

City of Palo Alto
Parklet Encroachment Permit
Parklet Standards & Requirements
Temporary Program
(Last Updated May 19, 2023)

On March 27, 2023, Palo Alto City Council rescinded their earlier requirement of a Letter of Consent from neighboring property and business owners and stated all existing parklets can retain their existing structures in front of adjacent buildings until permanent parklet guidelines are adopted and go into effect. The following temporary guidelines has been revised to reflect the changes. **Any parklet permitted, built or retrofitted after May 19, 2023 must adhere to these guidelines.**

Overall Information for Temporary Parklet Program

- **What is a Parklet?** A parklet is a seating area constructed in one or more public, on-street parking spaces.
- **Eligible Parklet Applicant:** A properly entitled and operating eating and drinking establishment, including retail food establishments such as cafes, ice cream parlors, etc., is eligible to apply for an Encroachment Permit (Permit) to construct a parklet in public parking spaces on public streets owned and maintained by the City of Palo Alto.
- **Eligible Parklet Area:** An eligible applicant can propose to construct a parklet in parallel or angle parking space(s) that are within the frontage of the eating establishment.
 - The City has discretion to determine the allowable density of parklets in a given area. Every eligible area may not be approved for a parklet. The City will balance the needs of an applicant, neighboring establishments, parking and traffic considerations, among other public needs.
- **Permitting:** Any applicant seeking to install a parklet in a public parking space in the City of Palo Alto must apply for and receive a valid Encroachment Permit before beginning construction of the parklet. The permit application will be reviewed by the Department of Public Works and other relevant City departments, prior to approval.
 - The Department of Public Works shall be an applicant's primary point of contact.
 - Construction of a parklet **cannot** begin until a permit application has been approved and the permit issued to the applicant. If work begins prior to approved application, the parklet materials will be removed and the applicant will be fined.
 - Prior to serving patrons and otherwise operating the parklet, the parklet must be inspected by the Department of Publics Works and approved for use.
 - An eligible establishment with a valid Encroachment Permit may construct and operate a parklet subject to the standards and requirements contained in this document, applicable sections of the Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC), other documents associated by reference, and other documents declared relevant by the Director of Public Works and his or her designee.
- **Sidewalk Dining:** An eligible establishment seeking to place tables and chairs for dining on public sidewalks must also obtain a Sidewalk Encroachment Permit. An eligible establishment may have both a Sidewalk Encroachment Permit and a Parklet Encroachment Permit.

- **Temporary Nature of Permit:** The Temporary Parklet Program expires on March 31, 2024 (pending Council approval). Unless Council approves an additional extension of the program, all parklets must be in conformance with permanent parklet guidelines or all parklet materials are required to be removed at the permit holder's expense by March 31, 2024 (or sooner if permit term ends or is terminated).
 - This deadline notwithstanding, the Encroachment Permit can be revoked by the City at any time.

Parklet Standards

- An applicant seeking to deviate from the following standards and requirements may need to submit additional materials, may be subject to additional inspections, and may be approved for installation only upon additional review.
- If an applicant's site or proposed parklet design deviates from the conditions and/or design expressed in this document, the proposal will be reviewed and considered. Such review and consideration may require additional time, including a site visit to observe the conditions at the site of the proposed parklet.

Design and Siting Standards:

1. Parklet Area

- a. A parklet may be installed in on-street parallel parking spaces or on-street angle parking spaces. Dimensional requirements for parallel and angle parking spaces differ per the standards below.
- b. Any parklet over 350 square feet with a roof requires installation of sprinkler system per PAMC 15.04.280.
- c. **Parallel Parking Spaces**
 - i. It is recommended, though not required, that a parklet consist of at least two contiguous parallel parking spaces.
 - ii. A parklet's outer edge shall be 2 feet back from the outer edge of the existing parking space. For all parallel parking spaces located on public streets within the City of Palo Alto, this shall be 2 feet from the exterior edge (closest to traffic) of marked parking T's. This is shown in Figure A.
 - iii. The 2-foot space shall be kept clear at all times. The only objects which shall lawfully occupy this space are reflective delineator posts, or their equal.
 - iv. Parallel parking spaces typically measure 8 feet wide by 20 feet long. Given the above mentioned 2 feet offset from the outer edge of the parking space, and the 4-foot setbacks creating buffer space for wheel stops (if no tree wells are present on the adjacent areas), the dimensions of a parklet in one space would be 6 feet wide x 12 feet long. (Figure A)
 - v. Parallel parking space measurements may vary across the City of Palo Alto. As a result of this variation, some parklets may measure less than 6 feet wide.
 - vi. Variations notwithstanding, in no case shall a parklet be placed within the 2-foot area measured from the outer edge of the parking space.
- d. **Angle Parking Spaces**
 - i. It is recommended, though not required, that a parklet consist of at least two contiguous angle parking spaces.
 - ii. A parklet's outer edge shall be 2 feet back from the outer edge of the existing angle parking space. For angle parking spaces located on public streets within the City of Palo Alto, this shall be 2 feet from the exterior edge (closest to traffic) of the marked parking stall. This is shown in Figure B.

