in the public realm or publicly utilized privately owned space is typically a process done by a professional landscape architect, civil engineer, or equivalent professional. A number of factors can influence bench placement decisions including public safety, view corridor blockages, pedestrian traffic, accessibility, and more. For example, the wrong kind of open space behind a bench can become a factor for public safety, fostering a perception of vulnerability for users, who will then likely avoid using the public furniture. Additionally, if a bench is installed across from homes oriented towards a particular view, it can create contention with property owners due to their views being obstructed, which can potentially impact their property value. Finally, placing benches too close to a steep slope can cause erosion, making the ground beneath the bench unstable and creating a higher than normal risk for damage to the bench and its site. This has the potential to render the bench unusable, as well as creating a dangerous situation for users and passersby.

Installing a bench on private property but adjacent to public property almost always requires a permit, no matter where you are. You can typically obtain a permit application available at your city or county's public works or planning departments. These applications typically involve detailing the proposed location; construction and installation plans; project specifications; advertising (if any); and any other details your local government may require. Applications also typically require some form of written consent from the property owner for the bench's placement on their property, as well as agreeing to be responsible for its maintenance and upkeep according to local codes (check with your local planning or public works department for specific installation requirements).

If your bench is going to have graphics and/or language on it readable to traffic, there are often rules and regulations about what kind of images are permissible, where they can or cannot be located on the bench, and how much of the bench's surface area they are allowed to cover. Many governments do not allow the use of words that might confuse, mislead, or distract beyond a reasonable measure

the operator of a vehicle. This usually means that words such as, “Stop,” “Look,” “Drive-In,” or “Danger” are not permitted in signage or advertising. Graphics and images with the potential to mislead drivers are also typically not allowed, such as an image with a similar appearance to a posted street sign (Yield, stop, directional arrows, etc). Many governments require that signage also can only exist on the front and back areas of the backrest, and often have a percentage or ratio of how much of each surface is allowed to be covered. Details about any graphical displays intended for use on the bench are almost always required in the application process and, like all other elements of the process, subject to the approval of the local entity responsible for issuing the permit.

### How long are they expected to last?

Benches vary in their lifespan. In the Seattle area, a standard wood bench utilized by the Seattle Parks Department typically lasts for 10 to 15 years before routine maintenance or replacement becomes necessary. Concrete, metal, or plastic composite benches last noticeably longer than wood benches, with concrete being the most durable of all if properly maintained (usually pressure washing and minor treatment to mitigate moss or algae growth).

### How are they shipped?

Benches are typically shipped via ground transportation – usually by truck – unless they are purchased or assembled overseas. Because shipping costs are so prohibitive, it is advised that local vendor options be explored thoroughly before looking for out of state or country options.



# Chapter 3: The Plaque

## What are some available styles of plaque?

The material most often used for plaques is bronze. In addition to providing a distinguished and traditional look, bronze also is quite durable when exposed to the elements. Bronze is also expensive, though, with a typical at-cost price around \$180 for a standard 4" by 6" engraved plaque – costing almost as much as the bench itself. Because of this, some choose to use plastic tags instead. While the plastic doesn't offer the same look and feel that bronze does, it is substantially cheaper to produce. Plastic does not hold up to vandalism or theft anywhere near as well as bronze, however and can be easily damaged, destroyed, or stolen. Fortunately replacement plastic tags are quite cheap. As part of your planning, consider the cost of time and labor associated with replacing damaged or stolen plastic tags. Other materials used include brass, copper and stainless steel.



Writing or images on plaques can be either etched (engraved) or cast in a mold. Either method will clearly display a message, however casting does typically allow for more variation in terms of raised characters or pictures (usually anywhere between 0" and 0.5" of elevation), providing a three-dimensional look and feel to the plaque. Bronze is the material of choice for cast plaques. Engraved plaques are flatter in their final appearance and can only imply depth in their design.

## What do the styles say about the program?

Styles can vary extensively. If you are unsure about what you want a plaque's style and design to "say" about your program, consult with the vendor to get recommendations and see examples of past work. What do you want your plaques to say about your bench program? If you figure this out, your chosen vendor can likely find something that will be right for you.

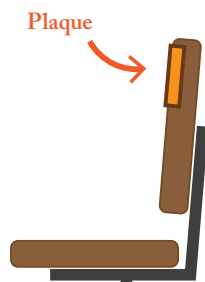
## Who are some vendors in Washington State who can make these plaques?

