



Parklet FAQ

San Francisco Pavement to Parks

PAGE 3 – Proposal Evaluation and Selection

- 1 How many applications will you receive in 2013? How are will be selected?
- 2 Initial application proposals are due on April 17, 2013. How long will it take for the City to announce the shortlist of selected proposals?
- 3 Do you review all Initial application proposals as they come in, or all at once?
- 4 Why doesn't the City accept rolling application proposals for parklets?
- 5 Do we need to prove that we have funding when submitting an Initial application proposal?

PAGE 3 – Site Evaluation and Existing Conditions

- 1 We have been approached to design a parklet in a 30 mph zone. Is there any flexibility with the 25mph restriction outlined in the new manual?
- 2 What is the maximum acceptable slope on the sidewalk and street?
- 3 Sidewalk widening is planned for some streets, for example along lower Valencia Street near Cesar Chavez. How does that impact the possibility of parklet installation in those areas?
- 4 Is there a place to view plans for streetscape improvements?
- 5 The Parklet Manual says that parklets must be located away from street corners. Are there ever situations where we can install a parklet near a street corner?
- 6 The business next door is currently vacant. Can our parklet occupy parking spaces in front of adjacent buildings?
- 7 Do you discriminate against proposed sites which are located near parks?
- 8 Is it okay to have two parklets on the same block?
- 9 How do nearby fire hydrants impact the viability of a parklet location?
- 10 Are there picture examples of utility access panels I should look for?
- 11 I have noticed that parklets on the sunnier side of the street get used more. Do you have any restrictions or suggestions for parklet locations based on factors such as sun and wind exposure?
- 12 There are certain neighborhoods in the City where there is resistance to additional parklets. Does this factor into your selection process?

PAGE 6 – Outreach, Permits, and Process

- 1 We started outreach for our parklet last year, but did not ask supporters to list their address or zip codes. Will you still consider this outreach material?
- 2 What if most of our neighbors support the parklet, but one or a few are opposed? If my proposal is selected, how does support and opposition affect my ability to move forward?
- 3 If a permit is granted for my parklet, but appealed by a neighbor or other entity, do I have to pay for the permit appeal?



- 4 Can we test different sites in our neighborhood by moving the parklet from site to site? Do we need to apply for separate permits for each location?
- 5 How difficult is it to move or eliminate yellow or white zones in order to build a parklet?
- 6 How difficult is it to remove parking meters?
- 7 Is an additional "Tables and Chairs (sidewalk dining)" permit required for parklets?
- 8 When do I pay permitting fees?

PAGE 7 – Hosts and Sponsors

- 1 Most parklets are installed by cafe owners and restaurants. What about residents, schools, churches or other groups?
- 2 Who carries liability?
- 3 What are some of the most common complaints you receive about parklets that have already been installed?
- 4 What about people sleeping or squatting in the parklet?

PAGE 8 – Design, Planning and Construction

- 1 Is the Parklet Program coordinating with the Mayor's Office on Disability (MOD)?
- 2 Does the entire parklet need to be ADA accessible?
- 3 Do we need a licensed contractor or builder?
- 4 How long do we have to build the parklet?
- 5 Can we pre-fabricate the parklet offsite before bringing it onsite for installation?
- 6 Can we pour concrete on the roadway to create the parklet surface?
- 7 Can AC paving be removed or penetrated?
- 8 Is there are weight limit to structure and materials?
- 9 We would like to install a bike corral (on-street bike parking) next to our parklet. Are there limitations to the size of the bike corral?
- 10 Are there any restrictions for permanent or temporary heaters, lighting, or other elements requiring electricity and gas?



