

**TOWN OF FAIRFAX
STAFF REPORT**

To: Mayor, Members of the Town Council
From: Jim Moore, Director of Planning & Building Services
Date: November 7, 2012
Subject: Report on the “parklet” concept and its possible use as public open space in the Town of Fairfax



Photo of a Parklet in San Francisco

BACKGROUND

Parklets are temporary small pedestrian spaces created in one of more parallel parking spaces to add to the ambiance of street life for pedestrians. They often contain seating with or without tables, vegetation, bicycle parking, etc., and often are in and of themselves works of urban art. There is no universal design for Parklets – though several sensible design parameters have evolved and/or been adopted by municipalities that allow parklets.

DISCUSSION

Previously, at the behest of Councilperson Bragman during a regular Town Council meeting, staff was requested to investigate the idea of allowing “parklets” within the Town of Fairfax. Subsequent to this request, staff discussed this request and the growing popularity of parklets with the Planning Commission during a regularly scheduled meeting. As a result of that discussion, Commissioners’ Coler and Hall of the Planning Commission developed an Ad-hoc Subcommittee to investigate the idea of accommodating a pilot parklet project.

Commissioner Hall of the Ad-hoc Subcommittee subsequently met with the Chamber of Commerce to discuss the idea of accommodating Parklets in Town on a trial basis. The Chamber reportedly embraced the idea with input as to the appropriate number and/or preferred placement thereof. Subsequent to that meeting with the Chamber both Commissioner Hall and Commissioner Coler met with the member(s) of the Chamber who had expressed interest in being a part of a pilot program – both in design and implementation – and brainstormed a possible prefabricated and/or moveable design for a pilot demonstration parklet.

In short, the idea presented by staff and discussed at the Planning Commission, and then at the Chamber of Commerce and with the Ad-hoc Subcommittee, was to develop a pilot parklet demonstration program – as free from “red-tape” as possible – keeping the exploration of parklets for Fairfax as fun as the idea itself.

RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, staff is recommending that the Town Council empower staff to administratively develop a pilot parklet demonstration program along the following parameters with the Ad-hoc Subcommittee of the Planning Commission serving as project advisors to staff.

1. Incorporate “best practices” into the pilot demonstration program, including, but not limited to: Insurance, interdepartmental review and parklet design parameters (please see **Exhibit A for examples of parameters which may be considered for the pilot, while minimizing regulatory requirements to the extent feasible**).
2. Allow staff to approve administratively the construction of one pilot parklet demonstration project in one parking space within the public right of way for a period of six months to one year (and allowing for the pilot parklet to be moved from place to place during this period): and revocable at any time with 30 days notice to the pilot project sponsor.
3. Direct staff of the Department of Planning & Building Services & Town Attorney to negotiate and execute a memorandum of understanding with the community stakeholder to serve as the project sponsor (chosen by staff for the demonstration project) which

would set forth the terms and conditions of the pilot demonstration parklet project.

4. Direct staff of the Department of Planning & Building Services to report back to the Town Council after one year of the demonstration project (or earlier) as to the success of the project: with recommendations for the creation of Parklet Program to include lessons learned, recommendations for the creation of a permit process, draft ordinance language, and cost benefit analysis.

ATTACHMENTS

Exhibit A – San Francisco’s Pavements to Parks Flyer

SAN FRANCISCO
PAVEMENT TO PARKS

PARKLET PERMIT



WHAT ARE PARKLETS?

Parklets are intended to provide space for people to sit and relax and enjoy the city around them, especially where narrow sidewalks would otherwise preclude such activities. They are intended to be seen as a piece of street furniture, providing aesthetic enhancement to the overall streetscape. While we ask that the permit holder sponsor the Parklet (more information on back), Parklets are public space and must be publicly accessible. Table service is not permitted.

