



PARK(ING) SPACE

PARKING TO PARKS IN THE CITY BY THE BAY

**AUCKLAND
DESIGN MANUAL**
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STREETS // STREETS CASE STUDY

Parklets
Interventions, San Francisco

OVERVIEW

Parklets are very small parks or mini-plazas that are constructed in on-street car parks. San Francisco's parklets programme provides inspiration for how we may use parking spaces to drive better community, environmental and economic outcomes in our neighbourhoods.

Parklets are often constructed either where urban park areas are lacking or where footpaths are too narrow to provide adequate space. Parklets can radically improve a street environment by reclaiming parts of the street for pedestrians and bringing vibrancy to the immediate area. This Case Study looks at examples of excellent parklets in the city of San Francisco.

PROJECT SUMMARY

In 2009 San Francisco launched its Great Streets Project. Modeled on New York City's (NYC) 'Streets Renaissance' its aim is to prove the multiple benefits of reclaiming road reserve for pedestrian usage.

San Francisco's Great Streets Project initially worked with political and business leaders to test, analyse and institutionalise Placemaking within the road reserve. To this end parklets were one of the first types of demonstration project undertaken by NYC and San Francisco. The demonstration projects were not done in isolation. These cities were also developing large-scale public campaigns, detailed Strategies, Plans and Implementation schedules, in conjunction with extensive community consultation and engagement programmes, to bring about a culture change in how streets should be viewed and used.

As stated by Enrique Penalosa, the former mayor of Bogota, Columbia who opened San Francisco's Great Street Project launch, "...The amount of space allocated to cars is not fixed, but rather a political decision that can drastically reshape the city.."



Rebar, a San Francisco firm, designed a parklet outside of Tony'sPizza Napoletanain the North Beach neighborhood. (Photo: SørenSchaumberg Jensen/REBAR)

KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

STREET TYPE

VARIOUS

Parklet's are often constructed on, or near retail streets, but have been built across a wide range of street types.

PROJECT EXTENT

15m2 UPWARDS

Parklets can be as small as a single parking space, or extend over several parking spaces

DESIGN TEAM

VARIES

Design teams are appointed by the project initiator, and are usually landscape architects, artists and designers.

PROJECT DATES

INITIATED IN 2010

Initial trial projects were initiated in 2010, and since then 30 + parklets have been developed across San Francisco.

PROJECT TYPE

STREET INTERVENTIONS
DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS
PARKLETS

KEY PROJECT WORKS

VARIES

- Located in on-street parallel car parks adjacent to the footpath.
- At least 2 car parks in size, often larger.
- Located outside retail or hospitality premises.
- Parking space is built up using a platform to same level as footpath.

CLIENT

LOCAL BUSINESSES

Projects are usually initiated and funded by businesses adjacent to the parking spaces, or local business associations.

PROJECT COST

LOW COST

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SMALL,USUALLY TEMPORARY
PARKS LOCATED IN CAR
PARKING SPACES

OTHER FACTS

In most cities (Park)ing Day is only one day. In San Francisco's fashionable Mission District mini parks have been occupying parking spaces for months at a time.

PROJECT GOALS

1. To improve the street experience by providing attractive, distinctive and artful areas for people to sit, relax, people-watch and enjoy.
2. To potentially benefit the adjacent businesses by bringing custom to the premises.
3. To provide street vitality where activities can extend from the footpath into the street.
4. To assist in meeting social, recreational and/ or ecological needs.
5. When carefully/strategically located, parklets can help slow street traffic and create more spaces for people on the street.
6. To provide additional public space in a cheap, and simple way.



Photo: Courtesy San Francisco Planning Dept. (via Flickr)

UNDERSTANDING THE DESIGN PROCESS

1. Following the example of European sidewalk cafes and Park(ing) Day, an international effort to temporarily transform parking spots into public spaces, San Francisco launched its first experimental parklet in March 2010.
2. The first parklet in San Francisco was built in front of the Mojo Bicycle Café on Divisadero Street. Six more trial locations followed, and now dozens of parklets dot the city across many neighbourhoods
3. Parklets can be temporary, such as International Park(ing) Day, or more permanent.
4. It is necessary that the adjacent retail or hospitality premises are 'on board' with the idea. Frequently the businesses pay for the parklet to be implemented.
5. A parklet 're-purposes' part of the street into a space for people.
6. Parklets provide public amenities such as seating, bike parking, art and planting, helping to meet the need for increased public open space, often in built-up areas.



