



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 02/05/2019

ITEM NO: 11

DATE: JANUARY 31, 2019
TO: MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL
FROM: LAUREL PREVETTI, TOWN MANAGER
SUBJECT: APPROVE A DOWNTOWN PARKLET PILOT PROGRAM AS RECOMMENDED
BY THE COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve a downtown parklet pilot program as recommended by the Council Policy Committee (Attachment 1).

BACKGROUND:

In recent months, property owners and businesses have been inquiring about adding parklets in front of their locations to attract business and offer customers an outdoor dining experience where sidewalks may not be wide enough to support outdoor furniture. Most commonly, a parklet is defined as a small seating area or green space created as a public amenity on or alongside a sidewalk, especially in a former roadside parking space. Many cities have found that parklets add vibrancy to a business area by activating new public spaces along sidewalks, including bigger cities such as Seattle, San Francisco, and San Jose and smaller communities such as Eureka, San Leandro, and West Hollywood. Parklets could be an attractive addition to Los Gatos' existing downtown. Parklets are typically designed to be temporary in nature given the location in the public right of way.

Town staff has received two proposals for parklets along Main Street. Staff informed the interested property owners that they could submit proposals for review and approval as a pilot program if the property owners provided a professionally designed plan and covered the costs for the construction and maintenance of the parklet. After the initial review of both submittals,

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Parks and Public Works Director

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, Finance Director, Community Development Director, and Economic Vitality Manager

BACKGROUND (continued):

several policy questions arose for which staff sought the Policy Committee's direction. The Policy Committee reviewed the concept over several meetings in late 2018, heard public testimony regarding the concept, and ultimately recommended referral to the full Town Council for approval.

DISCUSSION:

During the Policy Committee review, several topics garnered conversation as a pilot program framework developed. These have been addressed in the attached Quick Reference and Guidelines document (Attachment 1) with the more significant topics explained here.

Funding – The Policy Committee explored the opportunity for the Town to fund some or all of an installation in comparison with relying on private funding. Staff presented that private companies often have the ability to achieve more affordable construction costs and shorter timelines. In addition, the desire for the permittee to benefit economically from the installation (e.g., additional seats for a restaurant) swung the recommendation towards allowing the program to be funded privately through a permit process.

Allowable Use – The Policy Committee discussed the use of a parklet, especially in the case of a restaurant. The discussion focused on space dedicated to the permittee versus open to the public for general use. The recommendation allows for the space to be open to the public at all times due to the land being public right of way, with up to 85% of the space committed to dedicated use by the permittee. The draft program also encourages fixed or permanent seating available for public use outside of the permittees normal hours.

Timeline – The proposal is for a two-year pilot. This timeline will allow the permittee to maximize the return on their investment for the infrastructure.

Location – The pilot program has focused on Main Street between Santa Cruz Avenue and Villa Avenue. The pilot does not incorporate North Santa Cruz Avenue due to the planned one-way street pilot but could be expanded if the Council provides that direction. In addition, the one-way street pilot will provide the opportunity to program parking spaces in a less structured way given its more limited duration.

Permitting – The pilot program has been limited to two locations and applicants will be evaluated based on the proposed criteria in Attachment 1. The limited scale of the program allows for testing of the concept within current available staff capacity while minimizing impacts on parking.

PAGE 3 OF 3

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DISCUSSION (continued):

Design – The proposed program includes parklets up to three parking spaces in length and allows for Town staff to review the design to ensure a high quality durable product. In addition, Town staff will be careful to ensure that appropriate safety elements are included to protect users from adjacent vehicles.

Outreach – Each application will require documentation demonstrating support from adjacent businesses.

Beginning in July, the Town will implement a one-way pilot program on North Santa Cruz Avenue as directed by the Town Council on January 15, 2018. This vision for this project also includes parklets, however given the limited four-month timeframe and the expense with building parklets, the implementation would be much more limited in scope. Staff will work with interested businesses to make space available and accessible separately through the North Santa Cruz program.

CONCLUSION:

The review by the Policy Committee, establishment of a pilot program, and the direct outreach and coordination with interested parties have helped to create a program that is responsive to business needs and provides for streamlined implementation. Staff recommends approval of a downtown parklet pilot program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact from this action.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.

Attachment:

1. Draft Parklet Pilot Program Quick Reference