Proposal Evaluation and Selection

- 1 How many applications will you receive in 2013? How are will be selected?
 - a *In past years, we received about 30 applications. This year, we anticipate significantly more people will apply. We will select as many as we are able to process during this round. In future, we may setup a 'waitlist' or accept proposals on an open or 'rolling' basis, although we will likely review proposals in set increments rather than as they come in.*
- 2 Initial application proposals are due on April 17, 2013. How long will it take for the City to announce the shortlist of selected proposals?
 - a *Depending on how many Initial application proposals are submitted, it may take a month or more for the City to decide which should move forward. We will keep all applicants informed about our progress.*
- 3 Do you review all Initial application proposals as they come in, or all at once?
 - a *The City will wait until after all initial applications are submitted (April 17, 2013) before reviewing and creating a shortlist. We will first review applications for technical considerations, and then look at less technical factors such as the depth of your outreach and the quality of your narrative.*
- 4 Why doesn't the City accept rolling application proposals for parklets?
 - a *The City has established new guidelines for parklet design and operations, and wants to carefully monitor how the next round of parklets complies. We will select as many as we are able to process during this round. In future, we may setup a 'waitlist' or accept proposals on an open or 'rolling' basis.*
- 5 Do we need to prove that we have funding when submitting an Initial application proposal?
 - a *No, proof of funding is not required by the City; however you may submit any material that demonstrates the outreach and planning you have already done. Keep in mind that while it is not required, we encourage all interested applicants to start budgeting and identify funding and in-kind sources as early as possible.*

Site Evaluation and Existing Conditions

- 1 We have been approached to design a parklet in a 30 mph zone. Is there any flexibility with the 25mph restriction outlined in the new manual?
 - a *We welcome all of our parklet applications and encourage you to apply. Parklets proposed on streets with a speed limit of over 25 mph are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, you should be aware that there is a somewhat greater chance that your parklet*



may be determined to be infeasible. If your proposed parklet location is determined to be feasible, the City may ask for additional mitigation measures in your parklet design such as an increased buffer on the traffic-facing edge of your parklet.

- 2 What is the maximum acceptable slope on the sidewalk and street?
 - a *In our experience, we have found that five percent is the maximum allowable street slope. Streets with slopes over five percent make it more difficult to ensure that your design complies with universal accessibility requirements. We are open to considering parklet locations on streets with slopes over five percent but please keep in mind that parklets on streets with a running slope of over 5 percent pose significant design challenges. If your street has a running slope of over 5 percent, you should anticipate a longer and more robust review process, and be aware there is a somewhat greater chance that your parklet will not be issued a permit.*

- 3 Sidewalk widening is planned for some streets, for example along lower Valencia Street near Cesar Chavez. How does that impact the possibility of parklet installation in those areas?
 - a *The City will research and alert you of any future streetscape improvements when reviewing your initial application proposal. If you wish to research this before you apply, see the DPW 5-year Paving Plan Map. <http://www.sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=370>*

Please note that some streetscape improvement may not require your parklet's removal. Others like sidewalk widenings and street repaving projects will necessitate your parklet's removal during the construction. Parklet hosts are required to remove (at their own expense) their parklets during public works projects such as repaving and sidewalk widening. Take these potential extra expenses into account when considering a parklet proposal on your street.

- 4 Is there a place to view plans for streetscape improvements?
 - a *Information related to proposed future capital construction projects is publicly accessible from the DPW website. You can download a .pdf map of San Francisco which shows if our street is scheduled for repaving or other related public works which affect the viability of a parklet at your location. See <http://www.sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=370>.*

- 5 The Parklet Manual says that parklets must be located away from street corners. Are there ever situations where we can install a parklet near a street corner?
 - a *Data shows that traffic accidents most often occur at street corners, which makes installation of parklets within a certain distance of the corner potentially problematic. However in some cases, existing sidewalk bulb-outs and other physical traffic calming features at the corner can allow for closer installation of parklets. These are considered on a case-by-case basis.*



- 6 The business next door is currently vacant. Can our parklet occupy parking spaces in front of adjacent buildings?
 - a *A parklet may occupy parking spaces in front of any building as long as you can document the consent of the fronting property owner(s) and business operator(s).*