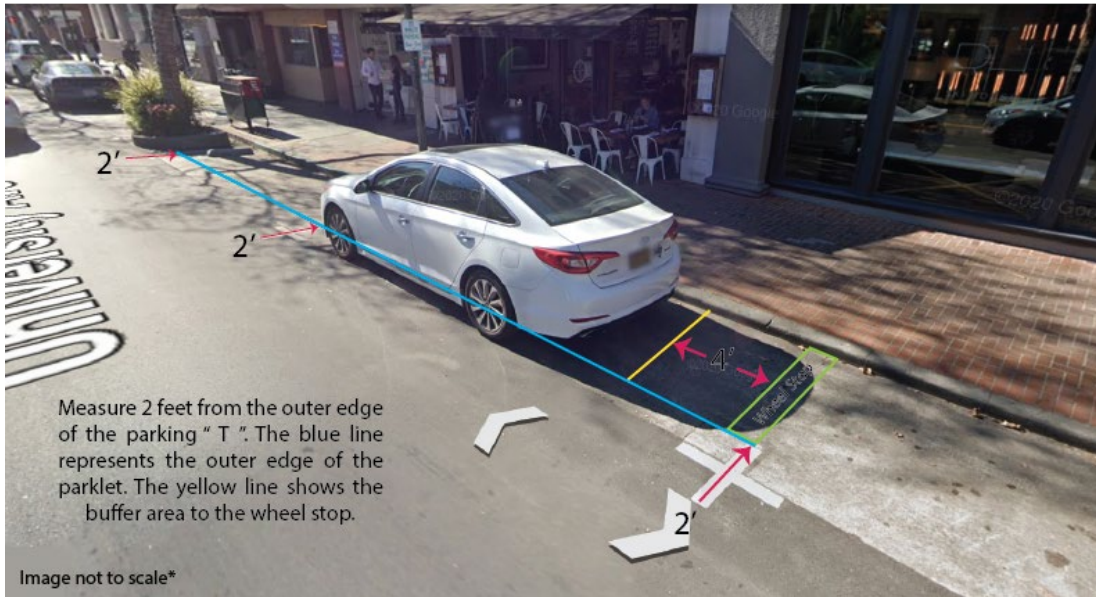


Figure A: Dimensions of a Parklet in a Parallel Parking Space

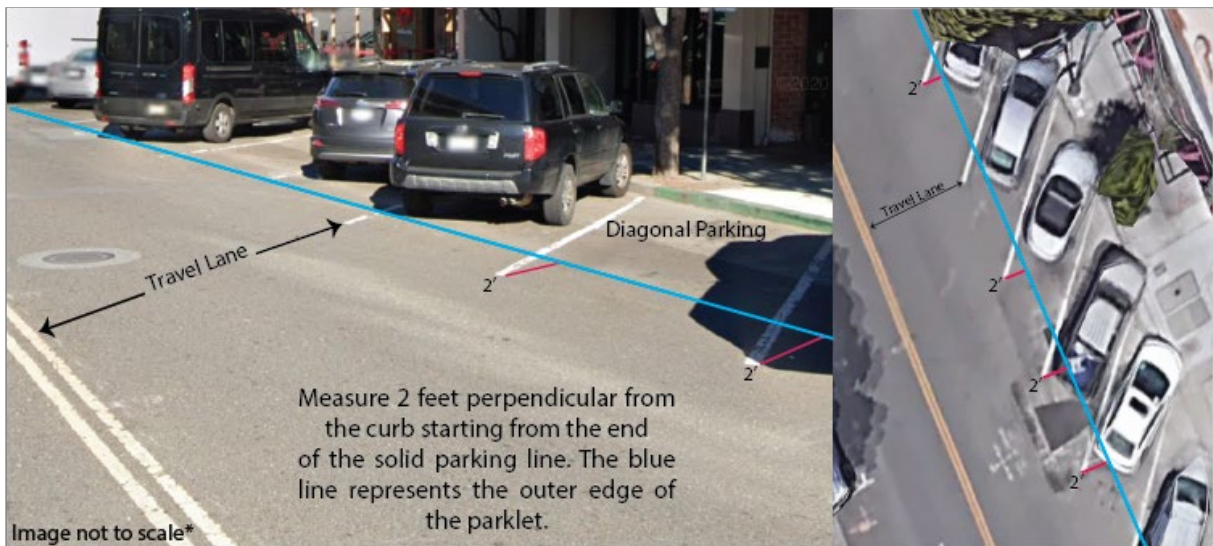


Figure B: Angle Parking Space Parklet Dimensions

2. Setbacks Adjacent to Active Parking Spaces

- a. All parklets are required to include 4-foot setbacks from adjacent on-street parking spaces and driveways.
- b. This setback shall be delineated by a concrete wheel stop.
- c. The 4-foot setback shall contain a planter if the required wheel stop(s) is/are glued to the roadway (see section regarding safety devices). The planter should be at least 700 pounds when filled with soil or decorative material.
- d. The 4-foot setback may contain a planter if the required wheel stop(s) are drilled into the roadway.
- e. The setback may not contain seating or any other objects.

3. Planters & Plants

- a. Planters in setbacks shall measure as low as 30 inches and high as 36 inches in height.
- b. Required planters (required for glued down wheel stops) the planters should be 700 pounds, made of light weight material such as fiberglass/plastic/steel or wood.
- c. The height of any plants contained within planters in setback or planters serving as a parklet platform enclosure shall not exceed 6 inches.
- d. Plant material shall not impede or hinder pedestrian and vehicular visibility.
- e. No plants shall have thorns, spikes, or sharp edges. Poisonous or invasive plants are not permitted.

4. Safety devices

a. Wheel Stops

- i. When a parklet is adjacent to active parking spaces, a three-foot wheel stop must be installed. The wheel stop shall measure 3 feet long by 4 inches high. It shall be constructed of concrete or rubber. Wheel stops shall be painted with reflective white paint for visibility.
- ii. Affixing Wheel Stops
