



PARKLET PILOT PROGRAM

Monitoring Summary Report | Summer 2015



SUMMARY

Parklet Pilot Program

Vancouver's first three parklets were constructed between 2011 and 2012. Each came to the City of Vancouver as separate, standalone proposals and helped to show support and interest for having more of these spaces in the city. As a result, the City of Vancouver's VIVA Vancouver program, which looks at opportunities to transform streets into more vibrant pedestrian spaces, launched the Parklet Pilot Program in 2013. The pilot sought to understand how and where parklets could be built in Vancouver and to learn more about whether an ongoing Parklet Program should be implemented.

Business owners, business improvement associations, property owners, community organizations, and other applicants in Vancouver were eligible to apply for parklets under the pilot. Applicants covered the costs of designing and installing the parklets and were responsible for showing community support and maintaining parklets on a day-to-day basis. Under the pilot, three more parklets were built for a total of six.

How are we doing?

In 2015, VIVA Vancouver took a formal look at the six parklets to see how these spaces are being used and how successful parklets have been in the community. Overall, parklets were found to be well-used and well-supported by both businesses and the public and adding vibrancy to neighbourhoods. Parklets appear to do well in providing a place for people to sit, relax, and enjoy the city and that there appears to be opportunities for more parklets to be installed in Vancouver.



2013 Parklet Pilot Program Guide



PARKLETS

Parklets create unique public spaces by transforming parking spaces on streets into places for people to sit, relax, and enjoy the city. Mainly consisting of a platform that extends the sidewalk and amenities like seating, tables, and landscaping, parklets create many benefits for pedestrians, local businesses, and the surrounding community including:

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

Collecting Data at Vancouver's Six Parklets

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

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



VANCOUVER'S PARKLETS

A. Urban Pasture

Robson St near Burrard St
opened 2012

B. Sunny Slopes

W 4th Av near Cypress St
opened 2015

C. Commercial Drive

Commercial Dr near E 4th Av
opened 2014

D. Parallel Park

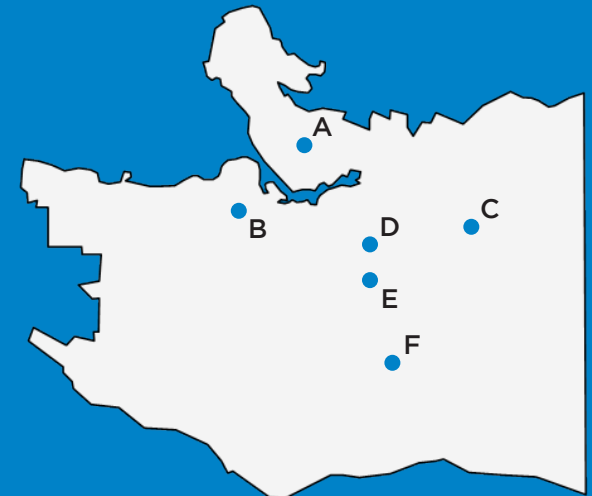
E 14th Av near Main St
opened 2011

E. French Quarter

E 21st Av near Main St
opened 2014

F. Hot Tubs

E 44th Av near Fraser St
opened 2012



WALKING

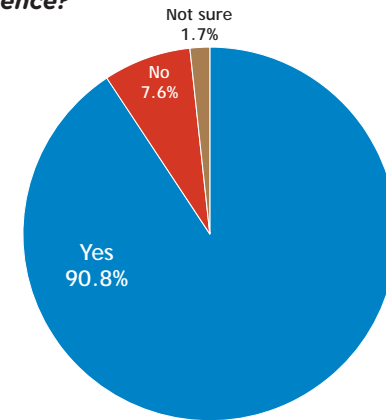
Objectives: Create a vibrant and fun walking environment and a space that is comfortable and aesthetically pleasing

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

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

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

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



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



91.4% were very or somewhat satisfied with the parklet's appearance

82.5% were very or somewhat satisfied with the parklet's level of comfort

LOCAL BUSINESSES

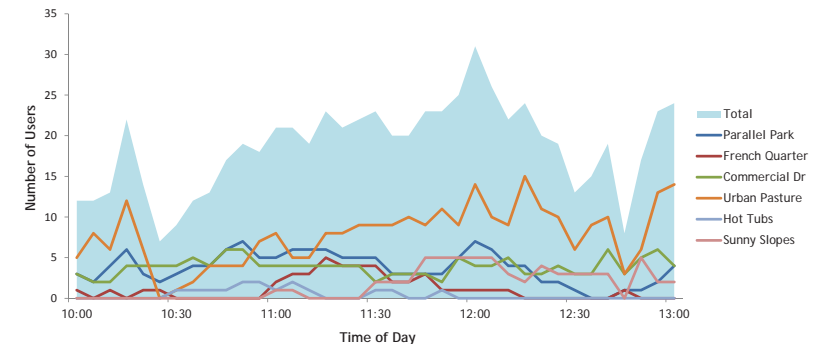
Objectives: Attract people to use the space and support the sales and operations of local businesses

