

LOCAL RETAIL AND ACTIVATION STRATEGY



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANCE OF
COLLABORATION

IS YOUR PRECINCT
FLOURISHING?



Placemaking: from transaction to interaction

Placemaking has an important role
in the success of our communities
and neighbourhoods.

Good placemaking can provide communities with a
sense of pride, belonging and local identity.

PLACEMAKING:
FROM TRANSACTION
TO INTERACTION

PROMOTING YOUR
PRECINCT

KEEPING
ON TRACK

What is placemaking?

Retail has long held an important role in placemaking and defining neighbourhood identity and perception for both its residents and visitors.

This section will provide you with the tools to attract more people to your precinct by creating memorable experiences and compelling reasons for them to visit.

Placemaking involves the reimagining and activation of spaces to create vibrant, memorable and social places and precincts where people feel a sense of belonging.

Placemaking is a long-term, future oriented process that recognises the uniqueness of a place. It involves listening to the people who live, work, visit, study and play in a place to discover their needs and aspirations. It uses short and long-term interventions to build on the place's existing qualities.

Well-designed places meet people's needs by harnessing the distinct characteristics and strengths of each place.

Delivery of good placemaking is dependent on the following:

- a shared vision
- application of appropriate skills
- collaboration.

Effective placemaking is flexible, collaborative and community-driven. It responds, adapts and utilises elements already in place. Successful placemaking uses existing people, places and things to maximise the overall impact and success.



Source: CBRE Research

Retail in the context of placemaking

Placemaking is about understanding how a place is experienced, the elements that make people want to stay and enjoy a place, and ultimately how they feel connected, comfortable and attached to a place.

Retail environments and place are inextricably linked. Customers do not want to shop in places that are unappealing.

Success factors

- Placemaking needs to be founded on a clear vision.
- It's important to understand a place – what will and won't work.
- The place must be authentic.
- Placemaking success is about people – make them feel special.
- It's what draws people to a place and keeps them coming back.
- A strong place has multiple layers and experiences.
- A place's overall offer must be curated.

Connecting with the community

When people enjoy spending time and returning to a place it starts to weave itself into the fabric of a community. The connection between people and place is palpable. When a local community is empowered to use and engage with a place they have claimed as their own, it becomes a learning and living resource. They can seek, share and return to the place, knowing that they will again find experiences they value.

Gradually, the effect is to establish a place in the fabric of the local community. Retail precincts have the opportunity create these places.

Lighter, quicker, cheaper

Lighter, quicker, cheaper (LQC) is a placemaking and community design method that originates from the Project for Public Spaces, an organisation based in New York.

Project for Public Spaces is a grassroots movement that leverages the lack of funding and resources for small-scale placemaking projects.

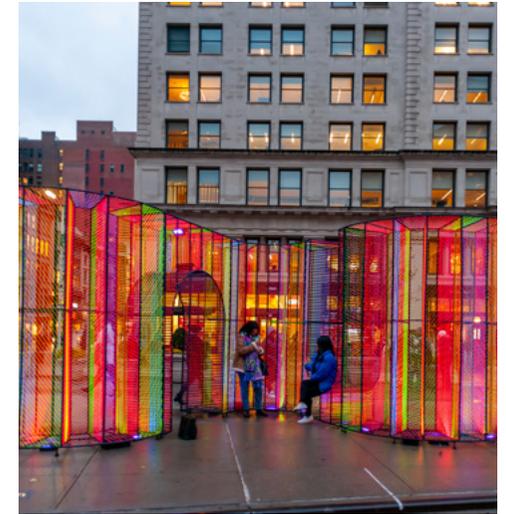
How are their projects done?

Lighter projects are seasonal or one-day events that can also be called pop-up projects. A 'lighter' project is flexible and temporary.

Quicker projects have short timelines from brainstorming to implementation. They avoid the long bureaucratic approval processes and look for a variety of funders to create their vision.

Cheaper projects explore private and public funding options. They are open to using grant programs, private sponsorships and partnerships, and crowdsourcing.

On the following page we have included some LQC imagery as inspiration for you to get the ball rolling in your precinct.



Placemaking process

What makes a successful placemaking project?

These are some recommended steps you can take when working on placemaking projects in your precinct. They are meant to represent work-in-progress and flexible approaches, because placemaking is never done and places must constantly be open to evolving.



Start with a vision

A vision can either come from a new project idea or an area that needs improvement.



Observe

See how people use the space. They may have the answer for what should be done to improve the space.



