



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: May 25, 2016
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Meeting Date: June 1, 2016

TO: Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities
FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services
SUBJECT: Enlivening Streets and Supporting Businesses with Parklets, Patios and Craft Carts

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve a regular ongoing program for Parklets.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to pilot expanded opportunities for patios including “streateries”, explore options for improved weather protected patios, and report back to Council on findings.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to pilot a Craft Cart Program in 2017 and report back on the results of the pilot.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides updates on two 2013-2015 pilots: the Parklet Pilot Program and the Extended Hours Patio Pilot. Both pilots have been successful and it is recommended that the City launch an ongoing Parklet Program and that the Extended Hours Patio Pilot be tested for a third summer season, with a final recommendation presented to Council as part of the Comprehensive Liquor Strategy .This report also identifies additional ways to enliven Vancouver’s streets and support businesses, which include expanding options for separated sidewalk patios, encouraging the use of patios throughout all seasons, and piloting mobile Craft Carts within the framework of the City’s Street Vending Program.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- On June 24, 2015 Council approved a motion for staff to identify opportunities to enable patio size increases, which includes expanding the creative use of sidewalks, streets, and other public or under-utilized spaces.
- On October 29, 2014, Council approved Phase 1 of the Healthy City Strategy which includes a commitment to increase community engagement.
- On November 20, 2013, Council approved the West End Community Plan, which recommends creating new plazas and parklets in the community to support public gathering and enhance existing gathering spaces.
- On October 31, 2012 Council approved the Transportation 2040 Plan, which includes recommendations to enable and encourage the creative use of streets and to create public plazas and gathering spaces throughout the city. The Plan includes a call to implement a permit-based Parklet program to transform on-street parking to places for people to sit, relax, and enjoy the city.

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of aforementioned recommendations.

REPORT

Background/Context

Experimentation with new public and private seating configurations can infuse the public realm with fresh energy. Vibrant and lively streets, in turn, support businesses and help strengthen a community's sense of place. Vancouver, along with other municipalities like Seattle and San Francisco, continues testing new approaches to activating the public realm, introducing parklets and experimenting with patio placements and hours. Ongoing refinement of our existing programs and the introduction of new ones through pilot projects are essential to improving service levels and improving the public realm experience for residents and visitors alike.

Strategic Analysis

Parklets

Vancouver's first three parklets were built between 2011 and 2012 as standalone projects through the VIVA Vancouver program. Once the parklets were introduced, interest from the business community began to grow; and so, in 2013, the Parklet Pilot Program was launched. The purpose of the pilot was to determine the feasibility of an ongoing parklet program. Applicants were responsible for the costs associated with the parklet, demonstrating community support and for maintaining the parklet on a day-to-day basis. A total of ten applications were received during the pilot. Of those, three new parklets have been constructed to create a total of six parklets on Vancouver's streets; another five applications are currently in the design review stage (see Appendix A for details on Vancouver's parklets).

Feedback from surveyed businesses and members of the public in 2015 indicates that parklets are strongly supported and benefit pedestrians, businesses, and the community (see Appendix F for a summary of monitoring results). As well, all parklet applications received through the pilot have had support from Business Improvement Associations (BIAs), where applicable, and interest in parklets has come from several neighbourhoods across the city, such as Kitsilano and Commercial Drive. Staff are recommending that a regular, ongoing Parklet Program be approved and administered by the Street Activities Branch within Engineering Services to continue permitting more parklets in Vancouver. The regular program would introduce a new easy-to-use parklet 'How To' manual and create new opportunities to promote parklets in Vancouver.

Sidewalk Patios

Patios on city streets enliven sidewalks, support public life and benefit businesses. They are approved by the Sidewalk Patio Program which is administered by the Street Activities Branch in Engineering Services. The program is continually growing: there are currently over 550 approved patios, over 300 of these are licensed patios. Staff work with a range of stakeholders to improve the program and engage in new trials, such as testing separated patios, extended patio hours and Patio Day.

