

# THINK BIG, WORK SMALL

ENLIVENING VANCOUVER STREETS  
FROM PARKING TO PARKLET



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2017 GREENEST CITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

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This GCS project was conducted under the mentorship of City staff. The opinions and recommendations in this report, and any errors, are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the City of Vancouver or The University of British Columbia.

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The following are the official partners and sponsors of the Greenest City Scholars Program:



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“Cultures and climates differ all over the world, but people are the same. They’ll gather in public if you give them a good place to do it.”

- Jan Gehl



Photo Credit: VIVA Vancouver, Lotte Veng (*Fraserhood Parklet, Vancouver*)

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Around the world cities are beginning to reclaim their streets for walking and cycling. As the shift to understanding how we engage with public spaces moves more towards people centric environments, the benefits of having access to these public spaces is becoming more apparent. Social gathering places such as streets, plazas, and other public spaces are indicators of collective well-being.

City leaders are setting priorities and expectations to focus on the development of public spaces through new policies and new infrastructure projects. One infrastructure that is emerging as a popular component in sustainable urban growth is the parklet. Parklets, a micro park typically situated in a on-street parking space, provide an excellent opportunity for street and community engagement, supporting local businesses and strengthening a community's sense of place.

In partnership with the City of Vancouver, the first parklet was built in 2011 by a recent graduate in Landscape Architecture, followed by two more as trial public spaces. A pilot program in 2013 further informed opportunities for introducing more parklets. Building upon that success the City of Vancouver approved an official parklet program in June of 2016.

The purpose of this report is to dig deeper into the roots of community engagement and the benefits of spaces such as parklets. Built upon feedback from individuals and groups, the report outlines ways the City can address the big questions parklets may face. Part of the study is to understand how to expand the program to be more accessible to a wider audience and how to increase community engagement.

This report draws on the experiences of case studies from around the world, to create a general guide for adding exciting, effective new forms of projects into Vancouver's toolbox. This report will provide examples of how parklets can contribute to the public realm.

It is not intended to prescribe any single future for the Parklet Program in Vancouver, rather to provide a variety of options and inspirations that can be used to create truly vibrant public spaces in Vancouver.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

I would like to personally acknowledge and thank my mentors, Kathleen Corey and Robert White, and the Street Activities Branch, for their warm welcome as a member to their team and the continuous support I received over the summer term. Being granted the opportunity to work alongside of the City of Vancouver Street Activities Branch was extremely inspiring and rewarding!

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# INTRODUCTION



Celia Winters  
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Photo Credit: UBC Sustainability

## GREENEST CITY SCHOLAR PROGRAM

Since 2010, the UBC Sustainability Initiative (USI) has collaborated with the City of Vancouver to sponsor University of British Columbia graduate students to work on sustainability projects in support of the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan. To date over 100 Greenest City Scholar projects have been completed.

In 2017, the Greenest City and Healthy City Scholars worked on a total of 23 projects that addressed Greenest City and Healthy City Goals.

The City of Vancouver's Engineering Services Street Activities Branch and the VIVA Vancouver Program submitted a project proposal for a scholar to assist in the research and exploration of parklets. The project was formally titled in the GCS request, "Public Spaces: Exploring the reallocation of on-street parking to parklets to enliven Vancouver's communities and

streets," however during the course of the summer has been retitled "Think Big, Work Small: Enlivening Vancouver streets from parking to parklets."

The research aimed to investigate future opportunities that help address existing challenges within the current framework for public space activations. The project proposal was created in order to better support the parklet and pilot projects to date.

The report focuses on providing recommendations for future direction and opportunities for the Parklet Program while continuing to support the City of Vancouver's Greenest City goals and strategies.

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

The purpose of this research project is to provide City staff and community members with practical guidance to support the development of parklets. Parklet Programs are an emerging global phenomenon and are becoming an invaluable tool for low cost, public space interventions in the urban environment. This study was conducted to support the development and growth of the existing City of Vancouver Parklet Program.

It is valuable to note, despite the focus on parklets, the program case studies, recommendations, and other best practices presented in the report are easily transferable to other public space projects within Vancouver.

This report begins with an introduction of the project and the general methodology and questions sought to be answered through a series of engagements, interviews, and literature reviews. Section 1 introduces the concept of parklets including definitions, and precedents to provide context for parklets in Vancouver. This section highlights how small scale interventions have led to current efforts to redefine the purpose of our streets, how to re-engage with public space, and seek opportunities in the urban landscape.

Section 2 defines where we may wish to go and how to navigate that path. The section consists of a series of case studies of parklet programs across North America. The case studies contain information garnered through interviews with program leaders and a publication reviews that help facilitate defining best practices that will lead to key takeaways and recommendations for the City of Vancouver Parklet Program.

## KEY GOALS

### The goals of this report is to study:

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Best practices from reoccurring themes of program goals, processes, and lessons learned from precedent cities

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Elements of successful community outreach and engagement for a successful parklet program

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How parklets are perceived among the general public and professionals

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Lessons learned from precedents to develop recommendations for Vancouver's evolving Parklet Program

Section 3 outlines practical advice and supporting details, at a high level, on how to achieve the defined goals in order to assist in the future opportunities and direction for the Parklet Program.

To conclude, section 4 summaries what was learned through the research, lessons learned and what are the next steps and additional opportunities that can build upon this report including a proposed case study on mobile parklets as a engagement tool for testing activations and public outreach.



Photo Credit: Paul Krueger, Flickr (*Parallel Park, Vancouver*)

# RESEARCH DESIGN

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As stated in the project overview, this report will examine parklet projects from select cities such as New York City, San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles, Ottawa, and Toronto to answer the following questions:

- » What do other cities find to be the most important elements of a successful parklet program? If a program is not successful, which elements of the program need to be reconsidered? How should the City of Vancouver restructure its parklet program?
- » Beyond the parklet program, what are some other strategies cities are implementing in order to engage and activate their streets and re imagine their public spaces?

These questions help guide the investigation over the course of the study.

This study recognizes the substantial amount of research and work previously done by the City staff and wishes to build upon the previous work, and hopefully not replicate it.

## RESEARCH APPROACH

The first step was to identify through literature review and discussions with City staff the opportunities and challenges within the current parklet program.

The research approach was to become immersed in the programming of public spaces through:

- » Conducting a review of existing literature on the reallocation of parking spaces to parklets or similar semi-permanent typologies
- » Participating in on-going stakeholder engagement including broader public space initiatives
- » Summarizing parklet programs from select cities, identifying placemaking frameworks and any lessons learned
- » Proposing community engagement tools and strategies in order to expand the public outreach of the parklet program.

## CITY SELECTION

All of the cases examined in this study are located in North American cities that have robust and long-lived parklet programs and similar urban context to Vancouver. This created an appropriate “apples to apples” comparison for maximum effectiveness in recommendations.

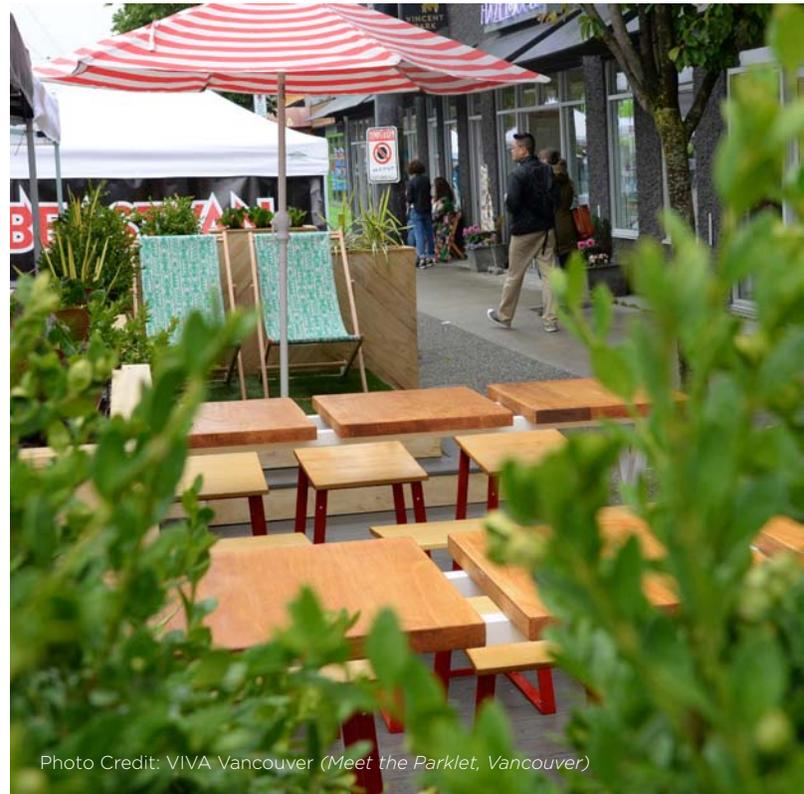
The study sought to determine the variables that most contribute to successful parklets. All of the parklet programs examined are relatively successful, evidenced by their continuing existence in popularity around the digital landscape of publications and media coverage. A future study should seek to interview those involved with failed and reverted parklet projects to determine which variables seemed most responsible for the project’s failure.

## RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This study recognizes that the City of Vancouver Parklet Program is a “living lab” and is continuously developing and implementing strategies or processes. Some aspects of this report may have already been identified and implemented prior to the completion of this report. This study is to stand as advocate and tool to help further the dialogue and success of the program.

Other limitations recognized by this report that have arisen in the four summer month study are:

- » Limited available time with City staff to discuss items due to summer being the peak season for public realm projects
- » Public stakeholders’ limited availability due to schedules and holidays



“Momentum is building for great public spaces in Vancouver.”

- Margaret Wittgens

*Director of Public Space  
and Street Use, Vancouver*

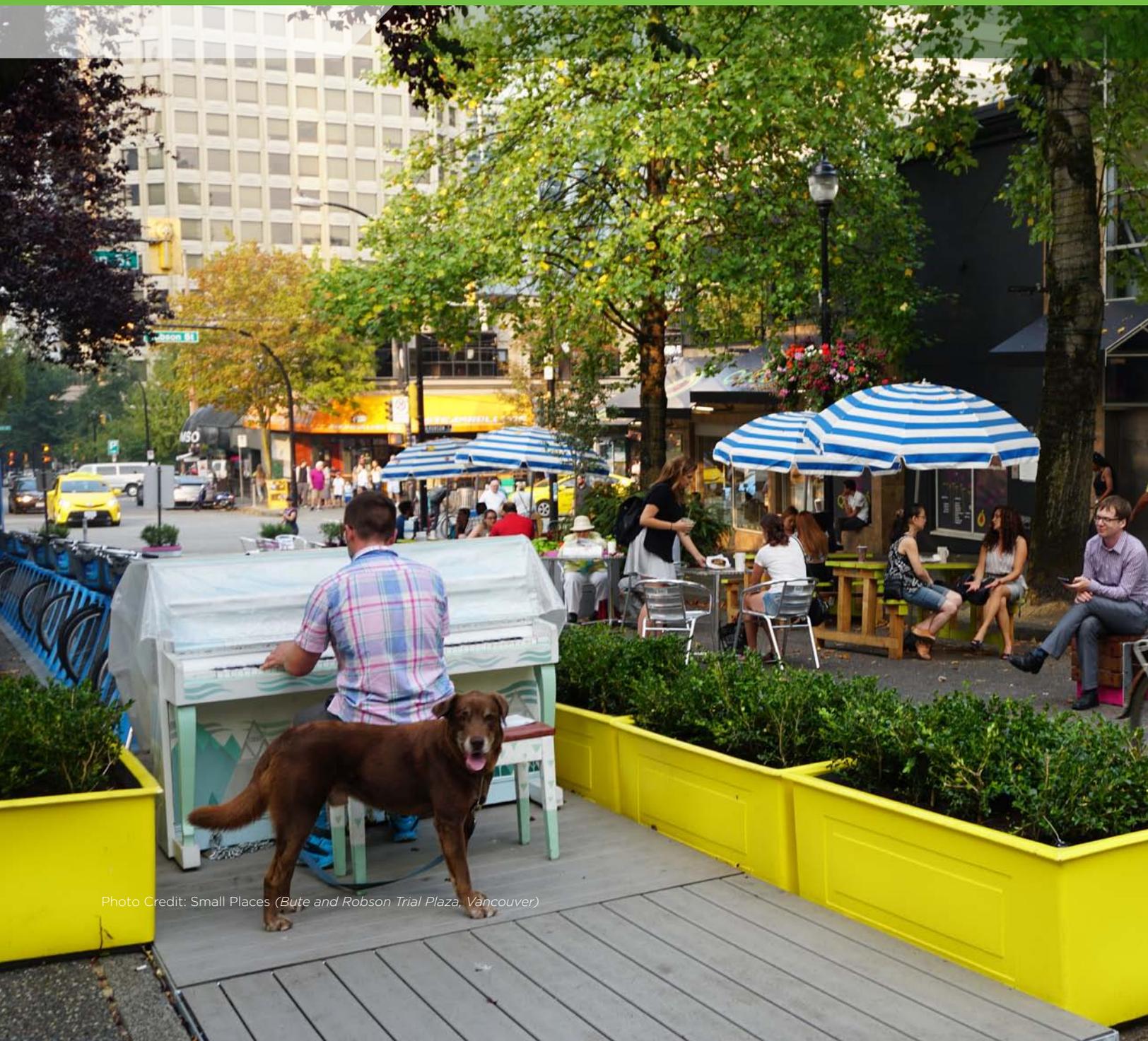


Photo Credit: Small Places (Bute and Robson Trial Plaza, Vancouver)

# SUPPORTING PLANS & STRATEGIES

Public spaces are identified in key policies and strategies in Vancouver. The City's pilot and official Parklet Program is supported by existing policies and strategies including the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, the Transportation 2040 Plan, the Engaged City Task Force, and the Healthy City Strategy.