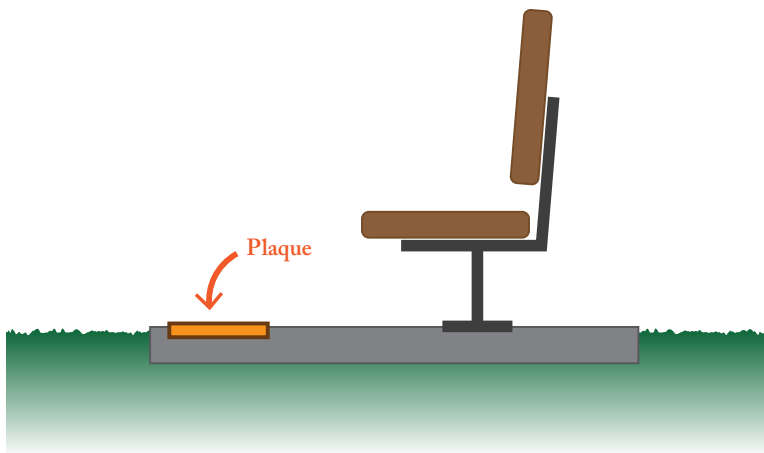
Vendors for plaques, unlike benches, do not have to be local and can be found all over the country. Because shipping costs often don't vary much between vendors, exploring multiple vendors/producers is recommended and easily done online. Local vendors may offer a degree of personalization available to walk-in customers as opposed to online. Some vendors to begin your search include American Marketing (<http://americanmarketing.biz/>) or Signs of Seattle (<http://signsofseattle.com/>), a local vendor.

## What considerations are necessary when deciding on plaque placement?

Plaques are typically placed in one of two traditional locations. The first is on the backboard of the bench, in the center. This positioning allows passersby and

those approaching the bench to read the plaque easily. The second location is facing the bench, flush with the ground, usually set in concrete, allowing the user to read the plaque while sitting. Neither offers any inherent advantage. Placement is entirely up to you. In creating your program,





you may want to decide, in advance, where you want all of your plaques located so you will be consistent in your design.

Installation of plaques is typically done by professional maintenance crews. But can be done by the average citizen on the bench-back location

with the proper tools and training. That said, it is recommended that professionals perform the installation for liability, quality, and consistency purposes.

### How do you create a style that speaks to your community?

There are many ways to create a style that speaks to your community. If this is a priority for a bench program, developing a process for public input, conducting research about the community, or hiring a professional designer may help to create a style that you feel best reflects your surroundings. Is your community rustic? Metropolitan and streamlined? Family-centric with lots of kids? Just as there are benches that appeal to every style, your plaque can do the same.

### Who decides what the plaque will say?

Simply: You do. But be careful to read the technical stuff below.

Technical Stuff: Ultimately the administrator of a bench program and/or owner of the property has discretion over what specific language will be used on a bench plaque. The language on your plaques needs to be a consistent part of your program message. Because oftentimes a bench will be dedicated to loved ones who have passed away, language is often reflective of that. Some bench program administrators make it a point to avoid language that is excessively “memorial” in

nature, as it has been shown to make daily users uncomfortable. Because of this, “memorial” style language is often limited to avoid overly morose, depressing, or potentially upsetting language. When selecting language, be cognizant that benches are often located in public areas that are heavily used, and should consider it similar to other forms of written communication in the public realm, selecting wording appropriate for all ages, backgrounds, comfort levels, etc.

If your program celebrates, for example, businesses and individuals who have had a significant impact of your area, one might consider consistent plaques that support that message. In no case should profanity, sexually suggestive language, or other obvious forms of upsetting content be allowed. Regardless of content, dedicating a bench with a plaque can increase overall costs and should be factored into the project planning as soon as possible.



# Chapter 4:

## The Location

### Who has land and how do you get to them?

Land owners come in a few different forms. Public land is often the most abundant in municipalities, as the majority of the transportation infrastructure - roads, sidewalks, bicycle/pedestrian paths, etc. are owned by the local government. While making a case for improving public amenities with the installation of benches or other street furniture and amenities is relatively easy because of who owns the space, as mentioned in Chapter 1, moving forward with the installation is often a long and cumbersome process. Appeals for infrastructure improvements require some form of public process, which involves site reviews, approval from various agencies with different degrees of power over land use, and budgetary considerations. Unfortunately, pedestrian infrastructure is often a few steps down the list when it comes time for governments to decide where to spend public resources. Depending on community support and pressure, it can be difficult to bring a program like this to the forefront of the discussion with public officials.

Understand that government officials have their own agendas and chances are good that, unless it is an issue that will get them re-elected, there is no political gain for them to listen to you. It's not you; they are very busy people. The more you can make this a prepared program that costs them very little but has big possibilities for political return, the more successful you may be.

A private landowner can sometimes be easier to work with, depending on their interests and priorities. Many landowners have agreements with the city or county. Sometimes these agreements have been bargained-for in return for the landowner getting something they wanted. If the agreement includes public amenities or improvements on the land, this may make your job easier since

putting in a bench will satisfy their own contracts. Anyway, it will probably be worth your time to take a look at what government regulations are being placed on development in your area. Some forms of these agreements are usually standardized in most communities. If you chose to go this route, be sure to check the zoning regulations on development in your community. It may prove that installing benches can fulfill some public benefit requirements they need in order to proceed with their plans. If you're confused, reach out to the local planning department with your specific questions about incentivizing variances.

