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Parklets: Best Practices for Design and Implementation

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During the 19th century, streets and sidewalks in America's central-city areas were vibrant social spaces hosting activities like street peddling, display of wares, and public speaking (Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht 2009). With the proliferation of the automobile in the 20th century, roads became the exclusive domain of vehicles, and even sidewalks progressively emptied of people and social activity (Blomley 2011). Now, however, a number of U.S. cities—San Francisco, Philadelphia, New York, and Los Angeles, among others—are seeking to reclaim some streets and sidewalks as public spaces.

Many urban areas suffer from a lack of public open space but have an overabundance of street pavement. Considering roads as public spaces presents an opportunity for decreasing a city's open space deficit. However, roads require modifications in order to operate as public spaces. Such modifications can take place at a small scale by converting sites formerly occupied by automobiles into places for people to enjoy.

Such ideas are behind the recent emergence and proliferation of *parklets*—settings that emerge from the low-cost conversion of small and underused residual spaces originally devoted to cars into places where people can enjoy passive or active recreation. Parklets present an opportunity for creating public open space through repurposing, redesigning, and modifying roadway spaces.

Given that parklets are a relatively recent phenomenon, there is limited guidance for cities wishing to initiate parklet projects. By examining case studies of cities with established parklet programs, this *Memo* identifies lessons learned and offers recommendations to cities and designers interested in reclaiming and converting residual roadway spaces into parklets.

The *Memo* first gives a brief overview of parklet evolution and precedents. It then examines parklet programs in selected North American cities and identifies their goals, challenges, design guidelines, and implementation. The last part of the *Memo* presents policy recommendations and guidance for planners on how to implement parklets.

Parklet Evolution and Precedents

The idea of the parklet in its current expression emerged in San Francisco in the form of temporary installations intended to extend the social life and pedestrian space of the sidewalk into parking spaces. Temporary parklets first appeared in 2005, when Rebar, a San Francisco art and design studio, converted a single metered parking space into a temporary two-hour public park in downtown San Francisco. The parklet featured a "lawn" made of artificial turf, a shade tree, and a park bench.

This initial action developed into an ongoing national event known as "Park(ing) Day" (Rebar Group 2012). Every year on the third Friday of September, community groups and individuals in cities across North America and Europe transform parking spaces into a diverse array of urban parks for a day.

More permanent city-initiated efforts to increase the amount of public space mirrored the efforts of Park(ing) Day. In 2007, then-New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg released PlaNYC. This 30-year plan, updated in 2011, included visionary goals such as "ensuring all New Yorkers live within a 10-minute walk of a park" and ways to "re-conceptualize and green our streets and sidewalks as public spaces" (City of New York 2011). Over the following year, the New York City department of transportation, under the leadership of Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan, started to implement this strategy and in 2008 launched the NYC Plaza Program, which included the conversion of Times Square into a pedestrian plaza. This program, which now includes both a "Plaza Program" and a "Street Seats" program for parklets, allows community nonprofit groups to propose the conversion of spaces for cars into spaces for pedestrians (NYC Department of Transportation 2012a).

During a visit to San Francisco, Mayor Bloomberg discussed his city's enthusiasm for creative public spaces and challenged

San Franciscans to initiate a similar program. In response, the City of San Francisco Mayor's Office, in partnership with other city agencies, implemented the first San Francisco pilot plaza project, Castro Commons, at the site of a triangular intersection on 17th, Market, and Castro streets. This effort was followed by five parklet installations that converted curbside parking spaces in 2010. In the years that followed, privately financed and installed parklets quickly multiplied in San Francisco.

The conversion of underused, residual automobile-oriented spaces into places to relax, recreate, or engage in the public life of the city is part of at least three broader trends in reshaping urban public space.

Use of Residual Space

There is a long tradition in public space design and implementation to leverage residual spaces into active public spaces or new community parks (Trancik 1986). These include roadway medians, spaces under bridges, traffic islands, roadway edges, freeway caps, and parking lots. These spaces are often valued for their availability because their "leftover" status does not require expensive acquisition or intense competition for their use. Approaches for the reclamation of residual spaces vary widely but typically require creative site-specific design solutions and engagement with the local community. Solutions tend to be long-term in intent and design, and may vary widely in scale. A successful example of reclaiming a residual space is the celebrated reuse of the High Line in New York City.