In 2012, Council approved the Transportation 2040 Plan, which included recommendations to enable and encourage the creative use of streets and to create public plazas and gathering spaces throughout the city. The Plan also included a call to implement a permit-based Parklet program to transform on-street parking into public spaces.

Following the Transportation Plan, in 2014, Council approved Phase 1 of the Healthy City Strategy, which includes a commitment to increase community engagement, encourage stronger walking connections, and to create wonderful temporary and permanent public spaces throughout the city.

Vancouver's Greenest City Action Plan identifies ten long-term goals, supported by a set of measurable and attainable targets, for Vancouver to become the greenest city in the world by 2020. This report specifically supports four of the ten long term goals identified in the plan:

» Goal 7: Cultivating Connections: All Vancouverites are connected and engaged in the places and spaces that matter to us by supporting the development of social connections movement in Vancouver.

» Goal 8: Active Living and Getting Outside: Vancouverites are engaged in active living and have incomparable access to nature.

» Goal 10: Getting Around: Vancouverites enjoy safe, active and accessible ways of getting around the City.

» Goal 11: Environments to Thrive in: Vancouverites have the right to a healthy environment and equitable access to livable environments that they can thrive.



These identified policies and strategies support future public spaces in one form or another. As a result, these goals and objectives help set priorities and expectations for public space design and sustainable urban growth.

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SECTION 1  
**WHERE ARE WE TODAY?**

# A SHIFT IN DESIGN

In the height of the 1970's urban sprawl took hold and the emergence of the auto-centric society arose. Urban centres were no longer the social gathering spaces for citizens and markets, but instead became the thoroughfares to transport vehicles from one destination to another.

It is only now, in the last few decades, there has been a slow shift in the design of urban centres away from the auto-centric designs to more people friendly environments. Over population, lack of public space, lack of access to green spaces, and the rise of mental and physical health concerns have made policy makers and city officials realize the need for public spaces in order to move into a more sustainable future.

The right-of-way comprises between 25 to 35 percent of all land in North American cities, however it largely serves a limited purpose as currently designed: to facilitate movement and storage of automobiles. One of the critical ways in which urban designers have attempted to move away from this, is by focusing on streets as the center of public life for people not vehicles.

There is an emerging shift in the design of these spaces not just at the government level but from grass roots community levels that wish to improve the street environment. Groups like Pavement to Parks, in San Francisco, are leading the way for global conversations about transforming public space into a more communal and collective experience. Their success with small scale construction helps drive the dialogue for many cities such as Vancouver, by setting a precedent for measuring impact and community outreach.

Community-minded projects invest in place and are an important part of the neighbourhood revitalization process. For example, by investing in innovative public space installations on the streets, cities can hope to bolster the surrounding community.

Commonly referred to as placemaking this process is becoming more mainstream, although it's not a new idea. As early as the 1960s activists, change makers, and community leaders, like Jane Jacobs, Jan Gehl, and William Whyte, recognized the need for grass roots community movements aimed at improving the urban core. This approach relies on a bottom-up style of community planning that stems from neighbours, not developers or government officials.

This movement revolves around the idea that cities should be designed for people, not just cars and shopping centres. This investment in place manifests itself in a variety of ways, like public art, green spaces, popup parks, but ultimately leads to a boost in local economies, community-interaction, and a sense of place.

Founded in 1975, the nonprofit organization Project For Public Spaces has expanded on the ideas of leaders like Jane Jacobs and William Whyte in order to develop a variety of tools for communities to evaluate place.

Placemaking has the ability to inspire people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces throughout their city. It recognizes that creating compelling public spaces is only part of the solution, the other important component is the community initiatives and involvement.

Project for Public Spaces has defined key parameters that make great public spaces. These parameters can be distilled down into four key principals that help define and direct public space projects.

## FOUR PARAMETERS OF GREAT PUBLIC SPACES<sup>10</sup>



Well-used, lively



Supports various uses, especially social opportunities



Draw users of the local community



Perceived positively by users

Over the next few decades, urban areas across the world are projected to experience exponential population growth. And those in charge of leading our urban centres into the future, are hoping to make adjustments now that will allow cities to sustain themselves under the pressures of this future growth.

City infrastructure is one of the most effective tools in urban sustainability and through infrastructure projects, city leaders can set priorities and expectations for positive city expansion. One infrastructure that is emerging as a popular component in sustainable urban growth is the parklet.

Parklets became an ideal temporary solution for eliminating some barriers public spaces face in urban cities. Parklets (micro parks or pop up parks) emerged as small scale interventions that allowed grass roots initiatives to reevaluate the use of public spaces through low cost quick build interventions.

Parklets are only one possible strategy in how we can facilitate safer, more vibrant, healthier communities. It's a start in the direction-moving conversations on how to design our public realm to foster growth and more meaningful experiences.

### IF WE CAN FACILITATE...<sup>21</sup>



**SAFER STREETS & NEIGHBORHOODS**

Improved roads, sidewalks, and lighting



**COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

Thriving businesses, attractive housing & neighbourhoods, and mixed land uses



**HEALTHY PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS**

Cleaner air & less noise

### WE WOULD EXPECT TO SEE...



**HEALTHIER BEHAVIORS**

Increased physical activity & healthier eating



**IMPROVED SAFETY**

Increased law abidance & safer behaviors



**SOCIAL COHESION**

Increased interactions among neighbours, friends, and others in the community



**ACCESS TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**

Better exposure to economic opportunities

### WHICH ALL SUPPORT IMPROVED HEALTH



**DECREASED CHRONIC DISEASE**



**DECREASED INJURY & CRIME**



**IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH**

# SPECTRUM OF INTERVENTIONS



## DEFINITION

So what are Parklets? Parklets are small public parks that often contribute to patio culture, built in areas typically devoted to cars, and in metered parking spaces. Parklets aim to increase public space in urban environments, which aims to transition cities from car-centric to people-centric systems.

## TACTICAL URBANISM<sup>20</sup>

Parklets are a celebrated example of how a tactical urbanism intervention has been formalized, and are now planned in cities around the world.

Small scale projects are part of a new set of ideas sometimes referred to as “tactical urbanism.” In their 2015 book *Tactical Urbanism: Short-Term Action for Long-Term Change*, Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia describe a spectrum of ways that streets can change, ranging from the most temporary changes to the most permanent ones.

Small scale interventions fall on the middle parts of the spectrum. Like larger capital projects (which are mostly asphalt and concrete, i.e. plazas), small scale projects are meant to be used by the public for years. But many other things about them — materials, process, funding — are new and developing rapidly. They allow for quick design-builds allowing the public to enjoy them sooner.

## SMALL SCALE INTERVENTIONS ARE:

- » Often grassroots led projects by community, business, and institutional organizations.
- » Can become formalized and are led by a municipal government or other public agencies.
- » Installed roughly within a year of the start of planning.
- » Planned with the expectation that it may undergo change after installation, such as removal or development to permanent space
- » Built using materials that allow changes such as relocation

If done well, small-scale changes may be conceived as the first step in realizing lasting change. Thus, tactical urbanism is most effective when used in conjunction with long-term planning efforts that marry the urgency of now with the wisdom of patient capital.

# PARKLETS

## ORIGIN

Parklets are a recent urban phenomenon, but originate from earlier trends in urban placemaking which sought to utilize dead space like road medians, freeway caps, and parking lots. The parklet concept originated in San Francisco in 2005 by the Rebar Group, and the first formal parklets in the United States were established in the same city five years later. The original PARK occupied a parking space for only two hours, and it was a form of social activism to explore the range of possible activities for under utilized metred parking spaces and to provoke a critical examination of the values that generate the form of urban public space. This standalone intervention has been the catalyst for the established parklet programs that are seen in cities world-wide, such as Vancouver, New York, São Paulo, Seattle, etc.

At its core, PARK(ing) Day encourages collaboration amongst local citizens to create thoughtful, but temporary additions to the public realm. Once reclaimed, parking spaces can be programmed in any number of ways. The possibilities and designs are as endless as they are fun. PARK(ing) Day challenges the everyday person to rethink the possibilities of public life and public space through its combination of spatial and temporary intervention. It incites a renewed dialogue on public space with the highly visible installations. Twelve years later, PARK(ing) Day has grown into a global event with 100s of cities taking part: “An annual open-source global event where citizens, artists, and activists collaborate to temporarily transform metred parking spaces into temporary public places”.

## BENEFITS

Parklets create unique public spaces by transforming parking spaces on streets into places for people to sit, relax, and enjoy the

city. Mainly consisting of a platform that extends the sidewalk and amenities like seating, tables, and landscaping, parklets create many benefits for people, local businesses, and the surrounding community.

Successful parklets are driven by the relationship between users and the hosts or sponsors. Parklets can serve as a draw to passersby and other users, increasing foot traffic to the area, and increasing the likelihood of customers patronizing nearby businesses. Users benefit from the added community space afforded by parklets and sponsors stand to benefit from that.



Increases the number of safe and accessible public spaces



Supports active forms of transport such as walking, biking and public transit



Cultivates more accessible green space which is proven to improve mental and physical health



Creates more passive recreational and social spaces in dense urban areas with limited public space



Enhances a community sense of place and identity



Can be showcase for local public art and creative talent



Enhances a communities vibrancy and public realm activities



Improves local economic strength and business value

# VANCOUVER TODAY

San Francisco influenced the birth of the parklet movement in many global cities. Vancouver was one of the first advocates of the parklet and so the VIVA Vancouver Program was borne out of prioritized initiatives identified in the City's Greenest City Action Plan in 2008. Elected in December of 2008 with a mandate to improve the people realm, Mayor Gregor Robertson and the Vision-leaning Council were early supporters of experimenting and repurposing Vancouver's roads. Shortly after his election, Mayor Robertson prioritized specific initiatives within the City's then-ongoing Greenest City Action Plan. Among these fast-tracked motions was the creation of 'Car Free Days' in the summer of 2009. These day-long events closed existing road spaces to motorists for various community events and activities throughout the summer.<sup>4</sup>

In response to the City of Vancouver's Expression of Interest for the Summer Spaces Program in 2011, VIVA Vancouver in partnership with designer Travis Martin, installed its first parklet, with two more following in 2012. Interest grew and in 2013 Vancouver piloted a parklet program. The pilot sought to understand how and where parklets could be built in Vancouver and to learn more about whether an ongoing Parklet Program should be implemented. Business owners, business improvement associations, property owners, community organizations, designers, and other applicants in Vancouver were eligible to apply for parklets under the pilot.

Designers played a key role in navigating the application and approval process, on behalf of the business, including project facilitation. Applicants were responsible for associated costs in designing and installing the parklets, often with pro bono design service and in-kind donations offsetting the costs. Applicants were also responsible for garnering community support and maintaining parklets on a day-to-day basis. Under the pilot, three more parklets were built for a total of six.

In 2015, VIVA Vancouver took a formal look at the six parklets to see how these spaces are being used and how successful parklets have been in the community. Overall, Parklets were found to be well-used and well-supported by both businesses and the public and adding vibrancy to neighbourhoods. Parklets appeared to do well in providing a place for people to sit, relax, and enjoy the city and that there appears to be opportunities for more parklets to be installed in Vancouver.

VIVA Vancouver continues today as an incubator and innovator in testing public space street activations in order to explore the potentials of Vancouver's streets. While parklets are one facet of the programs portfolio, there are many other initiatives happening today that continue to push those boundaries.

The charts on the right illustrate the progress of VIVA Vancouver from its conception to now. It demonstrates the success of the programs implemented to date and where the City of Vancouver and VIVA continue seek to improve the public realm.

# HISTORY OF EVENTS<sup>11</sup>

## Pre-VIVA

2008	2009	2010
Car-free Sundays Pilot	Summer Spaces Pilot	Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics, Rediscover Granville Pilot
PRE-VIVA VANCOUVER		

## VIVA Vancouver

WE ARE HERE



2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Picnurbia, Pop Rocks, VIVA Granville, Parallel Park & more		Robson Redux, Granville Social, Parklet Pilot, Heart of Davie Plaza & more			800-Robson, Alley-Oop, Parklet Program & more	Non-adjacent patios, pop-ups & more	Testing brand new ideas!
INNOVATE		INCUBATE			INTEGRATE	REFRESH	INNOVATE

# 2017 INITIATIVES<sup>11</sup>

Program	Projects Being Pursued in 2017	Completed in 2017*	Completed in 2016
1. Patios	Patio Program Review	-	-
2. Parklets	2-4 new parklets	4	-
3. strEATery Study	3-5 pilot parklets and pilot patios	1 pilot patio	-
4. Pavement-to-Plaza	800 Robson, Bute & Robson, Jim Deva	Maple Tree Square, Bute-Robson 800 Robson	Jim Deva Plaza
5. Liveable Laneways	Granville St, Commercial Drive, Robson St	-	Hastings St
6. Craft Carts	Street Vendors Collective, Craft Council	-	-
7. Street Art/Murals	Mural Festival, other murals	+50 (Mural Fest.)	80 (inc. Mural Fest.)
8. Street Furniture	Bike Rack Design Competition	-	-

