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MAIN STREET PARKLET PILOT PROGRAM EVALUATION

City of Santa Monica
Spring 2019



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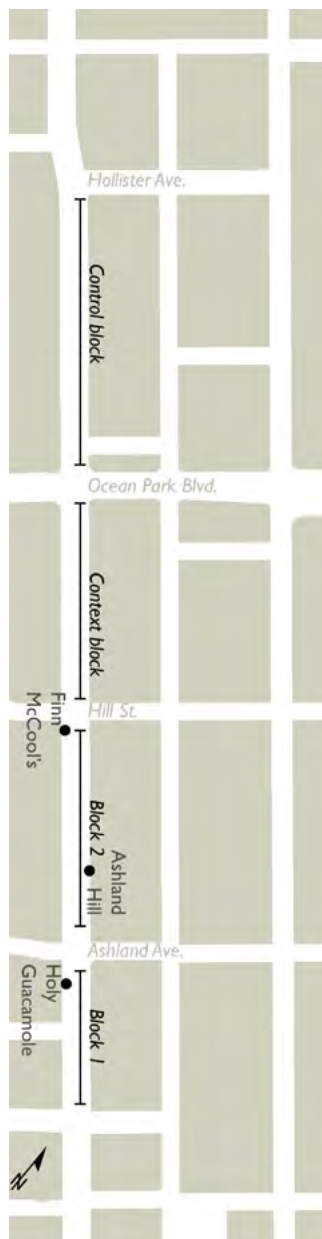
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In late 2015, the City of Santa Monica approved a parklet pilot program along Main Street at the request of the Main Street Business Improvement Association. By June 2017, three parklets were installed along Main Street.

To evaluate this pilot program, the City commissioned this pilot program evaluation to understand the pilot performance and provide recommendations for the program's future.

The goal of this evaluation report is to determine whether parklets, a relatively new streetscape improvement type, is an idea that works along Santa Monica's Main Street corridor.

The pilot parklet program goals included:

- Create active public space and aesthetic streetscape
- Provide more pedestrian amenities and pedestrian-friendly routes
- Encourage more walking and cycling
- Test the concept of parklets along Main Street and determine whether a parklet program is appropriate for Main Street

Using a large team of undergraduate and graduate research assistants, we collected a variety of data before and after parklet installation at the parklet sites and at two blocks on Main Street without parklets. We included the non-parklet blocks onto see if any observed changes may be related to trends other than the introduction of the parklets,

PROGRAM GOAL	DATA COLLECTION ELEMENT	PURPOSE
<p>Create active public space and aesthetic streetscape</p>	<p>Count number of people in the parklets</p> <p>Observe activities in the parklet and on the corridor</p>	<p>Determine level of parklet use</p> <p>Understand how the street is currently used and evaluate changes from parklets</p>
<p>Provide more pedestrian amenities and pedestrian friendly routes</p>	<p>Survey people in parklets and along street</p>	<p>Understand if parklets are a pedestrian amenity and see if parklets change perceptions of the street.</p>
<p>Encourage more walking and cycling</p>	<p>Conduct bicycle and pedestrian counts along corridor</p>	<p>Analyze differences in walking and cycling volumes</p>
<p>Test the concept of parklets and determine whether a parklet program is appropriate</p>	<p>Combine original data collection methods and collect secondary data from the Santa Monica Police Department</p>	<p>Identify whether nuisance or other unwanted behaviors occur in the parklets and understand parklet user's feelings of safety</p>

Table 1: Program goals and data collection approaches



The Main Street parklet pilot program was successful overall, but success varied widely across parklet sites.

1. *The pilot program successfully created active public space, with varied results between the three sites*

The Holy Guacamole site achieved success in creating active public space while the Ashland Hill and Finn McCool's sites struggled. Average hourly occupancy was 11.5 people/hour at Holy Guacamole, 4 people/hour at Finn McCool's and 1.15 people/hour at Ashland Hill.