 1. Drilled-in Wheel stops: A permittee will need USA clearance to anchor a wheel stop into the road.
 2. While awaiting USA clearance, a permittee may occupy an otherwise completed parklet without the installed wheel stops provided that the parking spaces adjacent are empty and temporarily unavailable. This, the adjacent parking spot is not available due to the work being performed to construct the parklet.
 3. Epoxied Wheel stops: Wheel stops affixed to the road with epoxy will require planters in the 4-foot buffer space between the parklet and the wheel stop. A planter in this space must weigh at least 700 pounds.
- iii. Parallel parking stalls shall place the wheel stop one foot from the curb at the edge of the front parking space. A wheel stop shall be placed one foot from the curb at the edge of the rear parking space. Wheel stops shall be setback four feet from the parklet structure.
- iv. Angled parking stalls shall center the wheel stops in the parking space next to the parklet structure.
- v. Angled parking stalls with wheel stops shall also have "No Parking" painted between the buffer zone and wheel stop.
- vi. Parklets extending the length between two in-street tree wells, as on University Avenue, may omit wheel stops.

b. Reflective Delineators

- i. The parklet shall include installation of Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)¹ approved delineator posts or their approved equal. The delineator posts shall be a minimum height of 42 inches. The delineator posts shall be placed at the beginning and end of the parklet, as well as every 20 feet of the parklet's length. These shall be installed on the street side of the parklet.
- ii. Delineators shall be white with white reflective bands for use on the right side of a travel lane. Reflective bands shall have yellow reflective bands if used on the left edge of a travel lane.