\*Note: As of August 2017

# PARKLET MANUAL



## PARKLET PROGRAM

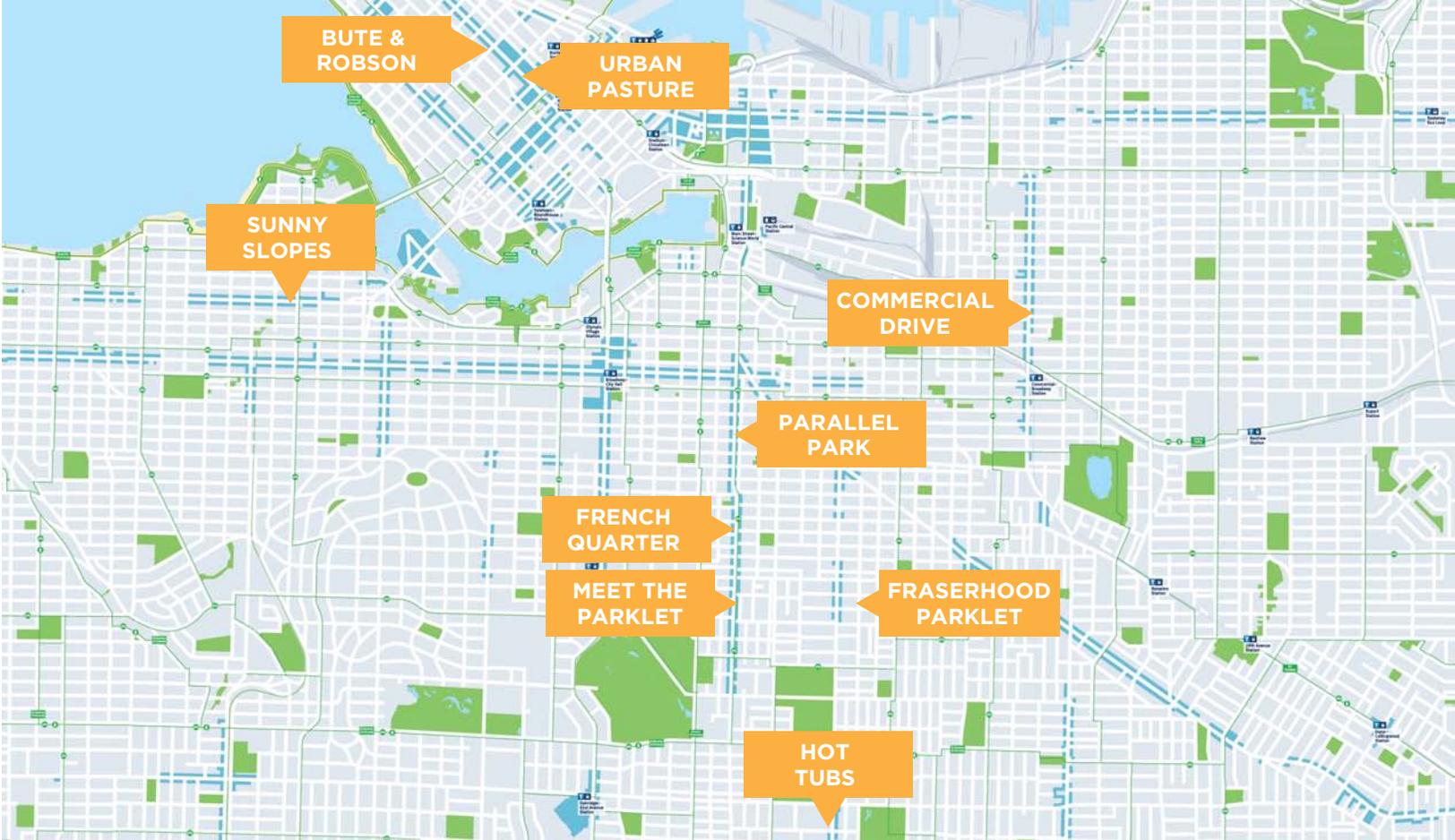
Vancouver's first parklet, *Parallel Park*, was constructed in 2011 in Mount Pleasant as a standalone project in response to a call for project proposals. Two more parklets followed in 2012, one downtown, *Urban Pasture* and one in the South Hill neighbourhood, *Hot Tubs*. Once installed, parklet popularity grew, and so, in 2013, the Parklet Pilot Program was launched.

From the success of Vancouver's Parklet Pilot Program the first installment of the Parklet Manual was developed which outlines the objectives, processes, and guidelines for successfully designing and constructing a parklet in the City of Vancouver. The Manual is inspired by the pioneering work done by San Francisco's program in 2010 and incorporates feedback from participants involved in the Vancouver trials and pilots.

Over the course of five years, VIVA Vancouver, in partnership with local businesses, had created several successful parklets from trial locations to pilots. Through that success, Council approved the official Parklet Program in June 2016.

With one year implementation under the official program's belt certain aspects have been reviewed as opportunities to improve communication with applicants and processes are being further streamlined, both internally and externally.

In Section 3, we will take a closer look at recommendations on how to improve the process and communication to the public.



## PARKLETS

**COMMERCIAL DRIVE** | 2014 | Pilot Program  
Steel and wood tables and benches. Have a break and experience the dynamic Drive.

**BUTE-ROBSON** | 2017 | Trial Plaza  
A trial plaza, from June to October, to test and garner feedback on the future possibility of a permanent plaza. This space features a parklet with modular decking and a public piano for people wanting to sit, socialize, relax, and hold small events.

**FRASERHOOD PARKLET** | 2017 | Official  
With lustrous boxwood borders and crafted wood high back seats, tables, and benches, this is a popular spot on Fraser Street.

**FRENCH QUARTER** | 2014 | Pilot Program  
The fixed angular benches increased the public space, bridging the front boulevard. An inviting gathering place near the independent boutiques of Main Street.

**HOT TUBS** | 2012 | Pilot Program  
Three circular seating areas surrounded by tall grasses, just like wooden hot tubs. Hop in, have a splash, and connect with neighbours.

**MEET THE PARKLET** | 2017 | Official Program  
Bright red accents, angled wood design and quaint little place to relax where the grass is always green down on Main Street.

**PARALLEL PARK** | 2011/2017 | Pilot Program  
The original parklet. The parklet enjoyed a refresh this summer with new trial modular decking and railings for an exciting space.

**SUNNY SLOPES** | 2015 | Pilot Program  
This two-level parklet makes for twice the enjoyment on the sunny slope of 4th Avenue.

**URBAN PASTURE** | 2012 | Pilot Program  
Long curving benches, beautiful wood decking, and lots of landscaping. A great place to sit and people-watch the throngs of Robson Street shoppers.



Photo Credit: VWA Vancouver, Lotte Veng (Parallel Park Retreat, Vancouver)

# LIMITATIONS

As a trendy and pragmatic model for new green public spaces, parklets embody many of the challenging questions facing contemporary cities: financial difficulties, rapid urbanization and densification, as urban strategies put pressure on the public provision of public space. In a search for new models for public space, parklets fit these needs as inexpensive, semi-permanent projects based on a public-private partnership model, a model seen as the hallmark of neoliberalism.<sup>16</sup>

Whether a setting a parklet along a curb, pedestrianizing a narrow corridor, or redesign a complex intersection, cities have the opportunity and the responsibility to make the most efficient use of valuable street space. An interim design can serve as a bridge to the community, helping to build support for a project and test its functionality before going into construction.<sup>24</sup>

Preliminary studies have shown parklets to have many of their desired effects, such as increased civic street life. However, there

are some potential problems with the current parklet process, that need to be acknowledged and addressed for parklets to have the kind of broad and lasting impact that many hope they will.<sup>24</sup>

Parklet programs also use a funding model that could prove counterproductive in the future. In general, parklets are funded entirely by the community. And so, as a tool used to help people reclaim city streets, parklets may only be going as far as reclaiming the streets by people who have the money to buy them back.

We can address their shortfalls now for them to have a real and sustainable impact on our future city. So in order to better support the existing parklet program and momentum from the last 5 years in Vancouver, the report will examine how to expand the program to be more accessible to a wider audience and how to increase community engagement while discovering new ways to build excitement!

# PRIVATE VS. PUBLIC

We live in a city with a limited number of neighborhood parks and open spaces and parklets provide valuable privately-funded and privately-maintained public spaces for people to meet and socialize. Parklets convert on-street parking spaces into community gathering places, creating more vibrant commercial districts. However in certain instances, the perception of parklets may be misconstrued as commodifying public space. Parklets in themselves are predominantly public and everyone is welcome. Cities like San Francisco, and New York do not permit privatization of parklets for commercial interests and profit. Typical hosts or sponsors are restricted in how they can incorporate their business into their business operations, such as table service, and liquor service are prohibited.

However a new form of typology is being introduced into the on-street projects; cities such as Ottawa, Seattle and now, Vancouver are testing the idea of private or semi-private “patios” in parking spaces or non-adjacent to buildings. “Streatery” is the name the City of Seattle has bestowed to a specific type of parklet that is associated with a neighbouring restaurant or bar. Similar to the Street Seats program in Portland, Oregon, or Streetside Spots in Ottawa, Ontario, the business hosting the streatery has the capacity to use the space exclusively for table service during the operating hours, but it must remain a public space open to all when the business is not in operation. And so, unlike parklets, streateries function as a private space of the timewith the remaining hours of the day public.

From trial parklets to an official parklet program, there are currently 8 parklets

across Vancouver in partnership with business owners and VIVA Vancouver. Parklets provide outdoor seating for both the public and patrons. These public spaces also support patio culture, being designed and maintained by restaurant and café establishments.

In 2016 Vancouver Council approved piloting a 3 year study to explore non-adjacent patios or “streateries”. This summer, VIVA launched a 3-year strEATery pilot to study new kinds of parklets and patios, some of which use modular decking systems. The study is as a way to inform patio culture (which doesn’t necessarily have to be private all the time). Bute-Robson is another example of contributing to patio culture without privatizing space, yet adjacent businesses are definitely benefiting as plaza is well-used by their patrons

The first of these pilots were installed in June with the goal of 10 to be installed by end of this year. Numerous questions and conversations have emerged from the study, and one of the main discussions has been how to define the use of the space as private, semi-private, or public.

As previously mentioned this type of typology brings to question, are this types of interventions commodifying public space? And how does such a program clearly communicate if a space is public or private or semi-private. Vancouver is currently tackling this question and how to proceed with clarifying the possible miscommunication. While this report will not address the larger implications of this type of typology due to its infancy in piloting, it is valuable to acknowledge these types of programs are arising. The bigger concern would be if these pilots are deemed successful, will businesses be more interested in the financial benefits that the strEATery study provides vs. the community benefits that parklets provide. And will this ultimately reduce the interest of parklets in the future?



Photo Credit: City of Vancouver

## NON-ADJACENT PATIO “STREATERY” PILOT

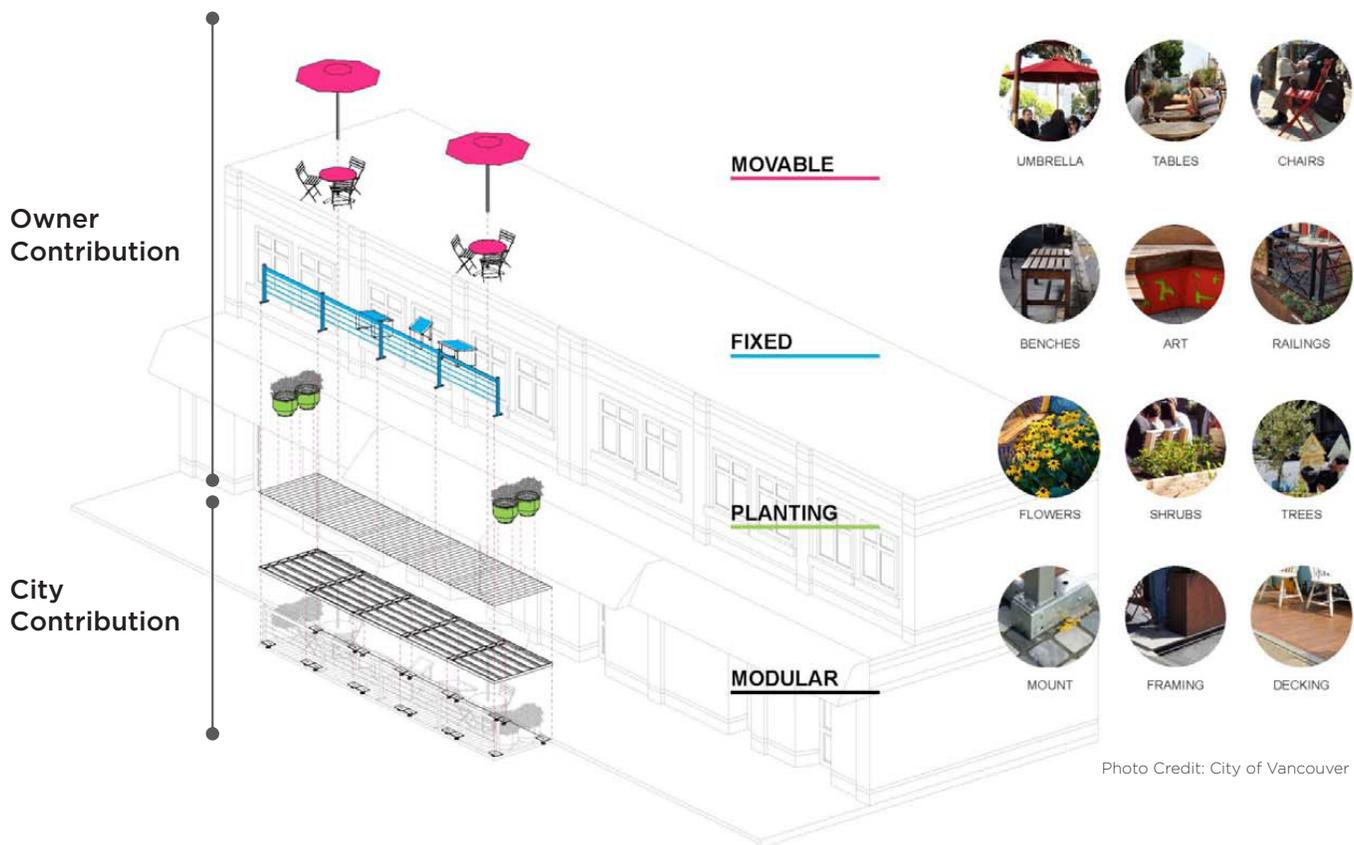


Photo Credit: City of Vancouver

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# VISION

Thus far we have discussed parklet origins, where they fit within public space typology, current Vancouver context and the overall benefits of parklets. Yes, there are limitations and barriers to parklet implementation, but the long term positive effects outweigh the challenges that may arise.