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

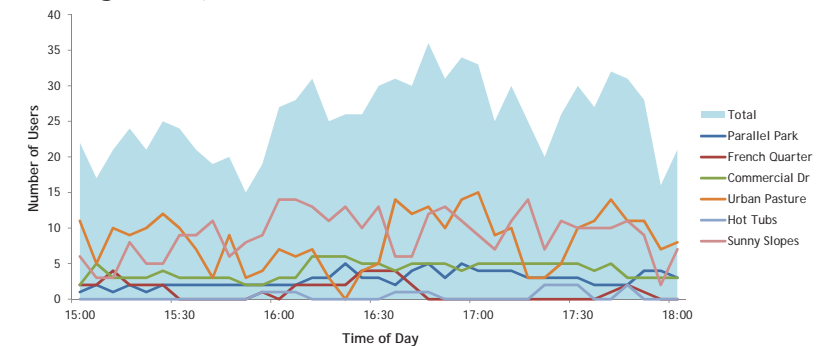
People were observed using parklets throughout the day. There were steady numbers of people using the spaces with slightly more people later in the day. As a combined average at the six parklets, there was also a mix of people who were not patrons of the business directly in front of the parklet (52.3%).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

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

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



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



The Victoria **LAWN STADESHOP**

13.6% experienced a positive impact in sales from the parklet

Rain or Shine

ICE CREAM

Float House

93.8% experienced no operational changes from the parklet

COMMUNITY

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

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

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

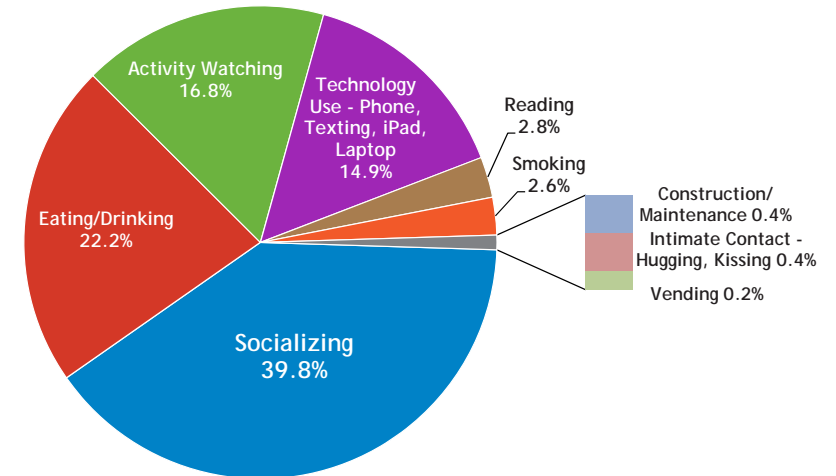
When people and businesses were asked about their thoughts on parklets, the theme of parklets fostering a sense of community and providing a nice space to socialize ranked consistently as one of the top reasons.

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

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



Primary Activities of People in Parklets



91.7% of people liked that the space was transformed into a place for people to sit, relax, and enjoy the city

64.4% of businesses say the parklet has made the neighbourhood better

LESSONS AND LOOKING FORWARD

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

Parklets as Public Space

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

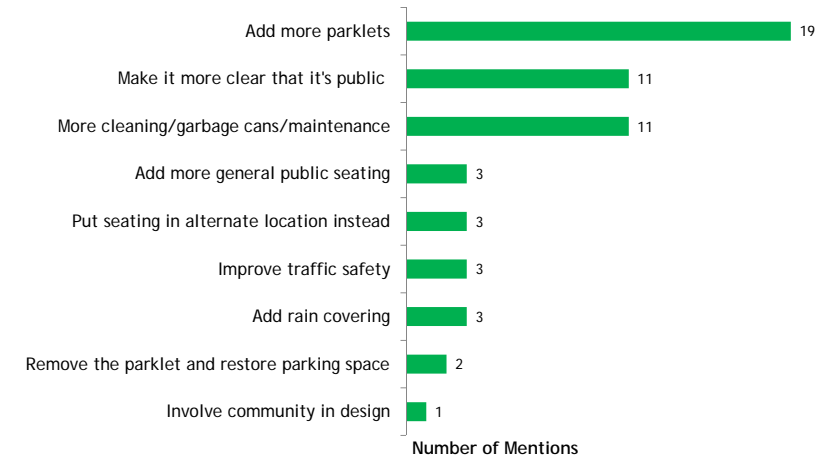
Other improvements

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

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



Suggestions Made by Intercept Survey Respondents





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