Update: Extended Hours Patio Pilot

In 2013, City staff partnered with the Province to initiate a pilot to extend sidewalk patio hours beyond 11pm. The City regulates sidewalk patio hours while the Province is responsible for issuing liquor licenses. Businesses in good standing with the City's Sidewalk Patio Program were eligible to apply to stay open beyond 11pm during the summer term (April to October). These businesses were notified that, as a condition of their extended hours, any noise complaints that were not promptly addressed would result in the City revoking their approval for extended hours. Staff continued the pilot through 2014 and 2015.

Feedback from businesses has been overwhelmingly positive since 2013 (see Appendix B for details of the pilot). As well, the number of complaints received over the course of the pilot remains low relative to the number of total participants. The 2016 pilot will test the patio hour extension for a third summer season. To simplify this summer's pilot, the City will permit a qualifying licensed patio to remain open as late as the hour indicated on its BC liquor license up to a maximum of 1am. Prompt attention to any noise complaints would remain a condition of the extended hours patio permit.

Upon completion of this year's pilot, staff will evaluate its effectiveness, and based on the findings, will recommend whether Council should approve the hours extension on a permanent basis. This would be brought forward as part of the comprehensive Liquor Strategy work, which is currently under development.

Update: Patio Day Pilot

Council asked staff to pilot the idea of "Patio Day" in the summer of 2015. Establishments otherwise not involved in the City's Patio Program came forward to participate, demonstrating creativity and interest from the business community. The pilot process involved expediting a significant number of patio applications for a single day event. While observations and feedback about the day were generally positive

(see Appendix D for details) staff believe that the greatest gains from the pilot were the strengthened working relationship with regulatory bodies, including the Provincial Liquor Licensing Branch. Building on this strengthened relationship by way of other pilots, like the extended hours pilot, would be of greater long term benefit to the community over organizing another single day event.

Update: Improved Weather Protection for Sidewalk Patios

To increase weather protection on patios, businesses may currently apply to Development Services to install awnings or canopies which extend from the building face over the patio. While businesses are also allowed to hang retractable covers from the two ends of the awning or canopy during the winter term only (November to March), there is a need for increased clarity for applicants on what is currently allowable.

Staff believe there are further opportunities to create weather protection beyond awnings and temporary retractable side protection and to clarify the process to applicants. Increasing allowable weather protection would encourage greater use of the patio during inclement weather and businesses are in strong support of this. Because additional protection can sometimes impact access/egress and cause other safety issues, staff will undertake an extensive review of weather protection options that meet fire and building code regulations.

New: Extending Patios into Parking Spaces

Several Cities have programs that permit businesses to place patios into parking lanes. Such a program in Vancouver would provide further opportunities for businesses to create vibrant spaces on the street while supporting their business at the same time. This potentially increases the space for pedestrians on the sidewalk and is especially beneficial for businesses that operate next to narrow sidewalks where traditional sidewalk patios would not be feasible (see Appendix C for illustrations of patio placement options).

Staff believe there is value in piloting patios in parking spaces in Vancouver. One model, which is used in Seattle for its Streatery Program, allows businesses to have exclusive use of the patio during certain hours, outside of which the space would be open to the public. Staff are interested in exploring this model as it allows the City to creatively support businesses without impacting other sidewalk users. Staff propose a three-year pilot that would follow guidelines established under the Parklet Pilot Program and Sidewalk Patio Program. With existing staff capacity, it is proposed that a limit of ten patios be approved in each of the three pilot years for a total of up to 30 such patios. Staff will report back to Council with recommendations at the end of the pilot.

Craft Carts

The City has engaged with the Craft Council of BC on an initiative to pilot up to 10 mobile vending craft carts on the streets of Vancouver. The initiative is supported by the City's Arts and Culture Policy Council. The City looks forward to partnering with the Craft Council of BC over the coming winter season to develop the pilot's

parameters in time for a spring 2017 launch. The Craft Cart Pilot Program is expected to be a multi-year endeavour with multiple locations. It should be noted that the Craft Cart initiative is an additional initiative, different in scope and focus, to the mobile vending initiative currently being explored for the Downtown Eastside by Social Policy and Carnegie Community Centre.

Implications/Related Issues/Risk (if applicable)

Financial

To support the installation of parklets, which are public spaces, applicants are not charged lost parking meter revenue. The displaced parking demand created by parklets can generally be accommodated by existing on-street parking in the area which can include other metered parking spaces. As such, the overall impact of parklets on city-wide parking revenue is small.