- 7 Do you discriminate against proposed sites which are located near parks?
 - a *We do not discriminate against proposed sites which are located near big parks, for example Dolores Park. Parklets serve different needs than big parks; for example relieving sidewalk congestion or providing alternative seating opportunities nearby transit stops.*

- 8 Is it okay to have two parklets on the same block?
 - a *Saturation is something we consider when reviewing Initial application proposals for parklets. In particular, we are trying to encourage parklets in areas where they don't already exist. However we will not reject an Initial application proposal based purely on the location's proximity to other parklets. Make sure to conduct plenty of outreach in your area to understand neighbors' potential concerns about over-saturation.*

- 9 How do nearby fire hydrants impact the viability of a parklet location?
 - a *There are several types of fire hydrants which have different clearance requirements. The minimum distance is typically four to seven feet. Make sure to include photos of nearby fire hydrant(s) in your Initial proposal application. Also make sure to include nearby fire hydrant(s) in your initial site plan.*

- 10 Are there picture examples of utility access panels I should look for?
 - a *The Parklet Manual has photographs of some types of utility access panels. Make sure to include photos of any panels or fixtures at your proposed parklet site so we can help identify if they present limitations to your location or design.*

- 11 I have noticed that parklets on the sunnier side of the street get used more. Do you have any restrictions or suggestions for parklet locations based on factors such as sun and wind exposure?
 - a *The City does not evaluate parklet proposals based on the location's exposure to sun or wind.*

- 12 There are certain neighborhoods in the City where there is resistance to additional parklets. Does this factor into your selection process?
 - a *Full consensus in support of your parklet is not required for your project to move forward. However the quality and robustness of your outreach when is weighed heavily by the City while evaluating your initial parklet application package. Signed letters of*



support are the most effective tool for demonstrating effective outreach and support for your parklet.

A well-documented outreach process will also prove valuable if someone files an objection to your parklet application. If during the public notice period someone files an objection to your parklet application, your project will be scheduled for a public hearing with a DPW hearing officer. The hearing officer will weigh the level of outreach you've done when making a decision as to whether or not your parklet application can continue to move forward through the permit process.

Outreach, Permits, and Process

- 1 We started outreach for our parklet last year, but did not ask supporters to list their address or zip codes. Will you still consider this outreach material?
 - a *Yes! Please submit any materials related to your outreach efforts. However moving forward, we recommend that you record addresses of your supporters to demonstrate that they are actually your neighbors.*

- 2 What if most of our neighbors support the parklet, but one or a few are opposed? If my proposal is selected, how does support and opposition affect my ability to move forward?
 - a *After a proposal is selected the City will issue you a public notice. The public notice is a 10-day window where neighbors can file an objection to your parklet application with DPW. If someone files an objection to your parklet, DPW schedule a public hearing where a DPW hearing officer will weigh testimony from you and your neighbors. In our experience, a robust outreach process documenting community support for your parklet proposal will increase the likelihood that the hearing officer will recommend your parklet proposal moves forward.*

- 3 If a permit is granted for my parklet, but appealed by a neighbor or other entity, do I have to pay for the permit appeal?
 - a *No. The costs for potential appeals are already embedded within the fee you pay for a parklet permit. However, the appeals process may result in additional design revisions; and you would be responsible for the costs of additional design and construction expenses.*

- 4 Can we test different sites in our neighborhood by moving the parklet from site to site? Do we need to apply for separate permits for each location?
 - a *This proposal may be submitted as one package, but you would need to document sufficient outreach and supplemental materials (site photos, initial site plan) for each potential parklet location. Be aware that local factors like curb heights, street grades*



and street crowns can vary considerably from place to place. Thus designing a parklet which can be easily relocated and still maintain compliance with the design standards established in the Accessible Elements for Parklets poses significant design challenges.