¹ MUTCD: Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices

- iii. Delineator posts shall be surface-mounted to the roadway via epoxy and/or glue down methods unless approved otherwise.
- iv. Maintenance of the delineator posts shall be the responsibility of the Permit holder.
- v. Examples of these devices are illustrated in Figures C and D.
- vi. Reflective delineators must be installed at the outside corners of the parklet. The channelizers or posts must align with the end of the platform and not encroach on the travel lane.
- vii. Delineators must be MUTCD approved, 42" high, white with white reflective tape, and anchored to the roadway. They shall be anchored via glue down methods. The delineators, posts, or their equal must be placed every 20 feet.



Figure C: Delineator with White Reflectors



Figure D: Delineator Post with Yellow Reflectors.

5. Parklet Enclosure

- a. The edges of the parklet platform shall be enclosed on three sides with railings(only sidewalk open)
- b. Wall height of the enclosure is limited to 36 inches.
- c. The enclosure design must ensure visibility to passing traffic and pedestrians and not create a visual barrier.
- d. The edge treatment shall be substantially secured to the parklet platform.
- e. Emergency Access (Figure E)
 - i. A minimum 3-foot-wide emergency gap, with vertical and horizontal clearance, is required for every 20 feet of enclosure length.
 - ii. The gap must be kept clear of any tables, chairs, bike racks, poles, walls, roofs, or other elements.
 - iii. The barrier in the emergency access gap shall be easily removable by emergency personnel and provide a latch or hinge that allows easy access.
 1. The latch shall be placed on the outside of the barrier, facing the travel lane.
 2. The hinge shall open a minimum of 90 degrees.
 3. Any gaps in the barrier shall be smaller than a 4-inch sphere.

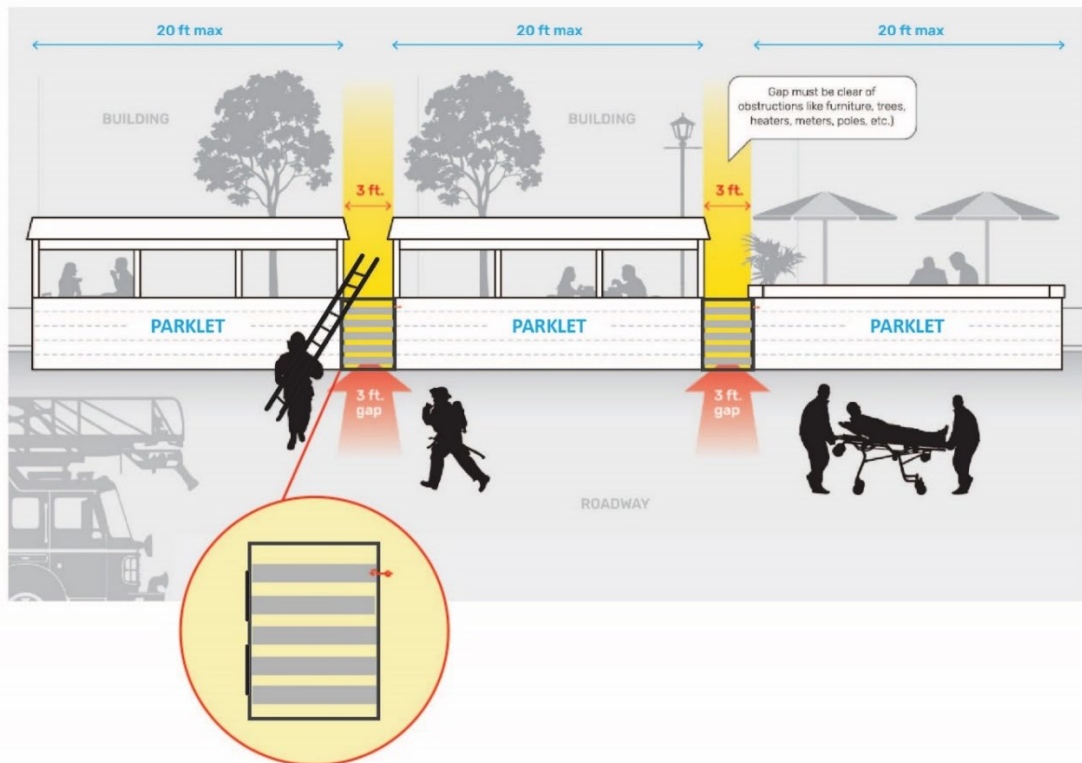


Figure E: Emergency Access

6. **Adjacent Sidewalk:** Neither the construction nor operation of the parklet shall interfere with, obstruct, or otherwise diminish the adjacent sidewalk and pedestrian path of travel.