Nonprofit organizations that are landholders are also a potential avenue to pursue. Because nonprofit organizations are typically oriented towards serving the public good, they may be more amenable to improving their land if a case can be made. Because they are not encumbered by public process like government – or the profit motive that can restrict investments - approaching a nonprofit landowner may yield positive results easier than the other two main options. However, because most nonprofits have a financial structure that is different and usually more limited in amount and what they can or can't allocate towards investment outside of their mission, their ability to invest in public infrastructure may also be somewhat limited even if their leadership so desires.

In all cases of land ownership, be prepared to make a case as to why installing benches for the public good is important to the community in which the landowner is invested, be it the government, private company, or nonprofit organization. In addition to your argument about the need for this public benefit, if you can ensure a source of funding for all or a portion of the installation (or present a sustainable plan for the landowner to recoup certain costs), your case will undoubtedly be stronger and landowners will likely be more eager to listen to your proposal.

## Public land vs. privately owned land? How do you get permission/rights to put in a bench from the landholder? What types of agreements are involved?

If a bench is being installed on already developed public land such as a sidewalk, park path, bus stop, or on privately held land like a corporate plaza or parking area, ownership of the bench can be transferred to the land owner. Simplifying questions and issues about maintenance, replacement, relocation, and more. It's recommended that the transfer of ownership comes with a previously agreed upon set of conditions, drawn up in a contract at the time of sale which should outline the responsibilities of the bench's new owner in maintaining and caring for the it. This shouldn't be a big barrier, since a well-built bench requires minimal upkeep for the duration of its usable life if placed and installed properly.

While these improvements to land may be a benefit to the public, to landowners they are sometimes seen as an additional obstacle to development, creating yet another hurdle they must jump over in terms of money and time, potentially affecting their overall plans. Because of this, the conditions should be written in such a way as to allow the landowner to choose the way in which they must meet the conditions required of them. Details like the placement or specific design of public improvements such as benches on a site is can be left up to the discretion of the landowner so that they can design a space that benefits the general public as well as themselves. The landowner oftentimes may prefer to use their own designers to select the proper arrangement of public infrastructure on their property. It is the job of the government and concerned citizens to ensure that the plans proposed by the landowner meet the standards of public benefit the community requires. This kind of compromising is very common between developers and the community, providing an opportunity to have a discussion about the importance of public amenities like benches. Check with your local planning or public works department to see what kind of regulations can or must be applied to public amenities on private property.

## How long does the permission last?

The Simple Version: You'll need a contract that defines the terms. It needs to be agreed to by all the parties involved. So getting a contract drawn up that sets these types of parameters is important.

The Technical Stuff: Permission for installation of a bench on a piece of land not owned by the same entity varies under the contractual agreement drawn up at the start of the process. Public entities may have a predetermined length of time for a contract to remain in effect before it either expires or gets renewed through a predetermined process, while private and nonprofit organizations may have their own set policies that may differ on a case-by-case basis. Provided their contract does not violate any legal precedents already set by the government, a private entity may set the time period for agreement to whatever is in their own best interests. Whatever the case, there are often built-in stipulations about circumstances when the terms of the contract can be changed or disregarded. For instance, if a bench is installed on a piece of city property with a 20 year conditional contract for its upkeep and maintenance, but after 15 years the government determines that a new bridge, tunnel, or other piece of infrastructure deemed more critical than the bench needs to be constructed and the bench's location somehow obstructs that, then the 5 remaining years of the contract may be disregarded and the bench removed. Oftentimes this process comes with further stipulations that the bench shall be replaced or otherwise compensated for, typically by relocating it or installing a replacement bench in a comparable location and manner. This process is particularly significant when taking into account the possibility of bench dedication. The party that paid for the dedication of the bench should be at a minimum be made aware of the risk that if they dedicate a bench to someone or something through a financial contribution as part of the contract, the bench can still likely be removed prematurely to make way for a conflicting use. It is a good idea to build in protections for the dedicator into the contract so they can possibly recoup some of their costs or be assured that their investment will live out the rest of its lifespan in another location or fashion that is equitable.

## Does someone in your area need to do an architectural review? If so, who?

**The Simple Version:** An architectural review is a process that involves somebody in the government looking at your plans – including the bench and the slab it will be on – to make sure it's okay and in keeping with the city rules for construction. You'll find there are a lot of types of reviews but it depends on where you want to put the bench. Make sure that you know who needs to review what (and at what stage) so your program doesn't get into any trouble.

**The Technical Stuff:** In the case of land-use decisions like where to install street furniture, the government always conducts final architectural review. This is typically the job of the planning and public works departments. However, before the final plan gets to that stage, the site designer usually conducts their own review to ensure that public amenities installed on their property meet their individual requirements as determined by their planned use of the land, industry standards, and government requirements. The landowner is usually required to make this an ongoing process throughout site development, involving the government to see plans throughout multiple stages of the process, from code enforcement to architectural and landscape design. If installing a bench on a piece of publicly owned land, the agency or entity charged with that space's regulation and control will have their own reviewers conduct a review to ensure it meets their particular requirements and standards. For example, installing a bench in a public park will require the parks department to have their own professional or contracted landscape architect examine the plans and the site, while doing the same at a bus stop will mean the transit authority and public transportation department will both have their engineers perform an assessment and review before permission is granted. If installing the bench on a private piece of land, the landowner will likely need to conduct their own review of the plan to ensure it meets their standards as well as the laws of the community in which they operate.