As a comparison, in a City of Seattle parklet evaluation, average occupancy was 6 people/hour, ranging from 2-16 people/hr and in the City of Los Angeles, the average occupancy was 8-11 people/hour.

People do visit the parklet sites fairly frequently - coming by at least weekly if not more often. People found it very easy to talk to others in the parklet. We found the most common observed activities included eating, drinking, using their phone, or talking to others. Overall, behaviors at the parklets are similar to uses at other small public spaces.

2. *The Main Street pilot parklet program successfully provided a new pedestrian amenity along Main Street but is not likely a pedestrian destination in-of-itself.*

Parklets can effectively reduce some sidewalk crowding & create a seating opportunity, an important function on Main Street where narrow sidewalks can make people feel in-the-way.

Even with the low occupancies at the Ashland Hill and Finn McCool's sites, all three parklet blocks saw an increase in the proportion of people sitting post-parklet installation. This is in contrast with the control blocks where we observed an increase in standing, post-parklet installation. The parklet and non-parklet blocks both saw an overall increase in visitors post-parklet installation.

We did not find an increase in the frequency of visits for people along Main Street after parklet installation. Forty-three percent of survey respondents on Main Street did not know what a parklet was even after they were installed nearby. These findings lead us to conclude that the Main Street parklets are a pedestrian amenity, but likely not a primary pedestrian destination.



3. *While bicycling and walking volumes increased along Main Street, the parklets likely did not have a direct influence on this change.*

We found slight increases in both walking and cycling volumes between 2016 and 2017, with approximately 15% more people cycling on the parklet blocks and a 13% increase on the control block. Similarly, we observed a 6-7% increase in pedestrians along the parklet block and a 5% increase on the control block.

They surveys found only a modest change in how people arrived to Main Street pre- and post-parklet installation. The proportion of people walking and cycling increased slightly between 2016 and 2017, similar to the modest increases we observed in our counts.

Parklet survey respondents did not arrive to the parklet by walking or cycling any more often than street survey respondents. In fact, people who completed the parklet survey arrived by car more often than those who completed the street survey (42% arrive by car in the parklets and 35% in the street survey). While walking and cycling volumes have increased on Main Street post-parklet installation, this increase is not likely attributable to the parklets.

4. *The City successfully tested the parklet concept along Main Street with little to no reported problems.*

We recorded any nuisance behaviors, received data and crime reports on “calls for service” data from the Santa Monica Police Department We bserve very few instances of nuisance behavior in the parklets (smoking, lying for long periods of time, panhandling, etc.) The Santa Monica Police Department records included eight calls for service to the parklets but none of these calls resulted in police action. Most commonly, the issue was resolved before the police arrived.

In conclusion, the Main Street pilot parklet program was a success but also demonstrated that each parklet site can take on its own characteristics.

The Holy Guacamole parklet is a thriving site while the Finn McCool’s and Ashland Hill parklets are not used as frequently. As the Main Street parklet pilot program achieved most of its desired goals, we, therefore, recommend expanding this to a permanent parklet program along Main Street. The following report expands on these findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Santa Monica joined a growing class of cities across the United States and abroad after installing parklets in 2017. Parklets are places where small urban places, typically on-street parking spots, are transformed into public spaces for people for people. By converting excess roadway space for cars, parklets increase the amount of open space. Parklets are an opportunity to create public space at a significantly lower cost than parks. Further, these projects are an opportunity for community groups, business owners, and residents to be directly involved in enhancing their streetscape.

In response to a request from the Main Street Business Improvement Association, the City chose to pilot three parklet sites:

- Finn McCool's – 2702 Main Street
- Ashland Hill – 2807 Main Street
- Holy Guacamole – 2906 Main Street

The City designed, funded, and installed parklets in these locations and committed to evaluating their use for at least one year. Paying for pilot parklet construction makes Santa Monica distinct among other peer cities. Parklet hosts and businesses in other cities paid for the parklet construction in all other cases, even during the pilot phase. In the Main Street pilot program, operators participated in the design phase but were only responsible for enhancing the space with movable furniture, placing/removing the furniture, basic maintenance and insurance.