7. Anchoring

- a. The parklet shall be anchored to the city street on sleepers and as shown in the drainage detail Figure F below to accommodate access and drainage.

- b. The manner of anchoring shall be through a pre-drilled hole into the street and a concrete anchor bolt.
- c. Any anchoring into the public street will require USA markings and additional staff review.
- d. The grating support angle shall be anchored perpendicularly to the city curb as shown in the drainage detail Figure F below.
- e. The manner of grating support anchoring shall be through a pre-drilled hole into the curb and a concrete anchor bolt.

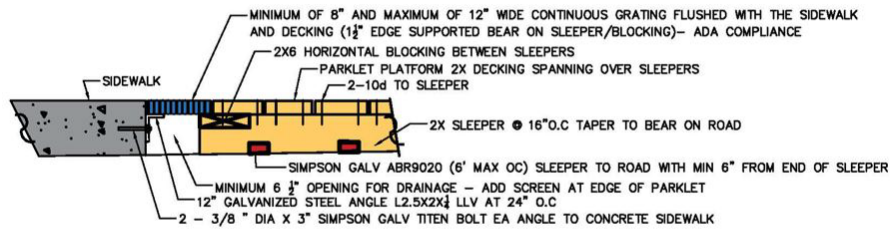
8. Accessibility

- a. The parklet shall comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- b. Compliance with the ADA can include a parklet surface flush with the sidewalk or a parklet that provides an ADA compliant ramp, railing, landing, and associated eating and drinking facilities.
- c. Any seating and dining must comply with the applicable accessibility requirements outlined in the adopted California Building Code.
- d. **Flush with Sidewalk Parklets:**
 - i. The surface of the parklet platform must be flush with the adjacent sidewalk with a maximum gap of one quarter inch and one quarter inch vertical tolerance.
 - ii. A minimum 4-foot wide accessible path of travel and 5-foot diameter turnaround space must be maintained within the parklet.
 - iii. Any abrupt changes in elevation exceeding 4 inches along an accessible path of travel shall be identified by 6-inch tall warning curbs.
- e. **Depressed or Elevated Parklets:**
 - i. If a ramp is required for access to the parklet or a portion thereof, it shall comply with all accessibility ramp provisions.

9. Drainage, Ventilation & Rodent Proofing

The parklet shall be designed and constructed to allow the maximum amount of water to flow along the gutter as possible.

- a. The underside of the platform shall be constructed to allow for seasonal drainage.
- b. Adequate cross ventilation shall be installed to allow for the surface to dry within 12–24 hours.
- c. Openings under the platform shall be screened with corrosion-resistant material with a maximum 0.25-inch mesh.
- d. Parklets shall not impede the flow of curbside drainage. The parklet design shall include a minimum 6.5-inch wide clearance from sidewalk curb along the entire length of the parklet. Openings at either end of the parklet shall be covered with screens to prevent debris buildup beneath the parklet and in the gutter. The closure decking must be removable for easy access for under platform inspection as needed. See Figure F for suggested platform attachment design details.



PARKLET-SIDEWALK DRAINAGE DETAIL (NTS)

Figure F: Platform Attachment Detail

10. Utility Structures Accessibility

- a. No utilities access points shall be covered by the parklet, this includes storm drain catch basins and all telecommunication vaults and manholes.
- b. A minimum of 5 linear feet clearance must be maintained between the end of a parklet and any storm drainage feature such as catch basins. Parklet construction and design must allow access to the catch basin and shall not obstruct the catch basin.

11. Platform Structure

- a. Structural
 - i. Parklets shall be constructed with quality materials and shall be of naturally durable wood (redwood, cedar), preservative-treated wood, or other engineered material suitable for exterior conditions.
 - ii. The parklet must support 100 pounds per square foot live load.
 - iii. All fastening hardware and fasteners adjacent to and into preservative-treated wood must be hot-dipped zinc-coated galvanized steel, stainless steel, silicon bronze or copper.