## How long does that take?

**The Simple Version:** That really depends on how many different groups you're working with. If you plan pretty well in advance you'll be able to ask all the different parties about their timeframes so you can take them into account when designing your program timetables and such.

**The Technical Stuff:** Architectural review can take different amounts of time depending on a variety of factors including project scope, design adjustment, and the capacity of a government to conduct its necessary reviews. Fortunately, many government bodies have preset standards for how quickly they must conduct a design review for a project. Check with your local government before undertaking a project to find out what those time requirements are, how best to be prepared for review, as well as what the ramifications are if either you or the government fails to meet those standards. For example, for a basic bench installation in a park by a frequently used pedestrian path in a large municipality such as Seattle, assuming the proposing party properly meets the prescribed requirements of the parks department before applying for the review, the process can take between 1 to 3 months. Smaller city parks, smaller cities or personal property can be a shorter wait. Be prepared with your project timelines to include these waiting times.

## Who do you need to talk to in order to make this happen?

**The Simple Stuff:** First off, go to your city officials and tell them what you're trying to do. Let them help you. If you have a good plan, they will probably help you to navigate their process. Ask them if they have any available funding that might help you out. They probably already have their money earmarked for other projects but it's worth a try.

**The Technical Stuff:** A good place to start asking questions about how to go about getting a bench or series of benches installed in your community is your local municipal or county planning department, depending on whether your

plans involve using land inside or outside a city's limits. They will likely have all of the information about the process of performing public improvements to land both public and private. If your plans involve placing street furniture like benches on a privately held piece of land, obviously checking in first with the owner or manager of the property should be one of your first conversations as well. Unless you can find a currently applicable requirement that a private landowner is somehow not presently meeting which would be remedied with the installation of a bench or benches, it may prove difficult to effectively demonstrate the need to make adjustments to them. It also is a good idea, in the interest of generating support, goodwill, and a positive relationship with a landowner on whose land you wish to make improvements, to involve them in the conversation early so they are as receptive to your appeal as possible. It may just prove that they can be convinced of the benefit to their interests to perform these kinds of improvements even if the fact may be that they are not legally required to make improvements. It's no secret that a company that makes a demonstrated investment in the well-being of the community tends to garner a positive public image, which can often lead to growing a positive public image for the business in the community, which often can lead to better and more business, because of this kind of strategic investment.





# Chapter 5: The Foundation

---

## How can the bench be installed?

As discussed in Chapter 2, benches are typically installed using one of two methods: either the bolt-down or rod style, each requiring a concrete pad to be poured as a foundation. Installation of the bolt-down style bench requires drilling into the concrete foundation, which sits at-grade with ground level and remains exposed, where bolts are inserted, affixing the feet at the ends of the bench's support rods to the pad. Installing a rod style bench requires pouring a concrete base that can either sit at, above, or below grade with the rods puncturing through the foundation.

## Are there ADA requirements for designing a bench's foundation and surrounding environment? How much larger than the bench should the foundation be?

While ADA requirements do exist for many types of benches, there are in fact no actual ADA requirements for wheelchair or otherwise handicapped access with regard to benches that are located outdoors. However, consideration for wheelchair adjacency is frequently requested and is becoming common practice with many agencies and organizations today. There is only one ADA guideline, which is not an enforceable requirement, specifying a bench seat height minimum of 17" and a maximum of 19" above the ground on which the bench rests, also stating that a bench is most useful if it has full back support in addition to armrests, which aid when sitting and standing. This guideline is relatively easy to implement, as it requires much of what is already commonplace in bench design. Read more about ADA requirements for benches at the US Access Board's website: <http://www.access-board.gov/>. When installing benches, the site's landscape

architect or engineer should make accommodations for a wheelchair to easily be able to park alongside the bench. This requires providing a rectangular area of 30"x48" minimum of open space of firm, flat, and stable ground on one or both sides of the bench (with the 48" side parallel to the short axis of the bench), allowing a wheelchair to rest next to the bench while facing the same direction as someone sitting next to them. Extra room of approximately 2' in front of and on the sides of a bench, allowing for one or more wheelchairs to maneuver safely, is also typically incorporated into modern designs. A wheelchair accessible approach to the bench is also a typical standard of modern bench design.