Tactical Urbanism

There is a growing interest across North America in creating or transforming public space with a "quicker, lighter, cheaper" ethos (Nordic Urban Design Association & Project for Public Spaces 2010). This trend has also been called "D-I-Y (do-it-yourself) urbanism," "guerrilla urbanism," or "pop-up urbanism." These terms reflect the small-scale, affordable, flexible, and often temporary nature of tactical urbanist interventions, as well as their accessibility and appropriateness for community or advocacy group-led projects. This use of temporary tactics allows for more affordable public space creation in an era of limited public resources, but also encourages experimentation and adaptation (Hou 2010).

Many tactical urbanism projects use pilot programs or interim uses to avoid lengthy bureaucratic approval processes. This enables cities or community groups to try public space interventions, see what works, and build a supportive constituency for a project. For more on this topic, see the September/October 2015 *PAS Memo*, "Harnessing the Power of Tactical Urbanism for Planning Success."

Car-Free Streets

The development of parklets also aligns with the trend to transform street space to pedestrian or other nonautomobile-centered uses. There is a broad spectrum of public space interventions within this category, including temporary or permanent street closures and conversion to spaces for walking and cycling, car-free days, and open streets initiatives, where streets are closed to car traffic during specific hours and days (often during weekends) to enable biking and walking (Street Plans Collaborative and Alliance for Biking & Walking 2012). Although car-free spaces tend to be larger in than parklets, there is a common lineage in the concern for expanding pedestrian space in urban areas. Car-free streets range from permanent pedestrianization strategies to temporary closures that enable pedestrian or event use, such as car-free days during CicLAvia in Los Angeles, a one-day closure of downtown streets for cycling or other non-motorized uses.

Parklet Design and Implementation

Parklets are typically created by building a platform on the pavement to extend the sidewalk space (Figure 1) and retrofitting it with benches, planters, tables and chairs, umbrellas, and bike racks. Parklets vary based on the following characteristics:

- *Location*: Former parking spaces, street medians, traffic triangles, repurposed travel lanes and parking lots, or excess asphalt pavement at angled or irregular intersections.
- *Surrounding land uses*: Commercial (most frequently) or residential.
- *Size:* One or multiple parking spaces extending along the length of a block.
- *Shape:* Linear, square, rectangular, triangular, or irregular.
- *Duration*: Seasonal (usually during spring and summer) or year-round.
- *Type of activity*: Passive or active recreation.

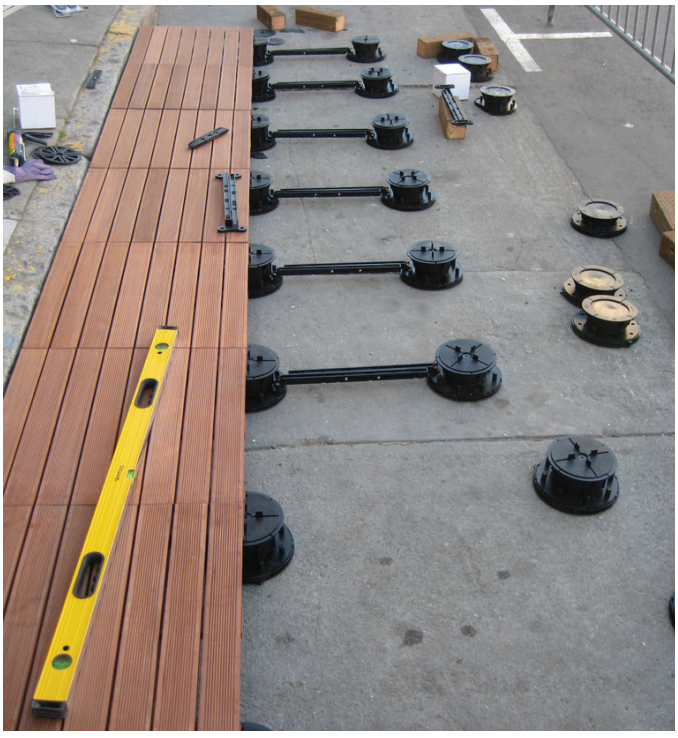


Figure 1. Platform installation in San Francisco. Courtesy San Francisco Bicycle Coalition (sfbike.org).