Parklets are an open, accessible public micro parks for anyone and everyone. They become little microcosms that increase community well-being. While they may not solve larger issues such as affordability, housing, or gentrification; they support social inclusion, diversity and culture, and active choices in transportation.

The overall broad vision for this report and the future of parklet programs is that they will:

- » Continuously increase available public space in limited urban landscapes
- » Continually open the dialogue for the discussion of what public space is, and how it should be designed for the people
- » Become a catalyst for the future design of “complete streets”
- » Continuously support active choices in public transportation
- » Enhance public realm experience!

The report’s key goals hope to identify ways in which the Vancouver Parklet Program can reach the broader overall vision.

## KEY GOALS

The goals of this report is to study:

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Best practices from reoccurring themes of program goals, processes, and lessons learned from precedent cities

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Elements of successful community outreach and engagement for a successful parklet program

---

How parklets are perceived by the general public and professionals

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Lessons learned from precedents to develop recommendations for Vancouver’s evolving Parklet Program

# RESEARCH METHODS

Exploratory interviews with City Staff and, local professionals/publics, case study peer reviews and an online survey were conducted in order to identify the final research recommendations which align with the reports goals and vision. Each tool allowed opportunities to explore different methods of collecting data information to help understand parklets and their involvement in not just a local context, but a global context.

# EXPLORATORY INTERVIEWS

Interviews are an extremely useful tool for collecting qualitative research data, as they allow the researcher to gather the story behind participants' experiences. Interviewers can pursue in-depth information, however interviews can become time consuming and they are resource intensive.

Based on the recommendation of the research mentors, interview participants were selected based on their involvement in parklet programs (past, current, or potential), or individuals involved in community based initiatives. This included City staff, program leaders from precedent cities, Landscape Architect/Architect professionals, designers/creatives, and other interested representatives.

The key themes that emerged from the interviews:

## FACING LIMITATIONS AND BARRIERS

A number of internal interviewees noted limitations and barriers to the current parklet program may limit the access for potential applicants to take part in the program. Finding ways to reduce limitations and barriers would significantly increase the future success of the program. Common issues identified were:

- » Lack of internal admin/staff leads to poor process times, poor efficiency and lack of available resources
- » Lack of community champions
- » Ongoing drainage and maintenance issues
- » Applicant costs (fees/construction costs)
- » Logistical barriers, such as storage

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Internal and external interviewees all noted that despite the approval of a official program in 2016, a single parklet had not been installed until summer of 2017. While some of the limitations and barriers mentioned previously may add to the lack of community engagement and support, additional issues such as lack of social media, public engagement and outreach are other causes for lack of public participation and awareness of the program. Some ideas were brainstormed for possible opportunities on engagement:

- » A yearly open house (public event) to showcase the great existing and upcoming public programs. This could also be used for an open forum/FAQ session on the parklet program for potential parklets.
- » Increase event attendance at local events and festivities from the Street Activities Branch to promote the parklet program and increase awareness
- » A more thorough communication strategy which could include increased social media presence, an updated website with additional resources,

## SUPPORT FOR PROTOTYPING

Discussions around different prototyping was a key focus of the interviews. Potential prototyping ideas that were discussed:

- » Kit of Parts Catalogue option for applicants
- » Mobile parklet that can either be used temporarily by applicants, or can visit local events to promote the program
- » Design Jams/Competitions with local schools and professionals
- » Trial parklets to test viability/feedback

# SURVEY

In part of the research, an online survey was distributed to professionals and affiliates in the Vancouver Public Space Network and the Vancouver Design Nerds social network groups by utilizing the City of Vancouver's Public Engagement Fluid Survey tool.

The intent of the online survey was to collect an array of opinions on parklets from a large body of individuals, working in the public space field in order to understand current opinions surrounding parklets, and seek further opportunities on how to expand the program. The survey was comprised of standardized, open-ended questions and closed, fixed response questions.

It should be noted, only 20 participants responded to the 10-question survey. While the survey does not represent a diverse and large pool of participants, the feedback gathered is still valuable and can be utilized as another additional tool for exploration during the data research.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

» Respondents understood the clear difference between a public parklet and a private patio, however program will need to be very aware how they clearly communicate non-adjacent private patios that are non-adjacent to the public, as these may be confused for public parklets.

» The majority responses to cost responsibilities are in favour of a 50/50 cost distribution between applicant and City. Respondents' noted that if the parklet or "patio" was considered private for commercial activities, that the business should pay 100% of the cost and if a parklet was public the City should subsidize or cover all costs. Additionally, a tiered system was proposed, where "large businesses should

pay full cost, small for-profits should bear some costs, but have subsidy, and non-profits should bear minor cost and enjoy a large subsidy," as stated by one respondent.

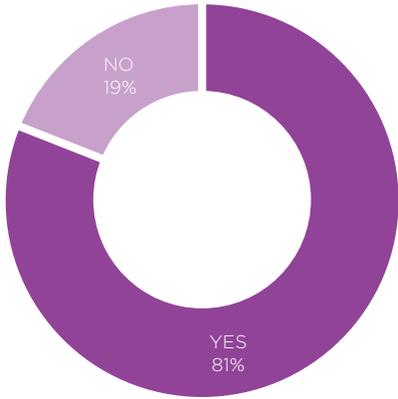
» Most feel the use of mobile parklets is only suitable for event based engagement and design should be executed at a high quality in order to avoid becoming "hokey."

» Respondents were in favour of test parklets, noting it would be a great opportunity to showcase the benefits of parklets, test the suitability of a location, but should be remain low-cost, and easy to set up. However, questions arose about how the test parklet would be evaluated and whether the test parklet provides results that will inform future change for the location.

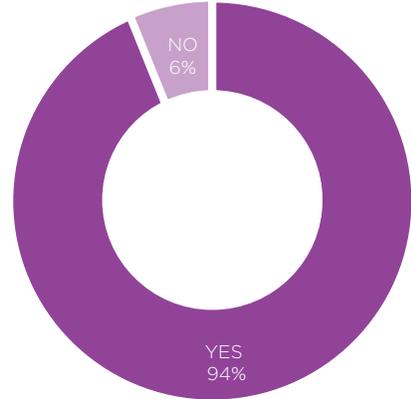
» Half of the respondents feel a kit of parts would be a beneficial strategy to help alleviate barriers, such as cost, but some concerns were raised, such as: "one of the main benefits of parklets is that they are place-based, and it seems [a kit of parts] would take away from that. Part of the benefit is the local ownership that comes from a locally driven design-build process, which a kit of parts might take away from." Possibility of losing creative parklets and ones that work specifically with the neighbourhood. Better to subsidize designs or fees and requirements to make it more affordable.

Diagrams on right visually represent numerical data collected from the closed, fixed response questions.

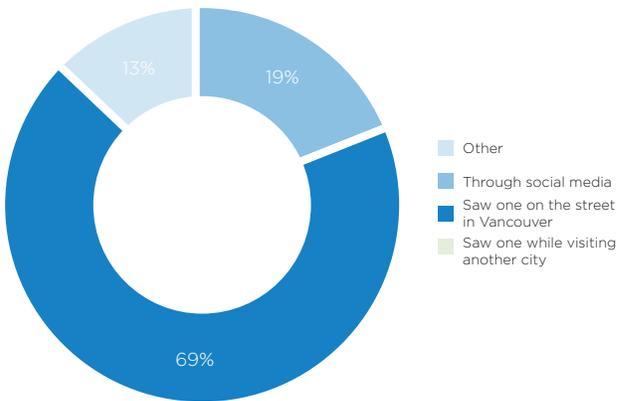
**ARE YOU AWARE OF VANCOUVER'S PARKLET PROGRAM?**



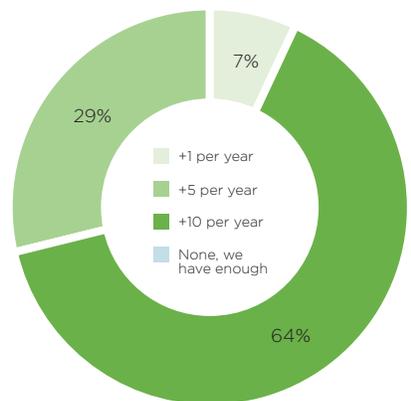
**HAVE YOU EVER VISITED A PARKLET IN VANCOUVER?**



**HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT PARKLETS?**



**HOW MANY MORE PARKLETS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN VANCOUVER OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS?**



**DO YOU FEEL THAT PARKLETS:**



“The street works harder than any other part of downtown... it is the nervous system; it communicates the flavor, the feel, the sights... it is the major point of transaction and communication.”

- Jane Jacobs



Photo Credit: Steve Chou, Flickr (*French Quarter, Vancouver*)

# CASE STUDIES

This report draws on the experiences of select cities' parklet programs across North America. The case studies contain information garnered through phone and email interviews with program leaders.

The case studies structured around a framework of general questions to help facilitate conversations to assist in defining best management practices and key takeaways for the City of Vancouver Parklet Program.

The report notes that questions pertaining to design specifications, costs/fees, and maintenance have not been discussed due to limitations to project scope and timeline. Questions focused specifically on processes, communication and engagement. Below are the paraphrased questions discussed:

» What type of communication and outreach does [city name] do in order to expand the outreach of the program to interested businesses or partnerships?

» What happens after the timeline of a parklet expires?

» Who maintains ownership of the parklet after installation? Insurance?

» What type of monitoring and evaluation does [city name] conduct? Frequency?

» Is the parklet program a rolling application or a deadline intake date?

» What are the future goals and stages for the program?

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

» Does [city name] allow on street private patios that allow businesses to sell food/liquor? Does this cause conflicts with the parklet program? How does the [city name] address any issues that may arise from public vs. semi-private vs. private spaces?

» Are there issues with public perception of parklets? Do you feel it is clearly communicated?

» How many dedicated staff does [city name] have for the parklet program? How many would the program require? Roles?

» Does [city name] provide grants, subsidies or funding opportunities for applicants?

## SELECTED CITIES

NEW YORK CITY: STREETSEATS

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SAN FRANCISCO: PAVEMENT TO PARKS

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SEATTLE: PARKLETS

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LOS ANGELES: PARKLETS

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TORONTO: PARKLET CAFES

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OTTAWA: STREETSIDE SPOTS

# NEW YORK

## AT A GLANCE:

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**Program:** Street Seats

**Current:** 18 installed, 2 more this summer

**Installation Duration:** Yearly application.  
March to December

**Intake:** Rolling Application

**Funding:** No application fees. DOT will reimburse new partners for up to \$12,000 and existing partners for up to \$5,000 USD.

**Internal Staff:** One program coordinator works with internal department. The geomatic design unit is involved with installation.

**Ownership:** Privately-owned. NYDOT owns 2 “roving” parklets they allow applicants to utilize for limited time periods; targeted towards low-income.

**Communication & Engagement:** Each Street Seats host gets 6” x 5” information postcards about the program to pass out. Much of the engagement is garnered through community support and social media.

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## MORE INFORMATION:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pedestrians/streetseats.shtml>

## BACKGROUND:

In 2008, New York City launched a “Pavement to Plaza” program. The program led to a 2-Year Pilot Program, in 2011, was which received 29 applicants: 12 technically feasible, 5 sites were approved and 3 sites were installed.

After the success of the pilot program NYDOT launched the official Street Seats citywide program where local partners apply to transform under used streets into vibrant, social public spaces during the warm weather months.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- » Three design options: Platform, customizable (engineering approval required), Platform-DOT Standard (City provided kit of parts, a standard design DOT licences), Non-platform-DOT Standard (Low-cost on street design, but requires a ramp for accessibility)
- » Typical 6 month process
- » All Street Seats are public and accessible, no commercial activity permitted
- » Process: 1. Property owner consent, 2. Community Board Approval, 3. Application to DOT, 4. DOT technical review, 5. DOT Design Review, 6. Annual authorization agreement
- » All purchased and installation of materials must occur before June 30.
- » Street Seats is currently hiring an Architect/Urban Planner that will research the program goals, create a program manual, and look for future opportunities for the program

# IN PHOTOS



Photo Credit: NYDOT, Flickr



Photo Credit: NYDOT, Flickr



Photo Credit: NYDOT, Flickr

# SAN FRANCISCO

## AT A GLANCE:

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**Program: Pavement to Parks**

**To date:** 60+ have been installed. 2 more to be installed by end.

**Duration:** Annual permit renewal. Up to 5+ years typically installation.

**Intake:** Rolling Application

**Funding:** Privately funded. Annual renewal fees apply. Required to take out a performance bond upon signing which would cover the costs of removal of the Parklet in the event that the host is not able to do so themselves

**Internal Staff:** Program Manager (1.75 fte ) work is with other department staff in planning department, public works.

**Ownership:** Privately-owned.

**Communication & Engagement:**

Pavements to Parks holds RFP calls for parklets, however the last one was in 2015. The program is well established is continuously supported through community advocacy and promotion of the parklet program at a community level.