### Installing the bench – who can you use in your area to do the work of installation?

Installing a bench requires some heavy equipment, but is not an exceedingly complex process. It is recommended that installation of a bench for use by the public be done by a professional. The process is usually done by either a public employee of the city or agency responsible for the site, or by a contractor doing the work on behalf of the responsible entity. Laying and leveling a concrete foundation can be dangerous if one is not adequately prepared. The process of installing either a rod or bolt-down style bench into or onto that foundation is also a process requiring some expertise to ensure that it is done correctly, allowing the bench to hold up to continual use by the public and resist abuse by the elements, vandalism, animals, and more. Contact the agency or organization responsible for managing the property on which your bench will be installed and ask them what their process is and who they use when making capital improvements. If you are dealing with a public agency like a city or county, they will likely be able to provide you with a simple answer, as they oftentimes conduct the work themselves or have a process already in place for securing a reliable contractor. The agency will also likely have a landscape architect or site engineer, either an internal staff member or a consultant, who can assess the site for compliance with local code and ordinances, account for subterranean infrastructure prior to digging a foundation, as well as provide professional guidance on the process as to maximize public benefit and safety and limit any negative impacts on the

environment, views, and more. Some private organizations may have staff that does this same work as well, depending on their business.

### What types of foundation materials hold up best?

Foundations are typically built out of concrete in most cases of bench construction. As mentioned in Chapter 2, other equally durable materials can be used as a foundation in the case of a bolt-down style bench, such as stone or asphalt.

### What types have not worked in the past and why?

Improperly mixed and/or poured foundations are the most likely cause of foundation failure. Benches installed in a base of earth (dirt and clay) also are at serious risk of failure. It is strongly recommended that outdoor furniture intended for use by the public always be attached securely to a sturdy foundation. Failure to secure a bench to an adequate foundation can result in serious injury to its users, as well as permanent damage to the bench, requiring its removal and replacement. It can also cause potentially serious damage to its physical site, damaging roots of nearby plants and trees, potentially killing them. It can also seriously damage any underground pipes or cables buried nearby, such as the plumbing to an adjacent water fountain, fiber optic cable lines under a sidewalk, sewage pipes from a public restroom, all of which can be quite costly to repair. It is recommended that a public bench always be installed with a concrete or similar foundation mixed, poured, and assessed by a professional.

### How long should the types of foundations last in your weather?

There is no reason a properly laid foundation, with a bench installed in or on it correctly, should not at a minimum last the entire life of its bench. Ideally a foundation should remain in good, functional condition for at least five years before any routine inspection needs to be conducted, even in relatively harsh climates. Outdoor benches are designed for durability for this reason. The metal and concrete elements are designed to expand and contract with rising and

falling temperatures in harmoniously with one another, causing as little wear and tear as possible. Some slight cracking of the foundation may occur on its surface. This is normal, relatively unnoticeable, and does not necessarily indicate that any actual damage exists below the surface. The bench's foundation is likely still in good condition and will last for many years.

Some signs that the foundation may be damaged or deteriorating prematurely and in need of attention by a professional do exist and should be watched for. Concrete is susceptible to damage from fire, improper expansion caused by exposure to aggregates (most often those containing silica, which causes the concrete to react by expanding improperly when simultaneously exposed to water), sea water effects (sea water damage to concrete is more pronounced when concrete is exposed to a mixture of ambient air and sea water, as opposed to being fully submerged), bacterial corrosion, calcium leaching, chemical damage (from carbonization, chlorides, sulfates and distilled water), and physical damage.

In the Seattle area, ambient moisture is most often the culprit when a concrete foundation must be repaired or replaced before the end of its useful lifecycle. Properly treated and coated materials can usually prevent this from becoming an issue, even in a particularly damp climate. Common maintenance issues are covered in Chapter 6.

# Chapter 6: The Maintenance

---

## Who will do the maintenance and for how long?

Maintenance of a bench or other pedestrian infrastructure is typically handled through the local government entity responsible for its site. Unless a special arrangement is made with a separate organization, the government entity or property owner/manager maintaining responsibility for the bench ensures that responding to maintenance issues is carried out in the most expedient manner. Governments keep an inventory of public infrastructure and amenities within their jurisdiction and keep track of maintenance calls for their record-keeping and planning purposes, ensuring that documentation of all issues related to issues like bench maintenance is kept securely.

Oftentimes, if a bench is located adjacent to private property, the owner and/or manager of that property is responsible for maintaining the bench in accordance with local code and regulations. This is typically outlined in a signed agreement accompanying the original permit application for the bench and kept on file by the local government that granted the permit (typically the city public works, engineering, or planning department).

## How to approach this in your area – who can you call?

If a bench appears to be damaged, deteriorating, or vandalized, first contact the owner or manager of the adjacent property to make them aware of it. As explained above, oftentimes it is their responsibility to provide the upkeep and maintenance of the bench located by their property. In cases where there is no clear adjacent property owner or the bench is located on or within a piece of public property like a park or bus shelter, contact the local government entity

responsible for the property. For example, a damaged bench in a county park would be the responsibility of the county parks and recreation department, but a damaged bus at a bus stop would be the responsibility of the transit agency operating that stop. If the bench in question is located on private property, contact the property owner or manager.