The Main Street pilot parklet program is tied to other citywide plans and vision as expressed in the the Land Use and Circulation Elements. Parklets are included as a part of the overall vision for creating pedestrian spaces and amenities and for defining a new sense of place for locals and visitors alike.

This purpose of this report is to understand how the city may benefit from parklet investments. going forward. As outlined on the following page, we translated the program goals to research questions and then matched them to different data collection methods.

We collected a wide variety of data in order to create a relatively complete picture of activity along Main Street and at the parklet locations. This report is organized as follows. We first describe the environmental context and character along Main Street, along with the parklet designs themselves at each site.

In the study approach and methodology section, we detail the different methods and explain why and how we selected particular approaches at different locations around the study areas.

The findings section begins with comparing parklet performance in Santa Monica with other peer cities. The results of the surveys, counts, and observations, secondary data from the police department, and the business improvement association are combined into a series of findings.

These findings are then translated into a set of recommendations for the pilot sites and the parklet program, along with a set of proposed criteria the City could use to select sites to increase the likelihood of parklet success at each site. Overall, we find Main Street to be a promising location for future parklets and find the city can learn a great deal, overall, from this evaluation effort.

PROGRAM GOAL	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION APPROACH
<p>Create active public space and an aesthetic streetscape.</p>	<p>How many people are using the parklets and who are they?</p> <p>Are the parklet visitors and uses different at each site? In what ways?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record parklet occupancy rates Conduct parklet intercept survey Observe behaviors through activity mapping
<p>Provide more pedestrian amenities and pedestrian friendly routes</p>	<p>What effect do the parklets have on people’s perceptions of the street?</p> <p>Do the parklets change street perceptions after installation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct street intercept surveys before and after installation
<p>Encourage more walking and cycling</p>	<p>Does parklet installation influence the volumes of people walking or cycling along the street?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct bicycle and pedestrian counts
<p>Test the concept of parklets and determine whether a parklet program is appropriate</p>	<p>Are parklets appropriate for permanent installation on Main?</p> <p>How can future parklets be improved based on evaluation findings?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combination of findings from counts, activity mapping, parklet counts, and intercept surveys

Table 2: Program goals and research methods



SURROUNDING CONTEXT

Santa Monica's Main Street is a low-rise retail corridor bordered by residential zones on all sides. Located two blocks from the beach, Main Street boasts a variety of small/independent businesses and a mix of neighborhood and regional-serving uses. In many ways, Main Street acts like any small-town main street with popular neighborhood-serving destinations.

The street today retains much of its historic architecture from the development in the early 20th century. The parklet pilot sites are in the heart of Main Street's most historic area, a commercial core first developed in 1902 that stretches from Hill Street to Pier Avenue. By the 1950s, Main Street had densified to become a "primary commercial artery." Today, Main Street is home to many of Santa Monica's annual events, including the Summer Solstice music festival and the Fourth of July parade.

In addition to observing activities at the parklets, we also observed the blocks where the parklets are located and two non-parklet blocks for a control and context setting. This five block area is considered the study area and described on the following page.

Main Street's frontage includes five primary business/activity types:

1. Retail Establishments: clothing boutiques, jewelry and accessories, bikes and exercise equipment, and paper goods and other small gifts
2. Service-oriented: Repair shops, laundromats, consulting and real estate offices, spas, salons, and yoga studios
3. Food Service: Restaurants, cafes, ice cream shops, and bakeries
4. Surface Parking Lots
5. Vacant Buildings

Like other retail corridors in Santa Monica and the region at large, establishments along Main Street are subject to pressure from increasing costs of doing business and changes in consumer behavior. These broad economic impacts likely contributed to increases in the vacancy rate between the 2016 and 2017 data collection periods. We used data from Google Streetview from January 2017 and December 2017 to inventory storefront occupancy and type, supplementing with information from Zillow, Yelp and local news sources when the occupancy was unclear. Empty storefronts along the five block corridor increased from 3% of storefronts to 12% in this 12 month period.