12. Roofs

- a. Structural
 - i. Complete roof framing plan, which includes horizontal and vertical bracing, is required to be submitted with structural calculations that meet the standards in the 2022 California Building Code. A licensed civil and/or structural engineer who is registered in the State of California, shall stamp and sign the plan and associated calculations, as well as conduct an onsite structural observation to ensure the roof structural system and its supporting elements were built according to the plans prior to occupancy.
 1. All connector hardware and fasteners shall be resistant to corrosion and listed as compatible to the framing material.
 2. Roofs may be a solid uniform material or open construction (i.e., trellis, pergola, etc.)
 3. Roofs shall not be attached or connected to a building.
 4. Roofs shall slope toward the street to ensure rainwater drains into the street.
 5. Gutters and rain leaders are required.
 6. Roofs shall not extend over the public sidewalk.

7. The roof's outer edges along the travel lane may extend 6 inches beyond parklet footprint at 8 feet or above to allow for attachment of the rain leaders and gutters only.

b. Height

- i. The roof shall be a minimum height of 8 feet provided the adjacent sidewalk is at least 8 feet wide. If the adjacent sidewalk is less than 8 feet wide, the applicant will need to consult with the Palo Alto Fire Department.
- ii. A parklet roof shall measure no taller than 12 feet, as measured from the platform grade.

c. Materials

- i. Rooftop material may be of plywood sheathing, polycarbonate sheets, or sheet metal.
 1. If plywood sheathing is used, it must be painted or stained.
- ii. If fabric shade sails or similar fabric coverings are proposed, the fabric cover shall be limited to the top portion of the parklet and not extend to additional sides perpendicular to the street or sidewalk. All fabric coverings shall be of all-weather and flame-retardant materials excluding vinyl.
- iii. Roof material may be a solid uniform material or open construction (i.e., trellis, pergola, etc.).
- iv. All exposed wood is required to be treated for exposure to weather.

d. Location

- i. Roof structure cannot extend past applicant's business frontage into neighboring business frontage.

13. Electrical Power Supply

- a. A weatherproof GFCI electrical outlet may be installed (with applicable permits) on the exterior of the building at a minimum of 10 feet above the walking surface.
 - i. Electrical power supply to the parklet, including the outlet, shall comply with permanent wiring methods as outlined in the adopted California Electrical code.
- b. Power cords between the building and the parklet shall be secured to one (1) single overhead guide wire between the building and the parklet structure.
 - i. No extension cords shall be permitted for fixed lighting or heaters.
- c. No power cords or conduits are allowed under or on the sidewalk.
- d. Parklet power source shall not be pulled from city sidewalk lighting or supported by trees.
- e. Generators are not allowed in association with parklets.

14. Lighting

- a. The following types of lighting and fixtures are permitted:
 - i. String lights;
 - ii. Solar powered and/or rechargeable battery powered table lights; and
- b. The use of electrical adaptors and power strips are prohibited.
- c. All lighting must be rated for exterior use, listed, and carry a product certificate for its intended use by a recognized electrical testing laboratory.
- d. Lighting must be LED only
- e. Lighting shall be limited to the parklet area and not encroach into any portion of the public sidewalk.

- f. Lighting shall be of the lowest intensity and energy use adequate for its purpose and be designed to focus illumination downward to avoid excessive illumination above the light fixture with a maximum of 100 watts or 1600 lumens, whichever is greater, per fixture.
- g. Applicants interested in lighting should consider solar-powered lighting that use a rechargeable battery.
- h. If installing permanent lighting on the parklet or adding the exterior GFCI receptacle at the building per IV(D)2a, an electrical permit shall be obtained and shall comply with permanent wiring methods as outlined in the adopted California Electrical code.