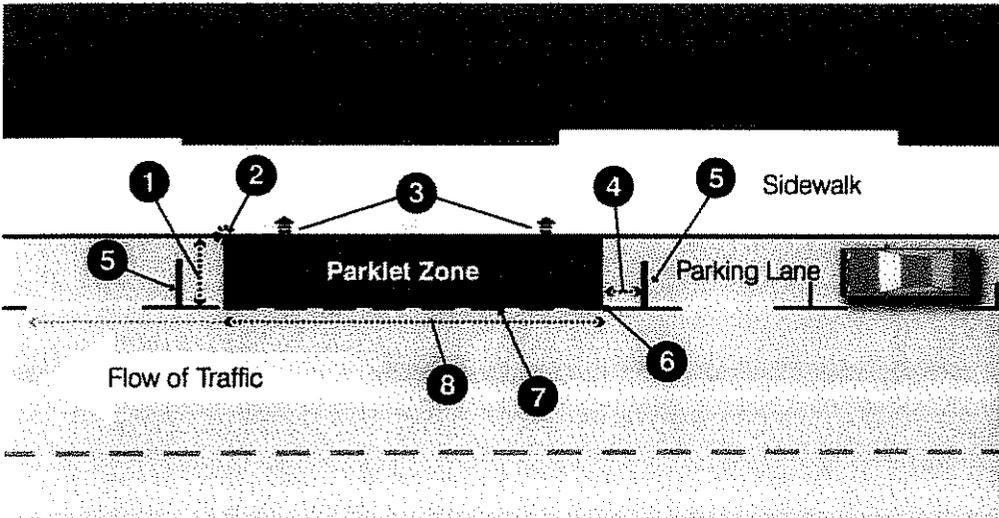
WHAT CAN BE PUT ON A PARKLET?

Parklets can feature:

- ▶ Tables and chairs for public use (*must be different design than what you may already be using as part of your business*)
- ▶ Benches
- ▶ Planters and landscaping features
- ▶ Bicycle parking

While other uses are possible on a Parklet, please remember that the goal of these spaces is to provide room for people to sit and relax. For images of existing Parklets, please see the Pavement to Parks website,

DESIGN AND PLACEMENT GUIDELINES



- Max of 7' width
- Maintain curb line drainage
- Parklet decking flush with sidewalk surface
- 4' distance from parklet to wheel stop
- Wheel stop must be 1' from curb
- Reflective bollards on 1'
- Highly permeable curb side edge. Buffering may be required
- Generally, 2 parking spots per parklet expansion may be considered

HOW CAN I OBTAIN PERMISSION TO INSTALL A PARKLET?



Retail businesses, cafés, restaurants, and community benefit districts (CBD's) may apply for a permit to install a Parklet. Other applicants may be considered, but please talk to the program manager before you apply. The City will be periodically issuing requests for proposals (RFP's) and we ask that you submit your proposal during one of these open requests; see <http://pavementtoparks.sfplanning.org> to download the RFP. We strongly recommend that you work with a designer to propose a project reflecting the design guidelines.

Please read the RFP for more information regarding the level of detail required for your initial application. Please note that submitting a proposal is not a guarantee that you will be issued a Parklet permit.

HOW WILL THE CITY EVALUATE YOUR PROPOSAL?

1. Suitable Location

- ▶ Parklet site is at least one parking spot in from a corner.
- ▶ Proposed location has a posted speed limit of 25mph or less.
- ▶ The proposed street has parking lanes.
- ▶ The proposed street has minimal slope.

2. Community Support

- ▶ At a minimum, we ask that you demonstrate support from your immediate neighbors and any relevant merchant group(s).
- ▶ We encourage partnerships. Larger Parklets reflecting the support of two or three merchants or two Parklets along a corridor will be viewed favorably. We ask that the design be similar for multiple proposals along a single street.

3. Clear and Well-Thought Out Design

- ▶ Parklet contributes to the beauty and character of the neighborhood.
- ▶ Material can easily be maintained, installed, and removed if necessary.
- ▶ Design meets requirements of all guidelines, including those on this flyer and any specific requirements contained in the RFP.

THE FINE PRINT...

Maintenance

If your project is selected, you will be required to provide daily maintenance of the Parklet. This maintenance includes watering any landscaping, hosing down the surface, and removing any graffiti. You will also be required to hose down the area underneath the Parklet at least once a week. The Department of Public Health may require pest abatement.

Liability

Applicants must provide evidence of liability insurance for a minimum coverage of \$1,000,000, naming the City and County of San Francisco as additional insured. The insurance coverage must be in force for the duration of the permit. Most businesses already carry this insurance. Please check in with your provider.



Questions regarding Parklet Permits and the Pavement to Parks program should be directed to:

[Redacted contact information]

<http://pavementtoparks.sfplanning.org>