### Are there agreements to be signed? If so, how long do the agreements last and what happens when they're over?

Permits for a bench installed on public property typically expire if not renewed. Information about timeframes and dates for renewing your permit are available at your local government's planning or engineering departments and should be given to you at the time of your application. These renewals are required on an annual basis and are typically very inexpensive. For example, King County requires permits to be renewed on July 1 of every year, following the original issuing date and costs two dollars per bench.

If a permit is not renewed properly and within the prescribed timeframe, the local government is typically required to notify the applicant holder that they have violated their permit agreement. There is usually a grace period (King County gives ten days after the permit holder is notified) after which the government can revoke the permit and remove the bench. Read your permit application to find out if the government will store the bench once removed and how long of a window you have in which to reclaim it before they can sell, destroy, or take ownership of the bench. You will likely be charged fees for storage as well as other costs incurred by the government during the process.

### What types of maintenance duties are necessary on a bench? What and who is involved?

Maintenance of a piece of outdoor furniture like a bench is an inevitable necessity. Wear and tear from use, abuse, and exposure to the elements will eventually

take their toll. A well-built bench, however, will provide years of use without ever requiring much attention in terms of upkeep.

Graffiti removal is the primary type of maintenance required for a bench. This can be mitigated to some extent by thoughtful placement of benches in well-trafficked, well-lit areas that deter would-be vandals. Removing graffiti from a bench, typically spray-paint, is not an overly intensive task, depending on the bench material. If the bench is made of wood and is not painted, sanding the affected areas is usually required with an electric sander (either belt or pad sander will work well). Once the graffiti is sanded away, the wood can be recoated with sealant and/or stain. Repeated sanding of a bench will result in small deviations in the surface of the wood, which will likely be unnoticeable to the casual user. Benches made out of materials other than wood such as aluminum, powder-coated steel, concrete, stone, fiberglass, recycled plastic, or thermoplastic are substantially easier to remove paint from. Graffiti removal products typically come in the form of liquid or aerosol sprays and are inexpensive, ranging on average from five to twenty dollars and can be found easily in most hardware stores. Some scrubbing may be necessary, but otherwise the process is relatively quick and straightforward. Sometimes graffiti does not come off of concrete even with a removal agent due to the material's porous nature. If graffiti does not come off by scrubbing with a removal agent, consider pressure washing the surface and then scrubbing it with a wire before attempting again.

Repairing a concrete foundation is also a relatively simple process, as many repairs are straightforward and require minimal special skills to complete. Surface cracks, corner chips, and other minor repairs can be made using tools and products widely available for purchase at most hardware stores. However concrete is heavy, mixing it is difficult work, and properly surfacing poured concrete does require some patience. Safety equipment (safety glasses, dust mask, work gloves, etc) should always be used when undergoing these types of repairs. Because of the cumbersome nature and potential safety risks of the process, calling a professional to handle repairs may be a simpler and smarter choice than attempting to handle it on one's own.

If a concrete foundation is damaged beyond repair or has outlived its useful life, it will need to be fully replaced. This is a job for professionals requiring the use of heavy equipment to both remove the old pad and install a new one, setting the bench in it properly.

As far as what party bears the responsibility for maintaining a bench, normally a publically-owned bench on public land is the responsibility of the corresponding government body or agency. This ensures all work is done to a replicable standard and removing the potential to be liable for substandard work if done by a third party. If a bench is situated on private land, then the property management would be responsible for the bench's upkeep. A common role for a third party in this process is to provide a watchdog service, alerting the proper authority when a bench has been damaged.

### How much time monthly do the maintenance duties take? How much do they cost?

Maintenance on a relatively simple piece of outdoor furniture like a bench is typically minimal, provided there are no extenuating circumstances. Maintenance time for benches is nominal, as are typical repair costs. Of the two, time is a more valuable commodity, as a benches program and a public agency may go back and forth with their communications in the process of scheduling and record updating. However, as indicated above, while most repairs require relatively little time and money, full replacement of a concrete foundation or of the bench itself is an expensive and time-consuming process. It goes without saying that options for repairing a bench should be exhausted before considering full replacement. Fully replacing a bench, using all of the proper equipment and methods, can be a long process, taking anywhere from several hours to a full day if new concrete must be poured and dried.

It is recommended that all repairs, major or minor, be handled by professionals, in accordance to the standards required of the property management responsible for physically maintaining the bench, to ensure quality work.



# Chapter 7:

## Program Costs

---

### How do you determine the cost of putting together the program?

Costs associated with a bench program fall into three main categories: 1) installation, which includes materials, inspection, and labor; 2) maintenance, which is primarily labor and materials; and 3) management. Of the three, management of the program tends to be the most expensive because of its ongoing nature and relationship with the other two elements.

While it is an expensive to install a single bench – between the cost of materials, labor, administrative fees, and other expenses associated with making improvements in the public realm – if done properly, installation is a one-time cost that will not reoccur for the duration of the bench’s usable lifespan. If installation is carried out properly, repairs will be minor and infrequent. For example, the Seattle Parks Foundation estimates that, out of the three-hundred benches it has donated to the City of Seattle’s Parks System since 2003, approximately six to ten benches per year require some form of repair. These repairs are almost always extremely minor in nature, typically consisting of removing graffiti or moss from bench surfaces.

