

A Tale of Two Cities: The Parklet Implementation
Processes in Los Angeles and San Francisco

Lena Burton Owens

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Occidental College

Department of Urban and Environmental Policy

Professors Bhavna Shamusunder and Mijin Cha

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Introduction

The trend of disappearing urban space has been an issue for as long as cities have been developing. A potential solution to the lack of space for urban open space is the creation of parklets in cities. This research will explore whether or not the parklet creation and implementation process, as a public and private partnership, is equitable and if it is really a public venture. So-called “public” space can only help citizens if it is truly public, which come in to question in this research. This is because the process to create parklets falls greatly in the hands of private investment and interest, making it hard for the process to be truly public.

This research especially focuses on the histories and differences between the implementation processes in Los Angeles and San Francisco. San Francisco’s parklet process is much older and more established than Los Angeles’s program, allowing for more parklets and greater benefits to the city. My research explores why this is, what the differences between the two are, and how Los Angeles can expand or change their

program to garner similar results. I also explore whether or not parklets are truly beneficial, in an effort to decide if they are something cities should invest resources in. \

Literature Review

This literature review will analyze previous research on parklets in Los Angeles and San Francisco. While parklets are public space and must be applied for through the city's individual application process, private companies and businesses that have an interest in creating and building the parklet subsidize them. Private enterprises must pay for the design and upkeep of parklets, but they must be kept as public spaces. The research done on parklets has mostly centered around usage, but rarely on access to the creation process and access to the parklet itself. The literature reviewed here pertains to the creation process and usage of parklets, as well as the general nature and composition of research done on parklets in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Discussion of why these two cities were chosen research lies in their differences, which are further stressed in the methodology section.

Why Parklets Matter

Many sources have found that parklets are good for the urban and cityscapes in general. A parklet study done in San Francisco by San Francisco's Great Streets Project states this:

By creating an attractive public space for seating, the parklet has freed-up sidewalk space for passing pedestrians, making it a better place for those who want to sit and easier for those who want to walk to other destinations along the block. These improvements translate into more people stopping to enjoy themselves, contributing to a livelier more vibrant neighborhood and a greater sense of community character. (San Francisco Planning Department, 2010)

Parklets have the potential to increase neighborhood pedestrian traffic and space, making it easier for pedestrians to access seating, meaning they linger in the neighborhood

longer. This action can also lead to an increase in business and pedestrian traffic, a trend that will boost economies in areas where there are parklets. This means that the business that pays for the parklet will also benefit. They get seating in their immediate vicinity, and more pedestrian traffic in front of their shop. So although the parklets are open to the public as open space, they do benefit the private investor involved.

Parklets also satisfy an open space deficit that is severely lacking in many urban cities, but the city does not have to pay for parklets themselves. The city has less reason to turn down a parklet when its funding isn't coming out of their pockets. Parklets can also make neighborhoods safer. In Michelle Birdsall's evaluation of parklets, she discussed the ways parklets do both of these things.

By providing traffic calming and an extension to existing sidewalks, parklets are proving to be a fast, efficient way for cities to increase safety and livability while promoting active transportation. Parklets can help address the need for wider sidewalks at a fraction of the cost and time of installing permanent sidewalk improvements, a major benefit for municipalities that would like to make positive changes but do not have the budget for large scale projects. (Birdsall, 2013)

Traffic calming is an important solution to that can help prevent car and pedestrian accidents, especially in dense urban areas. It also provides for safe space for pedestrians to walk, promoting healthier lifestyles and more pedestrian traffic. The issue of city's paying for urban beautification is taken away in the design of parklet policy and application. We again run in to the tension between public and private ownership here. The public clearly benefits from this agreement; governments still control public space and apply regulations and technically own the land, but their urban and public space is improved without very much of their own money, time, or energy. The public and private ownership is further addressed in the next section.

Public vs. Private Space

Because there are individual owners of parklets and often patrons of the fronting business are the ones using parklets the most, there is a tension between private and public ownership of parklets. Scholar Mike Davis discusses the loss of public space in Los Angeles as well as the undemocratic spacing and placing of public space.

The universal and ineluctable consequence of this crusade to secure the city is the destruction of accessible public space. The contemporary opprobrium attached to the term 'street person' is in itself a harrowing index of the devaluation of public spaces. To reduce contact with the untouchables, urban redevelopment has converted once vital pedestrian streets into traffic sewers and transformed public parks into temporary receptacles for the homeless and wretched. (Davis, 1990)

Davis describes a noticeable trend in Los Angeles in which accessible public space is being pushed out of the city and livable streets and parks are a thing of the past. Urban redevelopment has pushed the poor and homeless in to public spaces because they have no other place for shelter, making many others not open to accessing public space. While this is an issue greater than just equity and access to public space engaging systematic flaws in transportation, housing, zoning, healthcare, poverty policy, it also shows flaws in the amount, quality, and accessibility to public urban space.

A huge part of the issue for access other than inequity is that many spaces are built for on use, and that use takes up the whole space. Barry Maitland, an urban theorist, states,

The problems of inversion and introversion in development patterns, and ambiguity in the character of public space created with them, are not unique to new shopping center developments. It is commonplace that the modern city as a whole exhibits a tendency to break down into specialized, single-use precincts – the university campus, the industrial estate, the leisure complex, the housing scheme... each governed by internal, esoteric rules of development and implemented by specialist agencies whose terms of reference guarantee that they are familiar with other similar developments across the country, but know almost nothing of the dissimilar precincts which abut their own. (Maitland, 1985)

Because development in places like Los Angeles took its course as single use precincts, public space often does not fit in to the mix, since space is taken up by the individual use. Davis continues to discuss how genuine democratic space is going completely extinct and the forcing of the lower class in to “increasingly repressive ghettos and barrios” and the “privatization of the architectural public realm”, both which contribute to the loss of equitable and democratic public space.

A solution to this issue is the creation of innovative use of dense urban space for public open space. Ideally, parklets are one of these solutions. Parklets are a creative use of public space that do not take up a great amount of space, but still allow for leisure and interaction. This is one of the reasons parklets matter, and could potentially be a good use of urban space, if used and created in a democratic way. The city does not subsidize parklets, private companies do.

Public vs. Private Ownership of Parklets

While private enterprises or companies, as mentioned in the above paragraphs, pay for parklets, the public still has ultimate control over them. This is true in the sense that the public owns the parklet as well as the fact that the city regulates the parklet. “While parklets may be maintained by the businesses adjacent to them, they are built for the general public and are accessible and open to all, and as such the seating and design must be distinct from the sponsoring business.” (Birdsall, 2013) So in a way, the general public who is permitted to use the parklet owns the parklet. But in another sense, the ownership falls in the hands of the private business that paid for the built parklet.

Such a tension between public and private is noticed in many seemingly public places. Think of advertisements and sponsors of public stadiums, plazas, or even street

seating. This means that the success and placement of parklets, and even the movement to create parklets, depends on private funding and support.

“Micro urban commons do not challenge the overall capitalist production of urban space, infrastructure, property values and speculation, but nevertheless they constitute small acts of generosity, encouraging social interaction beyond private consumption and competition, while having the potential to function as sites of wider social and political organization.” (Bradley, 2015)

Just as Bradley states, parklets depend on private investment, even though they affect the public as a whole. Usually a business wants to benefit itself as well in this agreement, and they put parklets in front of their businesses, although of course anyone from the public is allowed to access the space no matter what it is in front of. Because parklets are a fairly expensive endeavor and investment, only richer businesses, partnerships, and corporations will be able to subsidize them in front of their businesses.

The topic then poses the questions, although parklets are to be made accessible to the public, who is getting access to these parklets? What neighborhoods are they being built in? Do parklets follow neighborhoods with rich or poor, of what race and nationality? The partnership between private and public interests in parklet creation and maintenance shines light on the fact that the private affordability of parklets, which can range anywhere from \$15,000 to \$50,000 is a lot for a business to take on financially. The time and energy put in to the creation process is also exhaustive. The creation of parklets is an expensive venture, one likely more accessible to richer companies, and richer businesses, with more expensive products making them richer, generally are situated in areas where residents are of a higher socioeconomic class.

My research seeks to assess the accessibility and creation of parklets in Los Angeles and San Francisco, because of the lack of parklets in Los Angeles in comparison

to San Francisco. I have found little research on the accessibility of implementation of parklets, but I do believe the research leads to questioning about the equity and democracy of the application and installation processes. The research of public and private partners in the business of creating parklets rarely mentions the fact that parklets are a hefty expense for many businesses. For this reason, parklets in both cities will be addressed, as well as their process to implementation. Parklets are an important and valued part of urban open space because of the benefits that the literature points out, but my research will focus on the equity of parklets as an urban green space, because they are beneficial and no community deserves them more than another.

Background

A parklet will be defined, for the purpose of this study, as the extension of the sidewalk or the attachment to the curb that allows a public space in which pedestrians can utilize space that might previously have been used for parking cars. The National Association of City Transportation Officials defines them as:

Parklets are public seating platforms that convert curbside parking spaces into vibrant community spaces. Also known as street seats or curbside seating, parklets are the product of a partnership between the city and local businesses, residents, or neighborhood associations. Most parklets have a distinctive design that incorporates seating, greenery, and/or bike racks and accommodate unmet demand for public space on thriving neighborhood retail streets or commercial areas. (National Association of City Transportation Officials, 2017)

While the definition cited above encompasses more specific details that parklets often incorporate, it is too narrow because it only includes a certain amount of different uses. Parklets can be used for other interactive uses as well, such as engaging with art, exhibits, exercise machines, and a variety of other things.

Pavement to Parks, an organization that helps to create San Francisco's city parklets and advocate on the behalf of their improvement says similar things, but with a less rigid feel.