15. Heaters

- a. Electrical heaters are allowed on parklets.
 - i. Electric heaters must be an outdoor approved type
 - ii. Electric heaters must be located on the parklet in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and specifications.
 - iii. Electric heaters must be placed at least 3 feet away from any combustible materials or as required by Manufacturer's installation instruction, whichever is more restrictive.
 - iv. A fire extinguisher is required to be mounted within sight and have appropriate signage per the Fire Code.
 - v. Use of electric heaters must comply with the power supply requirements in section IV.D.2.
 - vi. Any electrical equipment must be listed and carry a product certificate for its intended use by a recognized electrical testing laboratory.
- b. Propane heaters are permitted with a HAZMAT permit and CERS submittal.
 - i. hazmat permit is required for storage and use of liquid propane gas. A site plan with the desired location of each heater is required at time of the hazmat permit application. A final onsite hazmat inspection will be conducted to ensure the proper spacing of heaters form combustibles and emergency access/egress and storage of LPG.
 - 1. Proposed outdoor storage of 20-pound containers requires plan review and inspection.
 - 2. On-site storage of 20-pound propane contains (5 gal) is prohibited indoors.
 - 3. Propane storage is not allowed in the public right-of-way.
 - 4. If businesses do not have an approved private outdoor storage area, all propane containers must be removed from the premises at the close of business every day.
 - 5. LPG Heaters are not permitted on the sidewalk in the pedestrian path of travel
 - 6. LPG heaters cannot be placed underneath overhead canopies, awnings, inside buildings or tents and they must have 5-foot clearance from any flammable materials
 - 7. Any use of a portable heater, portable generator, candles, open flame or any activity regulated by the Fire code must be approved and permitted by the Palo Alto Fire Department separately from the parklet permit.

16. Table and Seating Layout

- a. Parklet tables shall be placed in conformance with the health and safety standards established by Santa Clara County and State of California.

17. Parking Signage

- a. Any existing parking signs installed adjacent to the parklet must be covered with opaque plastic; such coverage or illegibility shall occur only in manners approved by the City of Palo Alto through its Department of Public Works and/or its Office of Transportation.
- b. The parklet must have, on its roadway facing side, "No Stopping Anytime Signs." These signs shall meet standards set forth for an R26(S) standard sign and meet size and reflectivity standards as set forth in the MUTCD
- c. Signs shall be affixed to the parklet buffer.
- d. Parklet permit-holders are responsible for the purchase and installation of "No Stopping Anytime Signs."

18. Bicycle Facilities

- a. Bicycle racks or other bicycle facilities shall not be removed, made unusable, or otherwise disturbed by the construction of a parklet.
- b. Any parklet design that proposed such disruption shall require review by and approval of the Office of Transportation.

Parklet Requirements

1. Parklets are prohibited in front of active driveways, on street curves or hills where horizontal or vertical sight-distance is an issue.
2. Parklets are permitted on streets with speed limits of 25 mph or less.
3. When located near an intersection, parklets must be located at least 25 feet from the rear most boundary of a crosswalk at the nearest intersection or street corner, as shown in Figure G.
 - a. A curb extension (commonly referred to as a "bulb-out"), some other physical barrier that would protect the parklet in a corner location, or other specific site condition may allow the City to consider variations from the 25-foot minimum requirement.
4. No portion of a parklet shall block or prohibit full use of accessible curb ramps and infrastructure.



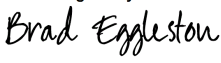
Figure G: Intersection location

5. Parklets are generally permitted on streets with a running slope (grade) of five percent or less.
6. Parklets can't block public utilities, bus stops, or driveways.
7. Parklets located next to driveways or alleys must be set back 15 (fifteen) feet from the outside driveway as measured from the highest point of the curb cut (i.e., the top of the adjacent driveway wing).
8. Parklets shall be placed no closer than 50 feet from a bus stop loading zone.
9. Parklets shall be placed no closer than 15 feet from fire hydrants.
10. Parklets cannot be installed in existing travel lane at any time.
11. In the event a proposed parklet location is in conflict with public infrastructure (i.e., public signage, benches, etc.) the Public Works Department shall meet with the applicant to evaluate relocation of the infrastructure. Relocation of any infrastructure may not be possible.
12. Umbrella Standards
 - a. Cannot extend past the buffer areas surrounding the parklet.
 - b. Umbrellas or other shade structures cannot extend into the street-facing buffer or sidewalk.
 - c. Must be placed on the parklet platform, not on the sidewalk, roadway, or in the buffer areas.
 - d. Umbrellas must be sufficiently weighted or secured to prevent being blown over or into the street or sidewalk.

Best Practices

- A. The City of Palo Alto hopes that parklets enliven the streets of Palo Alto. The temporary parklet program allows the residents of Palo Alto to more safely enjoy local establishments in an environment that decreases the risk of spreading COVID-19. The parklets also provide an amenity for businesses that may help them continue operations.
- B. The City encourages neighboring businesses to work together, reach agreements, and otherwise cooperate when it comes to the installation of parklets.

These guidelines are hereby approved.

DocuSigned by:

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Director of Public Works

Date: May 19, 2023