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**MORE INFORMATION:**

<http://pavementtoparks.org/parklets/>

**BACKGROUND:**

San Francisco's Parklet Program has been replicated in cities across the world seeking to increase public space. Coined as the pioneer of parklets the official Pavement to Parks program was founded from the success of the 2005 Rebar Group, Inc. first PARK(ing) Day installation. The first formal public parklets were initially conceived by Italian designer and London resident Suzi Bolognese (Sb Design Studio) and installed in San Francisco in 2010. The Pavement to Parks Program is part of the City of San Francisco's overall strategy for creating safe, complete streets and new open space for the public.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:**

- » Parklets foster community and possibly move to a more capital park funding such as a parklet led to a complete street widening at Castro Street
- » City Planning reviews and evaluates incoming applications and submits a finalized list to both the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and San Francisco Public Works to determine whether the application is in general compliance with the approved Public Works guidelines. After SFMTA and Public Works have completed their review, a public notice is posted.
- » Parklets full public, Commercial service not permitted. Private patios adjacent to business only.
- » Desire to have more established and regulated monitoring program
- » Future outreach agenda is to offer funding and assistance in planning grants, construction grants, and amplified partnerships to neighbourhoods without current parklet or public street project

# IN PHOTOS



Photo Credit: Kathleen Corey, Flickr



Photo Credit: SFDOT, Flickr



Photo Credit: SFDOT, Flickr

# SEATTLE

## AT A GLANCE:

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**Program:** Seattle Parklets & Streateries

**Current:** 13 Parklets & 10 Streateries

**Duration:** All-year round. Annual permit renewal.

**Intake:** Rolling application. Encourage applicants to apply in Sept-Oct for summer installation.

**Funding:** Privately-funded. Annual fee and permits apply.

**Internal Staff:** Program Coordinator, with a network of staff in each department to review applications (i.e. Traffic Engineers)

**Ownership:** Host owned—must carry liability insurance \$1 million in commercial general liability insurance and add the City of Seattle as an “additional insured” to policy. The city has no role in the ongoing maintenance and management.

**Communication & Engagement:** Community organizations and partnerships primary public outreach and engagement. Social media utilized for parklet by SDOT.

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## MORE INFORMATION:

<https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/parklets.htm>

## BACKGROUND:

The official Parklet Program was established in 2015. The program takes a community-driven approach, with local businesses and organizations proposing and funding parklet projects. In 2014, the Streatery Pilot Program was developed to test the idea of allowing private businesses to use parklet-like spaces for table service in an effort to bring more activity and vibrancy to the sidewalk. The streateries will be evaluated before a permanent program is considered.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- » Conduct regular counts of the number of people in the parklet and record how it's being used
- » Conduct business input surveys to help measure the impact of parklets on business success
- » A separate City department, from the Parklets Program, conducts the monitoring and evaluation reports
- » SDOT leverages the Park(ing) Day event as a City initiative to encourage community viability and outreach for the parklet and streateries program
- » SDOT has implemented a special use permit for Park(ing) Day and works in conjunction with the Seattle Design Week to encourage partnerships to create pop up parklets for the event
- » Seattle is the only city studied that currently permits conversion of parking spaces into private patios. Through the interview discussion, it was understood, that Seattle feels there is clear public perception between private streateries and public parklets, however additional work could always be done on communication to the public through public outreach and signage.

# IN PHOTOS



Photo Credit: SDOT, Flickr



Photo Credit: SDOT, Flickr



Photo Credit: SDOT, Flickr

# LOS ANGELES

## AT A GLANCE:

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**Program:** People Street Program

**To date:** 6 active, 3 in project pipeline

**Duration:** Up to 4 years, Permitted for a year with the option to renew

**Intake:** Rolling Intake

**Funding:** Financed by Community Partners. \$1 million in General Liability Insurance required. The Community Partner may be required to take out a performance bond upon signing the People St Parklet MOU which would cover the costs of removal of the Parklet in the event that the Community Partner is not able to do so themselves.

**Internal Staff:** One program manager, but the implementation consist of a number of DOT staff. Internal review is conducted by a number of city staff - transportation/civil engineers, public safety staff (fire dept) and disability advocates.

**Ownership:** Privately Owned

### Communication & Engagement:

Robust web presence with clear documentation make it very accessible to the public. Community organizations are large proponents for public awareness and advocacy.

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## MORE INFORMATION:

<http://peoplest.lacity.org>

## BACKGROUND:

Los Angeles installed two of LA's first four pilot parklets on Spring Street in February 2013. Lessons learned from installation of these pilot parklets helped form a city-wide parklets program under the Los Angeles Department of Transportation Program: People St. which transforms neighborhoods through their plaza, parklet or bicycle corral programs.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

» Applicants choose from designs in the Kit of Parts for Parklets: Three parklet types: Sidewalk Cafe (on-street), Sidewalk extension (expansion for pedestrian walking space), landscape lounge (diverse seating with planting)

» Application window, selects a limited number of applications to move forward. Process typically takes 6 months to a year.

» Through a partnership with CityGrows, an online interactive application tool, an applicant can track each step and check on the progress at any time.

» LADOT staff leads a quarterly review of new projects. During the meeting, they have summaries of each project that describe the background (who/what/where), contextual factors (speed limit, presence of parking), organizational capacity of the community partner, and whether or not the partner has successfully submitted their application documents.

» People St offers pre approved Parklet models (Kit of Parts) to expedite the approval and implementation of Parklet projects.

» People St collaborates with research partners to conduct Parklet Impact Studies, and pre- and post-parklet evaluations

# IN PHOTOS



Photo Credit: LADOT, Flickr



Photo Credit: Drew Ackermann, Flickr



Photo Credit: Drew Ackermann, Flickr

# OTTAWA

**Program:** Streetside Spots Pilot Program

**Duration:** April to November 15

**Pilot Types:**

- » Streetside parklet – a public space that may contain such elements as seating, shading, bike parking, or games table.
- » Streetside patio – a private space reserved for patrons of a café, restaurant, or bar that does not have an existing patio.
- » Streetside vending stall – an outdoor business space for the sale of merchandise (*No longer permitted after the pilot*).

The Pilot Program successfully ran in 2016 with four installed parklets and seven on-street private patios. The next steps was for the City to gather public feedback as part of the evaluation of this pilot project. A report will be made to Transportation Committee in 2017. (Specific date not confirmed).

Currently the municipal branch that operated the program, Neighbourhood Connections, has been discontinued and Streetside Spots is now under the regulatory approvals permitted under the Right of Way Patio Bylaw 2017.92. While the current status of the Ottawa program is to be fully determined applicants are still encouraged to apply. The two successful parklets from the Pilot were Business Improvement Area initiatives and have returned in 2017.

**MORE INFORMATION:**

Streetside Seats Pilot Program:  
<http://ottawa.ca/en/business/permits-business-licences-and-applications/right-way>

# TORONTO

Toronto does not currently have a fully fledged parklet program. They are in the midst of updating the sidewalk café and marketing by-laws which have not been comprehensively reviewed since the 1990s. Updated by-laws are being drafted that would make parklets permissible as a café type. Their proposed timeline is to report to Committee in October 2017, and then City Council in November. The few parklet pilots have been the initiative of local business improvement areas, and were done as an exemption to the existing by-laws through a report to Community Council.

While it is difficult to identify key takeaways due to the program being under review, we can examine the objectives of their current Sidewalk Cafe Manual to understand their key objectives for a simple, flexible program that guides users to create safe, accessible and high quality cafes that enhance the sidewalk experience.

- » An updated design manual will support the implementation of a new harmonized sidewalk café
- » Applicants have access to a wide array of typologies: Frontage cafe, flankage cafe, parklet cafe, curbside cafe

**MORE INFORMATION:**

Toronto Sidewalk Cafe Manual:  
<https://www1.toronto.ca/City%20of%20Toronto/Municipal%20Licensing%20&%20Standards/1-Files/Toronto%20Sidewalk%20Cafe%20Manual%20-%20Fall%202015.pdf>

# IN PHOTOS



Photo Credit: CBC News, Website



Photo Credit: City of Ottawa, YouTube

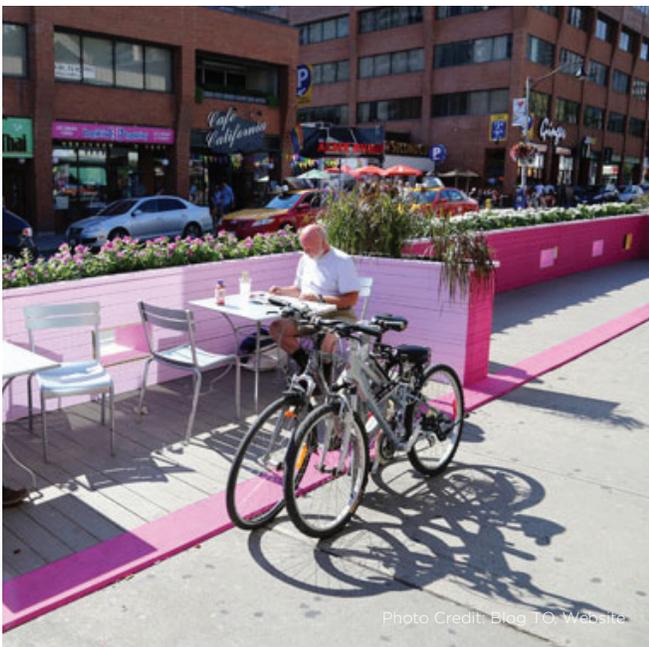


Photo Credit: Blog TO, Website



Photo Credit: Blog TO, Website



Photo Credit: SFDOT, Flickr

# SUMMARY

While each city that was studied may have a slightly different approach to the implementation of the Parklet Program, each programs' goals are similar, which imagine the potential benefit of parklets and the activation of the streets for people.

Based on the information gathered from the exploratory interviews, online survey, literature review and case studies, Section 3 will look at possible opportunities and recommendations for Vancouver formed from the research study.

	New York	Los Angeles	San Francisco	Seattle
Intake	Rolling intake <i>(anytime)</i>	Rolling intake <i>(anytime)</i>	Rolling intake <i>(anytime)</i>	Rolling intake <i>(anytime)</i>
Duration	March - Dec.	Year Round. Annual Renewal.	Year Round. Annual Renewal.	Year Round. Annual Renewal.
Funding	Grants available for applicants.	Privately-funded	Privately-funded	Privately-funded
Public or Private	Public	Public	Public	Public Parklet Private Streatery
Staffing	Program Coordinator	Program Coordinator	Program Manager	Program Coordinator
Ownership	Applicant/host private owned	Community partner/host private owned	Applicant/host private owned	Applicant/host private owned
Engagement	Postcard leave behinds Social media Community Advocacy, etc	Social media Community Advocacy, etc	Social media Community Advocacy, etc	Social media Community Advocacy, etc

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SECTION 3  
**WHAT DID WE LEARN?**



Photo Credit: VIVA Vancouver (Meet the Parklet, Vancouver)

## FINDINGS

A list of 11 recommendations are proposed for informing revisions and opportunities to the Vancouver Parklet Program moving forward. These recommendations were developed based on the research and direct involvement with the Street Activities Branch over the four month (part-time) Greenest City Scholar position. The Toolkit summarizes the recommended opportunities and the following section explores more in depth the recommendations. Some toolkit components have been further developed with draft design assets. All recommendations will require further investigation and development prior to being implemented.

On their own each of the recommendations, in the report, varies in its potential to address the gaps and barriers identified. It is important to recognize that the recommendations should not be considered as a singular solution; they are meant to work together, reinforcing each other in a process that builds momentum for stronger culture and engagement in Vancouver.

# TOOLKIT

## COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT:



Host a park(ing) day event



Consider revising signage



Provide quick reference material for potential applicants and interested publics



Update VIVA Vancouver website to be more informative and engaging



Engage the public on parklets for education and fostering local support



Launch a partnership parklet program to help identify and engage potential supporters, including advocacy walk/bike groups, business improvement associations, community centres, neighbourhood houses, etc.

## PARKLET PROGRAM:



Refine parklet manual to reflect updated process and incorporate stakeholder feedback



Allow for additional staff resources



Reconsider parklet ownership model



Implement a rolling intake process



Refine the parklet process based on stakeholder feedback

# COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT



## HOST A PARK(ING) DAY EVENT

Studies have demonstrated that daily passerbys and previous visitors were significantly more likely to understand that parklets are public space. Although this is not altogether a surprising result, a recommendation would be that the parklet program host a city-wide day to celebrate these spaces and encourage a large number of first-time visitors in order to increase the “public” understanding.

A PARK(ing) Day not only puts a spotlight on parklets for the public, but would be an ideal opportunity for a public forum for the City of Vancouver’s Parklet Program, allowing those interested to participate in a mini parklet.

There are different approaches on how a city should be involved in hosting an event, such as just allowing the general public to do their own tactical approach with no city involvement, to a complete city sanctioned permitted event. Seattle and Calgary were contacted to get a better understanding how these programs work. They both function slightly different, but may give a clearer idea for possibilities for the Vancouver Park(ing) Day in the future:

### CALGARY PARK(ING) DAY:

- » The City of Calgary has selected a specific street in the DT area with 10 parklet spaces. Applicants must apply to be selected for one of these spaces.
- » Preferred \$2 million liability insurance by applicants

Summary: Park(ing) Day in Calgary is localized to a specific street, and appears to be fairly regulated by the City of Calgary.

### SEATTLE PARK(ING) Day:

- » Applicants apply for the special event permit, SDOT has a special permit for events such as Park(ing) Day. Insurance not req.
- » The permits allows the SDOT to make sure applicant is adhering to safety and parking safety protocols, the applicant will have the parking meters cost covered by SDOT, and they are provided with safety cones
- » The permit/application process is a way for the SDOT to create community engagement with a broad reach and allow the SDOT to become a central resource for the community

Summary: Park(ing) Day in Seattle is a more wide open/ community grassroots event, however the SDOT requires permits for safety/bylaw requirements and provides participants with traffic cones and paid parking metres!

While a City sanctioned event would require more planning and organization, for the benefit and engagement of the program, this may be the more ideal choice.

In order to facilitate further discussions, proposed documentation I created the following for the City of Vancouver to use in future events.

The content is an amalgamation from my precedent research, including imagery from past Vancouver PARK(ing) Day installations.