### How do you determine the cost of putting in one bench?

Putting in an individual bench is an expensive process. A safe estimate for the installation of one standard outdoor bench with wood backing, aluminum/alloy rods, and a concrete foundation, is approximately \$3,000. This estimate incorporates administrative costs as well and does not include any accounting for profit on the part of program management. It is important to note that this

and any other cost estimate are based off of the costs of existing bench programs like those managed by the City of Bellevue Parks Department or the Seattle Parks Foundation. To install a bench without having the advantage of volume purchasing and administrative processes in place that these organizations provide may result in higher overall costs. Ultimately the costs of public improvements of this nature are determined by the government agency responsible for managing the property and overseeing the installation.

### How do you determine the cost of starting and running an entire bench program?

The overall cost of operating a bench program is difficult to accurately determine, as it is based on factors that vary from location to location, government to government, and more. Methods for managing those costs and keeping them as low as possible include operating at a large enough scope and scale as to take advantage of volume pricing on materials and efficient operating costs. It may seem like Economics 101 to many, but it is worth understanding that when a program operates at a size where materials can be purchased in bulk from reliable vendors who can then sell at reduced costs, the entire operation saves money. And when the amount of business conducted becomes similarly scaled, efficiency is bound to increase.

Partnering your bench program with a public agency like the city parks department or your local transit provider can also save money as that relationship can help streamline the entire process. A formal agreement between you and your partner(s) will help to clarify roles, responsibilities, deadlines, and expectations for all parties involved, increasing efficiency and (hopefully) keeping costs lower by reducing the amount of time and money necessary to install each individual bench.

## If you are selling to the general public, how do you price your program?

Pricing the installation of a bench in a bench program is also not a set-in-stone process. While material, labor, and operations costs must be met in a sustainable manner, those dollar amounts vary from place to place based on demand, resources, and other factors. For a program to be successful there must be sufficient demand for public amenities like benches in a community and a resource base with the capacity to meet that demand. The more nimble a program can be in adjusting to its surroundings through strategic partnerships and streamlined processes, the more likely the program will be to survive and be successful.

It is important to be aware of equity issues that may exist in your community when developing an overall program cost structure. Because benches in the public realm are a public benefit, the program should be structured in such a way as to be accessible to as many members of the public as possible. If your cost structure is too significant a barrier to entry for large segments of the population, the program may be viewed as inequitable, making the commemoration of a loved one, for instance, only available to those with means. Without getting mired in a philosophical exploration of social equity when it comes to the availability and distribution of community benches, this report will simply say that equity should be a consideration when developing a cost structure due to the clear public-benefit nature of a program. It is recommended that, wherever possible, implementing methods to mitigate or subsidize costs for parties of limited means may be a way to address any potential points of contention regarding equity. Failing to do so may put this type of program at risk of negative perception in the community, jeopardizing its chances for long-term success.

## How can you tell if the program will be self-sustaining?

Having a resilient business model for a bench program is the most essential piece to ensuring the health and longevity of a community bench program (or any public service). For the sake of discussion, this document assumes that the goal of

any benches program is to install a substantial number of benches in your community, not to generate profit. So while the program does not necessarily need to function under a traditional business model where the total costs of services provided is offset by the subsequent income generated, a bottom line still must be met. This means that costs like operations, labor, materials, payroll, and communications, among others, must be covered, leaving some extra funds to ensure the program's resilience in the near and long-term to cover program and maintenance costs in the future. Essentially, a reliable source of income must be identified and cultivated sustainably.

Determining what a sustainable revenue-to-spending stream looks like for a community bench or similar program is a difficult task dependent on factors beyond the costs identified above. These include factoring into your budget the scope, scale, environmental costs, government and partner relations, advertising, and more. The Seattle Parks Foundation works closely with the City of Seattle's Department of Parks and Recreation to keep its operating costs low and its processes similarly streamlined. The Foundation spends approximately \$40,000 per year in operating costs, a figure which composes approximately 1/4th to 1/3rd of its total income for the year to run its memorial bench installation program, which operates in all of the City's 430 parks except for the Washington Park Arboretum. Obviously the scale of the City of Seattle's parks system is unmatched throughout the region and, because of its size, age, and other factors, many of its parks have special restrictions due to historic, environmental, or other factors, which a program must budget to account for. A new program should anticipate similar restrictions, scaled to the size of the area or community it intends to operate within. The Seattle Parks Foundation's budget accounts for those costs and has proven to be a sustainable program since 2003, generating revenue through structured and scaled bench donation and renewal fees which cover its operating and materials costs. Learn more at the Seattle Parks Foundation website, [www.seattleparksfoundation.org](http://www.seattleparksfoundation.org).

# Chapter 8: The Timeframes

---

Once you have your information, how do you manage this program? What are the timeframes involved?

