



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Architectural Review Committee

**FROM:** Brian Pedrotti, Community Development Director

**BY:** Patrick Holub, Associate Planner

**SUBJECT:** Review of Objective Design Guidelines for Permanent Parklet Program

**DATE:** August 1, 2022

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### **SUMMARY OF ACTION:**

Review of proposed objective design standards to be included in permanent parklet program.

### **IMPACT ON FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES:**

No financial impact is projected.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Committee review the objective design standards and make a recommendation to the Planning Commission.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020 created a public health crisis and unprecedented economic impacts throughout the country, State, and at the local level. In the city of Arroyo Grande (City), local businesses have been economically impacted by this public health emergency, especially restaurants, hotels, and retail establishments. This created both a significant challenge for the City - with an urgent need to support both public health and economic recovery of local businesses - as well as a unique opportunity to re-imagine how the City's public right-of-way can be utilized to improve long-term community vibrancy and economic vitality.

In response to the initial COVID-19 reopening process, the City adopted Resolution 5007 on June 23, 2020, authorizing the Community Development Director to waive application fees for encroachment permits and Minor Use Permits/Temporary Use Permits for restaurants that were seeking additional outdoor dining space (Attachment 1). Starting in July of 2020, the City facilitated the installation of five temporary parklets for eight individual restaurant businesses in the Village. All of these parklets remain in use today. About eight other businesses, both in the Village and in other City commercial areas, took

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advantage of the opportunity to expand outdoor dining within private parking lots, including restaurants that utilized temporary barricades (concrete K-rail) provided by the City and installed at the City's expense, in order to remain in business outdoors. Most of the temporary barriers used to provide outdoor dining space in parking lots outside of the Village area have been removed. The only temporary street closure that remains in effect is the closure of Short Street between Branch Street and Olohan Alley. Council authorized the continued temporary closure of Short Street at its meeting on May 10, 2022 to provide time to evaluate options for a permanent closure and redevelopment of the area as a pedestrian plaza and park. Attachment 2 includes a map of the parklets installed during the temporary program. Existing parklets within the Village displace a total of fourteen (14) parking spaces, which include partial spaces that can only support smaller vehicles. There are a total of sixty-one (61) on-street parking spaces along East and West Branch Streets in the Village. The parking spaces lost to parklets currently account for approximately twenty-three percent (23%) of the on-street parking in the Village. Attachment 3 includes photos of the existing parklets.

On November 23, 2021, the City Council held a study session on the status of the temporary parklet program and discussed the potential for a permanent parklet program. Council expressed concerns with various aspects of parklets, including the number, their proximity to each other, the safety of users, the amount of staff time dedicated to a permanent program, their consistency with the historic downtown, design of the parklets, and costs. Council directed staff to return with the framework of a program that evaluated and provided recommendations on the following issues:

1. Associated costs for application, rent, encroachment, and in-lieu parking;
2. Safety considerations;
3. Suggested design standards;
4. A cap on the number of parklets;
5. A proposed proximity between parklets;
6. Eligibility; and
7. Application and notification procedures.

On April 12, 2022, the City Council considered the above points and directed staff to return with a permanent parklet program and provided further recommendations regarding each point. The City Council provided comments regarding each point and asked that the ARC help develop the objective design standards for the parklets.

### **ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:**

The City's previous temporary parklet program included performance standards aimed at ensuring compliance with ADA standards. With the consideration of a permanent parklet program, staff is proposing to implement a series of performance standards, including ADA compliance and design standards that would address safety considerations and the aesthetic character of the parklets. When the City Council ultimately considers a permanent parklet program, staff will process amendments to the Municipal Code to incorporate any approved performance standards.

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Staff also encourages the permanent parklet program to utilize a consistent looking physical security barrier. The dimensions of the security barriers should all be uniform throughout the City. Furthermore, staff recommends that no visual obstructions be placed on or above these barriers to ensure a consistent appearance as well as to facilitate traffic and pedestrian safety by removing visual distractions and obstructions.