- » 11 x 17 Poster / Sign
- » A double-sided 11 x 17 information on guidelines, and requirements.

# JOIN US FOR PARK(ing) Day® 2017 FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>

An annual worldwide celebration of people + open space

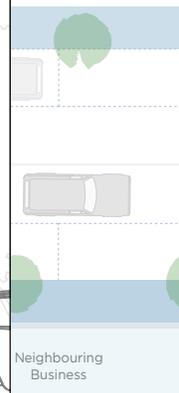
PARK(ing) Day is an annual open-source global event where citizens, artists and activists collaborate to temporarily transform metered parking spaces into "PARK(ing)" spaces - temporary public spaces. The project began in 2005 as a way to promote the need for more urban open space, to generate critical debate about the creation and allocation of public space, and to improve the overall quality of the urban realm. For more information please visit <https://www.facebook.com/vivavancouver/>



## THIS PARK(ing) SPOT FOR THE PUBLIC BY:

PARK(ing) Day is an open-source experiment in spatial remixing created by independently-operated groups around the globe. Original PARK(ing) Day concept is made in San Francisco by Rebar Art & Design. "PARK(ing) Day" is a registered service mark of Rebar Group, Inc. Copyright ©2005-2017 by Rebar Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

CITY OF VANCOUVER | VIVA VANCOUVER | [www.parkingday.org](http://www.parkingday.org) | [my.parkingday.org](http://my.parkingday.org)



PARK(ing) Day  
Poster (Sign)

PARK(ing) Day is an open-source experiment in spatial remixing created by independently-operated groups around the globe. Original PARK(ing) Day concept is made in San Francisco by Rebar Art & Design. "PARK(ing) Day" is a registered service mark of Rebar Group, Inc. Copyright ©2005-2017 by Rebar Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

CITY OF VANCOUVER | VIVA VANCOUVER | [www.parkingday.org](http://www.parkingday.org) | [my.parkingday.org](http://my.parkingday.org)

#parkingday2017 #parkingdayvancouver #vivavancouver

Information &  
Participation  
Guidelines

PARK(ing) Day is an open-source experiment in spatial remixing created by independently-operated groups around the globe. Original PARK(ing) Day concept is made in San Francisco by Rebar Art & Design. "PARK(ing) Day" is a registered service mark of Rebar Group, Inc. Copyright ©2005-2017 by Rebar Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

CITY OF VANCOUVER | VIVA VANCOUVER | [www.parkingday.org](http://www.parkingday.org) | [my.parkingday.org](http://my.parkingday.org)

#parkingday2017 #parkingdayvancouver #vivavancouver

Figure: PARK(ing) Day Assets  
Author, 2017.

## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>

### open space

Standard pop-up park or materials.

## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>

### open space

As part of San Francisco's "Parks" program, the city planners created the "Parklet" program. The city planners created the "Parklet" program. The city planners created the "Parklet" program.

Interested in creating a parklet? The City of San Francisco has an official Parklet program.

For more information visit: [www.sfgov.org/parklets](http://www.sfgov.org/parklets)

## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>

### open space

**Installation:** PARK(ing) Day installation will need to be monitored the entire time it is set up. Projects must be removed by 7 PM on Friday. If your project is on a street with high-volume driveways and long the length of your project you will need to conform to the City of San Francisco's regulations for street closures. You will need to have monitors at the ends of your project to manage pedestrian traffic if you are on a street with high-volume driveways and long the length of your project.

**Neighbouring Business:** PARK(ing) Day is open and non-commercial. You will be acting as a business, and you must follow the City of San Francisco's regulations for street closures. You will need to have monitors at the ends of your project to manage pedestrian traffic if you are on a street with high-volume driveways and long the length of your project.

**Notification:** You will need to notify the City of San Francisco and neighboring businesses about your project. Your notification should include the location, date, and time of the project. You will need to have monitors at the ends of your project to manage pedestrian traffic if you are on a street with high-volume driveways and long the length of your project.

**Permitting:** PARK(ing) Day is open and non-commercial. You will be acting as a business, and you must follow the City of San Francisco's regulations for street closures. You will need to have monitors at the ends of your project to manage pedestrian traffic if you are on a street with high-volume driveways and long the length of your project.

**Non-commercial:** PARK(ing) Day is open and non-commercial. You will be acting as a business, and you must follow the City of San Francisco's regulations for street closures. You will need to have monitors at the ends of your project to manage pedestrian traffic if you are on a street with high-volume driveways and long the length of your project.

**Registration:** PARK(ing) Day is open and non-commercial. You will be acting as a business, and you must follow the City of San Francisco's regulations for street closures. You will need to have monitors at the ends of your project to manage pedestrian traffic if you are on a street with high-volume driveways and long the length of your project.

## CONSIDER REVISING SIGNAGE

A simple tool in communication is signage. Signage not only can inform and orient, but help draw people to the uniqueness of a space. A signage program can reinforce a unique sense of identity, and overall image, especially when it incorporates historical or cultural information. Signage notifies when there is an application for a specific location, they identify when a parklet is being constructed and welcome and educate the public about the newly installed parklet. Ineffective signage can lead to miscommunication and confusion, however well designed and legible signage can benefit parklets through increased education about the program to the public.

### SUGGESTIONS:

- » Change the phrasing on the signage to include a statement about not needing to patronize a business in order to sit
- » Enlarge signs so they are clearly
- » Reposition these signs so they are visible at eye level, min. mount about 3'-6" above grade
- » Add additional signs, perhaps on tables, to reinforce the public aspect.
- » Use signage as an educational opportunity.
- » In some cases consistency is desired and in others eclectic signs of different sizes, colors and materials can add 'energy' to a space. Determine which is appropriate.
- » Consider signage that explains a relevant design features or historical significance of the parklet
- » During parklet installation, proponent signage should describe and showcase what is soon to come, and what a parklet is

### FURTHER EXPLORATION:

Due to limited time available further exploration on design of the final parklet signs should explored, such as: Interpretive signage, more vibrant parklet information or notifications signs.

Below is the revised signage design based on discussions with City staff and have been installed at 2017 projects. Goal is to be more visible and vibrant while incorporating brand identity colours.



Previous



Revised (Author, 2017)  
(Current)

### Current notification signs:



Revised (Current)



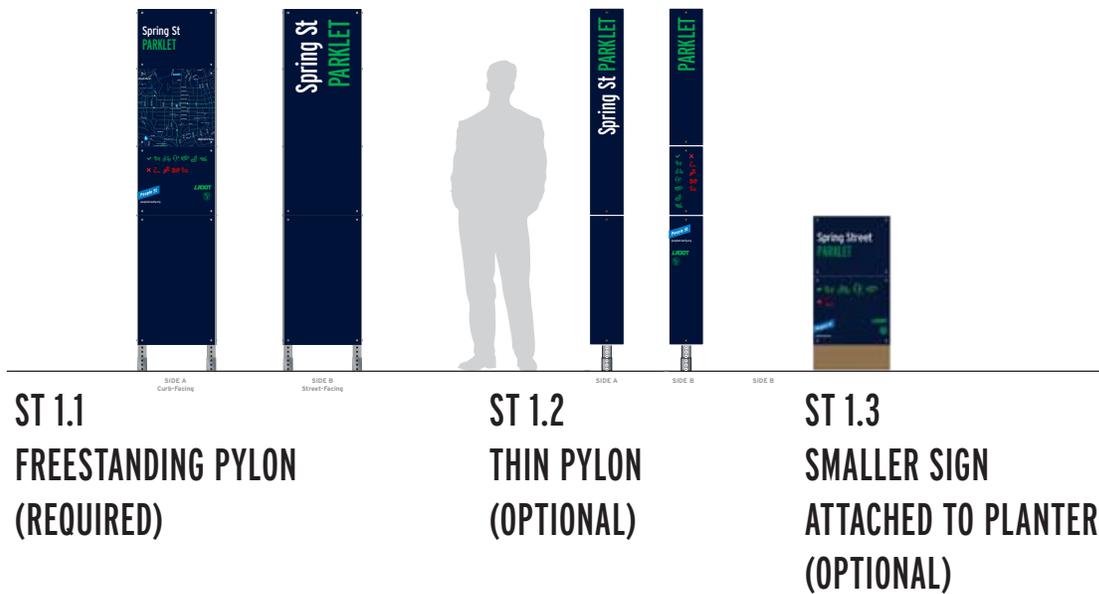
Previous



Precedent imagery of existing signage utilized in New York, San Francisco, Seattle and Los Angeles.

## Wayfinding Signage: Family of Sign Types

**Note:** LADOT will coordinate the fabrication and installation of required, standard signage for each project. Signage specifications are included in this document and the [Kit of Parts for Parklets Technical Appendix](#) for reference and project understanding only.



Los Angeles Wayfinding Signage Program



## PROVIDE QUICK REFERENCE MATERIAL FOR POTENTIAL APPLICANTS AND INTERESTED PUBLICS

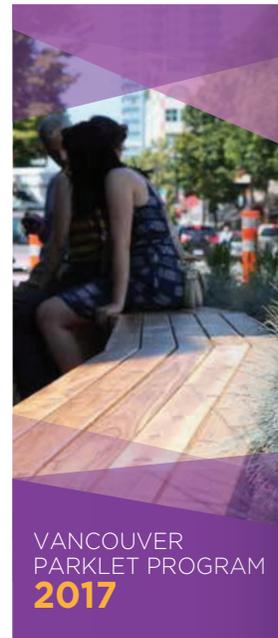
Throughout the study many stakeholders expressed that the current parklet program, while informative is large and can be difficult and time consuming for someone to comb through. Several solutions have been discussed, that would help facilitate quick ways to disseminate information to the public are typically printed communication materials.

Other Cities like San Francisco and Seattle have produced quick reference material that can be physically distributed or digitally downloaded as a reference guide for potential or interested parties.

### SUGGESTIONS:

An 8.5" x 11" information sheet or brochure that details:

- » What a parklet is
- » What the Parklet Program is
- » Who is eligible to apply
- » Submittal Checklist
- » Sample drawing/plan
- » Who is involved in the program
- » Requirements such as siting, design, insurance, costs, etc.



Right: Proposed tri-fold brochure. Author, 2017.

6" x 4" postcards that could be left with business stewards at parklet locations or handed out events. The postcard could contain details like:

- » Eye catching vibrant photography of local parklets
- » What parklets are
- » What the program is
- » Where to get more information





## UPDATE VIVA VANCOUVER WEBSITE TO BE MORE INFORMATIVE AND ENGAGING

Social media and websites are typically the first tool that interested parties go to, to collect information and answer questions. Having an effective and engaging website is imperative in order to disseminate information to the public effectively and clearly. Currently, the website does not reflect or showcase the creative potential of the Parklet Program.

### SUGGESTIONS:

Working with a professional designer, recommendations to amend to the website would be:

- » Add case studies on existing parklets
- » Update interactive map to show relevant public plazas and upcoming parklets to be installed
- » Add a FAQ page
- » Provide downloadable brief info. sheet



### PRECEDENTS:

» San Francisco website includes large case study collection on parklets



» Los Angeles and New York provide a thorough FAQ section



» Los Angeles website interface is bold, contemporary, and easy to navigate design



## ENGAGE THE PUBLIC ON PARKLETS FOR EDUCATION AND FOSTERING LOCAL SUPPORT

Parklets are designed for the public, to become spaces to socialize, relax, and celebrate our communities. However, since the launch of the Parklet Program, ongoing research has shown that public awareness of the Parklets and the program appears to be limited. Engaging with the public would increase support, facilitate conversation on the benefits of public space, and create partnerships with local groups.

### SUGGESTIONS:

- » Launch Event Parties/ Parklet Open House
- » Hold guided bike tours to the parklets
- » Videos Interviews or Mini-Documentaries on parklets (ie. process, meeting the designers, etc.)
- » Program for activation with more pop-up events to increase engagement with parklets
- » Increase social media presence and news blasts. (Refer to City of Vancouver Corporate Communication Draft Communication Strategies June 2017)



## LAUNCH A PARTNERSHIP PARKLET PROGRAM TO HELP IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE POTENTIAL SUPPORTERS, INCLUDING ADVOCACY WALK/ BIKE GROUPS, BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATIONS, COMMUNITY CENTRES, NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES, ETC.

Vancouver is a City full of grassroots initiatives with many groups and organizations that are passionate about their communities. There is opportunity to tap into those networks and partner in order to grow the network of creatives and advocates.

# PARKLET PROGRAM



## REFINE PARKLET MANUAL TO REFLECT UPDATED PROCESS AND INCORPORATE STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

During the first year of implementation in any program, details are refined that could help improve the program and the system. Parklet pioneers such as San Francisco and Los Angeles have updated their manuals in sequential years to continually be up to date with current trends, new information and lessons learned.

With a year and 3+ parklets installed with the official program there are lessons learned that will be required to be updated in the manual.

Continued refinement to program will be necessary, by using pilot projects, studies, surveys, and general feedback to refine the program as necessary.



## IMPLEMENT A ROLLING INTAKE PROCESS

While some cities in the past have experimented with a deadline for applications, many have found it is beneficial for a rolling intake. Results showed many applicants were not in favour of a hard deadlines, and the unnecessary wait to reapply in another year.

### SUGGESTIONS:

- » Refresh the Parklet Manual to make some processes more clear (manage expectations of the review/form 1 timelines, provide more clarity on the submission requirements, etc.)
- » Representation flow chart to showcase departments involved
- » Single-page checklist for applicants to utilize to during the application process
- » An updated process diagram (see next page) that is clear
- » Provide examples on different street typologies
- » Provide a list local and trusted designers, contractors, and builders
- » Provide a list of funding opportunities and grants that are available
- » Update signage vocabulary to reflect recent revisions

### SUGGESTIONS:

- » Include a note on the website and manual that the application is a rolling intake for fall in order to meet summer installation
- » Include a note of typical expected application process time of 8-12 months in order for applicants' timelines



## ALLOW FOR ADDITIONAL STAFF RESOURCES

As programs begin to grow it is important for cities to allocate resources such as staff and administration in order to facilitate quick turn around times and clear communication between departments and the applicant.