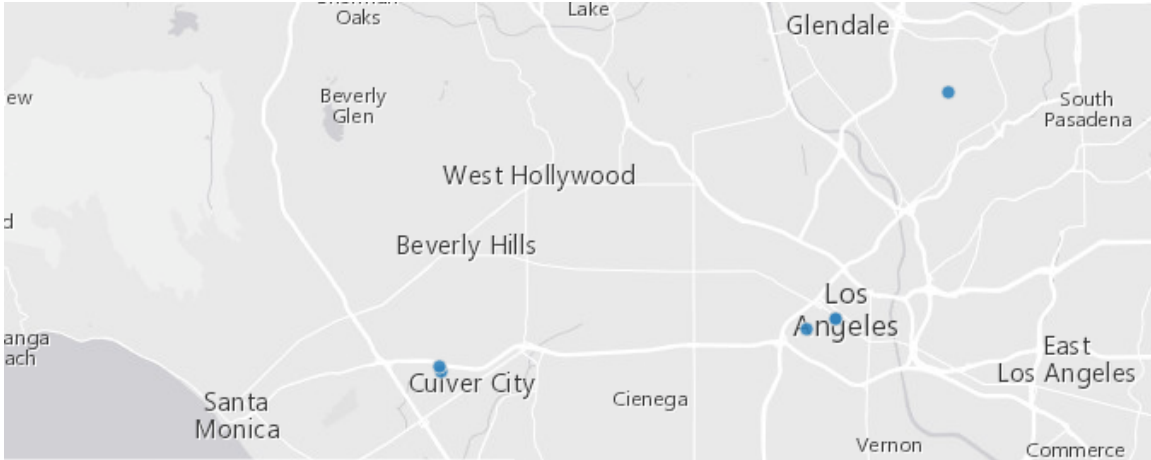
Parklets repurpose two to three parking stalls along a block as a space for people to relax, drink a cup of coffee, and enjoy the city around them. Parklets do this by building out a platform into the parking lane so that the grade of the sidewalk gets carried out into the parking lane. On the platform, benches, planters, landscaping, bike parking, café tables and chairs come together to provide a welcoming new public space. (Pavement to Parks, 2010)

Pavement to Parks recognizes a wider variety of elements in parklets that results in the capturing of the essence of leisure and relaxation that parklets are meant to give off. This feeling is meant to be a positive one, and also shows that this definition is a bit biased.

The first definition used for parklets is also biased towards the creation of parklets.

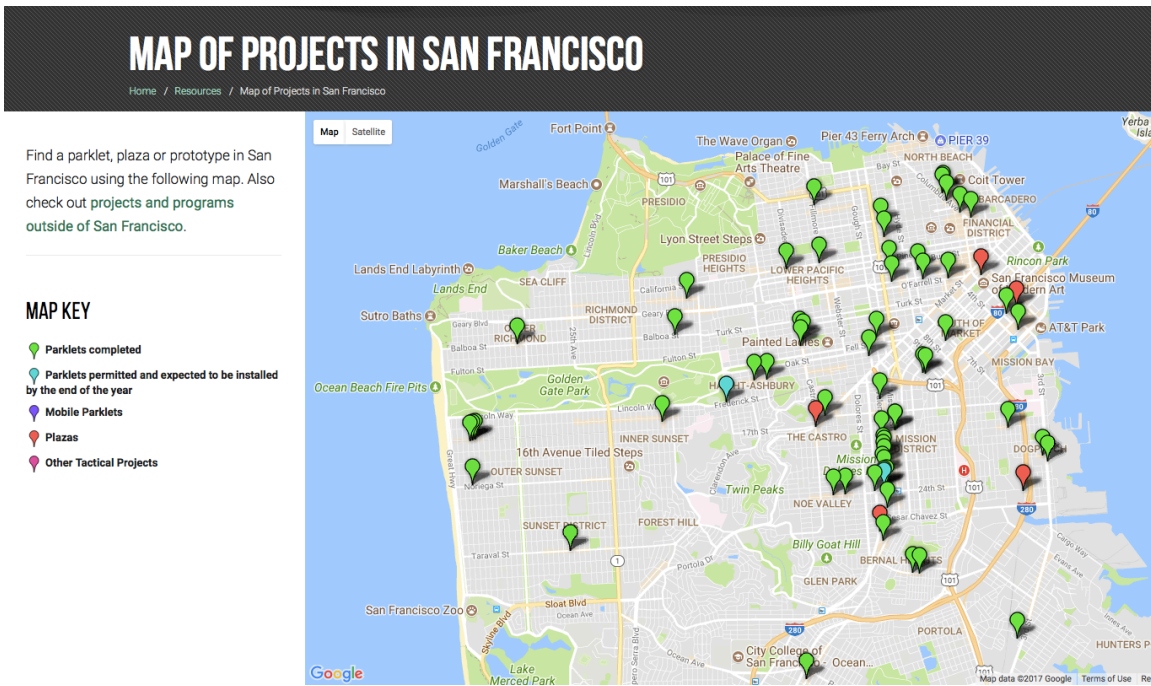
Taking from both of these definitions in this study, a parklet will be defined as the extension of the sidewalk or the attachment to the curb that allows a public space in which pedestrians can utilize space that might previously have been used for parking cars.

The process of creation of parklets is similar in both San Francisco and Los Angeles. Generally, the private investor will fill out a rigid application to whichever city they are applying for their parklet in, including information about the plan, zoning, dimensions, and partners for designing. This is shown in Appendix C, an example of the Los Angeles application process. Fig. 3 shows where the current parklets of Los Angeles are located. Important notes are that there must be demonstrated community support and that there has to be a projected type of usage and reason that the parklet is beneficial.



History of Parklets in Los Angeles and San Francisco

In 2005, a group called Rebar opened the first temporary parklet to the public. This consisted of a bit of foliage and a few seats, and they paid the parking fee to rent out the space for the day. They watched how people reacted to the space, and the parklet was born (Smart Growth America, 2013).



Parklets were first created permanently in San Francisco, and San Francisco is now home to over 50 parklets throughout the city, a map of which is shown in Fig. 1.

After the first few parklets were completed a temporary permit specifically for parklets was created (Mays and Meron, 2012) and in January of 2013 the Department of Public Works Director's Order no. 180921 established guidelines for the approval and installation of parklets and accessibility requirements (San Francisco Planning Department, 2013). (Christensen, 2014)

This way the process could be more fully democratic and systematic, making it so that all parklet applicants would go through the same process, and be subjected to the same standards. The current San Francisco application process and a comparison with the Los Angeles system for application are discussed in my findings section, with graphics of both of the parklet implementation processes. It is important to note in the story of the first parklets that parklets were at first created by a private entity, as well.

Rebar is a private group, and the idea for parklets and their first stages, although temporary, did not come from the public.

The institutionalization of the parklet is a good example of how a guerrilla action became a social movement, which in turn became incorporated into official public planning that then set rules to make parklets or other forms of urban commons enduring, transparent, democratically accountable and organized to serve a wider population in the city. (Bradley, 2015)

So while we know that the history of parklets has a private beginning, from a group that is working as its own enterprise, the process of creating parklets is now taken over by the public. In the article cited, Karin Bradley views this as a good thing; discussing how movements and policy change can occur from private motives in to the public sphere. While this may have good parts to it as Bradley discusses, there is also a tension that is created between public and private ownership and creation of space.

Los Angeles has a vastly different story; parklets are not as much of an urban staple, despite being in the same state of California. Parklets are still a fairly new phenomenon for Los Angeles, and parklets are not nearly as abundant as in San Francisco. The first parklets designed in Los Angeles were the Spring street parklets. In September 2011, the Los Angeles city council proposed the parklets in coordination with the Departments of Planning, Transportation, and Public Works, as well as UCLA. The same groups also quickly planned ones in Highland Park and El Sereno, and four parklets were up by and open by February 2013. (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2013) Since this time, Los Angeles has sustained six permanent parklets in the city, which are mapped out in Fig. 3. While Los Angeles has a larger population than San Francisco, the lower number of parklets could be attributed to the fact that the group that started parklets is based in San Francisco, as well as that was their birthplace in general, as mentioned in the above section about the history in San Francisco.

Policy Regarding Parklets

The two policies most crucial to the parklet design process are San Francisco's The Final Better Streets Plan adopted in 2010 and Los Angeles's Complete Streets Plan from Jose Huizar. The Complete Streets Plan is a chapter in the City of Los Angeles Mobility Plan from 2014. These policies both pertain to how parklets are created and why they matter.

The Final Better Streets Plan, adopted in 2010 but put in to action in early 2011, demonstrates the need and policy proposal for livable streets in San Francisco. With a multitude of goals, parklets can help realize making a space for public life, extensively greening, using parking lanes creatively and creating pedestrian-priority designs. The

plan mostly refers to “pocket parks” rather than calling them parklets as to incorporate other types of small parks that add to a varying street design as well. Technical dimensions and logistics are mentioned to help applicants to build a parklet that the city would approve of.

Los Angeles’s Complete Streets Manual from 2014 details the ideal use and benefit of parklets as well as similar guidelines for creation. Both plans require a buffer between the cars. Los Angeles requires 4 feet of a buffer space while San Francisco’s plan only requires 2 feet, possibly allowing for a larger parklet. Benefits and praise for the creation of parklets are stressed in the plan.

Parklets are an important interim design that can provide necessary public space for pedestrian, bicycle and other non-vehicular uses. Parklets are valuable at locations where narrow or congested sidewalks prevent the full utilization of public space. They can be installed at the request of local businesses and residents to expand seating capacity in a certain area. In return for the approval to construct a parklet, local property owners are often responsible for initial capital and maintenance costs. Parklets provide a unique opportunity to increase non-vehicular public space while also promoting and supporting local businesses. (City of Los Angeles, 2014)

Notice that this also states that parklets are interim, something not seen in San Francisco’s policy that emphasizes the more sustained passion for parklets in San Francisco because it was the place of the first parklet. All together, the policies have quite a bit in common with each other and are very comparable in what the city expects from applicants and expects for their parklets.

Parklet Usage Studies

Many studies have been done of the success in usage of parklets. There is a high quantity of these studies regarding San Francisco parklets, and still a few studies about

the ones in Los Angeles. Their methodological frame works are important to consider when doing a study of a similar topic matter. Because both of the chosen studies (one from each city) are primarily about usage, there is less of their methodology that relates to this study, but it is important to frame this project in the context of others, as my research goes past usage and in to the application and permitting processes.

A study of San Francisco's parklet usage was done by students at the University of California, Berkeley, called Public Perception of San Francisco's Parklets: Divisadero Cluster. This study is particularly relatable to my work because one of the three parklets that the study focuses on is the Mojo Bicycle Café Parklet, although I chose this parklet independently of this study. Their methods included four parts: street surveys, traffic and user counts, observations, and long interviews with business owners and managers. The first three seemed primarily used as methods to answer the question of who and how many people are using parklets and when and how are they using them. This leaves long interviews. Long interviews conducted do not seem to work their way in to their findings well. There is precedent for use of business owner interviews in parklet studies though, as we see here. Students mention this method, saying, "Long-interviews with managers of businesses that sponsor parklets: Lastly, long interviews were conducted with managers of each of the businesses that host a parklet. These interviews were gathered to contribute to the varied perspective of the users of the parklet." (Agoe, 2015) Interview findings are then integrated in to the findings from the two other qualitative approaches to study. Interviews are not the central focus of this study, but they are the only place in which we get to see the opinion of business owners and managers in this area. They seem to help in the qualitative methods by discerning how many people are patrons that use the parklet.

The amount of patrons to the business that are in front of or near parklets that utilize the public space has the ability to affect the private or public perception of the space.