Some cost recovery for both the Parklet Program and pilot for patios in parking spaces will be recovered through application and approval fees. Fees for the Parklet Program are listed in Appendix E. Fees for the pilot for patios in parking spaces have yet to be determined.

Legal

A letter agreement will be required for any privately-owned structures to be placed on a City street. These agreements specify the terms and conditions, including ongoing maintenance responsibilities and insurance requirements.

CONCLUSION

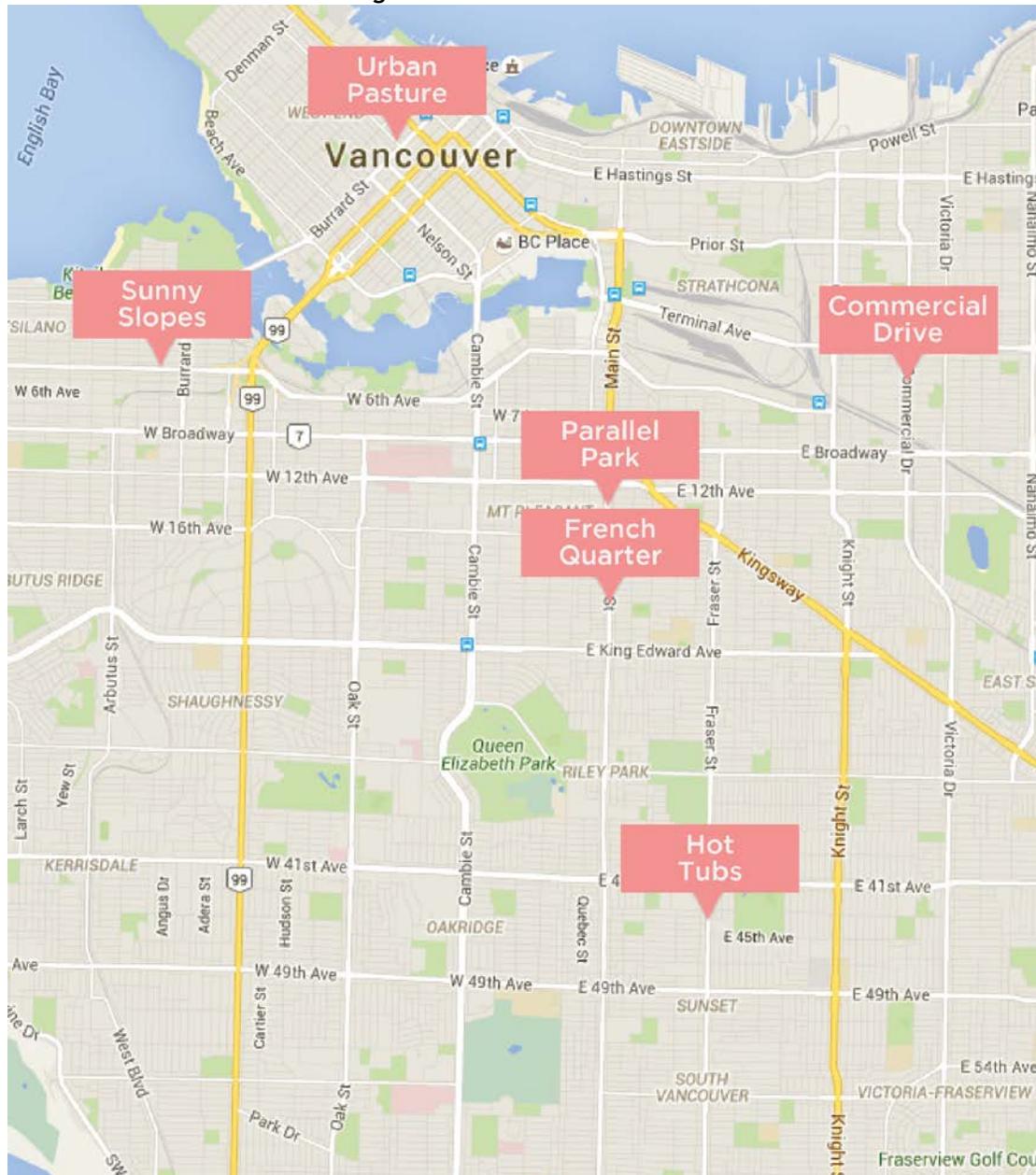
Parklets, patios, and craft carts are important tools to support businesses and encourage people to activate and enliven city streets. They allow for greater interactions between people on the street and can create a more active and inviting atmosphere. The recommendations in this report provide businesses with opportunities to make better use of sidewalk patios throughout all seasons and during peak summer hours when the weather is best. Information gathered to date has shown strong support for a regular ongoing Parklet Program and a pilot that would allow for patios in parking spaces in addition to sidewalks. These initiatives are intended to encourage a vibrant “patio culture” in Vancouver, create welcoming public spaces on the street and help achieve many of the City’s goals.