To understand how parklets are designed and implemented, we examined programs in nine North American cities: Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Francisco in California; Minneapolis; Montreal; New York City; Philadelphia; and Vancouver, British Columbia. We conducted interviews with (1) public officials with experience in the development, implementation, and administration of parklet programs in North America; (2) community partners and business owners of establishments adjacent to specific parklets in the case study cities; and (3) designers of specific parklets in the case study cities.

The nine parklet programs display a number of commonalities as well as differences. In the following sections, we discuss the variety of their origins and goals, planning process and design guidance, design considerations, and evaluation methods.

Origins and Goals

Before installing their first parklets, most cities implemented pilot projects for converting street rights-of-way to public spaces. By beginning with a small number of pilot installations, cities were able to shape formal parklet programs and also determine which city departments and mechanisms were best equipped to implement such projects.

Additionally, selected pilot projects helped to generate positive interest from the public and decision makers for additional projects. Seeking projects that could be implemented quickly and with less municipal investments of time and funding, cities found that parking space conversions provided a number of advantages over larger plaza projects, including easier availability of sites, smaller scale, lower cost, shorter construction time, and opportunities for private participation and responsibility in the development and maintenance of parklets.

All nine cities sought to achieve similar goals with their parklet projects. A primary goal is to provide inviting public spaces for people. Parklets foster social interaction by providing spaces for people to linger, sit down, and converse, particularly in areas where existing sidewalks are narrow. An additional goal is to enhance streetscapes by converting dull pavement into landscaped, well-designed public spaces, which can help surrounding businesses. Overall, cities implementing parklets are working to increase livability by providing benefits to residents, businesses, community groups, and visitors.

One notable difference among cities is the level of public access to the parklets. The majority of cities examined make every effort to demonstrate that parklets are public space, requiring a sign on each installation denoting that the space is open to the public. In Montreal and Long Beach, however, it is up to the private business that maintains the parklet to allow the general public (in addition to the patrons of the business) to use the space.

Design Guidance

In all but a few cases, parklets are designed by outside architects and landscape architects rather than by in-house municipal staff. Nevertheless, most cities issue urban design guidelines that provide general guidance to designers and ensure that parklet design is consistent to city standards. Some cities go as far as providing a specific kit of parts for designers to select from, as in the Los Angeles program. All programs require that the parklet installation must maintain curbside drainage.

Parklets are not appropriate for every street, and for this reason, cities also set safety requirements regarding allowable locations for installation. Design guidelines and placement requirements help to ensure that parklets are placed in appropriate contexts rather than along high-traffic major arterials. Most frequently, cities use speed limits to determine where parklets can be installed. Some cities use more specific requirements such as land-use type and proximity to other open spaces. Table 1 (p. 4) summarizes urban design guidelines for parklets in six cities.

Design Considerations

Three major considerations influenced parklet design in the cities interviewed: the surrounding land uses, the shape and size of the parklet, and the duration of the installation.

Surrounding land uses are an important consideration for site design. Most cities want parklets installed in areas where there is a demand for pedestrian amenities. Parklets in commercial areas are the most common and have the greatest design diversity.

Ensuring the public nature of these installations is an important consideration. This includes designing an open edge from the sidewalk into the parklet and using distinctly different seating from those of the adjacent businesses. Conversely, parklets designed in residential areas must provide space for people to sit in ways that do not constitute nuisances to adjacent residences (e.g., noise, public sleeping).