A different study of Los Angeles's parklet usage was done on the Spring St. parklets at UCLA. In a study also about usage, the methodology was very similar to the previous study discussed in San Francisco. Their methods were threefold; activity mapping, pedestrian and cyclist counts, and surveys/interviews for parklet users, pedestrians, and business owners in the immediate area of the parklet. I was particularly interested again in the business owner interviews, explained more in depth by the study here: "Businesses included food serving establishments, retail, and service. These interviews additionally describe the perceived strengths and weaknesses of Spring Street as a place of business. Most importantly, business operator interviews gauged attitudes toward the neighborhood and business patterns before and after the parklet installation." (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2013) Going further in to the survey questions (in Appendix D) the survey takers are steered towards answers about clientele and patron usage; how parklets are affecting their business. I used the importance of these questions in developing my questions, as I realize that the amount of business or the effect of patronage upon a business owner can affect or sway their answers depending on whether the parklet near their business is helping or hindering them.

Methodology

This project will incorporate a qualitative approach to assess the creation process of parklets in primarily urban areas. The parklets chosen are in Los Angeles and San Francisco because San Francisco is where the parklet was first created and it now has over 50 parklets, while Los Angeles only has six completed parklets to date, meaning that

San Francisco and Los Angeles contrast well because although they both do have sustained and permanent parklets, but San Francisco has a deeper rooted history of this. This will allow for a point of contrast and better answer my research question because the two cities are in very different places in the parklet creation process, and can better answer the question of whether or not public vs. private partnerships benefit the creation of parklets.

The process for creation of parklets in Los Angeles and San Francisco does vary in practice. In SF, Parklets are considered a public space but individuals or the private sector must invest in them initially, and work with the city to create them. This facilitates a tension of ownership and allows for barriers to the process of creation in parklets. The process relies more heavily on public ownership in Los Angeles, which could be projected as a positive for public space. My research question is: what are the barriers in San Francisco and Los Angeles to creating parklets and how can policies regarding living and usable streets in both cities change to make parklets more accessible in creation?

Both studies methodology of previous studies in the background section included interviews, but because neither was primarily about creation or implementation of parklets, and rather about usage, I can't rely on similar instrument specifics. I utilized the interview method for qualitative research in my own study, and ensure the inclusion of business owners as my subjects, considering their close physical proximity to the area of study, and frequent involvement in the application process. Parklets and cities were chosen to allow research that is applicable to cities in different stages of the parklet planning process and diversify partners involved in the parklet creation process. While there is a limitation that comes with this, I think it made for a more easily generalizable

project in the end. I used a qualitative approach in my research project, conducting nine interviews and utilizing policies already in place about parklet implementation. The interviews and document analysis of the policies are both qualitative methods. I analyzed my interviews coding for subject that occurred multiple times; usage, public space, private space, differences between San Francisco and Los Angeles, similarities between San Francisco and Los Angeles, benefits of parklets, disadvantages of parklets, standardization, and individualization. My methods will allow for insight in to the equitability and democratization in the public vs. private tension enveloped in the parklet creation process between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Subject Design and Choice

For this project, three parklets in each city were chosen to study. In San Francisco the Luna Reinne Gallery, Fillmore Stoop, and the Mojo Bicycle Cafe host the chosen parklets. The parklet host is the private entity, business, or company investing, implementing, and maintaining the parklet. These were chosen because they were all created in different years and have a variety of different types of businesses owning them, meaning their data would show a more varying and fuller picture of the parklet creation process. In Los Angeles, the three parklets include the Spring St parklets, the Hope St parklets, and the Motor Ave parklets. These were chosen because the information on their design and players involved in the process is publicly available and accessible, as well as the fact that there are very few sustained parklets in Los Angeles.

Qualitative Methodological Approach

The methods of research are qualitative. I conducted interviews with people involved in the design, creation, and installation process of all six chosen parklets. I also reviewed the policies for parklets in San Francisco and Los Angeles in an effort to compare and contrast the two, finding differences that might lead to discrepancies in implementation. Interview questions that were asked to different subjects are included in Appendix B. The answers to these questions were meant to correspond to my research question, discovering the differences in the Los Angeles and San Francisco parklet creation systems to draw conclusions about why parklets have been so successful in San Francisco, but have often failed in Los Angeles. I also looked at both policies for parklet creation in San Francisco and Los Angeles so that the process can be compared, a foundation to draw conclusions about how policy can improve going forward. I coded interviews for certain themes that occur throughout in an effort to find a pattern in my qualitative research. These themes included, public vs. private ownership, differences between parklets in both cities, benefits of parklets, usage of parklets, and standardization versus creation of parklets.

I anticipated that the limitations of this study would be trouble accessing the groups I needed to interview; not because I couldn't find their information, but because they would not all reply to my inquiries for interview. Because I have not chosen the parklets randomly, there is some researcher bias because I chose each parklet for a specific reason. In order to keep some constant variables present, I accept this limitation. I was barely able to choose parklets in Los Angeles, because there are really only three permanent ones, while in San Francisco, I simply picked them by keeping them in a close proximity to each other and using three differing types of investors in the parklet for

variation. I accept this limitation because I think both are important to look at to offer data about different types of cities in both stages, because as cities implement parklets worldwide, they will encounter both stages of this process. I also knew that there might be limitations based off bias of respondents to my inquiry for interview. Not all people emailed me back, and I hand-chose people to interview, so there is nothing random about it. Because I did this I attempted to get an even percentage of people from my different subject categories, to garner more varied data.

Findings and Analysis

Policy Analysis

The first method used was an in depth comparison and analysis of policies surrounding parklet implementation in the two cities of comparison. This involved both of the applications for parklet implementation in San Francisco and Los Angeles, as that is the primary policy enacted by both cities regarding parklets. This results in a categorical comparison of multiple sections in the policy: parklet program goals, roles of stakeholders, location criteria, funding and cost, and application process. San Francisco's program includes a much lengthier section regarding post-installation practices such as removal, upkeep, and parklet impact. Through this policy analysis, I found that San Francisco had a much more sustained and robust parklet program, as shown through their more guiding and detailed policy. The most updated policies are the San Francisco Parklet Manual Version 2, from 2015, and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation Parklet Application, also from 2015. The discussed manual from SF is in its second edition, while LA's is in its first. The next paragraphs will compare the policies by the previously outlined categories.

Similar Parklet Program Goals

The parklet program goals outlined in the below table. They are matched with goals that seemed essentially related in what they are trying to complete, but not all pairs have matches because San Francisco outlines five goals, while Los Angeles outlines seven.

| San Francisco Parklet Manual | Los Angeles Parklet Application |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reimagine the potential of city streets | Convert underused or redundant street space into a people place. |
| Foster neighborhood interaction | Emphasize streets as venues for social interaction and vibrancy. |
| Encourage non-motorized transportation | Foster future investment in more capital-intensive infrastructure to support walking and bicycling. |
| Support local businesses | Encourage increased levels of walking and bicycling which, in turn, support local business communities. |
| Encourage pedestrian safety and activity | Increase safety for people who walk, bike, and take transit. |
| | Create venues for community gathering, events, and celebrations. |
| | Support high-quality streetscape experience and improve the day-to-day life of the street. |

The table shows that the first four points are fairly similar to each other in both policies. In general, San Francisco’s policies are broader and Los Angeles cites specific examples. This includes being specific about social celebrations and events, as well as improvement of detailed day-to-day activities of residents and pedestrians.

These differences matter between the two of the policies because it lays the foundation for the fact that the city’s goals for the parklet programs are very similar. This sets up implementation and what happens with parklets to be similar to each other in both

cities as well. Both cities rely on their parklet programs to increase economies of businesses in areas with parklets, increase social interaction, encourage the safety and increase in modes of transportation other than driving single-occupancy vehicles, and improve the vitality of livable streets in urban areas. Despite similar goals, differences become apparent throughout the following categories of relationship in the two policies.

San Francisco has Deeper Description of Stakeholders

Stakeholders in the process of parklet creation are varied between the two policies in both San Francisco and Los Angeles. The essential stakeholder in the parklet process is called the project sponsor in San Francisco's policy and a community partner in Los Angeles. The huge difference in the jobs of these two roles is that the project sponsor in SF has to be responsible for community outreach, as is stated in the role description of the parklet applicant. Los Angeles also broadly lists the requirement of maintenance of the parklet; while San Francisco tells the applicant they retain liability for the parklet as a public space, and keeping it safely and attractively maintained. In LA, it does mention that having community outreach or a connection with the community is preferred and would most likely make for a better application. SF then lays out the process, and the roles of the city departments, as depicted in the flow chart of Figure 2. Players in the process include The San Francisco Planning Department, The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, and San Francisco Public Works. The visual display as well as detailed descriptions of what groups do at each part of the parklet process helps to give applicants an idea of what the application process will look like and who they will be working with. The informational deficit that this is in comparison to the LA parklet application gives SF applicants an advantage. SF's policy also gives a step-by-step time

line from conception to post-construction, allowing the applicant to get a full view of what committing to the parklet process means in practice.

The differences in this step of the policy may seem insignificant, but they are an indicator of the longer and more established program in San Francisco. They begin to point to the fact that San Francisco has established many successful and permanent parklets through this policy and application process. Los Angeles has truly only sustained six different locations of parklets. This can be attributed to a lack of clarity or information in the process, causing disillusionment and confusion in a parklet applicant or stakeholder. This is not to say that the LA policy is worse, just that it might lack some of the age and nuance in this section of parklet making, a section that might be beneficial to parklet applicants to have a full understanding of.