MAIN STREET TENANT TYPES

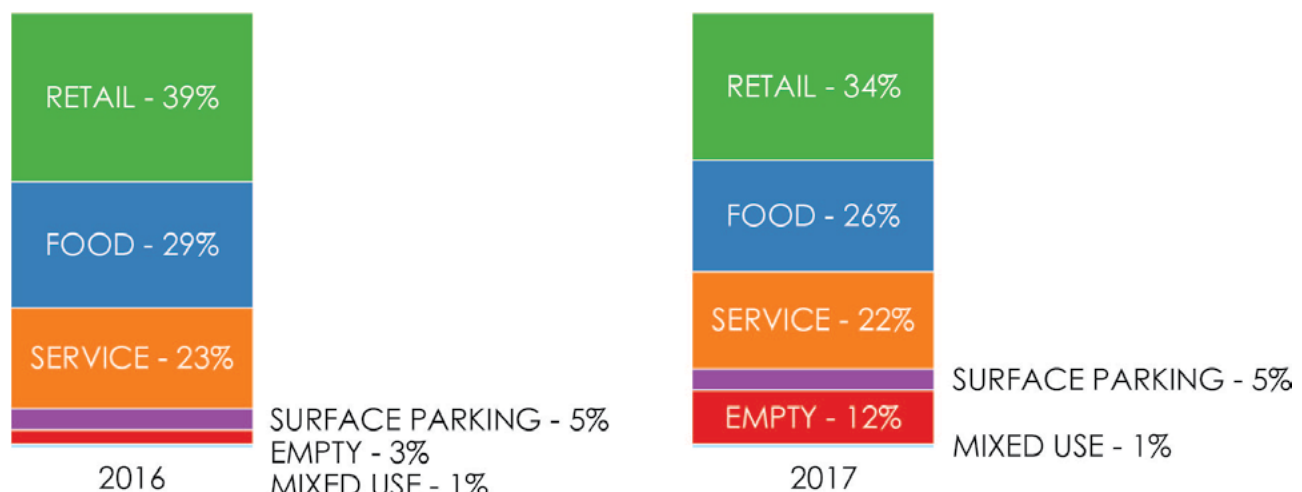


Figure 1: Main Street tenant types pre- and post-installation

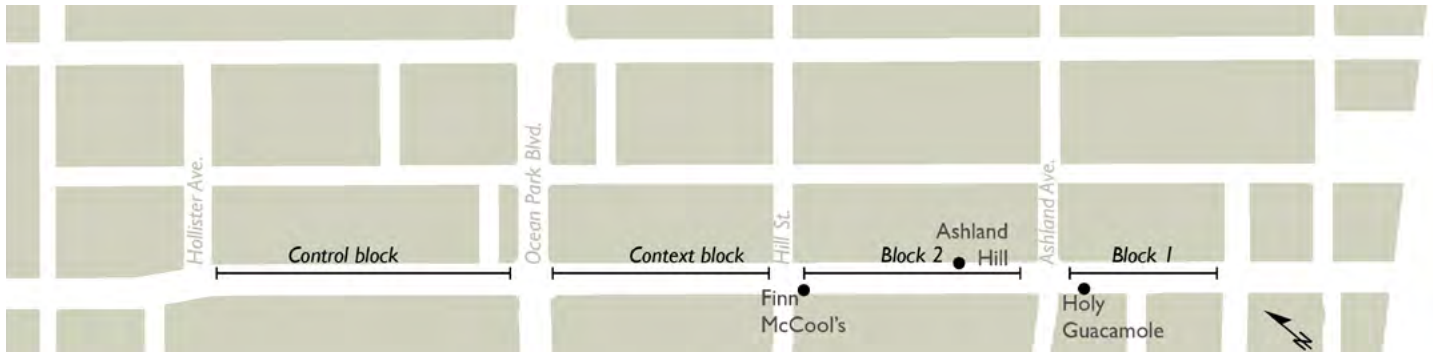


Figure 2: Study area overview

Block 1: Holy Guacamole Parklet Block

The short block from Ashland Avenue to Kinney Street hosts retail along its west side, with two food service storefronts - Groundworks Coffee and Holy Guacamole - anchoring the Holy Guacamole parklet. A toy store is located south of Groundworks Coffee. Properties on this block face are fairly narrow, with five storefronts in a 100-ft. section. The parklet stretches across both Groundwork and Holy Guacamole with the toy store and bike shop close by on either side.

On the east side, a row of restaurant/bars are mostly active during evening hours. The Coffee Bean anchors the block's northeast corner, with an outdoor seating area frequently full of patrons drinking coffee and socializing.

Block 2: Finn McCool's and Ashland Hill Parklets Block

The block containing the Finn McCool's and Ashland Hill parklets stretches from Hill Street to Ashland Street. The east side is comprised of retail uses, including boutique stores and galleries; with restaurants and service uses, including salons, spas and a fitness center. Large surface parking lots interrupts the street frontage in two places. Ashland Hill parklet is adjacent to one of the two surface parking lots.

The west side is dominated by restaurants and clothing stores. The Finn McCool's parklet is set back from the corner and mostly in front of a clothing store adjacent to Finn McCool's. During both the pre- and post-installation periods, approximately 15% of the storefronts were vacant on this block.

Block 3: Context Block

The Ocean Park Boulevard - Hill Street block is conventional along its east side with some small storefronts. The Victorian, an event space/restaurant/bar which hosts the Sunday Farmers Market and Food Truck events, dominates the west side of the block.

Because activity on this block is not entirely representative of the parklet blocks, we only observed Block 3 as a control block in Saturday bicycle and pedestrian counts.