* * * * *

Completed Parklets in Vancouver

Vancouver's first parklet was constructed in 2011 in Mount Pleasant and came to VIVA Vancouver as a standalone project in response to a call for project proposals. Two more parklets subsequently followed in 2012 in response to an Request for Expressions of Interest for seasonal public spaces: one in the South Hill neighbourhood and one in the downtown. In 2013, the Parklet Pilot Program was initiated and three more parklets have since been installed for a total of six parklets.

Location of Vancouver's Existing Parklets



SUNNY SLOPES

Description: Lots of seating and plants on a sloped street. This two level parklet makes for twice the fun.

Year completed: 2015 (Pilot Program)

Location: West 4th Av (near Cypress St)

Sponsoring business: Rain or Shine
Homemade Ice Cream



COMMERCIAL DRIVE

Description: Steel and wood tables and benches. Have a break and experience the dynamic Drive.

Year completed: 2014 (Pilot Program)

Location: Commercial Dr (at East 4th Av)

Sponsoring business: Prado Café



FRENCH QUARTER

Description: Angular benches and multi-level planters. An inviting gathering place near the independent boutiques of Main St.

Year completed: 2014 (Pilot Program)

Location: East 21st Av (at Main St)

Sponsoring business: Chocolaterie De La Nouvelle France



URBAN PASTURE

Description: Long curving benches, beautiful wood decking, and lots of landscaping. A great place to sit and people-watch the throngs of Robson Street shoppers.

Year completed: 2012

Location: Robson St (near Burrard St)

Sponsoring business: Café Crepe



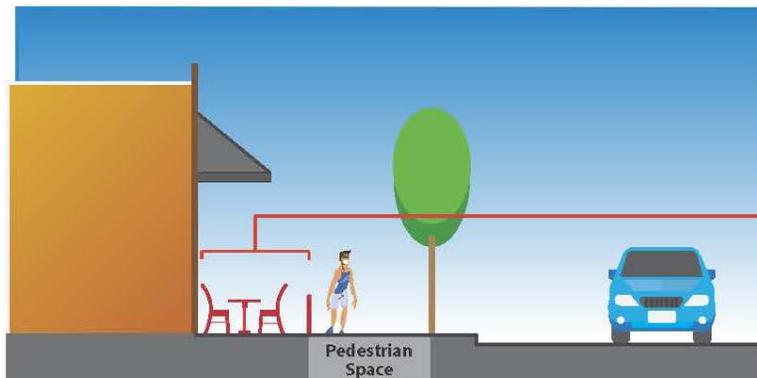
Extended Hours Patio Pilot Summary

Since 2013, the City, in partnership with the Province, has enabled eligible businesses to apply for extended patio hours for the summer term (April to October). The following is a table of applications received and approvals granted for patios on City property for the extended hours patio pilot:

YEAR	EXTENDED HOURS	NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	NUMBER OF APPROVALS
2013*	12am	37	35
2014	12am	100	100
2015	1am	69	67