Innovate

Seize opportunities and make connections between unlikely concepts.



Understand the audience

Talk to the people who will engage with the project to better understand their wants and needs.



Collaborate

Make connections to help with anything and everything from funding, research and design to implementation, maintenance and promotion.



Create a place, not a design

Think about how the space will be used and design for those activities. Don't just think about how the outcome will look.



Use local talent

Using local talent will help to create an authentic connection between the project and the community.



Triangulate

Triangulation is the process by which a third party creates an attraction and prompts strangers to talk to each other as if they were friends.



Reflect

Think about the impacts your placemaking project may have on the social, economical and political climate of the community.

Activate your place

Do you have an empty space, shop or footpath that needs some activity?

Do you want to attract more people to your place?

Do you want your precinct to thrive and be a hive of activity?

You need to 'activate' your place!

Great places can stimulate conversation and social interaction, create interesting destinations for locals and visitors, reduce vandalism and build a sense of pride and ownership in the community.

There are many low-cost, easy and fast ways to create great places – the best part is you can act now!

Don't wait for someone else to do it! Read on to find some effective, easy and creative ideas that can make a difference to your business, street or entire precinct.

The aim of activating a precinct or shop is to create a space where people can stop and engage.

An active space is enjoyable and allows people to relax, which can draw more people to your precinct. Busy places attract people.

Placemaking recommendations

Placemaking recommendations are grouped under the following three themes:

1. Physical improvements

2. Events and activities

3. Retail experience

Included in the recommendations are several quick win projects that can be undertaken to have short-term, high-impact results.

Physical improvements

Small improvements can have a large impact on the retail experience by lifting the precinct's appearance and providing additional comfort and amenity for visitors.

Streetscapes that are dynamic, comfortable and engaging can create a memorable experience and encourage more people to visit and stay longer.

High-quality streetscapes can create an instant impression on visitors and help to instil a pride of place amongst traders and the local community.

Recommendations

Focus on common areas

- Increase shade and shelter to protect pedestrians and encourage them to stay longer.
- Create more places for visitors to pause by increasing informal and formal seating.
- Increase lighting throughout the precinct to enhance the evening experience and increase a sense of safety and activity.
- Install fairy lights in trees or string catenary lighting, and make sure shopfront, architectural details and retail displays are well-lit.
- Investigate providing gateway signage and entry statements to your precinct.
- Create a vibrant space outside your shopfront to attract customers.
- Block closures for neighbourhood events can bring residents together to socialise and experience their local retail precinct as a vibrant public space. Local organisations, families, neighbourhood associations and schools can also partner with you to enliven the experience.

Parklets

- Parklets are an effective way to create vibrant streetscape activity when limited space exists on footpaths or in front of shopfronts.
- Investigate the reclamation of car parking spaces and the temporary assembly of playful parklets for children and adults to engage in play, and dining parklets for eateries, bringing life to the street.

Greening

- Soften streetscapes by using planter boxers with suitable edges along shopfronts.
- Cover blank walls by using inexpensive wire structures for climbing plants.



HINTS AND TIPS

- People only visit where they want to go.
- Make your shopfront fun and engaging!
- Encourage lingering and conversations.



Events and activities

Pop-ups and seasonal events

Events and temporary activations create additional things to do in a retail precinct and provide reasons for locals and visitors to visit when they might otherwise choose to go elsewhere.

Temporary or pop-up events are a good starting point to activate a destination. They are a simple way to disrupt and kick-start business-as-usual because they attract different people at different times.

A regular program of events and activities help attract additional visitors to your precinct.

Recommendations

Pop-up retail and events

Events can be small-scale, informal events or larger, more formal events. These might include:

- invite a food truck or destination food operator to set up a pop-up location in your precinct one evening a week
 - encourage young traders, artists and innovative retailers to establish pop-ups that support bringing in more visitors
 - be dog, bike and child friendly
 - create a regular program of community focused events such as a pop-up cinema on a blank wall
 - consider forming a "What's On" communications strategy to promote your precinct
 - prioritise events to occur on weekends and evenings to help attract visitors when they're likely to have more leisure time
- investigate placemaking grants to develop coordinated events and pop-ups
 - hold a community "Chalk Festival" or community barbeque
 - encourage partnerships with different community groups (e.g. schools, community groups or charities)
 - generate a buzz with events celebrating diversity or something place-specific
 - run a competition that can link to your social media pages to engage with the community and attract more customers.