In addition to the size and location of the barriers, staff is recommending that the materials chosen for the interior of the parklets (e.g. decking, shade structures, etc.) are consistent throughout the parklet program and that these materials are in keeping with the character of the Village. The Village Design Guidelines specify that “all new projects shall use materials that fit within the character of the Village. Using similar materials or replicating these materials on all projects and restorations will extend the existing character extended throughout the Village” (Attachment 4).

Based on these considerations, staff has included the following performance standards, including parklet design, for consideration and discussion by the ARC:

#### Parklet Location

1. A parklet shall only be located in designated on-street parking areas.
2. A parklet shall not block sight distance of motorists at intersections or driveways. Accordingly, a parklet may not be located less than 25 feet from a roadway intersection or adjacent driveway or other points of off-street access which require line of sight standards as required by the Public Works Department. The final location of a parklet will vary based on the proposed parklet design, and shall be subject to review and approval.
3. Parklets are prohibited in disabled, twenty-minute and no-parking zones.
4. A parklet may not cover or impede access to any utility equipment, utility pole, fire hydrant, parking permit kiosk, or utility access such as manhole covers, drainage inlets, and equipment shelters.

#### Parklet Design

5. Parklets shall be no more than two parking spaces, or 40-feet in length.
6. A parklet's walls or railing shall not have a continuous height that exceeds 42 inches and shall not block views in or out of the parklet. Columns or other vertical framing for overhead elements are permitted. All elements of a parklet shall have a maximum height limit of 10-foot.
7. The depth (dimension measured perpendicular to curb) of a parklet shall be no less than the minimum dimension required to meet ADA accessibility requirements. Portions of the required parklet depth may be located within an existing sidewalk area as long as the sidewalk encroachment does not reduce the pedestrian path of travel to a width of less than 4.5 feet in the public right of way.
8. A parklet shall include an element of the parklet enclosure that addresses public safety and provides a barrier or fortified railing between moving vehicles and parklet users.

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9. Parklets shall have a flush transition at the sidewalk and curb to permit easy access and avoid tripping hazards.
10. A parklet shall comply with applicable Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards. Compliance with ADA standards is required with respect to design elements of the parklet, as well as for adjacent areas that may be impacted by the parklet. Parklets shall use a slip-resistant flooring material to minimize hazards and should be accessible to wheel-chair users.
11. The four corners of a parklet shall have a reflective element or other clearly visible design feature, such as a soft-hit post, bollard, or raised pavement marker, to illuminate the parklet at night and signify the parklet envelope.
12. Parklets shall be consistent with the Village Design Guidelines.
13. The primary materials shall be stone, brick, wood, decorative concrete or composite wood. Wood materials such as lattice and T1-11 plywood siding, are prohibited.
14. Color schemes shall consist of one primary color and one secondary color, at a minimum.
15. Areas for the storage of trash, recycling, and green waste receptacles shall not be visible from the public right of way and all waste receptacles shall be emptied and maintained by the applicant in a neat and sanitary order.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Recommend approval of the proposed Objective Design Guidelines for the permanent parklet program to the Planning Commission as submitted; or
2. Revise the Objective Design Guidelines and make a recommendation to Planning Commission; or
3. Provide other direction to staff.

#### **ADVANTAGES:**

Approval of the objective design guidelines for parklets will allow the Planning Commission to consider and recommend changes to the program for final consideration by the City Council for the establishment of a permanent parklet program.

#### **DISADVANTAGES:**

No disadvantages are identified.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

This review of objective design guidelines does not constitute a "Project" under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15378. Permanent continuation of the parklet program would be categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because the actions are limited to permitting, leasing, and minor alteration of existing public facilities.

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**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND COMMENTS:**

The Agenda was posted at City Hall and on the City's website in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2.

Attachments:

1. Resolution No. 5007
2. Map of Parklet Locations
3. Photos of Parklets
4. Village Design Guidelines