Block 4: Control Block

The Hollister Avenue - Ocean Park Boulevard control block is highly resident-serving. On the east side, retail for clothing, bikes, ice cream, and juice bars mixes with service-oriented uses: spas, salons, dentist office and a public library. The block is anchored by the Edgemar Lofts shopping center, which contains restaurants, shops, and a large public plaza located off the sidewalk.

The west side consists of a car wash, liquor store, and several restaurants with scattered boutique stores. Storefronts along this block are almost all in operation, and a mid-block crosswalk enhances pedestrian connectivity.

PARKLET SITE DESIGN

The Main Street parklet pilot program is unique in that the City incurred the parklet design and construction cost. The parklet operators participated in the design of a wooden “shell,” buffered by large planters, located behind the parklet with two bicycle racks located in from of each site.

These wooden parklet shells have short walls topped by box planters along three sides. All three parklet operators found that landscape treatment of the box planters required a learning curve: landscape elements at the sunny Finn McCool’s and Ashland Hill parklets have both been replaced and refreshed since the initial planting; however, plants at all three parklets are now thriving. The street-facing panels include diagonal slats breaking from the solid wood. These aesthetic breaks allow people to feel enclosed in the space while also allowing some visual permeability for public safety reasons.

Parklets at Holy Guacamole and Finn McCool’s include permanent, built-in benches in a sidewalk-adjacent structure which allows parklet visitors to sit or stand while eating, working, or socializing. The “stand up bar” at the perimeter between the parklet and sidewalk provides a place for people to stand, either in the parklet or on the sidewalk, and have a place to lean, eat, or rest. The associated business furnishes each shell during their operating hours.