Overhead view of a café-related parklet on Polk St. in San Francisco.
(Photo: www.sfgate.com)

GETTING IT RIGHT



Photo (left): Courtesy San Francisco Planning Department.



Photo (right): Matarozzi Pelsinger Builders & Wells Campbell photography.

GETTING IT RIGHT



Photo (left): Courtesy San Francisco Planning Department and Tim Griffith.



Photo (right): Courtesy of Scott Beyer.

GETTING IT RIGHT 1. DESIGN STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACES

1. The parklets are publicly accessible open spaces available for all to enjoy.
2. A parklet “re-purposes” part of the street into a space for people not in cars.
3. Parklets provide public amenities such as seating, bike parking, art and planting, helping to meet the need for increased public open space.
4. Parklets allow people to stop, rest, and enjoy life on the street, improving safety through simply ensuring more people are in the street.



22nd St Parklet hosted by hosted Fabric8.
August, 2011 (Photo: Courtesy San Francisco Planning Dept.)

GETTING IT RIGHT 2. DESIGN FOR CONTEXT

1. Most parklets are sponsored or paid for by the adjacent retailer or retailers as an (outdoor) extension of their business
2. This parklet provides seating and increased visibility for the adjacent general store.
3. The parklets has been strategically planned to ensure that it doesn't impinge on vehicular or pedestrian traffic. A clear section of pavement is maintained for pedestrians to walk through.
4. A typical parklet design physically extends the footpath, often with a deck, so that it becomes a part of the immediate public pedestrian zone.



The materials of this parklet, complete with sculptural tree trunk seating (far distance) echoes its host, the timber-fronted shop opposite. (Photo: Courtesy San Francisco Planning Department).

GETTING IT RIGHT 3. DESIGN FOR CONNECTIVITY

1. Although parklets don't generally improve physical connectivity, they can often enhance community connections, and economic relationship between adjacent businesses.
2. A few parklets located within easy walking distance of each other can form a connected network of places for a local area.
3. Parklets can be part of a wider programme to create a more pedestrian-friendly and connected local environment.



A centrally located parklet contributes to a more pedestrian-friendly and connected community.
(Photo: Søren Schaumborg Jensen/REBAR)

GETTING IT RIGHT 4. DESIGN FOR SAFETY

1. Parklets and mini-plazas can contribute to making a safer street environment, by narrowing and calming vehicles.
1. Parklets offer opportunities for people to stop, relax and enjoy. More street life brings more 'eyes on the street' and helps create a perception of safety.
2. Parklets often have boundary-defining elements – planters, seating, edging -to protect visitors and clearly differentiate the parklet from the carriageway.
3. The psychological effect of positioning pedestrians in the road reserve is an uncertainty; therefore drivers travel with more care, and slower speeds.



Parklets allow more people to inhabit the street which significantly increases both actual, and the perception of, street safety. (Photo: San Francisco Planning Dept.)

GETTING IT RIGHT



The extent of parklets can be formally or informally defined by way of the design.
Credit: Ogrydziak Prillinger Architects (Photo: Tim Griffith -Courtesy San Francisco Planning Dept.)

GETTING IT RIGHT 5. DESIGN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

1. Parklets are generally low cost and relatively straight forward to construct. This parklet reconfigures a skip to provide seating and green the street.
2. Parklets often provide enhanced environmental performance, supporting biodiversity, improving water retention to minimise stormwater run-off, or incorporating bike storage for more sustainable lifestyles.
3. Parklets are often temporary structures. This parklet could easily be lifted onto a truck and moved to another location within minutes,
4. Many parklets are easy to dismantle.



Relocate-able “dumpster” (skip) parklet.
Photo: Flickr, Courtesy of San Francisco Planning Dept.

GETTING IT RIGHT 6. DESIGN AND PLAN STREETS TO BE FIT FOR PURPOSE

1. Parklets provide a Place function for streets that often have only a (vehicular) movement function.
2. Parklets help to redress the frequent car-pedestrian imbalance in some streets.
3. They are simple and straightforward to maintain; businesses and/or the local community often take informal ownership of these public spaces.



Easily relocate-able “dumpster” (skip) parklets.
Photo: Flickr, Courtesy of San Francisco Planning Dept.

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The Auckland Design Manual provides practical advice, best practice processes and detailed design guidance to enable us to design and build the world's most liveable city. The manual will enable us all to make informed choices, to build houses and develop our streets and neighbourhoods to not only look good but to ensure they are built to last, sustainable and give the best return on investment.

www.aucklanddesignmanual.co.nz