Stricter Location Criteria in Los Angeles

One of the most crucial parts of the parklet process is choosing the best location possible for the parklet. An outline of requirements is included in the table below, again with comparisons between the two policies when the criteria are similar. While these criteria are technical, they also deal with city street policy that differs between SF and LA.

| San Francisco Parklet Manual | Los Angeles Parklet Application |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Speed limit must be less than 25 mph on the street. Streets over this speed limit may be considered. | Speed limit must be less than 25 mph on the street. Streets with speed limits of 30 or 35 mph will require additional permitting and buffering. |
| Parklets must replace space meant for parking. | Parklet sites must be at least one parking spot abutting the traffic-direction side of the street. |
| Parklets may be installed in front of a driveway if the applicant owns the property served by driveway, or | Parklet sites must provide adequate clearance for automobiles to turn in and |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>obtains written permission from the property owner. If the driveway has been abandoned or no longer provides access to off-street parking, the driveway may be leveled as part parklet project.</p> | <p>out of nearby driveways.</p> |
| <p>Parklets cannot replace blue zones or red curb zones. They may replace green, yellow, or white curb zones. Parklets are not permitted in bus zones. They may be located adjacent to bus zones.</p> | <p>Parklets cannot replace red curb zones. Parklets can replace white or green curb zones. Yellow, blue, and bus zones may be considered with prior approval.</p> |
| <p>Parklets may not be constructed over utility access panels, manhole covers, storm drains, or fire hydrant shut-off valves.</p> | <p>Parklets are not permitted within 15 feet of a fire hydrant, over utility or manhole covers, and cannot impede access to public utilities, access panels, valves, building standpipes, and other features.</p> |
| <p>Parklets are allowed on hills of less than 5% grade, or more if determined to be ADA accessible.</p> | <p>Nearby land uses should include food service, retail, transit facilities, and cultural institutions to support the natural functions of a viable Parklet site. Adjacent businesses or other uses are also key partners to serve as stewards of moveable furniture.</p> |
| <p>The City may reject parklet proposals that conflict with upcoming streetscape improvements. Parklets installed on streets scheduled for future improvements will likely need to be removed prior to the improvements being constructed.</p> | <p>Parklets work best in locations with existing pedestrian activity, and/or where more pedestrian-accessible public space would be helpful to accommodate current foot traffic.</p> |
| <p>Parklets must be at least one parking space away from the corner. Special considerations may be made for some already-existing physical barriers between the parklet and the corner.</p> | |

One difference in the table shown above is the allowance of parklets in a blue curb zone. In both cities, a blue zone is the same thing: disabled parking. Parklets are also not permitted in bus zones in San Francisco, when they are permitted in bus zones in Los Angeles. This shows a large commitment to putting parklets in wherever they fit in Los Angeles. This might be due to the more limited number of parklets and people applying

for parklets in Los Angeles; there is more space in these zones for them because there are so few. Parklets are in a boom in San Francisco though, and allowing them to be in these zones may force city streets to completely change based off the parklet. Parklets are never meant to completely change a city street, but be an indicator towards change that streets are becoming more livable. They were never meant to take up an entire street, and this is not reflected in the goals of the policies that were examined earlier.

The bottom of the table above shows many differences in the policies, where columns no longer share colors and can't be related in location criteria. Most of these are simply based off differences in the two cities. For example, San Francisco misses grade on hills as a constraint, which is understandable considering how many more hills there are in SF in comparison to Los Angeles. Other than zone differences, the first five criteria listed here are fairly similar, and its very possible that Los Angeles looked at San Francisco's requirements as an example for their own. The last two criterions for Los Angeles are broad, essentially saying that parklets should be placed where there are already people and businesses. This should be assumed, as a parklet would never thrive on a street without this. Furthermore, parklets are meant to alleviate stress on foot and car traffic by being placed on busier streets in denser neighborhoods. Their goals reflect this location, as they focus on places where there is a large quantity of foot traffic and public use. Rare are places where this occurs without businesses.

The most important finding in this section of the policy is that there are more constraints on areas to place parklets in San Francisco. This is interesting as there is a larger quantity of parklets in San Francisco, but signifies the push to put parklets in wherever possible in Los Angeles, as the program is a fledgling stage in comparison to

SF. Driveway and corner constraints in the policy are also intensified in San Francisco's policy. This, too, indicates the maturity of San Francisco's policy. Possibly in the next few years, Los Angeles will find issue with placing parklets in areas that San Francisco would not approve of. But because the program is newer, constraints on location criteria are not quite as extensive.

Funding is more Accessible in San Francisco

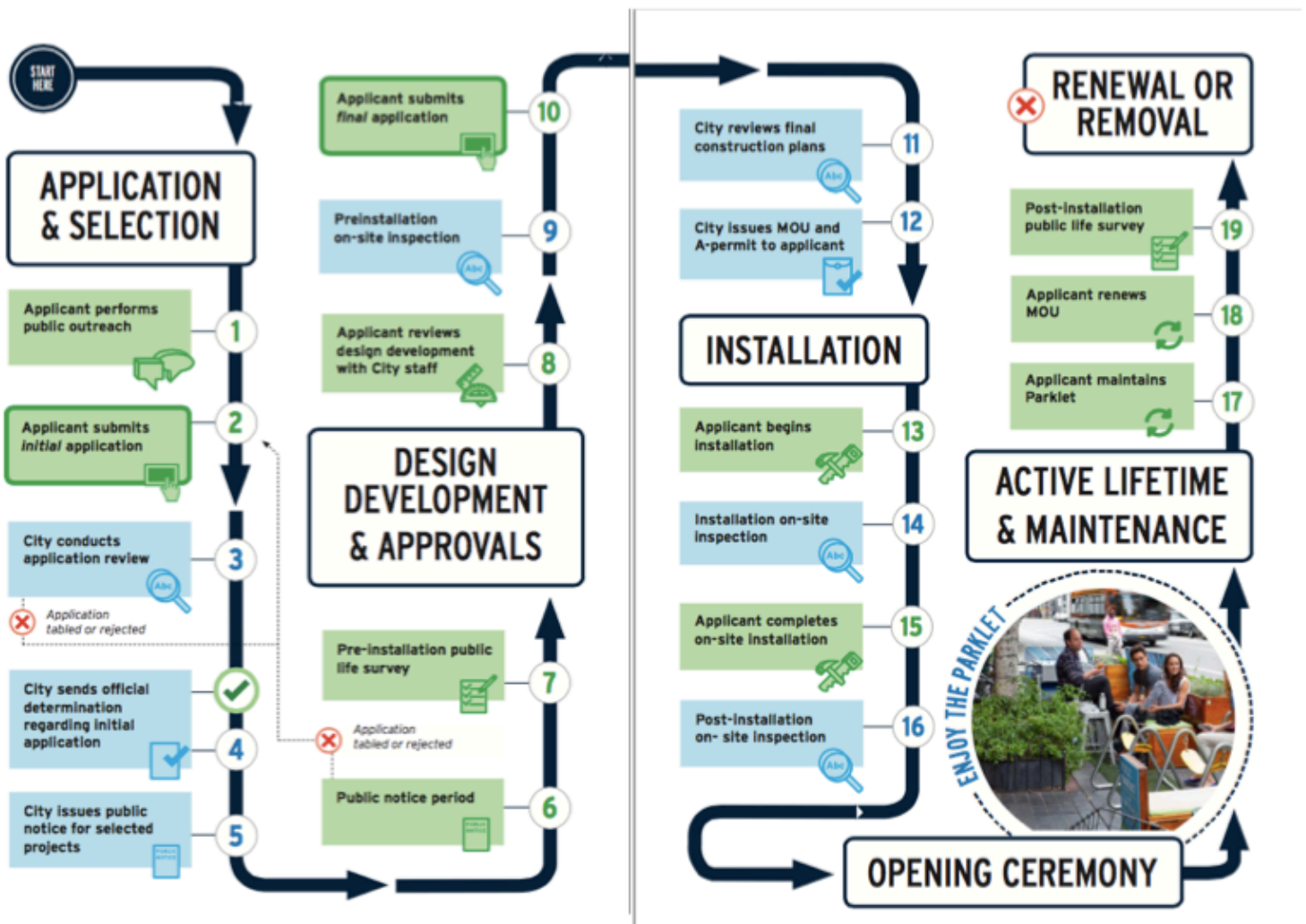
Funding and cost in these two policies is fairly similar. San Francisco policy states that funding must be completely covered by the project sponsor; the applicant. This policy lays the foundation for tension between public and private desires. "While they are funded and maintained by neighboring businesses, residents, and community organizations, they are publicly accessible and open to all." (Pavement to Parks, 2015) The parklet applicant will incur all funding and spending, although raising funds from any sources possible is absolutely welcome. The manual does not provide suggestions for parklet funding.

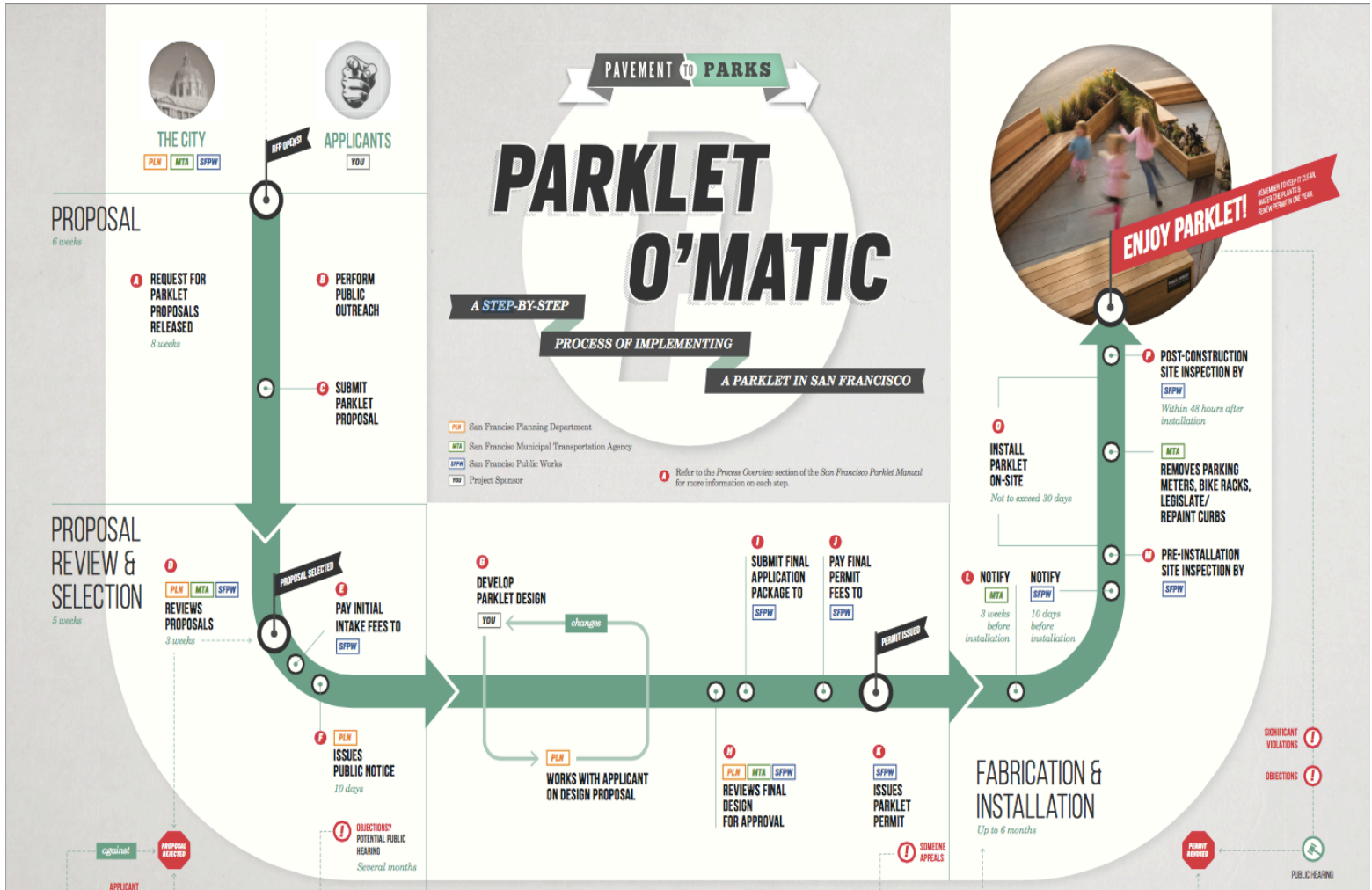
This contrasts with parklet policy in Los Angeles. Funding is given an entire section and laid out for the applicant in an effort to help them receive funding and give them avenues to go through to get funding. Community partners are allowed to completely fund parklets on their own, but can also apply to grants from outside organizations and seek pro bono professional help for design and construction. Suggestions of where to go for these things are given in the policy. Material donations can also be provided by the City of Los Angeles. The city retains a kit of parts created by architects in an effort to standardize the parklet design process and make the process more accessible to a variety of community partners. Funding and cost wise, this is a

benefit. It is easy to figure out how to design a parklet once location and permits are in place. It lowers the cost for an architect or designer’s time, as well as their cost of materials, making a parklet a more affordable endeavor.