Retail experience

Maximising the retail experience

People no longer need to leave their house for products with the availability of online services and retailers. Engaging shopfronts are a competitive advantage bricks and mortar retailers have. This shifts the role of a local precinct to something that is a place people visit because they want to. It also reinforces the importance of place and experience – both for individual retailers and as a group across the precinct.

Memorable places are those people can sit, meet and engage some of their five senses.

This is achieved by:

- encouraging lingering at key locations and dwell-time within the precinct
- curating internal and external spaces
- window displays and artwork
- coordinated branding of the precinct.

Recommendations

Bring the inside out

- Enhance the visual interest of shops by 'trading out' and creating vibrant outdoor displays and sidewalk activations.
- Engage one of the five senses of those walking past.
- Curate internal and external spaces of each shop.

Retail trading and visual merchandising

- High quality visual merchandising and attractive shopfronts can dramatically lift the overall appeal of a precinct, the retail experience and leave long lasting memories of a place.
- Keep changing window displays and try to update your displays at least once a month. For busy shopping seasons like the holidays, you want to do it every couple of weeks or even every week if possible.

Activate vacant shops

- Explore transforming empty shopfronts into incubator spaces, micro tenancies or pop-up retail outlets.
- Explore using empty shopfronts as temporary gallery spaces or studios where artists can showcase their work.

Focus on precinct narrative and place identity

- Stories help craft relatable narratives for places. People are more easily able to form associations with places when there is a story to set the scene.
- Just as brands create an identity with a brand narrative, local precincts can too. Key components include high-level facts, a vision, its story, emotional impact and a marketable concept.

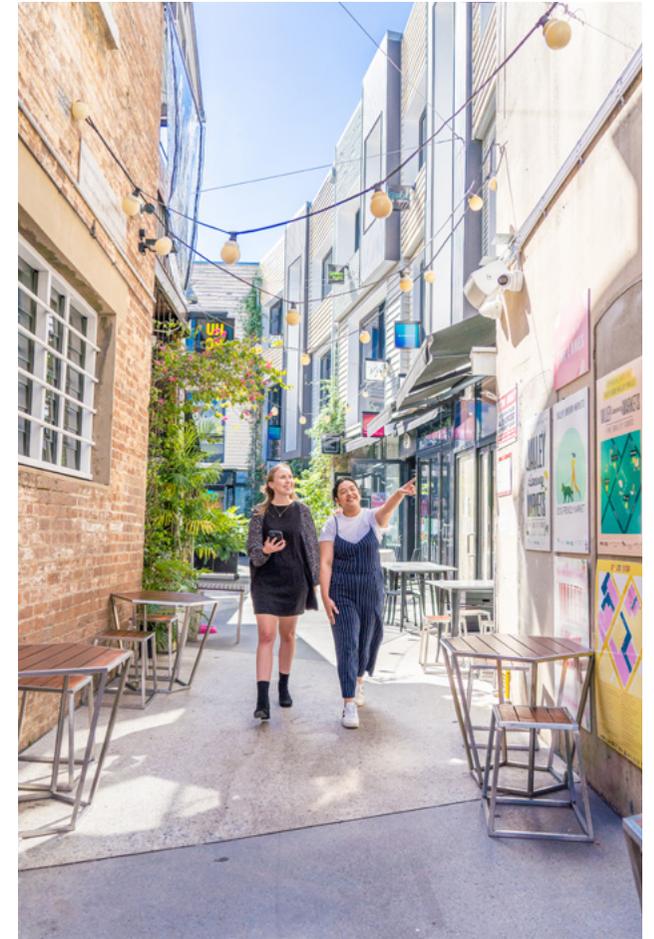


- Place identity is made up of both physical and non-physical (e.g. brand narrative, reputation) elements within the precinct. It is what makes one place different from another.
- Developing and curating the precinct's distinctive place identity is key to growing and strengthening your local precinct's brand.

HINTS AND TIPS

Employ a coordinated precinct-wide approach to:

- planting (e.g. pot plants)
- signage and branding
- furniture
- lighting
- continuous design elements – e.g. awnings, shopfront windows
- precinct public art.



Precinct management

Ongoing and coordinated management underpins successful precincts. On-site management helps long-term precinct planning and organisation, as well as day-to-day housekeeping.

While your precinct may not have a dedicated management structure in place, there are some place management strategies you could consider implementing.