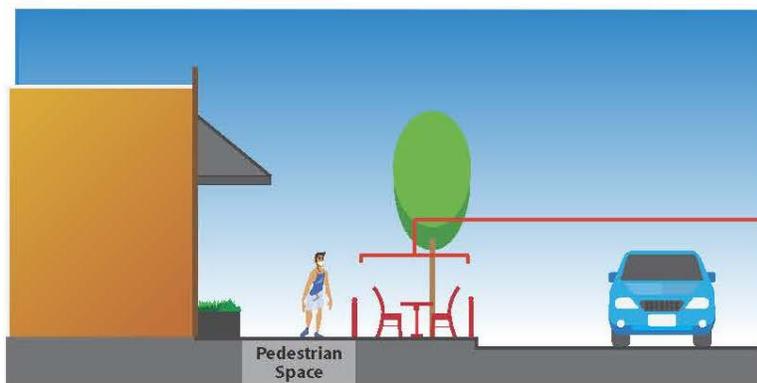
**In 2013, the pilot was in place from August to October only.*

Parklet and Patio Placement Diagrams



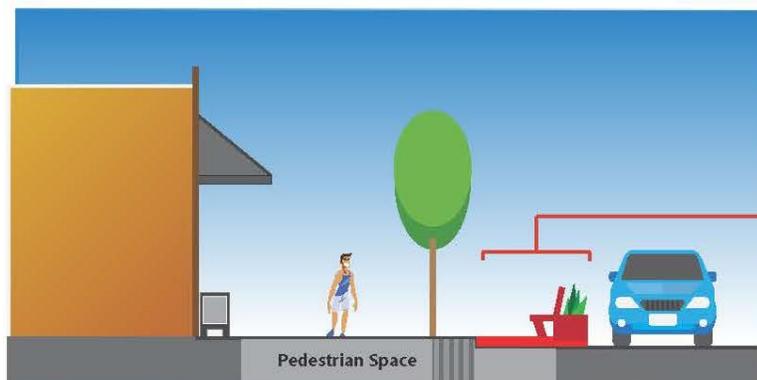
SIDEWALK PATIO

- located on the sidewalk
- adjacent to the storefront
- owned by the business
- exclusive use for the business
- railing optional under certain conditions



SEPARATED PATIO

- located on the sidewalk
- adjacent to the curb
- owned by the business
- exclusive use for the business
- railing optional under certain conditions



PARKLET

- located in the parking lane
- extends the sidewalk and creates more pedestrian space
- owned by the City
- publicly accessible
- maintained by the sponsoring business
- may include seating, tables, landscaping, and other features



PATIO IN PARKING SPACE

- located in the parking lane
- may use a portion of the sidewalk
- owned by the business
- exclusive use for the business at certain times and may be publicly accessible at other certain times
- maintained by the business
- may include seating, tables, landscaping, and other features
- railing optional under certain conditions

Patio Day 2015 Summary

Last summer, City staff engaged with multiple stakeholders including the Province to enable a “Patio Day”, which was a one-day allowance for businesses without a patio to place temporary patios on sidewalks and in parking spaces.

YEAR	NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	NUMBER OF PERMITS APPROVED
2015	23	19

Observations

- Businesses were very creative with their use of the space and enlivened the sidewalk and neighbourhood (using the space to promote themselves with giveaways and activities).
- Businesses used the space to put out structures that are not generally permitted (e.g. tents and barbecues).
- Businesses used the space for activities that are not generally permitted on patios (e.g. live music, cooking on the street and street hockey).

Feedback Received

- Patios helped to bring in more customers.
- Interest received in applying for a small patio permit or parklet.
- Patrons do not want to sit on a patio that does not allow alcohol service.
- Obtaining patio furniture on short notice was difficult.

Other Comments

- Received one complaint asking if parking spaces could be used by a restaurant
- 2 businesses withdrew application when told they cannot serve alcohol
- 1 business withdrew application when City staff requested signatures of neighbours.
- 1 business withdrew when clarification was provided that Patio Day guidelines did not permit merchandise displays.

Proposed Fees

Parklet Program

Application Fee	\$204
Approval Fee: Program Cost Recovery	\$1,000
Approval Fee: Site Inspections	\$200
Parking Meter Removal Fee (per parking meter removed)	\$125
Annual Renewal Fee	\$500

Monitoring Summary Report of Parklet Pilot Program



PARKLET PILOT PROGRAM
Monitoring Summary Report | Summer 2015



SUMMARY

Parklet Pilot Program

Vancouver's first three parklets were constructed between 2011 and 2012. Each came to the City of Vancouver as separate, standalone proposals and helped to show support and interest for having more of these spaces in the city. As a result, the City of Vancouver's VIVA Vancouver program, which looks at opportunities to transform streets into more vibrant pedestrian spaces, launched the Parklet Pilot Program in 2013. 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, and other applicants in Vancouver were eligible to apply for parklets under the pilot. Applicants covered the costs of designing and installing the parklets and were responsible for showing community support and maintaining parklets on a day-to-day basis. Under the pilot, three more parklets were built for a total of six.