Similar Application Processes

The application process for Los Angeles and San Francisco are outlined in graphics below. The first process is from Los Angeles, and the second from San Francisco. Both policies go in to greater detail of time periods, stakeholders, and criteria throughout the application process within the text of the policy, but for review and comparison the graphics outlining the processes suffice.





In total, the process to apply for parklets to both cities is fairly similar. Small differences appear throughout. In San Francisco, funding is required earlier in the process, just after the proposal is selected. The graphic for San Francisco explains the appeal and denial process, while Los Angeles does not in the graphic, but the process is similar in both cities. Pre-installation site inspection occurs earlier in the Los Angeles process, still when the parklet is being designed. Site renewal or removal processes are also included in the Los Angeles graphic and process, while this is discussed in a

different section of San Francisco’s policy. The application processes are very similar, and most likely have been reviewed by city officials in conjunction with each other.

Differences throughout the policies are significant because they lead to a clearly more established and robust parklet implementation program in San Francisco. While many policies are the same between SF and LA, differences in roles of stakeholders, location criteria, and funding show the maturity of San Francisco’s program. It is important to note that goals and application processes between the two cities are fairly similar, in an effort to assess whether or not these goals are met and if the application processes are still accessible in both cities. These differences were found through interviews.

Interviews

The methodology of this project also focused on qualitative interviews, meant to collect data about the creation process of public parklets, a comparison of the systems to implementation in San Francisco and Los Angeles, and the importance of parklets on an urban area. Interviews were conducted with eight stakeholders in the parklet design process, all who had a hand in designing, financing and/or implementing one or more parklets in one of the chosen cities.

Parklet Interview Subjects

| Funder/Community Supporter | Owner/Sponsor | Architects/Artists |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lisa Craypo | Anonymous Parklet Owner | Daveed Kapoor |
| Ellen Riotto | Olivia Ongpin | Rob Berry |
| Anonymous Community Sponsor | | Reuben Rude |

Interviewees on Los Angeles parklets included Lisa Craypo, who worked to write grant proposals for the parklets on Spring St from the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation, Daveed Kapoor, who worked with the Los Angeles Department of Transportation to design parklets and design parklet kits around LA, Rob Berry, who worked with Kapoor and LADOT to also design the parklet kit of parts and the Motor Ave parklet and Ellen Riotto, the executive director of the South Park Business Improvement District and community partner of the Hope St parklet in downtown LA.

Interviewees who worked on San Francisco parklets included; Reuben Rude who was an artist that helped to design installations for the parklet in front of the Lune Reinne Gallery, Olivia Ongpin is the owner of Luna Reinne Gallery; she implemented and maintains the parklet in front of the gallery, an anonymous parklet owner of a San Francisco parklet; who implemented and maintained a parklet in front of his business as well, and an anonymous community partner and supporter of parklets in San Francisco.

All eight interviews proved to be helpful in some manner based off the nature of the work that each subject did. I analyzed my interviews coding for topics and subjects that occurred multiple times; usage, public space, private space, differences between San Francisco and Los Angeles, similarities between San Francisco and Los Angeles, benefits of parklets, disadvantages of parklets, standardization, and individualization. Compiling responses to these interviews and coding them allowed four key findings emerge.

1. The ways that parklet implementation functions in San Francisco and Los Angeles are very different. San Francisco ultimately has a more private process, while Los Angeles' process relies more on the public.
2. Parklets are useful to urban areas. The ways that they are useful varies from slowing down cars to the addition of green space to a possibility for physical activity, and much more.

3. Parklets are at an earlier stage in Los Angeles in comparison to San Francisco. They do have the ability to flourish in Los Angeles, but have succeeded less often, and less permanently.
4. The parklet implementation process has more standardization in Los Angeles, due to the kit of parts, but less creativity and individuality.

These findings will be discussed and analyzed in their own sections to inform policy recommendations between the cities. The four findings were relevant to my research question and to differences in access, policy, and implementation in San Francisco and Los Angeles, but much more was mentioned in the interviews about parklets. More information that cannot fit in the findings is included in my limitations section after policy recommendations.

Parklets as Private vs. Public Space

Parklet implementation is different between San Francisco and Los Angeles, despite fairly similar policies. Through interviews, I found that six of the eight people interviewed commented on the public or private ownership over the space, and which the space ends up being more of, depending on which city they are discussing. Interviewees seemed to consider San Francisco's process very private, with the city as the least important player. Still, anonymous community parklet supporter says, "Parklets are a great example of public-private partnerships, where the City permits members of the public to build and maintain spaces that better serve their needs and those of their customers." Using a parklet for private needs and customers is a private benefit to a parklet.

Architect Daveed Kapoor said, "I think that's a huge issue with San Francisco especially because most of theirs are sponsored by a restaurant or a fronting business. They're not supposed to serve directly to them but it happens...they can't kick anyone

out though, but it can appear to be private... I don't have huge problem with it though because a parking space is already a private space." The appearance of parklets as private space can make the public perceive them as such. Olivia Ongpin, owner of the Lune Reinne Gallery and their parklet discussed putting an inflatable kiddie pool for her kid in their parklet, as well as watching Warriors games and television shows with friends and neighbors. While their parklet is considered public space, both of these events are for local use, and may not be inviting to pedestrians passing the parklet. Ongpin still considers the process of implementing a parklet, "An opportunity for a private citizen to contribute to the public." An anonymous parklet owner interviewed, sees parklets as private spaces. "I think that they are expensive to install and labor intensive to maintain. There should be a way to make a profit as a return for that service." The interviewee goes on to state, "It's [the parklet] private. The city doesn't do anything but ask for proof of insurance and an annual payment for the permit." Furthermore, they state "Customers use it most. I wish that I could have told people that it was for patrons only, but it still worked fine for me." This owner wishes it were almost more private than the process is now. In San Francisco, the parklet is a more private venture than Los Angeles's implementation process is perceived as.

It was helpful that this was a program that [the City of Los Angeles] also wanted to see done...I think it's really important to have that public-private partnership. So, making the permitting process simple, straightforward, streamlined is really important. And that's something that the policy can reflect. I don't think it's sustainable to expect that the city funds all of these projects, but they can be instrumental in not attaching a hefty cost for every permit pulled. There are ways in which they can be solid partners.

When considering the policy in Los Angeles it is more to the public side of implementation. Grant writer Lisa Craypo denies the private nature of Los Angeles's parklet system saying, "There's always a public element... The city provides the land; a business might provide money to develop a parklet and may do maintenance. It's often a partnership, never just a private venture." Ellen Riotto comments on the location choices of Los Angeles parklets as a factor in the public vs. private nature of space. "Because it's in front of four businesses...all of the patrons and residents in the district make use of it... It's definitely regarded as public space." Craypo mentions this as well, "When they appear to be an extension of a business, they aren't necessarily as welcoming to the general public." Businesses in front of a parklet can definitely have an effect on whether or not they are seen as public space. As the two different parklet owners from San Francisco discussed with their parklets, the spaces in front of their businesses often appear private.

Both Craypo and Riotto further explain the importance of the public in the parklet process. Riotto says, "It was helpful that this was a program that [the City of Los Angeles] also wanted to see done...I think it's really important to have that public-private partnership. So, making the permitting process simple, straightforward, streamlined is really important. And that's something that the policy can reflect. I don't think it's sustainable to expect that the city funds all of these projects, but they can be instrumental in not attaching a hefty cost for every permit pulled. There are ways in which they can be solid partners." Craypo brings the public good up, saying, "Something that assures genuine community engagement to ensure they are meeting the community's needs, not a business needs or a local elected needs. So there's a voice for the residents to talk about

what they need.” To both Riotto and Craypo, a crucial element to parklet design and implementation is a voice from the public. Community engagement is crucial as they are the users of the park; a parklet is a public space.

Kapoor stated in his interview that parklets should continue to be private in Los Angeles, with the possibility for further privatization. “I would make parklets privatizable... and I think this would increase the number of applications [in Los Angeles].” This position is intriguing, the idea that some parklets could be privatized is one that helps to reach the goal of a more livable and safe street, as more parklets could be implemented in Los Angeles, similar to San Francisco. A goal of the parklet programs is also to create public interaction and gathering, which might not happen if parklets are only meant for business patrons. The goals of the programs bring up whether or not parklets are successful in their goals, and if they are useful or not.

Parklets are Useful to Urban Areas

Through interviews, it was evident that most consider parklets as useful to urban areas. Seven of the eight interviewees mentioned the importance of parklets for urban areas. Parklets are often contentious in the fact that they remove viable parking space in cities where there is already a lack of parking. It is the parklet program’s goals that driving gives was to foot traffic and public transportation. Parklets can support this, along with other benefits to a street and city. Reuben Rude, designer of the Luna Reinne Gallery parklet, says, “I think there’s too much driving in San Francisco anyways... If I ran the political world, there would be a lot more collective stuff like that.” Craypo’s opinion is similar; “I don’t think parklets have a negative act on the city. I think that they only have positive impacts.” One of these impacts is making streets safer. Kapoor says,

“The presence of the bold colors [on the parklet] and the parklet... made everyone slow down. It really worked. Everywhere we’ve done them I’ve seen it.” Architect Rob Berry agrees with Kapoor, “I think generally they improve the safety of the street. Generally, the more types of activity you have on a street, the safer they are.” The presence of parklets can help to slow car traffic, but also increase foot traffic.