- **Be customer-centric:** Focus on the customer experience, encourage more frequent visits and a longer 'dwell time'. This may include coordinating consistent trading hours across the precinct, considering what people might do or where they might wait between appointments, or reasons why they might visit the precinct again.
- **Encourage a mix of retail types:** Diversity in the mix of retail types can create a dynamic and nimble precinct more able to respond to change. The mix can be curated over time to meet broader precinct goals.
- **Cluster retail types:** Locating like with like strengthens retail destinations. Smaller retailers particularly benefit due to shared marketing, promotions and a greater destination pull.
- **Emerging trends:** Keep up-to-date with emerging trends within the precinct. These could be used to create event, art or placemaking opportunities.
- **Involve all back-of-house stakeholders:** Each stakeholder has different skill sets, knowledge and insights to contribute. Key stakeholders include property owners, managers and leasing agents.
- **Collect data:** Look for ways to obtain feedback, information or data about your precinct and the initiatives you undertake. These might include vehicle counts, pedestrian counts or visual observations.
- **Maintenance and cleanliness:** Coordinate a regular maintenance and cleaning schedule across your precinct. Encourage a small, regular and frequent routine that is shared across shops.
- **Tidy shopfront:** Keep your shopfront tidy by using it as an opportunity to interact with customers!

Waiting and destination drawcards



Coupons and merchandising



HINTS AND TIPS

- Be customer-centric with consistent trading hours.
- Coherent mix of retail types.
- Visible and active street frontages.
- Constant and active casual surveillance.
- Cleanliness.
- Encourage spill-over to footpath e.g. dining, visual merchandising, signage, planting.



TOOLKIT EXERCISE

Steps to make great places

Use this worksheet as a placemaking guide for your local retail strip.

Find out

What are the **key characteristics and history** of your local retail strip?

Who are the **people (now and future)** that use this retail strip? How do they use your precinct?

How can you **approach these groups of people**?
What can you talk with them about?

Create ideas

What is the **ideal future vision** of your retail strip for your local community? This can be one idea or many.

What is required to **deliver this vision**?
Write these as statements.

How can you **add this to the story** of your local place?
This will help people get excited and make decision-making easier.

Implement

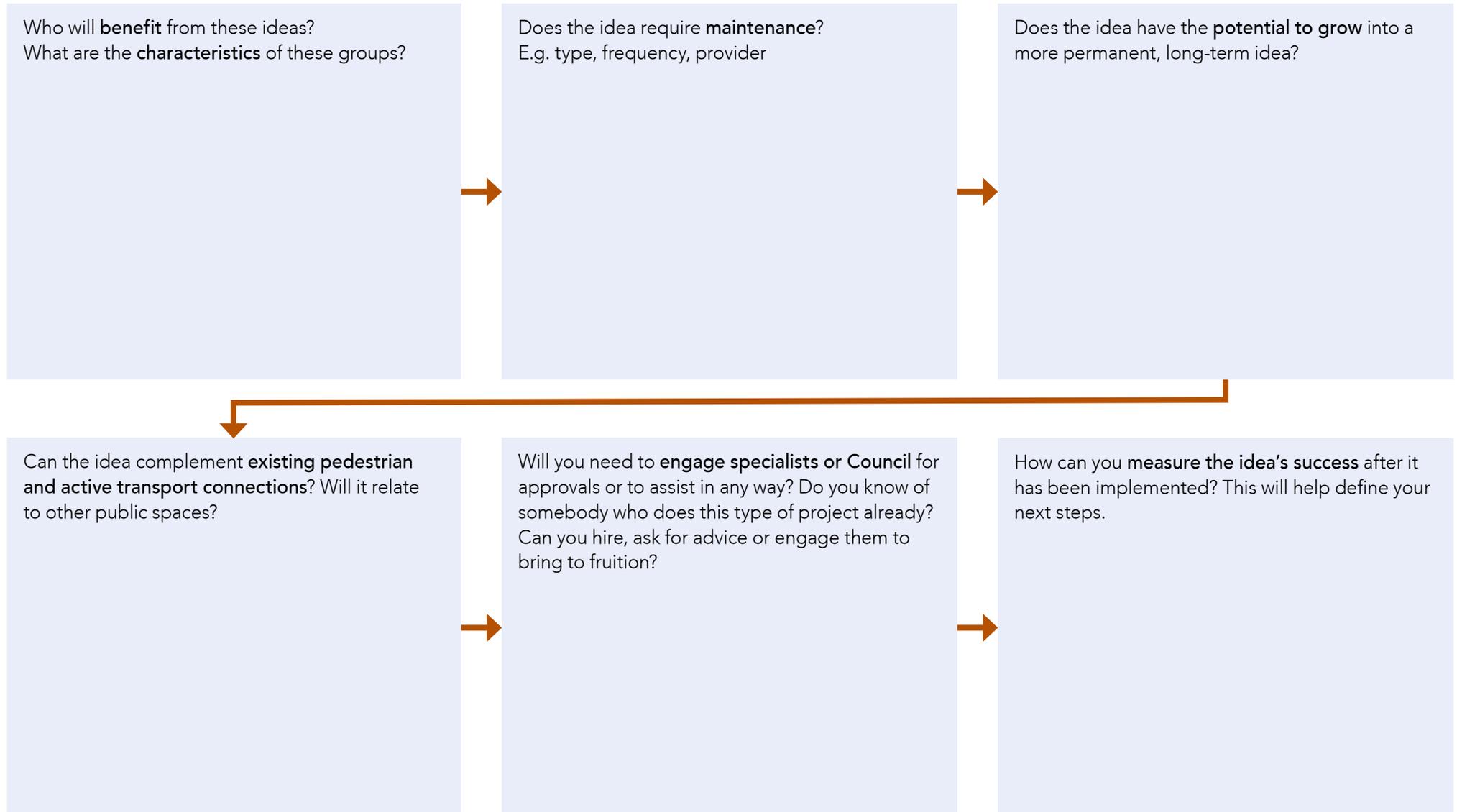
What is the **top idea** or set of ideas that can be enacted? Who can **champion** these?