The Finn McCool’s parklet is set back 60 feet from the intersection for safety reasons. The parklet is actually offset from Finn McCool’s and rather is located directly in front of the adjacent Paloria Building (2708 Main Street). Finn McCool’s furnishes their site with tables, chairs, umbrellas, a heater, and bar stools during their hours of operation.

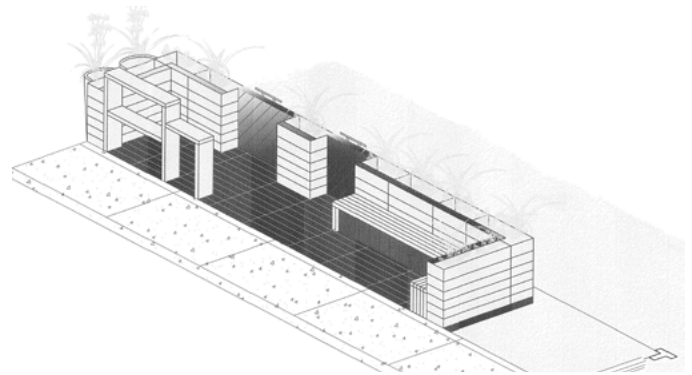


Figure 3: Shell design from parklet construction documents



Figure 4: Ashland Hill parklet viewed from across Main Street



Figure 5: Stand up bar viewed from the sidewalk



Figure 6: Finn McCool's parklet



Figure 7: Ashland Hill parklet

Located on the opposite side of Main Street from Finn McCool's, the Ashland Hill parklet is in front of the restaurant. Flanked by curb cuts on either side, the site has a limited amount of shade and a smaller number of nearby businesses, compared to the other sites. Due to this sun exposure, parklet shell required additional wood treatment. During their hours of operation, Ashland Hill furnishes their parklet with square café tables, chairs, umbrellas, and patio heaters. At times, the heaters and sidewalk sandwich boards block some of the clearance zones to enter the parklet.



Figure 8: Holy Guacamole parklet

Located on the short block between Ashland and Kinney, the Holy Guacamole Parklet is in front of the Holy Guacamole restaurant and Groundworks coffee. Shaded by two large ficus trees on either side, Holy Guacamole furnishes the site with colorful chairs, stools and benches during their hours of operation.