How are we doing?

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 appear 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.



PARKLETS

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 pedestrians, local businesses, and the surrounding community including:

1. Contributing to a more vibrant and pleasant walking environment by extending the sidewalk for pedestrians and creating a space where people can animate the street;
2. Attracting foot traffic and potential customers to nearby businesses by adding public seating and unique spaces on the street; and
3. Fostering a greater sense of community by creating welcoming spaces that allow for people to gather and interact with one another.

Collecting Data at Vancouver's Six Parklets

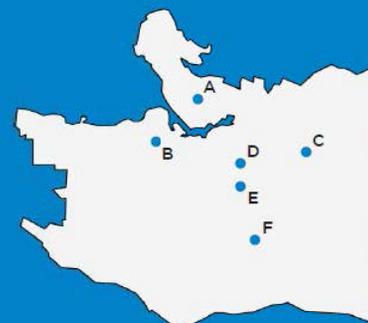
Data and feedback from the public and businesses were collected towards the end of the pilot on several weekdays over the period of June to August 2015. Several data collection methods were used:

- *Behavioural Mapping and Duration of Stay Tracking* involved visiting each parklet to see how long people were staying and what activities people were engaged in at the parklet. Each parklet was visited once in the morning to noon period and once in the afternoon to early evening period.
- *Surveys* sought input from the public and businesses on their perspectives on the parklet. 120 intercept surveys were completed by people at parklets or passing by. 133 business surveys were completed by businesses located within approximately 1-2 blocks of a parklet.
- *Site Cleanliness* assessed each parklet based on how clean the space appeared and its overall upkeep. Each parklet was assessed twice during the data collection period.



VANCOUVER'S PARKLETS

- A. Urban Pasture**
Robson St near Burrard St
opened 2012
- B. Sunny Slopes**
W 4th Av near Cypress St
opened 2015
- C. Commercial Drive**
Commercial Dr near E 4th Av
opened 2014
- D. Parallel Park**
E 14th Av near Main St
opened 2011
- E. French Quarter**
E 21st Av near Main St
opened 2014
- F. Hot Tubs**
E 44th Av near Fraser St
opened 2012



WALKING

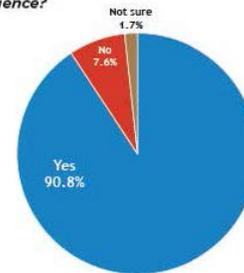
Objectives: Create a vibrant and fun walking environment and a space that is comfortable and aesthetically pleasing

Results: Parklets add vibrancy to people's walking environment. They are spaces where people can animate the street and are seen as comfortable and aesthetically pleasant spaces.

Survey responses from the public indicate that parklets are helping to make streets more vibrant and fun to walk on. The most popular reason is that parklets are community/social spaces where people can find their friends and other members of the community to sit down and chat with.

People also see parklets as generally comfortable and aesthetically pleasing spaces with many saying they were either very or somewhat satisfied with these qualities. This finding is consistent with observations that showed parklets were generally clean and graffiti-free. In fact, there was only one instance of a small graffiti tag and one instance of a minor maintenance issue (a loose board) observed. This also speaks to the importance of having businesses and community members who actively care for the space.

Q. Do you feel that the parklet contributes to a vibrant and fun walking experience?



Top Five Reasons Parklets Contribute to a Vibrant and Fun Walking Experience



LOCAL BUSINESSES

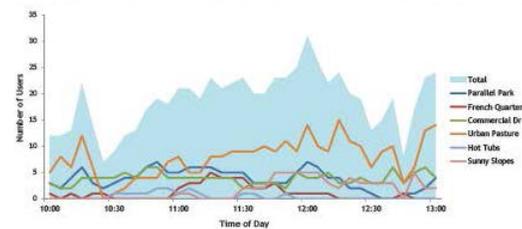
Objectives: Attract people to use the space and support the sales and operations of local businesses

Results: People are using parklets throughout the day with a mix of both patrons and non-patrons of the sponsoring business. Overall, 88.4% of businesses surveyed are supportive or neutral to having the parklet in their neighbourhood.