Findings from the case studies showed that while each city, with an established parklet program, has one full time or three quarter time program coordinator, all expressed desire for additional support staff. Parklet Programs need a champion and leader to keep the program moving forward!

Currently, Vancouver has a Parklet Manager and Parklet Coordinator, but both are not full time, with a number of different staff groups involved, including:

- » Parklet Design (transportation, street activities, neighbourhood)
- » Utilities (external, water, sewers)
- » Construction (street repaving, building development, cycling facilities)
- » Assets (public bike share)
- » Usage (filming and special events)

The VIVA Vancouver program in the Engineering Services department is the primary point of contact for applicants, with minimal coordination outside of Engineering Services (VIVA, 2017).

### SUGGESTIONS:

- » Year-round full time, parklet dedicated program coordinator without any additional wayfinding/lending library/public space tasks.
- » Program Coordinator should have an architecture, engineer, or landscape architecture background in order to facilitate construction, design, installation plans, etc.

» During peak summer season assistance from an Engineering Assistant will be necessary in order facilitate application processes

» If the streatery pilot is successful it will justify at least 1 additional dedicated staff

» While it is not necessary for just the parklet program, VIVA Vancouver would benefit from a full time communication and engagement specialist who is dedicated to running social and public engagement events, communication and administration (311), social media, etc.



## RECONSIDER PARKLET OWNERSHIP MODEL

Previous survey results conducted in 2015, by the City, and review of the precedent cities, showcase that there is a preference for installed parklets to be owned by the applicant/host. While this report recognizes the reasons for the City to own parklets currently (in case if parklets get damaged, costs do not fall on the host) this model will not be economically sustainable as the program grows.

### SUGGESTION:

- » Parklets are privately owned, this may provide an incentive for prospective applicants due to capital costs required for parklets installation and design
- » Maintenance or repair on parklets will be evaluated on a case by case basis on who will cover costs of repair.
- » Modular components such as modular decking remain as City assets
- » Privately owned parklets will be required to take out a performance bonds upon signing letter agreements which would cover the costs of removal of the Parklet in the event that the host is not able to do so themselves



## REFINE THE PARKLET PROCESS BASED ON STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Since the approval of the official parklet program, internal discussions have informed revised steps in the application process and in turn revisions will be required to the public facing parklet process diagram. Clear communication of the expected timeline and the steps in the application process is imperative for not only the applicant, but the City. It outlines responsibilities and expectations in order to facilitate a clear line of communication. And so, while the current diagram is aesthetically appealing, and aligns with the parklet look and feel, revisions are required to reflect current new processes.

### SUGGESTIONS:

Process Diagram:

» Update process to reflect the steps based on internal discussions and feedback

» Remove additional graphic clutter that makes the diagram hard to read (ie. additional characters, arrow hands, etc.)

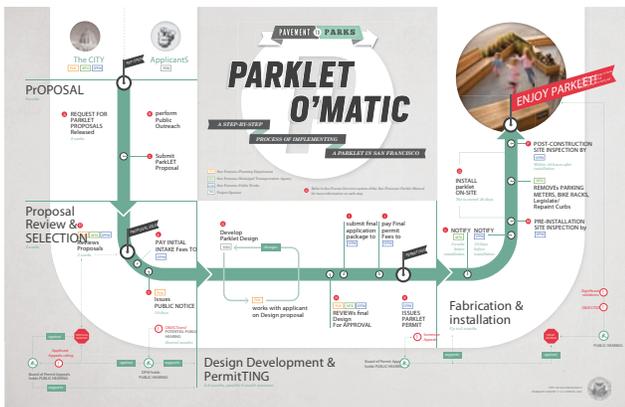
» Move icon legend of responsibilities to the front of the process diagram instead of the end, so applicants understand roles right away.

Timeline Process Diagram:

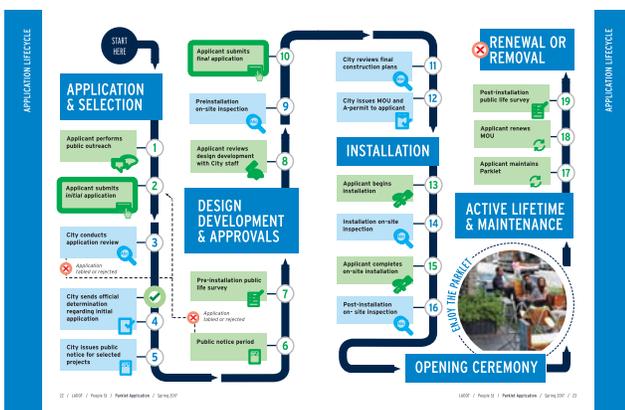
» Update approximate timeline process from 6-8 months to 8-10 month process

» Revise “The Community” to “The Applicant”

» “A Designer” and “A Contractor” involvement path to be revised to indicate involvement after the launch of the parklet. Current process shows continuous arrow.

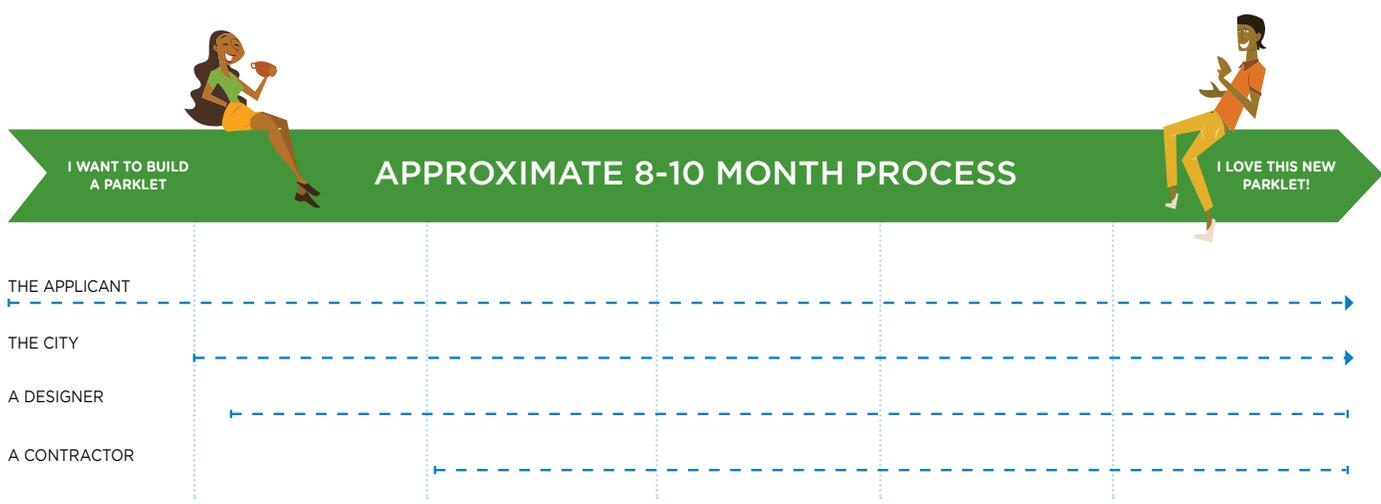
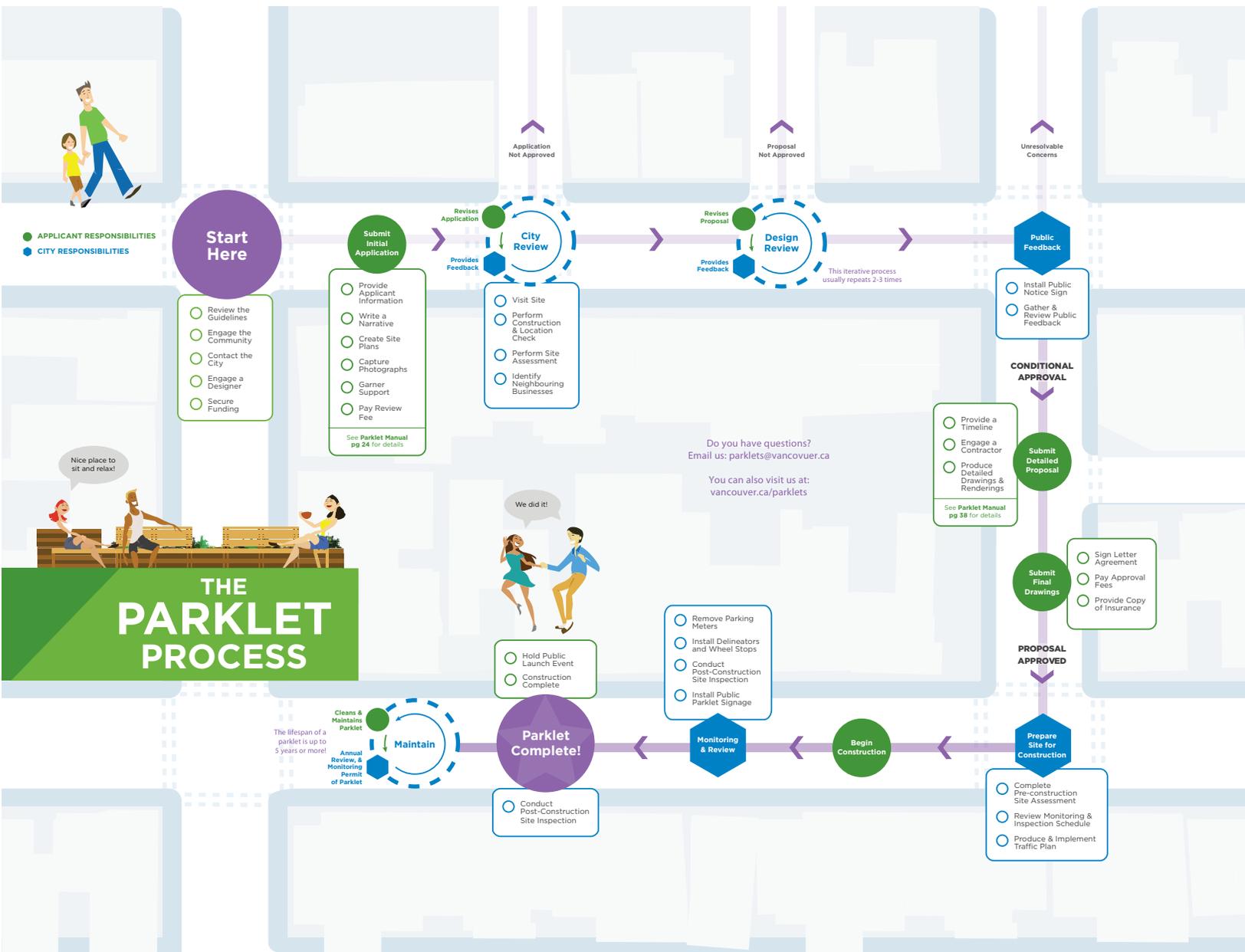


Precedent: San Francisco Parklet Process



Precedent: Los Angeles Parklet Process

Diagram showing a revised parklet process with suggested changes. Author, 2017.



# MOVING FORWARD

Vancouver's Parklet Program is a formidable asset for the City and has great potential for advancing Vancouver's Greenest City Goals. However, parklets and the Vancouver Parklet Program are still recent additions to the public space field and the full potential for innovation, research and direction are still yet to be fully explored.

Due to the limited time frame, and wide research scope of this report many avenues were left unexplored. Below are a list of potential future projects and avenues that could be explored:

## FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

### PRODUCE ANNUAL PROMOTION MATERIAL

Developing and distributing internally and externally material that showcases projects and programs within ViVA.

#### PROPOSED PROJECTS:

- » Annual Program Fact Sheet
- » Social Media Final Wrap Release

#### PRECEDENTS:

- » VIVA Vancouver 2014 Fact Sheet



### HOST A DESIGN COMPETITION

To foster relationships between emerging professionals, local design students, and professional practices, an annual parklet competition would encourage dialogue about public space activations while creating the opportunities for new innovations in parklet design.

#### PROPOSED IDEAS:

- » Partner with local businesses that may want a parklet
- » Host up to 3 parklet locations

#### PRECEDENTS:

- » Edmonton URB PRK annual parklet competition (<https://www.urbprk.com/>)
- » VIVA Vancouver Robson Redux
- » RAIC Parklet Design Competition Nanaimo (<https://www.raic.org/news/raic%E2%80%99s-parklet-design-competition-finalists-display-nanaimo>)

### PROVIDE A KIT OF PARTS DESIGN OPTION

Pre-approved design elements hasten process and installation

#### PROPOSED STEPS:

- » Establish metrics for evaluating the modular decking and railing
- » Request for Proposal
- » Engage a Consultant

#### PRECEDENTS:

- » Los Angeles Kit of Parts
- » City of Phoenix Kit of Parts
- » New York City Standard Design Manual

# CONCLUSION

## DEVELOP A VANCOUVER TYPOLOGY MAP

A map that indicates neighbourhoods that may be ideal for parklets.

### PROPOSED STEPS:

Conduct an analysis on Vancouver context and neighbourhoods to determine viable locations for future parklets. Variables may include areas with lack of public space/green space, high density non-market housing, commercial arterial roadways with non-restricted metred parking, etc.

### PRECEDENTS:

» Opportunity Mapping: San Francisco Parklets and Plazas by Gene Stroman, August 2014.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Establish a monitor and evaluation program through partnership with research collaborations, such as the VPSN. Studies would measure impacts on neighbourhoods track trends over time, evaluate project success, inform future program direction, demonstrate benefits of transformation, and justify large more capital intensive improvements.