PARKLET OPERATOR HOURS OF OPERATION

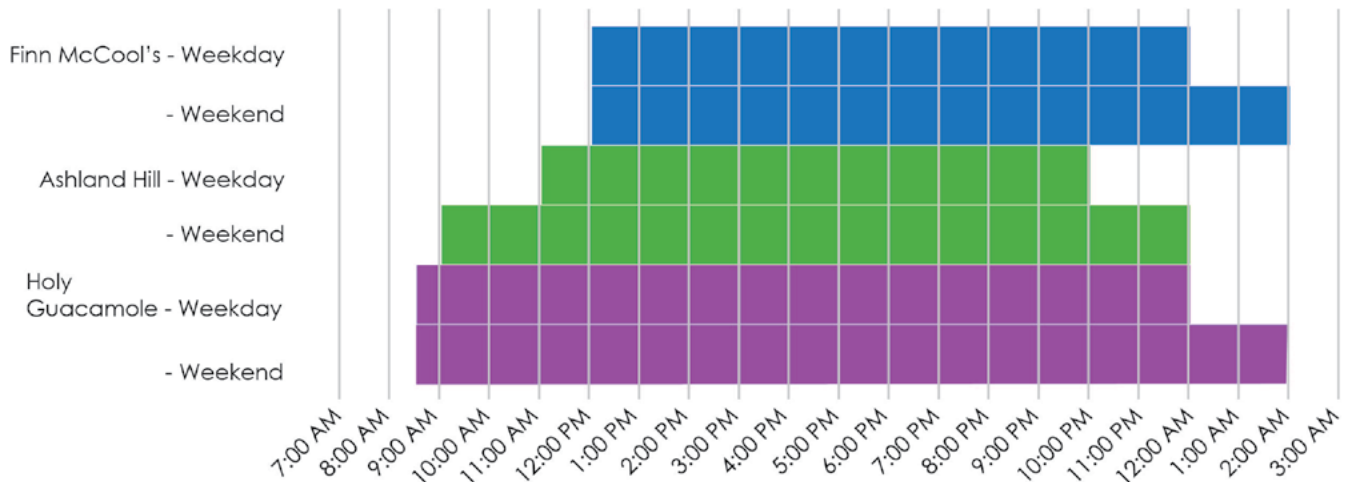


Figure 9: Parklet operator hours of operation

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The varying dynamics at the parklets dictated using a variety of different data collection methods. As presented in the table below, three data collection methods inform this study:

1. Stationary activity observations, including occupancy counts at the parklets
2. Intercept surveys; collected both along Main Street and in the parklet sites.
3. Bicycle and pedestrian volume counts

UCLA student research assistants collected these data using tools pilot tested and refined in conjunction with the City of Santa Monica Planning Department. Most data were collected pre- and post-parklet installation on both weekdays and weekends.

For obvious reasons, parklet surveys were only collected after installation. While survey conductors were positioned nearby all three parklets, they encountered so few people at the Finn McCool's and Ashland Hill sites that they could not get many (or any) parklet survey responses in their two-hour shift. Therefore, the vast majority of all parklet survey responses are from the Holy Guacamole location, a telling limitation of this performance evaluation.

PROGRAM GOAL	DATA COLLECTION APPROACH	TASK PURPOSE
Create active public space and aesthetic streetscape	Count number of people in the parklets	Determine level of parklet use
	Observe activities in the parklet and on the corridor	Understand how the street is currently used and evaluate changes from parklets
Provide more pedestrian amenities and pedestrian friendly routes	Survey people in parklets and along street	Understand if parklets are a pedestrian amenity and see if parklets change perceptions of the street.
Encourage more walking and cycling	Conduct bicycle and pedestrian counts along corridor	Analyze differences in walking and cycling volumes
Test the concept of parklets and determine whether a parklet program is appropriate	Combine original data collection methods and collect secondary data (SMPD)	Identify whether nuisance or other unwanted behaviors occur in the parklets and understand parklet user's feelings of safety

Table 4: Research approaches

Stationary Activity Observations

To paint a picture of which actions take place within the study area, we recorded people’s stationary activities both their posture (standing, or sitting) and their activity (eating, drinking, using a cell phone, etc.) over two hour periods. Data collectors noted the relative location and time, type of behaviors, and basic observable demographics. From these observations, we derived the parklet occupancy counts and gender split.

Both pre- and post-installation weekday mapping took place on a Tuesday and Thursday, with morning, afternoon, and evening shifts. Weekend mapping observations happened on a Saturday morning and evening.

Intercept Surveys

We surveyed people both on Main Street pre- and post-installation and in the parklets post-installation. Street surveys gathered information about use of Main Street, perceptions of safety, time spent on Main Street, general opinions, and demographic characteristics through a series of closed- and open-ended questions. We collected 268 surveys pre-installation and 230 surveys post-installation.

The parklet surveys provided direct feedback from people visting. Survey questions included information about parklet use, visiting frequency, and other perceptions.

We collected a total of 63 parklet surveys overwhelmingly (79%) from the Holy Guacamole parklet because the Finn McCool’s and Ashland Hill sites were often vacant. We shifted the survey collection times post-installation in an attempt to better align with business operating hours, but the low occupancy at these sites resulted in very few people to approach. All survey instruments are found in Appendix A.