- 5 How difficult is it to move or eliminate yellow or white zones in order to build a parklet?
 - a *Moving or eliminating yellow and white zones depends upon the support of your neighboring businesses and residents. Make sure to conduct plenty of outreach before submitting an Initial Application Proposal. Include the location and length of existing colored curbs on the initial site plan. See Parklet Manual 1.0, page __. Please note that removing or moving colored curb zones requires legislative action by the MTA board. This may add several months to your permitting process. If you wish to remove or relocate a colored curb zone, it's important to let the City know early in the process.*

- 6 How difficult is it to remove parking meters?
 - a *If your parklet will occupy paid parking spaces, you are required to document the quantity and identification numbers of the parking meters in your Initial Application Proposal. If your Proposal is selected and your permit granted, the City will remove the parking meters. Keep in mind that you must pay additional fees for every parking meter that is removed. See Parklet Manual 1.0, page 37.*

- 7 Is an additional "Tables and Chairs (sidewalk dining)" permit required for parklets?
 - a *You are not permitted to provide table service at parklets, therefore no additional permit for Tables and Chairs is needed. Tables and Chairs permits enable you to provide table service on the sidewalk directly in front of your business, NOT across the sidewalk in the parklet itself. See Parklet Manual 1.0, pages 32, 46 and 77.*

- 8 When do I pay permitting fees?
 - a *You are not required to pay any fees to apply for a parklet. If your Initial Proposal Application is selected, all permitting fees are due after you have cleared both public notice periods and the City has approved your construction drawings. See Parklet Manual 1.0, page 37.*

Hosts and Sponsors

- 1 Most parklets are installed by cafe owners and restaurants. What about residents, schools, churches or other groups?
 - a *The City is interested in exploring how parklets can be applied in non-commercial locations. We welcome applications from schools museums and other civic land-uses and residences. We will consider any parklet applicant can prove they have capacity to steward, monitor, and maintain the parklet during its lifetime.*



2 Who carries liability?

- a *The business owner/Parklet Host carries insurance for the parklet as part of their existing general liability coverage. See Parklet Manual 1.0 pages 47, 54, 69 and 77.*

Your designer, architect and/or landscape architect is still responsible for ensuring that the design complies with health and human safety requirements outlined in the California Building Code, and universal accessibility requirements outlined in the Accessibility Guidelines for Parklets outlined by the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Disability. See Parklet Manual 1.0, page 57.

3 What are some of the most common complaints you receive about parklets that have already been installed?

- a *A great majority of complaints refer to a lack of maintenance and stewardship of parklets, for example: litter or garbage build-up, graffiti, unattended repairs to wear and tear, or poorly maintained plants.*

Neighbors also complain when restaurants or cafes are seen providing table service at parklets.

4 What about people sleeping or squatting in the parklet?

- a *Successful parklets are well and actively used as intended throughout the entire day; so in our experience, sleeping or squatting usually occurs at night after the neighborhood goes to bed. Mornings are a great time to start some daily maintenance tasks such as sweeping or hosing, and gives you an opportunity to interact politely with any itinerant citizens who are on the parklet at that time.*

In general as the host and steward of a parklet, you need to figure out design or monitoring strategies that discourage certain uses. Look at the design strategies of other parklets that discourage loitering and other activity. Strong engagement with your neighbors also helps to monitor undesirable uses not only in your parklet, but in your neighborhood.

Design, Planning and Construction

1 Is the Parklet Program coordinating with the Mayor's Office on Disability (MOD)?

- a *The MOD helped us create the new Parklet design guidelines that were released in 2013. See Accessibility Elements for Parklets 2012.*

http://sfpavementtoparks.sfplanning.org/docs/SF_P2P_Parklet_Manual_1.0_Accesibility_Elements.pdf