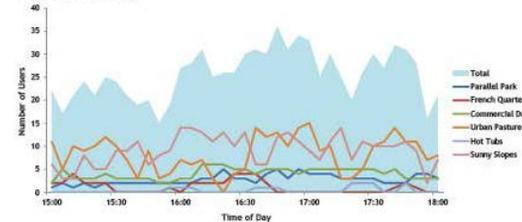
People were observed using parklets throughout the day. There were steady numbers of people using the spaces with slightly more people later in the day. As a combined average at the six parklets, there was also a mix of people who were not patrons of the business directly in front of the parklet (52.3%). This finding suggests that there are benefits that extend beyond just the sponsoring business.

While a majority of businesses (72.0%) indicated that the parklet has had no noticeable impact on their sales, quite a few (13.6%) experienced a positive impact on their sales compared to those who experienced a negative impact (3.0%). Also, it appears the impact of the parklet to the operations of businesses have been minimal (6.2% of businesses indicated an impact). The most common impact was a loss of parking but there was one instance of a business adjusting their hours to accommodate more customers.

Total Number of Users at Any One Time (Morning to Noon Period)



Total Number of Users at Any One Time (Afternoon to Early Evening Period)



COMMUNITY

Objectives: Enhance social connectedness and create a space where people can linger, socialize and engage in a variety of activities

Results: The most common activity people engage in at parklets is socializing with one another. Many people also spend time lingering in the space.

Most people (91.7%) said they like that the parking space was transformed into a place for people to sit, relax and enjoy the city. As well, many businesses (64.4%) said the parklet has made their neighbourhood better compared to those who said it has made it worse (6.8%). These numbers suggest parklets are leaving an overall positive mark on neighbourhoods.

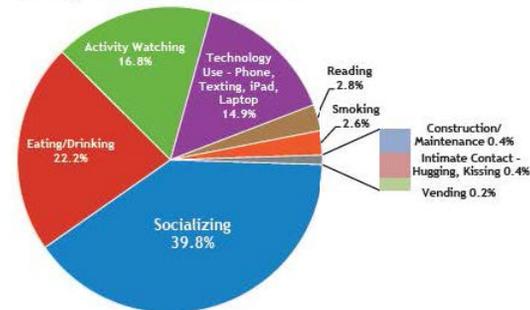
When people and businesses were asked about their thoughts on parklets, the theme of parklets fostering a sense of community and providing a nice space to socialize ranked consistently as one of the top reasons.

Observations made at parklets supports this by showing that parklets are used by people to engage in a wide variety of activities with one of the most popular being socializing with others (39.8% were seen socializing as their primary activity). This is consistent with observations that many people (64.6%) were spending time in parklets with at least one other person.

Word Cloud of Comments Supporting Parklets (the larger the word, the more times it was mentioned)



Primary Activities of People in Parklets



LESSONS AND LOOKING FORWARD

Overall, data and feedback from the public and businesses indicate that parklets are being well-used and are successful in creating benefits for pedestrians, local businesses, and the surrounding community. These results suggest that there are opportunities to have more parklets in the city.

Parklets as Public Space

Parklets remain a relatively new type of public space in Vancouver. Intercept surveys indicate that 37.8% of respondents were not aware that parklets are public, no purchase-necessary spaces (although, they were delighted to learn that as part of the survey). As a result, there are opportunities for more work to be done to make people aware that parklets can be used by anyone without needing to make a purchase from a business.