Categorise actions by **cost and timing**.
What actions can be delivered in the short-term?
Which can be delivered in the longer term?

Which idea will **go first**? What needs to happen for this to be implemented in your precinct?

TOOLKIT EXERCISE

How to refine your placemaking strategy



TOOLKIT EXERCISE

How to host an event

Events are good ways to engage with the local community and new customers, and showcase small business, local artists and restaurateurs.

Steps to holding a successful event

1. Establish event goals and objectives (six months)
2. Select event date
3. Develop event plan
4. Create event budget
5. Brand event and begin publicity (12-16 weeks)
6. Arrange sponsorship and speakers (8-10 weeks)
7. Launch ticket sales (if paid)
8. Coordinate with event suppliers (catering, equipment etc.)
9. Manage event day set up and execution (one week – during)
10. Conduct a thorough evaluation (post-event)

It is important when organising an event to remember what type of permits you'll need for the day. It is important to talk with Council on the required forms and process for these permits. Refer to "**Keeping on Track**" for more information.

Notes

There are dos and don'ts when hosting an event:

Do

- ✓ **Keep the event short.** Long events can result in a lack of volunteers throughout the day and lower crowd numbers at times.
- ✓ **Document the day.** It is important to take lots of photos and encourage visitors to upload their photos to social media and tag your business and precinct.
- ✓ **Take advantage of momentum.** It is important to catch up with your precinct business group and volunteers to discuss what is next.

Don't

- ✗ **Delay planning.** Start the process early as applications and permits may take time. It is also important to have time to promote the event.
- ✗ **Make the event too big.** If you plan too much you can get overloaded with tasks.

TOOLKIT EXERCISE

Event planning checklist

Events are a great way to activate your precinct and attract more visitors. We have put together the following checklist to help you plan your event.

HINTS AND TIPS

Remember to start planning early so you have enough time to get all the approvals and marketing material ready for the event.

Task	Summary notes
1. Establish event goals and objectives (six months)	
2. Select event date	
3. Develop event plan	
4. Create event budget	
5. Brand event and begin publicity (12-16 weeks)	

Task	Summary notes
6. Arrange sponsorship and speakers (8-10 weeks)	
7. Launch ticket sales (if paid)	
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TOOLKIT EXERCISE

How to deliver successful pop-ups in vacant spaces – a guide for landlords

HINTS AND TIPS

Vacancies should be considered as an **opportunity to market your precinct.**

Task	Summary notes
Identify spaces for temporary activation	Vacant, unused or awaiting redevelopment
Make safe for immediate use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean and inviting• Electricity• Plumbing• Waste management• Insurance
Check with Council for any permits and approvals	
Prepare a contract for a short-term lease/licence	Transparency around pop-up conditions and length of lease

Task	Summary notes
Check that the potential tenant has correct permits and insurance	
Promotion and marketing partnerships	Will your precinct be promoted in exchange for discounted rent?
Outline a pathway for pop-up tenants to become permanent tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Longer term lease arrangements• Rental arrangements