



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 04/07/2020

ITEM NO: 8

DATE: March 31, 2020
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Direct the Town Manager to implement a temporary public parklet on a portion of Grays Lane to promote community vitality and continue to gather information on possible options for the future downtown streetscape improvements.

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct the Town Manager to implement a temporary public parklet on a portion of Grays Lane to promote community vitality and continue to gather information on possible options for the future downtown streetscape improvements.

BACKGROUND:

During the summer of 2019 the Town implemented a pilot program on North Santa Cruz Avenue that included a variety of elements including angled parking, one-way traffic patterns, and community parklets. The parklets provided the feeling of wider sidewalks and offered community members a place to gather and connect while shopping, dining, and walking through downtown. Of the elements implemented during the pilot, the parklets were the most well-received for encouraging placemaking. Many community members appreciated the opportunity to gather in various locations along North Santa Cruz Avenue.

In addition to the North Santa Cruz Avenue pilot, the Council also adopted a pilot parklet program that offered businesses the opportunity to enter into a public-private partnership to convert a street parking space(s) into curbside seating for restaurant guests during business hours and a public space when the restaurant is closed. To date, four public-private parklets are either under construction or completed.

PREPARED BY: Monica Renn
Economic Vitality Manager

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Finance Director

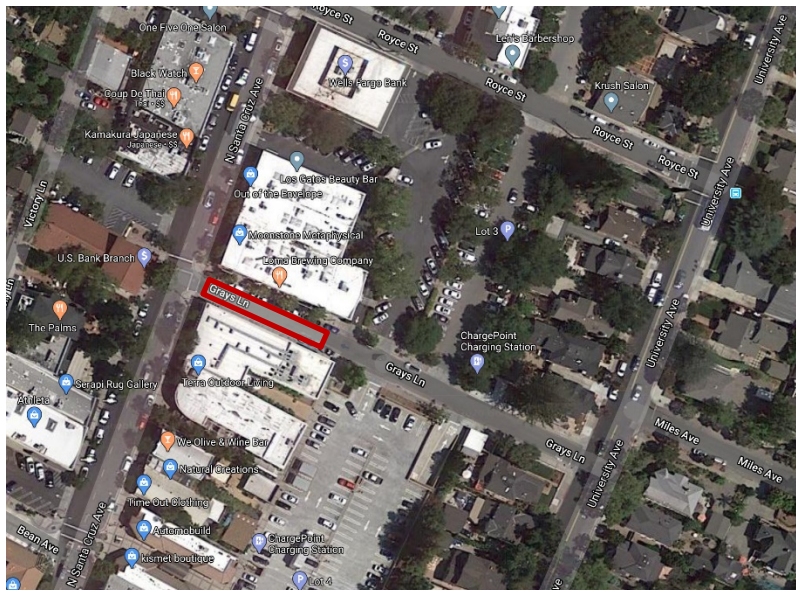
DISCUSSION:

As conversations evolve around the parklets, and as the Town Council moves forward with its discussion on the future of the downtown streetscape, staff believes adding a temporary public parklet to downtown could enhance community vitality and provide the opportunity for further information gathering on how the community uses public spaces. The Chamber of Commerce presented a similar idea to staff in January of 2020 based on its conversations with local businesses and community stakeholders; however, the Chamber did not have the funding or capacity to construct and maintain the space. As a result, Town staff from multiple Departments met to consider some of the options and developed the recommendation contained in this report.

The Grays Lane space could be utilized as a “pop-up” park space as well as a space to support community events through the Town’s special event permit process. Placemaking continues to be a necessity for shopping and dining districts as more goods become available online, a public parklet would also support downtown placemaking. In addition, as the Town navigates the unprecedented events caused by the COVID-19 crisis, and plans for a return to normalcy following the shelter-in-place order, providing an open, outdoor gathering space should encourage the community to reconnect and visit downtown.

Using information gathered from experiences and feedback during the one-way pilot program last year, and looking at placement options throughout downtown, staff recommends the following for a temporary public parklet:

Location- As pictured below, the proposed location is on Grays Lane, on the one-way portion west of the driveway for the private and muni parking lots. This would require through traffic from University Avenue to use either Royce Street or Elm Street to circulate, while still providing access to the one private and two muni parking lots located off of Grays Lane. This location requires the least amount of traffic detours and parking stall removal as compared to other side streets in downtown.



DISCUSSION (continued):

Timing and Duration- While the timing and duration can remain fluid, staff is recommending that the parklet be implemented in May, or as early as allowable based on staff workload and the shelter in place order by the County and State governments. Following implementation, staff recommends planning to keep the parklet in place through the fall of 2020, with the flexibility to alter or remove it at any point if deemed appropriate by the Council.

Construction of the Parklets- To construct the parklet, staff recommends using boulders placed at each end of the parklet to allow continued pedestrian access via the sidewalk, and pedestrian access between the boulders into the parklet. The use of boulders provides a strong concrete like barrier from cars on the road, in a more aesthetic manner than the k-rail which was previously used and often not well received by the community. The asphalt would be coated with a lighter shade to reduce the heat absorbed and radiated during the summer heat.

Furniture- Staff recommends using only Adirondack chairs with umbrellas. In an effort to reduce the costs and frequency associated with cleaning the parklet, staff has not included tables in the recommendation. The goal is not to create a dining experience, rather a pop-up park setting. Extra Town trash and recycling receptacles could be added in the parklet as needed.

Programming- It is recommended that the piano and extra-large chess set the Town already owns be placed in the space to provide impromptu entertainment for the community. Both were elements the community reported enjoying from the prior pilot program.

Maintenance- Based on the recommendation in this staff report, staff believes the parklet would need to be cleaned twice a week including debris removal, spot cleaning, and reorganization of the furniture.

Signage- Detour and placemaking signage would be installed.

Costs- Staff estimates the total cost to put the parklet in place and maintain it through the fall at \$15,000. Equipment remaining from last year could be repurposed for this year, including chairs, piano, and chess set with augmentations for additional elements like umbrellas. The greatest expense will be in the asphalt coating, estimated at \$10,000. Staff considers this is a necessary expense to reduce the heat and make the space attractive. The proposed approach allows Parks and Public Works to absorb the maintenance costs.

PAGE 4 OF 4

SUBJECT: Temporary Public Parklet on Grays Lane

DATE: March 31, 2020

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that Council considers implementing a temporary parklet on Grays Lane for the summer and fall of 2020. The costs associated with the construction and maintenance would be managed by the Town. Should third parties wish to utilize the space for events, staff recommends this be allowed subject to the provisions and fees associated with the special event permit process.

Providing physical options that cannot be experienced virtually create interest and vitality associated with placemaking and encourage the community to connect with one another and local businesses.

COORDINATION:

This report was prepared with collaboration between the Town Manager's Office, Town Attorney's Office, Community Development Department, Parks and Public Works Department, and Police Department.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The cost associated with the implementation of a public parklet are estimated at \$15,000 for the duration of the summer/fall of 2020 and can be absorbed in the existing Operating Budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.