- 2 Does the entire parklet need to be ADA accessible?
 - a *All programs in the parklet must be ADA accessible. Designs must comply with health and human safety requirements outlined in the California Building Code, and universal accessibility requirements outlined in the Accessibility Guidelines for Parklets written by the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Disability. The accessibility guidelines which can be found on the DPW website:
www.sfdpw.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentID=2903*
- 3 Do we need a licensed contractor or builder?
 - a *No, the parklet does not need to be fabricated and installed by a licensed contractor or builder. However the City highly recommends that you work with an experienced builder who can coordinate design, material procurement, site logistics and staging. Most importantly, the parklet must be built according to the construction drawings you submitted to the City for your permit; and the parklet will be inspected by the City to ensure that it conforms to the approved design plans, meets standards for health and human safety, and complies with ADA guidelines established in the Parklet Manual..*
- 4 How long do we have to build the parklet?
 - a *After receiving a parklet permit from DPW, you have 30 days to install it onsite. In our experience, we found that installations which exceed 30 days can generate complaints from neighbors to DPW. This requires DPW to take action, which may result in revocation of your permit.*
- 5 Can we pre-fabricate the parklet offsite before bringing it onsite for installation?
 - a *Pre-fabrication may help onsite installation proceed more quickly and efficiently. However, site conditions vary and every parklet structure is custom-built to exactly fit irregularities in the roadway surface, the curb, and sidewalk surface. If you plan to fabricate your parklet offsite before installing it onsite, make sure you begin with a thorough site survey.*
- 6 Can we pour concrete on the roadway to create the parklet surface?
 - a *The City does allow concrete as a floor material for parklets. Because city sidewalks are typically built out of concrete as well, incorporating a concrete floor in your design can help your parklet feel like a natural extension of the sidewalk. If you choose to include a concrete floor in your parklet design, there are a few factors you should consider to ensure you design is complies with the design parameters established in the Parklet Manual and the DPW Director's Order 180,921 (the City policy which under which the Parklet Program legally exists). These include designing for easy removal and preventing damage to the underlying roadbed.*



Concrete floors in parklets should always include a plastic slip-sheet in the design to ensure that the concrete doesn't bind with the street below. Concrete floors should not incorporate any structural rebar in the design, and should specify a low-weight concrete mix (under 200 lbs / square foot). Avoiding structural rebar in the floor will simplify the demolition process if your parklet needs to be removed. See Parklet Manual 1.0, page 28.

- 7 Can AC paving be removed or penetrated?
 - a *No. The pavement under or near your parklet cannot be removed or penetrated. However, you are allowed to pin your structure to the curb. See Parklet Manual, page 28.*

- 8 Is there are weight limit to structure and materials?
 - a *DPW Director's Order 180,921 (the City policy which under which the Parklet Program legally exists) limits parklet materials to 200 lbs per square foot. The logic behind this policy is that the parklet structure must be light enough to facilitate easy removal and relocation if necessary, and also to prevent damage to sensitive sub-surface utilities. We will review your proposed parklet design and materials to ensure that it meets these criteria.*

- 9 We would like to install a bike corral (on-street bike parking) next to our parklet. Are there limitations to the size of the bike corral?
 - a *On-street bike parking (bike corrals) must have at least 15' (fifteen feet) clearance next to the parklet. These 15' bike corrals are funded, installed, and maintained by MTA through a separate application and permitting process. However, you may integrate bike facilities into the design of the parklet structure itself, which would be reviewed and approved as part of the parklet permit.*

City-installed bike corrals require legislative approval by the MTA Board. This process can take several months. If you choose to incorporate an MTA bike corral into your parklet design, you should notify us early in the process.

- 10 Are there any restrictions for permanent or temporary heaters, lighting, or other elements requiring electricity and gas?
 - a *Fixtures requiring electricity and gas will be considered on a case-by-case basis. While we encourage innovation in parklet design and program, understand that connecting your parklet with electric and gas utilities adds extra time, additional permits and fees that could greatly prolong your design and review period. If you choose to draw power from an adjacent building, you will need to get a separate permit from the Department of Building Inspection.*