### PROPOSED PROJECTS:

» Field reports, before/during/after parklet installations  
» Public Life Study

### PRECEDENTS:

» Los Angeles Project Evaluation Manual  
» San Francisco Parklet Impact Study  
» VIVA Vancouver 2015 Summary Report

The discussion and installation of parklets goes beyond the nuts and bolts of seating and landscaping. This creative open space movement opens the doors for city planners and transportation officials to talk about what streets can do and can be. The hope of this research conducted over the summer not only creates further discussion on how we can activate our streets, but perhaps create a program that fosters growth of parklets and removes some of the existing barriers applicants may be facing. Parklets might have started as outdoor seating near a restaurant, but as the popularity of these micro parks continues to grow, their availability and purpose will evolve to meet future needs.

Cities should fully utilize the best aspects of the parklets—not succumb to the temptation to only use them as quick fixes and business enticements. Even though parklets are part of a tactical urbanism movement, the institutionalized management structures risk contesting moments of creativity and alternative urban practices. The symbolic shift from pavement to park, from grey to green, is embedded in ideas of sustainability and the need for urban nature and ecological functionality. Parklets are powerful symbols for rethinking the street but, when transferring the model to a new local context, the questions of publicness, roles and responsibilities, and functionality of urban nature remain.<sup>16</sup>

As urban populations grow and the need for more public spaces are required, how do you see public space design, such as parklets, evolve in the future to meet growing needs?

“It’s hard to design a space that will not attract people. What is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished.”

- William Whyte



Photo Credit: Pizza Carano (Fraserhood Park, Vancouver)

# REFLECTION

To look back at the last four months and to summarize my experience with the Greenest City Scholar Program, in the simplest terms would be, absolutely rewarding!

The program aligned with my motivations to return to school to complete my graduate studies and provide me with new and invaluable experiences. The GCS program has allowed me to apply my academic, and professional background to develop and design programs that benefit the public in the built environment. As well, the program has allowed me to meet amazing creative and like-minded individuals.

It was very rewarding to work with the City of Vancouver Street Activities Branch and work on the creation of test projects to enliven Vancouver communities and streets. This project has helped me develop my own research skills and highlights the importance of collecting data and not relying entirely on existing theory and subjective opinion to dictate the success of an initiative.

I was surprised to realize how time consuming this type of research is. Despite the 250 hours in the field, in total, I am left with the feeling that this is only, but a brief sample of the larger picture. There are so many additional components to this report that I wish I had the opportunity to further explore, such as monitoring and evaluation, a mobile parklet case study and kit of parts research. My hope is that this report can provide some useful suggestions as to how to reconfigure and refine the parklet program and to ensure the program is meeting the City's larger goals and vision.

What remains to be seen is how the parklet program, with its finite resources and continuous growth, will be able to expand and innovate to meet the growing demands required of our public spaces.



Kathleen Corey, Mentor, (Orange T-shirt, front row) Celia Winters, Scholar (Centre-front row with the hands up) and the other members of the Street Activities Branch celebrating the completion and launch of the Bute and Robson Test Plaza).

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# APPENDICES

# PROPOSED CASE STUDY

During the initial project agreement of the Greenest City Scholar position it was discussed a case study could be done on a mobile parklet design to address barriers such as affordability, community outreach, logistical issues that may arise for a semi-permanent installation.

The mobile parklet project was a way to raise awareness about parklets, potential for testing locations for viability and increase community engagement, while adding a temporary green space to the urban landscape and offer busy pedestrians a place to sit and enjoy. However, due to limited time available the case study was never completed.

It is proposed the student will build upon findings from the Greenest City Scholar report and conduct an independent study on a mobile parklet, while continually working with the City of Vancouver.

## **POSSIBLE PROJECT:**

5896 Fraser St Parklet, John Oliver School has inquired about a possible mobile parklet (See Installation Plan for reference).

## **FRAMEWORK:**

- » Design and build of a mobile parklet
- » Conduct a design jam with potential partners
- » Create guidelines for mobile parklets
- » Research existing precedents and best practices

Bicycle-mobile parklets



Photo Credit: Sasaki, Kit of Parks, Web



Photo Credit: DZine Trip, Web

Retrofitted, mobile vehicle parklet



Photo Credit: Think Intelligent Places, Web



Photo Credit: Interboro, AD-BLOC, Web

Interlocking modular parklet

Retrofitted shipping containers



Photo Credit: Pop-Up City, Montreal, Web



Photo Credit: SFDOT, Mobile Parklet, Web

Repurposed shipping crates



Photo Credit: Sourced from Google



Photo Credit: Sourced from Google

Travelling parklets



Photo Credit: SFDOT, Ocean Ave Parklet



Photo Credit: Sourced from Google



Photo Credit: Author, City of Vancouver Mobile Parklet Ideation Workshop

# IDEATION WORKSHOP

Part of the study explored possibilities on how to expand the program to be more accessible to a wider audience and how to increase community engagement while discovering new ways to build excitement! One idea that emerged are mobile parklets.

In order to generate ideas, an internal ideation workshop was conducted with the Street Activities Branch. With the ideas and discussions gathered from the workshop, ideas will be extrapolated for commonalities in the design and synthesize possible strategies and recommendations for a mobile parklet project and communication engagement tools.

## ACTIVITY: CRAZY EIGHT IDEATION

Is a tool that can be used in workshops to help stimulate ideas quickly in the ideation process. The idea is to generate as many ideas as possible in a short time frame, focusing on quantity of ideas not quality. Many ideas will converge into one idea.

## GOAL:

Collective thinking. What more can we do? What do you think is missing?

- » Help brainstorm and develop possible mobile or modular designs that could be: Easy to transport, Multi-functional, low-cost, and sustainable/reusable.
- » Help brainstorm and develop possible ways to engage and communicate with the public in order to better understand the parklet program and create excitement about pop parks.

## ACTIVITY:

Defer judgement, Encourage Wild, Think Big!

- » In teams of 2-4 people, each group will sketch ideas either around community engagement ideas or mobile parklet design ideas. Depending on the amount of people will depend on how many panels each person will draw.
- » Timer will be set for 8 min. Think, Design, Do, QUICKLY!
- » At the end of 8 min. teams will discuss mobile parklet design ideas and communication ideas they explored.

Images on right are the ideas generated from the teams during the workshop.



FOLD-UP  
POP-UP  
PARKLETTE

DESIGN  
COMP. 2018

travel kit for parklets

**Longevity + phasing**  
 ea., < 1 year  
 1-2 years  
 2-5 years  
 5+ years  
 10+ years  
 ∞ years

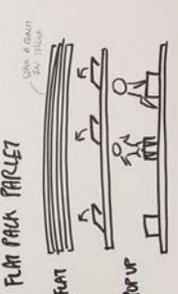


**PROCUREMENT SERVICES**

- FURNITURE - DURABILITY
- delivery → event rentals...
- storage
- landscaping
- painting
- install

**LESSONS LEARNED FROM MARKETING**

**LESSONS LEARNED FROM FOOD TRUCKS.**



**SUSTAINABILITY**

- drainage
- sourcing materials
- weather-proof, long lived
- flexible
- re-usable

play space (playscaping)  
 child-friendly  
**ORGANIC FORM**

technology  
 Lighting  
 exploratory

Access 24/7  
 Year long  
 Weather protection

**PLATFORM**

ORDER - ONLINE

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

**TRANSPORTATION**

- trailer
- delivery / storage
- truck

TRAVEL AROUND THE CITY TO MAKE IT EASIER TO MOVE PARKLETS

POOL TABLE  
 DINNER TABLE

PROGRAM TO EDUCATE ABOUT THE VALUE OF THE SPACE



**BIA sponsored Parklets**

- neighbourhoods
- stewardship

**Competitions**

- marketing/advertise
- social media #vanparklets
- involving schools/students

**Themed Parklets**

- including different cultures
- branding/advertising
- Public Art opportunity
- incorporating board games and little libraries for example

Get STUDENTS involved!

**STORAGE?!**

SHIPPING CONTAINERS!  
 @landfill

Flash Mob!  
 pop-up installations around city

Just use asphalt on platform

pop-up benches/benches & chairs (with chairs & tables) + umbrellas

planters

unit furniture +

**Hidden Wheels/Towable**

- mobile
- removable sides

**Linkable**

- train of Parklets

**Rentable**

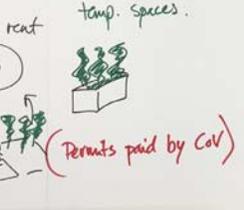
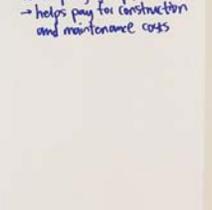
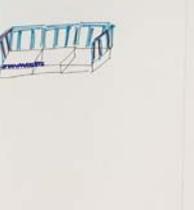
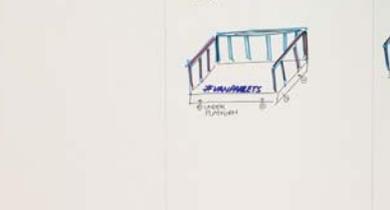
- increases affordability
- to 3rd party groups/businesses
- helps pay for construction and maintenance costs

CITY to build platforms

Move parklets → create more temp. spaces.

Businesses can rent → happy people

Recycled materials for furniture



**SHADE OR WEATHER SEASONAL?**

More resources to respond to applications.

Photo bombs parklets social media.

POSTCARDS FROM "THE EDGE"

Instead of things, people first: who was here before?

**TRIVIA STORIES**

- People who use them
- People who find them + look after them

COV to Donate used materials or Partnerships though developers

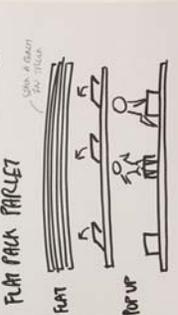


**PROCUREMENT SERVICES**

- FURNITURE - DURABILITY
- delivery → event rentals...
- storage
- landscaping
- painting
- install

**LESSONS LEARNED FROM MARKETING**

**LESSONS LEARNED FROM FOOD TRUCKS.**



Define "mobile" temp + life cycle.

How temp is temp or mobile is stationary?

**FUNDING MODELS**

- CAC?
- DEV.
- BUSINESS.

COOKING DEMONSTRATIONS PERSONALANCES

Design competition for "pop up" or a mobile.

Find businesses who want to participate & do a public call.

Imagine what could be done with this space!

**PLATFORM**

ORDER - ONLINE

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

**TRANSPORTATION**

- trailer
- delivery / storage
- truck

TRAVEL AROUND THE CITY TO MAKE IT EASIER TO MOVE PARKLETS

POOL TABLE  
 DINNER TABLE

PROGRAM TO EDUCATE ABOUT THE VALUE OF THE SPACE



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# STAKEHOLDER AND INPUT

An extensive consultation process took place to get feedback to help inform the final report. This included individual meetings with stakeholder groups, public meetings and events, forums and opportunities for open feedback.

## **WEST END BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION MEETING**

May 10, 2017

Participated in group discussion for the street activities initiative, Pride Place Parklet, to take installed at 1118 to 1124 Davie Street for the Summer of 2017. The parklet will incorporate the prototype modular decking system.

## **STREET ACTIVITIES BRANCH MEETINGS**

Bi-weekly meetings with the Street Activities Branch to discuss ongoing projects and endeavors by the different departments and programs.

## **IDEATION WORKSHOP**

July 4, 2017

Conducted a brainstorming workshop with the Street Activities Branch to think and discuss possibilities on mobile parklets and communication tools.

## **ISCN CONFERENCE**

June 27, 2017

Presented research to the Scholars Ideas Lab, a unique collaboration between the City of Vancouver and UBC Sustainability to global delegates.

## **BUTE AND ROBSON TEST PLAZA**

June 30, 2017

Contributed to the design and build of a temporary plaza at Bute and Robson that will be installed for a three month period to assess the feedback for a possible permanent future plaza.

## **CITY OF VANCOUVER CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY MEETING**

June 23, 2017

## **CAR FREE DAY MAIN STREET**

June 18, 2017

The official launch of Vancouver's first parklet under the official Parklet Program was launched on Car Free Day Main Street. Members of the VIVA Team celebrated the launch by attending Car Free Day.

## **VIVA VANCOUVER APPLICANT MEETINGS**

May - July 2017

Participated in the ongoing discussions between applicants to understand and engage in the application process and review with PumpJack Pub, Los Amigos, Stephos, Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House, Baodown, and Meet on Main.

### **ROBSON STREET PLAZA DESIGN COMPETITION**

July 6, 2017

The City is working with the Province to establish a preferred construction delivery option for the permanent plaza design. We are targeting early 2018 for construction kickoff and in the meantime, we want to create a flexible, functional, and level temporary plaza space at 800 Robson. In late July, we will create a temporary asphalt in fill within the 800 block of Robson, and we want to brighten the asphalt with a painted design.

### **PILOT PATIO PROGRAM MEETING**

May 31, 2017

A roundtable discussion with the VIVA team to discuss working definitions, engineering review update, and ongoing progress of the parklet and streatory pilot programs.

### **PUBLIC SPACE AND STREET USE DIVISION WORKSHOP | CREEKSIDE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

May 29, 2017

PSSU brings together Engineering's branches that coordinate and enable the use of streets, sidewalks and other public spaces including: Film and Special Events, Public Bike Share, Street Activities and Utilities Management. An afternoon workshop with lunch and panel discussion to learn more about other branches and build connections with colleagues.

### **EQUIPMENT SERVICES TOUR | MANITOBA WORKS YARD**

May 11, 2017

A tour of the existing facilities and services of the City of Vancouver's work yard to get a understanding of the capacity of fabrication and storage. Opportunity to see the test modular decking being built that will be utilized at Parklets and Patios in the summer of 2017.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Online Survey Participants

### **VANCOUVER DESIGN NERDS\***

Online Survey Participants

*\*Denotes Interview participants via email, phone, online, or in-person.*

