

From: [Salim Damerdj](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM #9 - November 30, 2021
Date: Monday, November 29, 2021 3:54:26 PM

Hi City Council,

I support the staff recommendation on agenda item #9 because outdoor dining creates a more vibrant, lively downtown with a real atmosphere of community.

Thanks,
Salim

From: [carol little](#)
To: [Public Comment](#); [City Council](#)
Subject: Comments for item number 9
Date: Monday, November 29, 2021 5:22:51 PM

November 29, 2021

Dear City Council Members,

I'll say one thing for Council meetings this year, they've been jam packed with items that require resident attention. I appreciate that Council is making an effort to get things done.

Please consider the following when determining next steps for the downtown parklets. Item number 9.

One cannot really define them as parklets as they do not serve the public with any green space or enticing places to sit if not dining at the restaurant where the space is located.

According to the Oxford Languages Dictionary and Google, parklets are defined as "a small seating area or green space created as a public amenity on or alongside a sidewalk, especially in a former roadside parking space." None of the current so called parklets are there for that purpose. They are there to allow the restaurants to survive the covid 19 situation. There is nothing wrong with that! However, due to the definitions of parklets, I will now refer to the spaces as pop outs.

I am really enjoying being able to support our local restaurants by dining outdoors as we slog our way through the covid situation. My husband and I have been dining outside in Los Altos an average of once a week thanks to the available outdoor areas. Therefore, I fully understand the need for pop outs during this particular time. For this reason, I encourage extending the program for another 4-6 months. However, I do not feel making it permanent is a wise idea, at least not yet.

I think it is important to consider what is needed and allowed, after the pandemic. Here are my observations and suggestions regarding the pop outs in downtown Los Altos.

- The pop outs will become worn after a bit. There will need to be a requirement to keep them looking fresh and inviting as they are front and center visually. Essentially, as the city is the landlord to the restaurants using the pop out spaces,

all angles must be considered. Tidiness and good representation, according to precise rules, must be enacted.

- Many restaurants will continue to be challenged in staffing the extra space. Having frantic servers, as is the case right now in many restaurants, running across the sidewalks is hazardous to pedestrians. It is also distracting pedestrians from the nearby shops.
- Any nearby business must not be adversely affected by the pop outs. I imagine one of the goals is to create an inclusive business district that offers diverse options, and to lose any additional businesses in our downtown area would not support goals such as these. Therefore, no blocking of signs or storefronts in any way.
- It would be wise to spend time determining best layout for traffic flow. As long as cars can safely pass and the fire department can easily get through in a timely manner, the pop outs are probably not a big issue. I have noticed actual cruising of loud vehicles since the pop outs have been in place. These two things may or may not be related, but they seem linked and worth investigating. The cruising and noise, makes dining outdoors less than pleasant. In addition, when cars are stacked up due to traffic, dining outdoors can become an issue for one's health. Clearly, breathing in vehicle exhaust is never a healthy option.
- The sidewalks are far too impacted by the pop outs. This creates a safety challenge, as well as an ADA compliance challenge.
- There must be tracking to determine if the pop outs are helping all businesses. I've mentioned the need to track sales revenue each and every time something is tried in downtown, or other areas. It doesn't matter if it is a pop up park or the pop outs, we need to know how the changes affect, both positively and negatively, the tax revenue and the efforts of the small business owners to survive. What good is it if bringing folks into downtown doesn't equal spending their money, or ends in the loss of businesses? Yes, I am aware that sometimes an event brings people into the area and that despite not spending money at the event, they come back later to spend money. That sort of outcome is visible with appropriate tracking methods.
- Absolutely every business owner in downtown must be surveyed in a thorough manner, to determine what effect the pop ups are having on their businesses. As a benefit to the city, most business owners will likely be able to provide data that shows how they have been affected. It is appropriate to ask them for their input. Not every business is a member of the Chamber of Commerce or LAVA. That means their voices may not be heard. Therefore, a thorough assessment will require a business to business system of consulting the business owners. Allowing a 4-6 month extension should surely allow plenty of time to accomplish this goal.
- There needs to be a uniform size. Perhaps 2-3 parking spaces maximum. That helps maintain fairness and attractiveness in our downtown area. What is working well now will likely not work in the future, particularly if more restaurants join the

outdoor dining scene.

- No blocking of any nearby business, even if the nearby space is empty. Why? Because at some point the space will be filled. Including this as a requirement will prevent any future territorial behavior that is part of human nature.
- There needs to be a limit to the amount of total pop outs in the downtown area.
- After the proposed 4-6 month extension period, and if the pop outs are to become permanent, there needs to be a fair fee for allowing the parking spaces to be removed from service as parking spaces. Not having the spaces may actually stop some folks from parking and spending their money in our downtown area. Residents do benefit from the outdoor dining, but so do the restaurants. Once winter is over and covid settles down again, it is time for a fair, to tax payers, assessment of actual costs to the city and tax payers, of the pop outs. All time spent by any staff or police as a result of the pop outs must be considered. Perhaps a square footage based fee is a good idea. That is where a set size limit will also help.

Thank you very much for all of your efforts and for considering my input.

Respectfully yours,

Teresa Morris

From: [Roberta Phillips](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Parklet Fee in Carmel -- Re Item #9 Los Altos Parklet Program
Date: Monday, November 29, 2021 7:13:26 PM

Dear Council

Please see the attached article. Carmel is charging \$28 dollars a day (\$850 a month per single parking space) to have a parklet.

<https://www.montereyherald.com/2021/09/10/carmel-extends-life-of-parklets-for-another-month-with-rental-fee-attached/>

Sincerely
Roberta Phillips