Other improvements

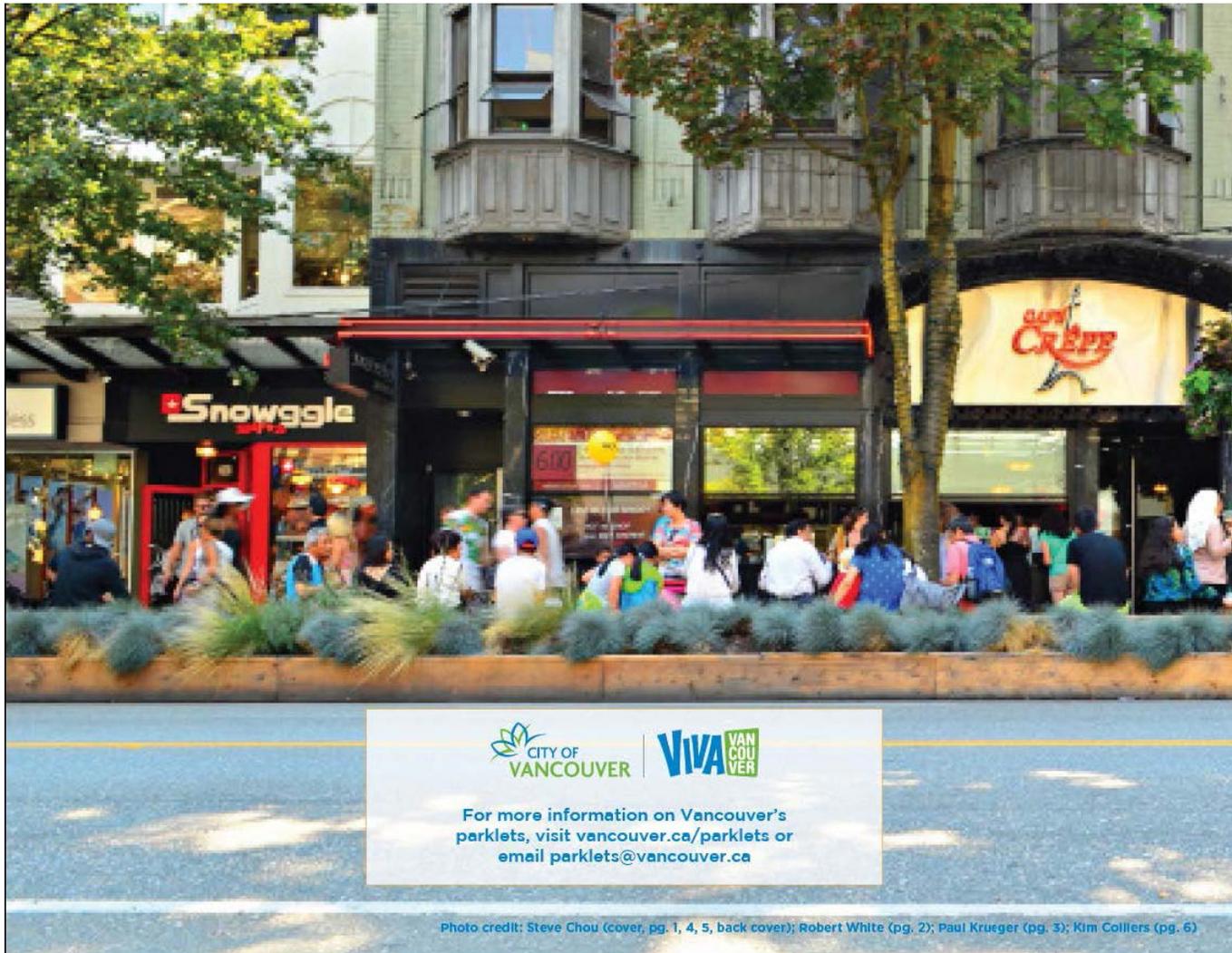
Some of the more frequently mentioned suggestions for improving parklets include adding more seating, improved exposure to traffic and adding rain covering. As well, more attention to cleaning and the upkeep of parklets could be made. The most frequently mentioned suggestion was adding more parklets in Vancouver, which suggests parklets have a promising future as a relatively quick and low cost method for creating successful public spaces in the city.

Q. Are you aware that this parklet is public?
(Open 24 hours a day, anyone can use it and no purchase of any kind is necessary to use this seating area)



Suggestions Made by Intercept Survey Respondents





For more information on Vancouver's
parklets, visit vancouver.ca/parklets or
email parklets@vancouver.ca

Photo credit: Steve Chou (cover, pg. 1, 4, 5, back cover); Robert White (pg. 2); Paul Krueger (pg. 3); Kim Collfers (pg. 6)