The shape of the site also drives the design process. The most commonly used sites are curbside parking spaces. These sites are usually designed with a fairly standard format of landscaped edges, a railing, and installed benches or movable seating. Parklets can expand upon this standard format, as demonstrated by San Francisco designs; one such installation focuses on landscaping and creating immersive seating areas (Figure 2, p. 5), while another uses the railing to double as a stand-up bar (Figure 3, p. 5).

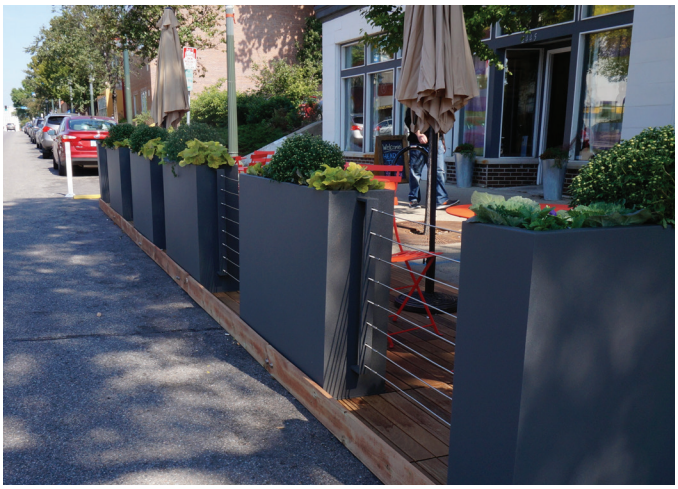
Diagonal parking spaces can be more advantageous than parallel spots because they provide a larger area for the parklet. The larger the site, the more opportunity for creative design, including using travel lanes or connecting traffic triangles or pedestrian refuges to the adjacent sidewalk.

A third major consideration in the design process is the duration of the installation, which can range from a single day to permanent. Park(ing) Day installations feature one-day parklets, with community groups bringing portable materials such as fabric, tables, and plastic chairs into a site. Such installations often serve as an inspiration for a more permanent construction.

New York City, Minneapolis, and Philadelphia host seasonal parklets that have simplified designs, are not bolted into the roadbed, and are disassembled and stored during the harsh winter months (Figure 4, p. 5). In contrast, San Francisco's parklets are installed year-round, are lightly bolt-

Table 1. Parklet Design Guidelines in Select Cities

City	*Size*	*Street selection guidelines*	*Wind/Visibility*	*Barriers*	*Engineer's stamp requirement*
Los Angeles	6′ wide and 32′ long, generally. Applicants can request parklet sites from 1 to 4 parking spaces in length.	25 mph or less. Streets with 30 or 35 mph speed limit may be considered on a case-by-case basis and additional 5′ buffer between parklet and nearest vehicular travel lane may be required	Applicants can select from multiple 42″ tall perimeter treatment options from "kit of parts" including low planter with steel and wood railing or diagonal slat perimeter in wood or steel	4′ distance from parklet to wheel stop in front and back, 2 fiberglass planters with retroreflective tape between parklet and back wheel stop and 2 flexible posts	Yes
Minneapolis	May not exceed 32′ in length, 1/2″ max gap between parklet and curb, and no wider than 6′	Commercial corridor, 30 mph or lower speed limit, 20′ from intersection	Must have vertical elements to be visible to passing vehicles; must include a continuous physical barrier along the three street edges; must maintain clear, unobstructed sightlines to and from the street	Wheel stop 4′ from parklet, flexible bollards 7′ from curb, both provided by the city	No
New York City	6′ width, as flush to the curb as possible; at a minimum 12′ must be flush with sidewalk. Standard design is 20′ long	Active corridors, close to transit with narrow sidewalks and/or lack of open space	Should have vertical elements so that it is visible from vehicles; 3′ tall perimeter treatment or deck planters	DOT assesses site to determine safety improvements: traffic markings, flexible bollards, and wheel stops may be installed	Yes
Oakland	6′ width for parallel parking, 15′ from the curb line where there is diagonal parking, at least one parking space away from a corner with certain exceptions allowed, decking is flush with the curb and has gaps no greater than 1/2″	Speed limit of 25 mph or less (consideration may be given to other streets on a case by case basis) with parking lanes. Site must not have cross slope exceeding a 2% grade	A portion of the parklet edges should be visually permeable. Planters, railing, cabling or a combination at least 42″ above the parklet deck required along roadway with openings that do not allow larger than a 4″ sphere to pass through.	4′ distance from parklet to wheel stop; 3′ wheel stop installed 1′ from curb; reflective soft hit posts	Yes
Philadelphia	6′ width, as flush to the curb as possible with no more than 1/2″ gap from curb, 1–2 parking spaces but longer and shorter sites considered	25 mph maximum speed limit, generally in commercial corridors; should not be located in front of establishments that serve alcohol; not recommended for streets with historic paving materials; 20′ from marked crosswalk, 32′ from corner without crosswalk	Should have some vertical elements but not obstruct driver views; must be constructed with light-colored or reflective materials. Should be stable under wind loads of 80 mph with open guard rails. No wall or rail may be higher than 3′.	Must have reflective soft hit posts and may have wheel stops installed 4′ from curb	No
San Francisco	6′ width, flush with curb (1/2″ gap maximum). 17″ side buffer. 80″ min overhead.	25 mph or less and away from corner. Parklets on streets with speed limits over 25 mph may be considered on a case-by-case basis.	Visually permeable outside edge; railing may be required	Wheel stop 4′ from end of parklet front and back	No