Many interviewees mentioned the benefit of parklets to pedestrians. An anonymous parklet owner states that “[parklets] bring greenery and community to pedestrian space.” Berry also says, “Parklets work really well where there is already some activity and pedestrians. They can amplify that, but they aren’t necessarily going to create it on their own.” Parklets can benefit businesses as well as pedestrians. The same anonymous parklet owner states, “Parklets benefit people by opening up more welcoming, enjoyable spaces for us, which in turn attracts business.” Moreover, parklets can improve social interaction. Craypo says, “It’s so important for communities to have these public gathering spaces. We really need to work on increasing the gambit of public spaces.” Parklets have clearly met goals laid out for them in Los Angeles and San Francisco policy: improving safety and livability, increasing foot traffic, facilitating social interaction, supporting businesses, and increasing beauty of city streets. Parklets are part of a movement to better streets that include all of these benefits. Berry summarizes this; “I think they serve the purpose of shifting the attitude of what the street and what the sidewalk is as public space and hopefully are a way of building activity and interest in the streets that lead to permanent changes in the streets.” Parklets are not necessarily meant to be a permanent solution, but they are meant to push urban design and public space towards a positive change for our streets.

Broadly, parklets are considered a positive addition to the urban fabric. Riotto says about parklets, “It’s an opportunity to infuse some nature in to an otherwise very concrete and urban environment. It creates an aesthetic of a sort of reprieve from the urban landscape.” An anonymous parklet partner also says, “Parklets are a fantastic repurposing of public space to create inviting places for people to relax, recreate and connect.” Craypo mentions, “There’s very little public space in downtown Los Angeles.” The density and commotion of urban space creates a need for parklets because they allow for respite and relaxation, many offering seating and leisure space. Craypo says this of a happy parklet owner, “Then, the café owner was very pleased, and excited for the possibility of additional seating. They didn’t talk about any negative impacts in terms of parking or anything like that.” So, while you do lose parking to parklets, there is a great urban benefit to their installation. Obviously, not all parklets are as successful as others. The lack and frequent removal of parklets and Los Angeles indicates their earlier stage in the city parklet process, which interviewees made clear.

Cities are at Different Stages of the Parklet Process

Interviewees also mentioned the different timing and space of San Francisco and Los Angeles’s parklet movements. Five of the eight interviews referenced the differences between the two, and why San Francisco is at a more advanced stage than LA. Rude says, “San Francisco has a lot of history of letting your free flag fly, and art and everything.” And later adds, “San Francisco definitely has a tradition of letting artists have a space here.” The location and history of San Francisco do play a part of furthering it in the parklet history. It was the city in which parklets were created, so it got a jump-start, and it’s history primes it for public space and art. Ongpin concurs, discussing the differences

between the two cities, “The big difference between SF and LA is that it’s more of a pedestrian city. In LA, you have to put in a seriously concerted effort to find a place to live where you don’t have to get in your car everyday. Because of the way LA sprawls, it might be more difficult to just happen upon something and decide to sit there and trip out for a minute.” Location clearly matters, and the development of Los Angeles towards sprawl has made it difficult for LA’s parklets to flourish.

San Francisco helped us make our program... They gave us their application letter and they were like ‘just change the letterhead’.

Craypo disclosed about the failure of parklets in Los Angeles, saying, “There was some community engagement, but maybe it wasn’t extensive enough.” Community engagement is more thoroughly built in to the policy of San Francisco’s parklets. Craypo does have hope for the future of LA’s streets though, hypothesizing, “As LA does more and more to become less of a car culture, parklets could become much more common in LA.” This is a cyclical change, as parklets create less driving, less driving must create more parklets.

An additional difference is the maturity of the process and acceptance of the city to reviewing parklets. Ongpin says, “The process [in San Francisco] has become much more official and bureaucratic, and I think in some ways a little more daunting than when we did it.” When architect Kapoor was working on parklets in Los Angeles, working with the city was much tougher than Ongpin’s experience with San Francisco. The city was a constant barrier. We couldn’t even get anyone to review it...I wish the city would pay for it and implement it.” Berry expresses a similar opinion; “If there was a way that the public-private partnership didn’t rely so heavily on private funding, if there was more of

a model of the city taking a more financial role in them or constructive role or producing a number of them at one time, that's probably the one thing that would improve the success of the program." Los Angeles interviewees continue to push for a more public process, as heard from Berry and Kapoor. This is expressed because of the struggle for funding and working with the city that they have encountered in the implementation process. The kinks and barriers in implementing parklets are worked out with a longer process, which can be seen in more advanced policies of SF's parklet manual. Kapoor says, "San Francisco helped up make our program... They gave us their application letter and they were like 'just change the letterhead'." San Francisco's advancement can help Los Angeles along as it did here, but the city still must commit to the implementation of parklets and livable streets. Ongpin's outlook is hopeful; "It's well acknowledged that in downtown LA we don't have enough green space. So if it's parklets, if it's green alleys, if it's parks that are built and maintained by private developers but are open to the public, you know, there are various models and this is one of them. And I know that Department of Planning, DOT, Mayor's office, our council office, they have all prioritized public space in downtown." Despite the difference in stages for policies and implementation, Los Angeles may be able to work up to that of San Francisco.

Creativity vs. Standardization

A difference that is displayed in the parklets throughout both cities is that there is much more creativity and individualization in San Francisco's parklets. This is very much due to the kit of parts created for Los Angeles to make parklets with. This creation standardizes the parklet process to make application, funding, and construction easier in Los Angeles, but leaves out art and creativity. This is evident simply by looking at the

pictures in Appendix A, which show the three similar parklets in Los Angeles and three very diverse ones in San Francisco. Just in the ability to have four artist installations that have rotated through the Luna Reinne Gallery parklet shows the greater individuality allowed. Both Kapoor and Berry mentioned this as a theme, which although not a high number of interviewees contributes to the theme of why there might be failure in parklets in Los Angeles and should possibly be a policy change. Kapoor says, “That way any community partner could have a kit of preapproved designs, and they wouldn’t have to go through the two year process of getting materials approved. The city engineers didn’t have the time to deal with it, and didn’t want to entertain custom designs.” Berry similarly states, “In San Francisco, they tend to be each one is custom designed relative to their standards, so [Los Angeles] is more preformed in that way. For a community group that maybe didn’t have the funds, they could still potentially build one.” This standardized process makes it so applicants can go through the process quickly, but if there are no applicants at all, then this does not really matter.

Berry and Kapoor had similar opinions on the fact that Los Angeles needs to have more creative and individual options. Kapoor explicitly discusses this, “They let you do whatever you want [in San Francisco]. I mean, their parklets are custom designed; there are not the same safety features [in comparison to Los Angeles]. They cost more and take up more space...I would encourage more custom stuff.” Berry agrees with the desire for customizable parklets; “I would like to see more opportunity for customization, or a completely customizable version, it’s entirely possible... and will be more feasible as the program grows.” While standardization has made the parklet process simpler for applicants in Los Angeles, there still isn’t enough investment from the city or drive to

create parklets. If there was the availability for greater artistry and creative elements, it is possible that there might be more parklets on the streets of Los Angeles today.

Policy Recommendations

Based off the discrepancy in policies between the two cities and the discrepancy in quantity and quality of parklets, it is clear that Los Angeles's policy on parklets needs to change to increase applicants and continue to further its goals of the parklet program. The individual design of the parklets gives the owner a greater stake in the parklet process. This is likely what creates the feeling of more of a private venture in San Francisco, as found in interviews with stakeholders. I recommend that Los Angeles city officials and parklet policies allows the option for either the use of the kit of parts or the design of one's own parklet. The kit of part does allow for a lower funding option, as well as a clearly public and private partnership. But parklets with it have failed and few have been added, so something has to give. The option to design your own has worked in San Francisco, and could be beneficial here.

Policymakers should stay committed to parklets, as there benefits are part of a larger movement towards safe and livable streets. It is obvious through interviews and literature that parklets can have benefits in dense urban areas, but the city is not committed enough to the parklet program in Los Angeles. While it is viewed as a more public venture here, the city still has to be more committed to its applicants. The allowance of individual designs can show this commitment to the parklet program and to smarter urban design. It will take more time and energy on the city's side to approve, permit, and implement this type of parklet, but the benefits are numerous.

If parklets can gain traction in Los Angeles as they have in San Francisco, as I have found there is a difference, Los Angeles streets will become healthier. This is not necessarily compromising standardization, as it will still be an option, but allowing for growth in the program. Because of the issue found within the differences and maturities of the program, the option of individualization and customization in design is a necessary policy change to push the parklet program to its next stage, and increase public benefit through a higher quantity of parklets.

Limitations

Limitations of this study are mostly found in the limited sample size for interviews in the parklet process. Ideally, city officials would be included in the data and analyses of this study, because of the importance of urban design policy. City officials in both San Francisco and Los Angeles were contacted for interviews, but only one responded, and I was not able to interview them due to time constraints. Two interviewees also failed to send me consent forms, meaning I had to make one of their responses void, and the other anonymous. Investment in my study for these participants must have been low, meaning I could not garner a response to gain consent from them. I also did not receive any replies from stakeholders in the Fillmore Stoop parklet, which I had originally chosen to research. I became much more familiar with the Luna Reinne Gallery parklet and the parklet implementation process in San Francisco. Additionally, Daveed Kapoor and Robert Berry had researched San Francisco parklets and the process in creating a kit of parts for Los Angeles, which helped to fill gaps in my research. Overall, interviews ran smoothly and my questions were answered from a variety of

stakeholders. City officials are a piece of this project that is missing. Given more time, I would ensure their inclusion in the data.

A limitation with many studies, including this one, was a surplus of data and information from interviewees. Many interviewees were frustrated with certain aspects about the process and had varying views about what the outcome should be. Specific details of frustration could not always be included, because findings had to be compiled and standardized.

I also encountered a limitation in having to shift the focus of my research and question throughout the process. I originally planned to include census data and focus more on access to parklets, but the interviews made it clear that a focus of implementation and differences between San Francisco and Los Angeles was enough of a topic to garner results on. A focus on this allowed for a more comprehensive list of findings to inform policy recommendation, as well as perceptions of public and private space, which is the literature framework that this study is based upon. A longer and more intensive study might also include access to parklets, in an effort to see how usage between Los Angeles and San Francisco might affect policy. This study was not able to accommodate for the inclusion of that data.