At the point when all of the information and financial contribution are received, the process of site selection, materials, labor/installation, dedication, and other processes tends to take between 1 to 3 months. Bench programs that go through this process on a regular basis oftentimes use an online application to streamline and simplify the process. This can be completed with a relatively simple online template that provides customers with all of the options and requirements needed from them in one place. These forms should be straightforward and can be designed and implemented by any web development company or in-house, if expertise is already on hand.

Is there an online template that could be created to help people to install and create their program?

An online template is relatively easy to develop and integrate into an already functioning website. The same could be done by developing a paper form with the same options, but the advantages of developing an online tool, particularly if you anticipate the program to have an ongoing nature, are fairly obvious. Options can be changed or adjusted as necessary, records can be stored digitally, and customers can have access in real-time to additional options and resources unavailable with a paper form. If program administrators take the time to decide on what options should and shouldn't be available for people to select from, including pricing, the process can be designed in a very straightforward manner, saving time and hassle for users on both ends of the system. A supplemental resource, in the form of a webpage or downloadable fact sheet, is also a poten-

tially useful resource, providing extra information for users into the process. Users should be presented with all information they may need or be interested in, including timelines of the process. Unless you feel like you have the in-house talent and capacity to take on this kind of a project, it's usually a good idea to hire a professional web developer to put together your site for you.

Important information to consider including on the form include all the different styles of benches, the dedication plaques, whether the bench is new or repurposed, and the corresponding prices for each option. In the case of a program based on donations, the type of donation (one-time, ongoing, or another option - if applicable) should be noted. Details about each type of bench, including the timeframe should be available if possible. An option to pay for the process online is also an important consideration, as it can streamline the process, allowing the program administrators to receive payment instantly and begin the installation and dedication process without the delay paperwork usually involves. The more details about what the customer is getting for their money and the exact agreement involved, including roles/responsibilities of both parties involved and any important timelines (some bench donation programs require renewal of the donation after a predetermined period of time if the party wishes to keep the bench dedicated in the original name).

Options to download a form to complete manually should also be included, in addition to contact and location information for other non-digital options. These can be especially important if the customer is not comfortable or familiar with using computers and online commerce tools.

# Chapter 9: The Marketing

## What are common marketing tools and methods?

The marketing of a bench program can take any number of forms and be targeted to a variety of audiences. Common places to advertise a bench program should include places where people seek to memorialize the lives of loved ones, significant life events, accomplishments, and more. These include newspaper obituaries, graduation catalogues and fairs, newsletters (print and web), and more. Online advertising through purchasing ad-space from relevant companies with online presences, as well as through social media channels should not be discounted also. Do not forget that people in a position to potentially contribute to or purchase from a bench program may not be as tech savvy as others.

## Can you advertise through local groups and public channels?

Another easy source of advertising is any publications or web presences handled by partner organizations the bench program may have. For example, if the program is partnering with the local transit agency, consider putting ads for people to dedicate benches on or in their vehicles. If the program works with a parks system in the area, consider requesting ad space in whatever newsletters they may circulate. There are also advertising opportunities on any signage or public information resources available on your partners' property. It is not unrealistic for these advertising resources to be available free of charge, due to the nonprofit nature of a bench program. Negotiate with your partners when making these arrangements to fully understand what options may be accessible to you. Bulletin boards, fliers, mailers, and other regularly published informational resources

from agencies, governments, and companies are often available to advertise in free of charge.

### Are there other generic ways to get the word out?

Consider developing your own newsletter or flier to get out in the community. Ask your local electrical utility, parks department, or other public resource if you can include your flier with their regular mailers (often included with bills, in the case of power utilities and other billing service providers) for free, or at-cost for mailing. Or consider mailing or distributing your flier, advertising your services, on your own, if resources are available.



# Afterword

---

Congratulations! You made it to the end of the Bench Program Cookbook! At this point you should be prepared with a thorough foundation on which to start to implement your community bench program.

While this cookbook provides a broad overview of the various components of the program you need to consider, there will undoubtedly be a snag or two that you may not have been prepared for. But never fear. The point of this document never was to give you all of the answers. The Bench Program Cookbook is designed to serve as a guide rather than a cheat sheet. You may verywell still have a burning question on a topic that was somehow omitted from these pages. Look back through the book's chapters for guidance on on where to go and who to ask for answers to your specific questions. Often enough getting your questions answered is as simple phone call away to your local city planning, parks, or public works department or transit agency. Talk to them, and use the information in this guidebook as a roadmap to guide and facilitate the conversation. Being prepared with the right tools, language, and vision for the job will make the interaction with your public servants focused, productive, and will likely ingratiate you to them as you present your structured plan for fixing up your community.

Finally, this document was written wth the intent of storing it on the web, as opposed to hardcopy. This allows the Bench Program Cookbook to serve as an ever evolving and updating document. See something you think could use a little more information or clarity on? Let us know! We'd love to hear from you and will happily take your suggestions into consideration, making the appropriate changes or adjustments in order to paint a clearer picture for our readers.

Now go out there and get to work!

-2015, Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative