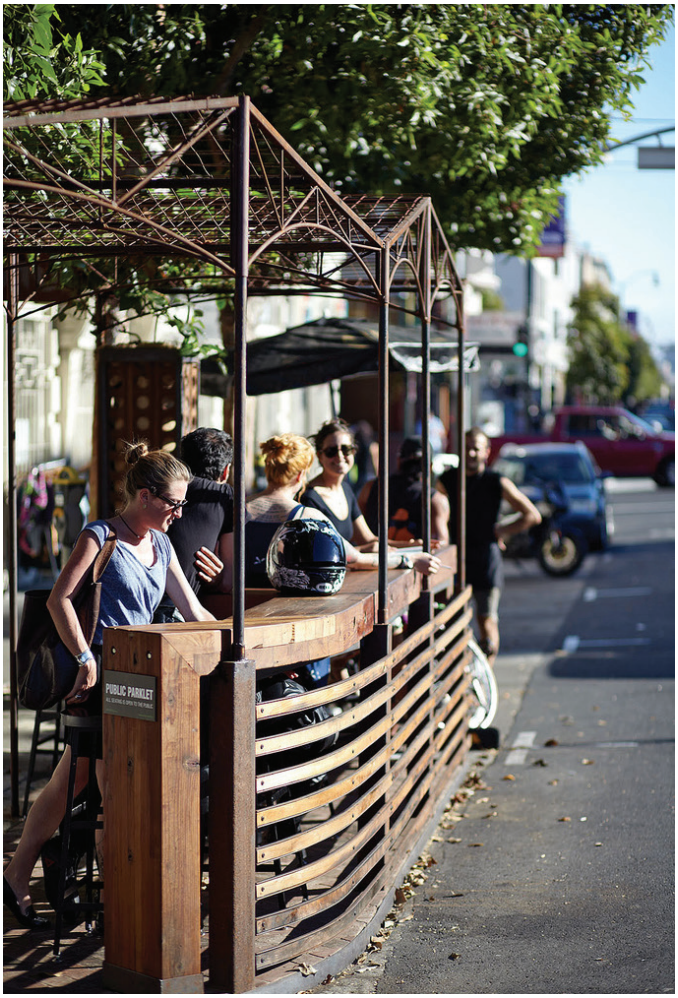


Figure 2 (Left top). Landscape-focused parklet. Courtesy San Francisco Planning Department; Figure 3 (right). Safety railing doubling as stand-up bar, San Francisco. Courtesy Bruce Damonte Photography; Figure 4 (Left bottom). Simplified parklet design in Minneapolis for storage during winter months. Courtesy Madeline Brozen.

ed into the roadway, and require a yearly permit renewal. The lifespan of these year-round installations has yet to be determined, as most projects have existed for less than three years as of this writing.

Projects with the longest duration are permanent parklets that often require pouring concrete to create a lasting structure. These more permanent projects require coordination among city departments, and the processing of their permits often takes much longer. Overall, the duration of the installation influences the selection of materials, type of construction, and design.

Permitting

For parklet projects, cities create general design guidelines and review plans in order to grant permits, but once the project is approved, the installation, maintenance, and liability insurance are the responsibility of the permit holder. This differs from traditional municipally driven projects in the public right-of-way. The liability (in the range of $1–3 million) for the parklet lies with the property or business owner, who must also handle all maintenance concerns with a maintenance agreement in place (Table 2).

Only half of the case study cities require submitted parklet designs to have a licensed engineer's stamp. Staff in cities not requiring a stamp on designs believe that such a stipulation is costly and a barrier for community organizations wanting to create a parklet. Cities that require the stamp do so because of safety concerns. Regardless of whether a stamp is required, the purpose of design guidelines is to ensure that parklet design meets certain safety considerations.

When submitting a parklet design, applicants typically pay a permit fee ranging from $75 to $1,300. This fee pays for the city to review the design plans, inspect the site before and after installation, and ensure basic safety precautions. Cities typically require wheel stops and other safety features to protect the sites from being damaged by adjacent cars and flexible bollards delineating the parklet edge in the street. Some cities provide wheel stops and flexible bollards to community partners, while others do not. Table 2 summarizes selected characteristics of the nine parklet programs.

Table 2. Selected Characteristics of Municipal Programs

City	*Current number of sites (2016)*	*Departments Involved*	*Permit Required and Cost*	*Insurance/ Liability*	*Duration*
Long Beach	4 with 1 in construction	Department of Public Works with approvals from Department of Water and Power, Department of Traffic and Fire Department	$819 with yearly renewal	Between $1–2 million liability coverage	Year-round
Los Angeles	5	Department of Transportation with permit issued by Department of Public Works Bureau of Engineering, Bureau of Contract Administration inspect site after installation to verify site was installed to approved specifications	"A" permit $273 base fee (exact fee may vary depending on size and shape of parklet) plus inspection fee of $85/hr with 8 hr. minimum	$1 million general liability insurance	Year-round
Minneapolis	8	Department of Public Works and Department of Community Planning and Economic Development	Encroachment Permit ($75 non-residential fee), Land Use/ Obstruction Permit during construction	$1 million general liability insurance	Spring–October 31
Montreal	90 (approximate as of 2012)	Department of Public Works	$600 for application; $7,625 fee with parking meters; $2,207 fee without parking meters	$2 million	April to October
New York City	9	Department of Transportation	Application required but no fee charged	$1–3 million depending on size	March 1 until December 15
Oakland	7 sites installed, 10 additional sites permitted	Planning Department with reviews and approvals from Department of Public Works	$1,300 permit fee; $127 yearly renewal/ inspection fee	$1 million in general liability insurance	Year-round; applicants must renew yearly
Philadelphia	6	Deputy Managing Director's Office of Transportation & Infrastructure with design review by Streets Department and permit issued by Department of Licenses and Inspection	Pedestrian Enhancement Permit renewable for up to three years, $125 each year	Permittees must have workers compensation and employers liability, general liability insurance automobile liability insurance, all at $1M per occurrence	April–November
San Francisco	47	Department of City Planning and coordination with Department of Public Works, and SF Municipal Transportation Agency	$258 for new application; does not include SFMTA processing or meter removal fee; must renew permits yearly	$1 million	Year-round
Vancouver	21	Engineering Department's Street Activities Branch	$200 review fee; $1,000 program cost recovery fee; $200 for site inspection before and after installation; $125 to remove each parking meter; $500 annual renewal fee	Commercial general liability insurance with at least a $2 million limit	Year-round

Post-Implementation Evaluation of Parklets

All cities studied found their programs to be successful. The parklet programs created new spaces for people using innovative treatments of the street right-of-way. While not every city has conducted a formal post-occupancy evaluation, the data that exist (San Francisco Great Streets Project 2010; New York City Department of Transportation 2012b; Loukaitou-Sideris et al. 2013) along with anecdotal evidence suggest that both users and sponsors are responding positively to parklets and demanding more of them. In San Francisco, the city received over 100 applications during a request for proposals. In fact, demand for parklets is so significant that the city is harboring concerns about their saturation in particular neighborhoods and the demand on city resources to review proposals and issue permits.

According to a San Francisco report (Street Plans Collaborative and Alliance for Biking & Walking 2012), parklets help generate foot traffic in commercial areas, thus increasing the number of customers for local businesses. These results mirror experiences in other cities. Pedestrians on a street hosting two parklets in downtown Los Angeles increased after their installations, and people were more likely to walk on the side of the street that had the two parklets (Loukaitou-Sideris et al. 2013).

Philadelphia boasts that its parklets boosted the revenue of adjacent business by nearly 20 percent (Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities 2012). Parklets in Long Beach have contributed to two full-time and four part-time jobs in adjacent restaurants (Loukaitou-Sideris, Brozen, and Callahan 2012). A survey administered by the City of Vancouver found that 60 percent of residents viewed parklets as a community asset, regardless of whether or not they had spent time there. These results indicate positive public sentiments for the projects (Vancouver 2015).

Challenges and Responses

One challenge for parklets is their typical location on city streets, with different municipal agencies having jurisdiction within the right-of-way. Coordination among the different departments, including city planning, transportation, and public works, during the permitting and installation process can be problematic at times, so having one lead agency is preferable for parklet planning and implementation processes. In the cases of San Francisco and Philadelphia, the lead agency is the mayor's office. In Oakland and Vancouver, it is the city planning department, while the department of transportation is the lead agency in New York City. San Francisco's program began in the mayor's office, but the program is now housed in the city planning department, demonstrating that lead agency roles can change over time.

Permits are the mechanism through which cities exercise control by creating a standard framework for ensuring the safety of parklet installations in the public right-of-way. But at the outset of parklet pilot projects most cities lack an institutionalized permitting process due to their innovative nature, and this can pose a challenge. Some cities have used street closure or minor street encroachment permits to pilot their initial parklet installations, while simultaneously working to revise their municipal code for the creation of a standard parklet permit. In some cases, such as in New York City, a permit is not required, but rather an interested party can apply for permission to install a parklet through the city's parklet program. A city's permit strategy largely depends upon the local context, but viable options include piloting through an existing permit, as done in Los Angeles; modifying municipal code to create a parklet-specific permit, as seen in Oakland; or moving forward without a permit, as is the case in New York City.

Lastly, financial challenges face individuals and community groups hoping to sponsor parklets. Though the cost, which typically ranges from $15,000 to $70,000, is relatively modest for a road project, it may be beyond the means of local groups. Additionally, the local sponsor has to have the ability to take on $1–3 million of insurance and should be able to maintain the parklet.

Implementing Parklets: Guidance for Planners

The concept of parklets has caught on quickly because it provides a low-cost and innovative way to reclaim residual and underutilized road spaces. Planners must understand a variety of considerations when working with community partners to create a welcoming, well-used, and unique place in the right-of-way.

The following is a list of policy recommendations based on the lessons learned from our case studies:

- ***Identify residual spaces in priority areas.*** Not all sites or all neighborhoods are appropriate for parklets. Parklets work well where there is a certain level of foot traffic, where automobile traffic is low-speed, and where there are surrounding establishments that can provide a level of natural surveillance. City planners can develop an inventory of residual spaces in priority areas (with low amounts of open space) that fit these criteria and encourage their conversion into parklets.
- ***Encourage variety in parklet design.*** Parklets can be functional and aesthetic assets for cities, especially if they demonstrate unique and innovative architectural and landscape designs. Planners should encourage innovation and experimentation in design. While no two parklets should look alike, providing a "kit" of parklet parts to interested community groups and allowing them to creatively mix them up may provide necessary guidance to groups not familiar with design. Design competitions or charrettes may produce a rich inventory of parklet design ideas.
- ***Tailor design to community needs.*** Depending on community needs and the character of the surrounding area, parklets may facilitate passive or active recreation, offer age-specific activities (young children, senior citizens, etc.), and incorporate neighborhood-specific cultural and landscape elements in their design.
- ***Provide urban design guidelines.*** Design guidelines

Further Resources for Parklet Design and Implementation

These helpful resources offer further guidance on parklet programs and more information on the programs in the cities featured in this article.

General Guidance
Reclaiming the Right-of-Way: A Toolkit for Creating and Implementing Parklets. This toolkit provides detailed guidance for creating parklets from the conversion of parking spots and other underutilized spaces for cars into places for people.

Reclaiming the Right-of-Way: Evaluation Report. This report provides a comprehensive evaluation of two parklets in downtown Los Angeles and a methodology of how to conduct such evaluations.

Boston
City of Boston Parklet Evaluation Report. Evaluation of four city parklets provides findings from the city's pilot parklet program and recommendations for parklet implementation and future evaluation.

Long Beach, California
Long Beach Guidelines and Conditions for Temporary Sidewalk Extension, or "Parklet." This one-page sheet lists the City of Long Beach guidelines and conditions for applicants wishing to install parklets.

Los Angeles
"People St. Parklets." This City of Los Angeles website includes useful information, links to applications for parklets, and a technical appendix with detailed parklet drawings.

People St. Kit of Parts for Parklets. A kit with parklet parts and configurations that are preapproved by the city.

Minneapolis
Minneapolis Parklet Application Manual. This document includes guidelines and conditions for applicants in Minneapolis wishing to install parklets.

New York
New York City "Street Seats." Program information for the city's parklet program. Includes links to application to install a Street Seat and maintenance agreement.

2011 Pilot Program Evaluation Report: Curbside Public Seating Platforms Sponsored by Local Businesses. This report by the NYC Department of Transportation evaluates New York's pilot parklet program.

Oakland
City of Oakland Notice of Parklet Opportunity, Applications for Proposal. This document includes the City of Oakland's guidelines and conditions for applicants wishing to install parklets.

Philadelphia
City of Philadelphia Parklets: Guidelines and Application. This report includes guidelines for placement, design, and operation for parklets in Philadelphia.

San Francisco
San Francisco Parklet Manual, Version 2.2. This manual compiled by the San Francisco Planning Department details the goals, policies, processes, and guidelines for creating parklets in San Francisco.

San Francisco Citywide Assessment of Parklets and Plazas. A summary of data collected for a summer 2014 public life study.

should not stifle parklet design and experimentation, but must ensure that appropriate safety standards are met.

- ***Streamline the permitting process.*** Part of the appeal of parklets is that they are relatively easy to plan and install. Planning agencies should ensure that the permitting process is simple and low-cost. At the same time, permits should be renewed annually, giving cities the opportunity to monitor operation and maintenance.
- ***Designate a lead staff person and public agency.*** While various public departments have jurisdiction over city streets, it is essential that a particular city agency (and ideally a particular staff person) takes the lead in coordinating and streamlining the parklet planning and installation process.
- ***Streamline maintenance requirements.*** Cities should make the expected levels of maintenance very clear to parklet sponsors and keep a watchful eye to guarantee that all maintenance requirements are met.

Conclusion
Currently, excitement about parklets is spreading across North American cities. Parklets are re-imagining small portions of the urban landscape from ordinary car-storage spaces into beautiful public space assets for urbanites to enjoy. If successful, the parklet "movement" will reclaim underutilized roadway spaces, converting them to meaningful social places.

About the Authors

Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris *is a professor of urban planning and urban design at the UCLA Department of Urban Planning. Her books include* Urban Design Downtown: Poetics and Politics of Form *(1998),* Jobs and Economic Development in Minority Communities *(2006),* Sidewalks: Conflict and Negotiation over Public Space *(2009),* Companion to Urban Design *(2011), and* The Informal City: Beyond Taco Trucks and Day Labor *(2014).*

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