Conclusion

Considering my findings and analyses of these findings, I've made a policy recommendation to the city of Los Angeles. San Francisco is much further along in the parklet implementation program, so if Los Angeles wants to continue to reap the benefits from parklets, it must increase its efforts in the parklet program. This can be done with the inclusion of policy that allows for individual designs for parklets. This does not mean

getting rid of the kit of parts as an option for parklet applicants, but adding the option for custom parklet designs. This study has grown significantly from the original research question, which questioned the barriers to access of the creation process, and how policy can be changed to accommodate for these barriers. Interviews and policy analysis has shown that the barriers of cost and funding are there, but more so the city and its policies are the barrier to Los Angeles obtaining a parklet program as advanced as that of San Francisco. Through my policy recommendations, it is possible for Los Angeles to advance to this stage, but the city must commit to parklets and their implementation. The addition of public space is crucial to a city's health, and although the public and private ownership is brought in to question here, the public uses parklets, whether owners like it or not. Policy must be changed to allow for diversity in parklet design if Los Angeles is committed to the livability, safety, and beautification of its streets.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Images of Parklets Studied



Spring Street Parklet, Los Angeles. Accessed: Palisidian Press



Motor Ave Parklets, Los Angeles. Accessed: People St – City of Los Angeles



Hope St Parklet, Los Angeles. Accessed: People St – City of Los Angeles



One version of the Luna Reinne Gallery Parklet, San Francisco. Accessed: San Francisco Curbed



Mojo Bicycle Café Parklet, San Francisco. Accessed: San Francisco Curbed



Fillmore Stoop Parklet, San Francisco. Accessed: San Francisco Curbed

Appendix B – Interview Questions

Interview Questions to be used for Human Subjects – Business Owners

1. What is your position title and what is the daily nature of your job (i.e. tasks, responsibilities, etc.)?
2. How did you decide to first initiate the process of creating a parklet?
3. What, if any, barriers have hindered you in the creation and designing of this parklet?
4. Do you think parklets are beneficial to a healthy and livable street?
5. In what ways do parklets benefit or hurt pedestrians, cars, and businesses?
6. What elements were important to have in in your parklet?
7. Has the parklet increased your business or foot traffic at your store/restaurant?
8. If you were to create policy regarding parklets, is there anything that you would make sure to include in this policy?
9. Are parklets a private or public venture?
10. Despite parklets being in front of certain businesses, do you think the general public still feels comfortable using them?
11. What do you do in terms of maintenance and cleaning of your parklet?

Interview Questions to be used for Human Subjects – Designers, Architects

1. What is your position title and what is the daily nature of your job (i.e. tasks, responsibilities, etc.)?
2. What are the most important factors in deciding where to place a parklet?
3. What is the process for designing parklets like? Do community partners, businesses, or the local government reach out to you when a parklet is being created?
4. What is important to include in the design of parklet (i.e. seating, art, tables, etc.)?
5. Do you think parklets are beneficial to a healthy and livable street?
6. In what ways do parklets benefit or hurt pedestrians, cars, and businesses?
7. If you were to create policy regarding parklets, is there anything that you would make sure to include in this policy?

8. Are parklets a private or public venture?
9. Despite parklets being in front of certain businesses, do you think the general public still feels comfortable using them?

Interview Questions to be used for Human Subjects – Government Officials

1. What is your position title and what is the daily nature of your job (i.e. tasks, responsibilities, etc.)?
2. What did you think of parklets when you first heard of them?
3. Do you think parklets are beneficial to a healthy and livable street?
4. In what ways do parklets benefit or hurt pedestrians, cars, and businesses?
5. How has policy been affected and changed by parklets? As parklets were first created as temporary installations in many cities around the US, did policy take a longer time to catch up with the urban phenomenon?
6. Are parklets a private or public venture?
7. Despite parklets being in front of certain businesses, do you think the general public still feels comfortable using them?
8. How long does the parklet process usually take, from the initial application process to the installation, and who approves each step of the process?
9. Does the city play a part in maintaining parklets around the city?
Do you consider the location of a parklet when there is a new parklet application?
Is it relevant that the area is urban, or that there are other parklets in the area already?

Appendix C – Application Example – Los Angeles Parklet Application

PARKLET INITIAL APPLICATION

1 Application Form

The Community Partner must complete this form in its entirety before submitting online to LADOT.

SUBMIT ONLINE
peoplest.lacity.org/parklet



APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

First Name

Last Name

Title

E-mail

Phone

Organization

Street Address

City and State

Zip

Insurer

Insured Amount

ORGANIZATION TYPE

- Business Improvement District (BID)
- Community Benefit District (CBD)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Property owner
- Ground-floor business owner
- Nonprofit and community-based organizations
- Other _____

PROPOSED LOCATION

Nearest Valid Street Address _____
 Nearest Cross Street _____
 City and State _____
 Zip _____
 Council District _____

SITE LOCATION INFORMATION

- (Please select all that apply.)
- Posted speed limit 25 MPH or less
 - Posted speed limit 30 MPH
 - Posted speed limit 35 MPH
 - Posted speed limit greater than 35 MPH (disqualifies location)
 - Does not block driveway access
 - Does not restrict access to emergency vehicles, fire hydrants, or public utilities
 - Does not interfere with public transit routes
 - Provides alternative access to delivery trucks and sanitation vehicles

USE TYPES WITHIN TWO-BLOCK RADIUS

- (Check all that apply.)
- Business
 - Retail store
 - Restaurant
 - Café
 - Bar
 - Multifamily residential
 - Single-family residential
 - Office/commercial
 - Other _____

PARKING ZONE(S) THAT THE PROPOSED PARKLET WILL REPURPOSE

- (Check all that apply.)
- Metered parking
 - Street parking (no meters, no colored curb)
 - Red zone
 - Yellow zone (commercial loading)
 - White zone (passenger loading)
 - Green zone (short-term parking)
 - Blue zone (disabled parking)

CERTIFICATION OF ACCURACY

I herby certify that all the information provided on this application is true and correct.

2 Proof of Community Outreach and Support

Applicants must speak with each site-adjacent business as well as fronting property owners about their intent to apply. Applicants are also encouraged, but not required, to inform local community groups and/or business organizations.

- A minimum of three letters of support are required** for applications. If submitting electronically, scan and upload as individual PDF documents, or submit original hardcopies.
 - A letter of support must come from the local Council District Office.
 - Letters of support are also required from nearby entities associated with white, green, yellow, or blue curb color zones if the proposal involves relocation of those zones.
 - Letter(s) of support from adjacent property owner(s) and/or others directly impacted by or fronting the Parklet.

Applicants are required to present their proposed People St project at a local Neighborhood Council meeting. Neighborhood Council meetings occur monthly and applicant presentations should be scheduled well in advance of application deadline.

- A minimum of one document** must be submitted as proof of presentation. Acceptable documentation obtained from the Neighborhood Council includes:
 - Meeting agenda
 - Meeting minutes

Optional documentation that may also support a robust application include:

- Additional letters of support from other project stakeholders including, but not limited to: neighboring businesses, schools, neighborhood councils, community groups, and neighboring residents*
- Petitions in support of the Parklet*
- Fliers and posters created by applicant
- Community surveys
- Documentation of community-outreach meetings and/or visioning workshops
- List of coordinating participants and project partners

* **Note:** A sample letter of support and petition of support can be found on peoplest.lacity.org.

LADOT encourages applicants to actively involve the community in the development of the application as it evolves. In review, LADOT will pay special attention to the description of outreach efforts within the submitted application. Once an application is approved, a public notice will be placed in the window of the adjacent business for 10 days to solicit any public comment that may influence the acceptance or rejection of the application.

XYZ GROUP

Los Angeles

January 1, 2015

People St
City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation
100 S. Main St., 9th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear People St,

I would like to express my support for the proposed parklet next to my property at 1001 Chapparral Blvd. The Sunset BID, who is submitting the application for this parklet and would be the Community Partner for this project, has my complete support to move forward in this location.

For a few years, I have seen the need for more quality public space in the Sunset area, especially in this neighborhood. This particular part of Sunset Blvd experiences calm traffic and would be a good candidate site for a parklet. My property includes two restaurants and an incoming bike shop.

I recognize that the parklet needs to be located in front of a business that can help keep an eye on it and that the BID will maintain the space. I look forward to becoming a partner in the care of such a space and have offered my commitment to store the parklet's moveable furniture at night.

I urge you to strongly consider their application and help us bring back some public open space back in this neighborhood.

Sincerely yours,



Joe A. Smith
XYZ GROUP | Partner

XYZ GROUP | 500 Los Feliz Blvd | Los Angeles, CA 90000 | Tel. 213-555-0203 | www.xyz-group.com

Example of a Letter of Support

3 Existing-Conditions Site Plan

The Community Partner must submit an **Existing-Conditions Site Plan** with the application.

LADOT highly encourages that the applicant engage a design professional to produce this plan. The plan may be hand-drawn as long as all the required elements are included, and the drawing is legible. LADOT prefers electronic submission of individual PDFs using the online application portal at peoplest.lacity.org/parklet. If submitting hard copies, please print at 11x17 inches.

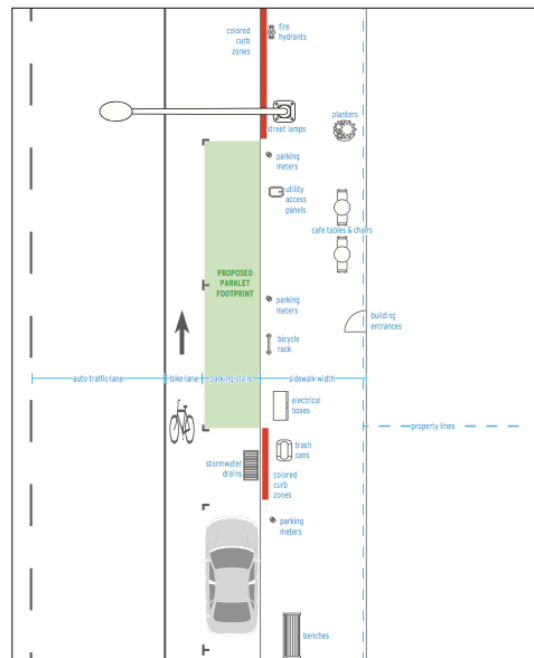
The **Existing-Conditions Site Plan** must show the following:

- Proposed site
- 20 feet on either side of the proposed site
- Proposed Parklet Footprint (with dimensions)*

The **Existing-Conditions Site Plan** must also include the following existing elements:

- Parking stalls (with dimensions)
- Adjacent bicycle lane or auto traffic lane (with dimensions)
- Location of existing utility access panels in the sidewalk and in the street
- Location of storm drains
- Colored curb zones
- Driveways and garage doors
(even if driveways are not actively used)
- Sidewalk dimensions
- Street trees and tree wells
- Permanent above-ground street fixtures
(such as utility poles, street lights, parking meters, electrical boxes, fire hydrants, newspaper stands)
- Moveable above-ground street fixtures
(such as trash bins, planters, benches, cafe tables, and chairs)
- Property lines where they meet the sidewalk
- Building entrances
- Building standpipes

Example of Existing-Conditions Site Plan
Two-parking-space Size Parklet



4 Existing-Conditions Photos

Community Partners are required to submit photos like those shown below. LADOT prefers JPEG electronic submission using the online application portal at peoplest.lacity.org/parklet. If submitting hardcopies, please print at a minimum of 8x10 inches. Any photos that illustrate pedestrian activity near the site are encouraged.



BUILDING ELEVATION

Take a photo of the proposed site from across the street. Center the proposed site within the frame, including the sidewalk, fronting and adjacent buildings.

Submit as "B_Elevation_YYYY_MM.jpg"

Key: YYYY = year of application
MM = month of application



UPSTREET SIDEWALK APPROACH

Take a photo of the Parklet site from the sidewalk, approximately one parking space to the left of the proposed site when standing at the storefront.

Submit as "US_Approach_YYYY_MM.jpg"



DOWNSTREET SIDEWALK APPROACH

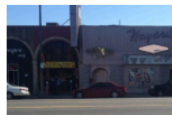
Take a photo of the Parklet site from the sidewalk, approximately one parking space to the right of the proposed site when standing at the storefront.

Submit as "DS_Approach_YYYY_MM.jpg"

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PARKLET INITIAL APPLICATION

PARKLET INITIAL APPLICATION



OPPOSITE ELEVATION

Take a photo of the opposite sidewalk and buildings from the proposed site.

Submit as "O_Elevation_YYYY_MM.jpg"



CURB, GUTTER, AND DRAINS

Take photos of the curb and gutter where the Parklet structure will connect with the sidewalk. Include photos of any storm drains within 20 feet to either side of the proposed Parklet site.

Submit as "Curb_[photo number]_YYYY_MM.jpg"



UTILITIES

Take photos of utility access panels on the sidewalk and in the street within 20 feet to either side of the proposed Parklet site.

Submit as "Utilities_[photo number]_YYYY_MM.jpg"



ABOVE-GROUND FIXTURES

On the sidewalk within 20 feet to either side of the proposed Parklet site, take photos of existing above-ground fixtures, including utility poles, newspaper dispensers, bike racks, parking meters, and street trees. Document movable fixtures such as trash bins, benches, and potted plants.

Submit as "Fixtures_[photo number]_YYYY_MM.jpg"

5 Model and Color-Scheme Worksheet

Refer to the **Kit of Parts for Parklets** to make these selections for your site.

Selections are preliminary. LADOT considers the tentative choices from the options in the **Kit of Parts for Parklets** to assess the viability with the chosen site. Final decisions and design development are made between the Community Partner and LADOT.

PROPOSED LOCATION

Number of parking spaces to occupy

- One *
- Two
- Three
- Four or more

PARKLET MODEL

- A1/2: The Spot *
 - B1: The Sidewalk
 - C1: The Steps
 - A3/4: The Pit Stop *
 - B2: The Diagonal
 - C2: The Planter
 - A1: The Café
 - B3: The Streetside Bench
 - C3: The Slope
 - A2: The Curbside Bench
 - A3: The Counter
- * Size type for one-space Parklet only

PARKLET COLOR

- Color palette
- Blue
- Green
- Pink
- Pattern
- Single color
- Dual color

6 Budget and Maintenance Plan Worksheet

The applicant must submit a draft of a fiscal year operating budget for maintenance of the Parklet, including but not limited to the following below. Fill out the form below or submit the plan in your preferred format.

| DAILY | x hours | x cost per hour | annual cost |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----------------|-------------|
| Clean and empty any trash receptacles | | | |
| Clean movable furniture and equipment | | | |
| Deploy/store movable furniture and equipment | | | |
| Sweep ground surfaces and gutters | | | |
| Irrigate plants and trees | | | |
| | | | |
| WEEKLY | | | |
| Inspect ground surfaces for damage (report to LADOT for repair) | | | |
| Inspect plants and trees for damage | | | |
| | | | |
| ONGOING | | | |
| Power wash ground surfaces | | | |
| Maintain, repair or replace damaged plants | | | |
| Repair or replace movable furniture and equipment | | | |
| Abate graffiti | | | |
| Outreach and communications | | | |

TOTAL: _____

This is an example of Los Angeles’s parklet application to show part of the policy discussed in the findings and analyses section. **San Francisco’s application and full parklet policy can be found at:** http://pavementtoparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/SF_P2P_Parklet_Manual_2.2_FULL1.pdf
Los Angeles’s full policy can be found at: <http://peoplest.lacity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/parkletApp2015.pdf>

Appendix D – Survey Questions to Business Owners from Study by UCLA on Spring St Parklets

Contact Name:
Alternate Contact:
Business Name:
Address:
Business Type:
What kinds of products and/or services does your business provide?

Which of the following best describes your business:

Title: Title:

Partnership Franchise

Store Space: Rent

Other

Sole Proprietorship Non-Profit
 Corporation Limited Liability Corporation

Own

Restaurant

Retail

Business Hours: Office

Phone #: Phone #: Date:

What year did this establishment begin operating at this location?

LOCATION

1. A.1 What neighborhood is your business located in?
2. A.2 What are the boundaries of this neighborhood?
3. A.3 Why did you choose to locate your business in this neighborhood?
4. A.4 Since opening, have any other advantages arisen at this location?

Small Business Survey Instrument parkletstudies.carbonmade.com

◆ Cooperative

| SPRING STREET PARKLET EVALUATION | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------|--|----------------|--|------|--|---------|--|---------|--|
| <p>BUSINESS PROFILE</p> <p>parklet.studies@gmail.com parkletstudies.carbonmade.com</p> <p>B.5 What kind of change do you expect in the following aspects of your business over the next 12 months?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><i>increase no change decrease please explain</i></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>employees / staff</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td># of customers</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>debt</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>revenue</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>profits</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>B.6 How many employees work in your business at this time? (excluding owners) Full-time Part-time Total</p> <p>B.7 What are your average daily gross sales on a</p> <p>Weekday \$ Weekend Day \$</p> <p>B.9 Which of the following best describes your annual gross sales? ◆ less than \$49,999 ◆ \$50,000 - \$99,999 ◆ \$100,000 - \$299,999 ◆ \$300,000-\$499,999 ◆ \$500,000 - \$1,000,000 ◆ more than \$1,000,000</p> <p>B.10 Where does delivery / pickup of supplies / products take place? ◆ Curbside Loading Zone 9/23 ◆ Alley / Sidestreet 4/23 ◆ Anywhere in the street that works at that time 6/23</p> <p>Small Business Survey Instrument parkletstudies.carbonmade.com</p> | <i>increase no change decrease please explain</i> | | employees / staff | | # of customers | | debt | | revenue | | profits | |
| <i>increase no change decrease please explain</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| employees / staff | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| # of customers | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| debt | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| revenue | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| profits | | | | | | | | | | | | |

SPRING STREET PARKLET EVALUATION: APPENDICES

CLIENTELE

◆ lessthan10min ◆ 10-30 min

C.14 What percent of your clients are

◆ 30min-1hour
◆ more than 1 Hour

'Return Customers'?
Locals / Residents Commuters / Non-Residents

parklet.studies@gmail.com parkletstudies.carbonmade.com

- 11. C.11 Where do you tell your customers to park?
- 12. C.12 What is your clientele's primary mode(s) of arrival (check all that apply)

◆ Foot ◆ Bike ◆ Bus ◆ Train ◆ Car ◆ Scooter/Motorcycle ◆ Other

C.13 Clientele Length of Occupancy in establishment (Average):

◆ Taxi

% % %

C.15 How much does a typical client spend in your establishment during peak hours? \$

PARKLET IMPACTS

- 1. D.1 Would you recommend a parklet to merchants in other districts?
- 2. D.2 Would you be interested placing a parklet in front of your business?

Yes No

- 3. **D.3 In the last month, the parklets have caused:**
- 4. D.4 Foot Traffic Increase 1 2 3 4
- 5. D.5 Sales / business volume for *my business*

5 Decrease 5 Decrease 5 Decrease

Increase 1 2

- 6. D.6 Sales / business volume for the *area* Increase 1 2
- 7. D.7 Other:

3 4 3 4

Appendix E – Consent Form for Interview Subjects

OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE
Consent for Participation in a Research Study

Title of Study: Equity of Urban Space: A Study of the Creation of Parklets in Los Angeles and San Francisco

Student Investigator: Lena Burton Owens

Faculty Supervisors: Mijin Cha and Bhavna Shamasunder

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Lena Burton Owens, a student from the Urban and Environmental Policy Department at Occidental College. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study.

The purpose of this study to examine the accessibility of parklets through creation and use. Part of this study includes interviews with those who help to create parklets, as an effort to see if the process is accessible and equitable, as well as a greater understanding of what the creation process entails. If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to answer questions about this process and parklets in general. With your permission, this interview will be audio-recorded for note-taking purposes only.

Your decision to participate or decline participation in this study is voluntary and you may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, with no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled. There are no anticipated risks or discomforts to your participation in this study other than those encountered in daily life.

You will not be paid for participating in this study. So although you may not directly benefit from this research, by participating in this study you may further the research done in the field of parklets, a fairly unstudied urban design.

Data collected from this study will be kept confidential as possible. Only the researcher and faculty supervisor will have access to direct responses. Digital data will be stored in password protected computer files, and study records securely stored. Your name will be released in research, as a method of identifying your importance in the creation of parklets. Data collected from this study will be used for the researcher's senior thesis that may be used in presentations or published in journal format or online. Data derived from this study may be held for future use, and may be stored and re-analyzed, or otherwise combined with other data at a later date.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, you can contact Lena Burton Owens at burtonowens@oxy.edu or Professors Mijin Cha or Bhavna Shamasunder at mcha@oxy.edu and bhavna@oxy.edu, respectively. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board Office at Occidental College in Los Angeles, CA, 90041 at hsrrc@oxy.edu or (323) 259-2921.

My name may be used in the final report: YES___ NO___

My organization may be named in the final report: YES __ NO __

This interview may be audio-recorded for note-taking purposes: YES__ NO__

I am at least eighteen years of age. I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this research project and the possible risks as outlined above. I understand that I may withdraw my participation on this project at any time without prejudice or penalty of any kind. I hereby agree to participate in this research project.

Name (print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Subject should retain a copy of this form. Return via email (burtonowens@oxy.edu) an electronically signed copy.