ACTIVITY MAPPING COUNT TIMES



Figure 10: Activity observation collection periods

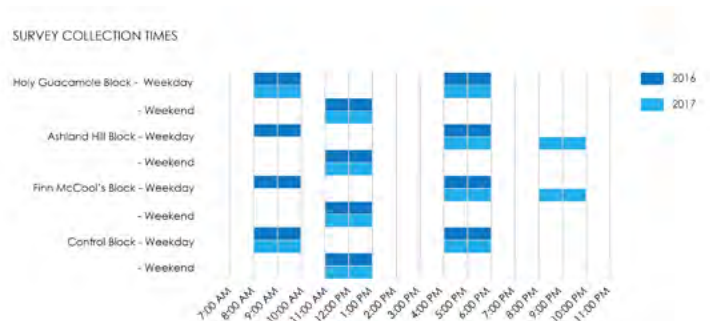


Figure 11: Survey Collection Times

SURVEY COLLECTION DISTRIBUTION

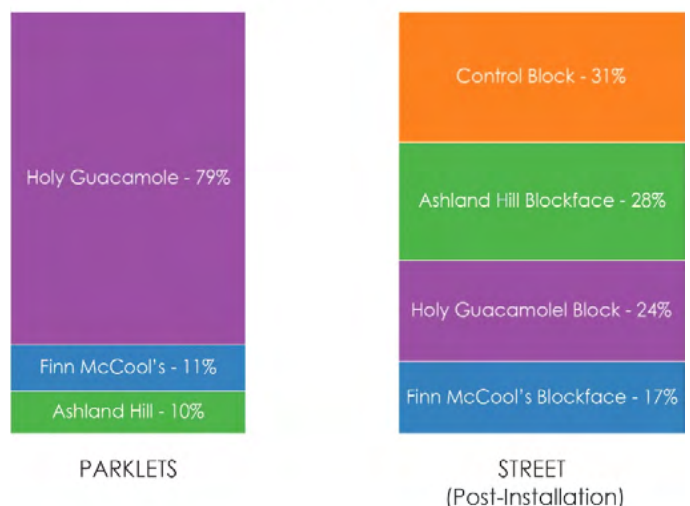


Figure 12: Survey Collection Distribution

Bicycle and Pedestrian Counts

Because encouraging more biking and walking was a key program goal, we counted the number of people walking and cycling at points along the study corridor in 15-minute intervals during peak 2-hour periods. The purpose of these counts was to understand whether or not the parklets had an effect on the people walking and cycling in the study area.

In each count, data collectors established a screenline and then counted all pedestrians and cyclists who crossed this imaginary line. Weekday counts occurred on a Wednesday and Thursday pre-installation and Tuesday and Thursday post-installation because of student availability. Being that traffic counts are similar on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays this difference should not have any effect on the resulting data. Weekend counts for both periods took place on a Saturday.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN COUNT TIMES



Figure 13: Bicycle and pedestrian count times



FINDINGS & RESULTS

Benchmarking Performance Among Peer Cities

Santa Monica is among the minority of cities with a formal evaluation of the parklet efforts. This means there are a limited opportunities to understand how the Main Street parklet performance compares. The small, but growing, number of parklet evaluation reports provide examples from four other places: New York City, Downtown Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Seattle.

With the exception of the Downtown Los Angeles study, the data collection methods and approaches differ between these other places provide a limited set of comparable metrics to the Santa Monica experience. For this reason, we only compared the parklet occupancy rates between the Santa Monica and other jurisdictions.

By this comparison, we conclude that the Holy Guacamole site is extremely well-performing, seeing about 12 people/hr. This occupancy rate is nearly at the same occupancy only seen in commercial areas in New York City.

On the other hand, this comparison demonstrates the below-average occupancy patterns at the other two sites. Finn McCool's is slightly below average occupancy at 4 people/hr, and Ashland Hill is infrequently visited at 1.15 persons/hr.

OCCUPANCY RATES

Santa Monica Main Street	Holy Guacamole: 12 ppl/hr Finn McCool's: 4 ppl/hr Ashland Hill: 1.2 ppl/hr
New York City	4 ppl/hour at more residential locations 15 ppl/hour in more commercial areas.
Downtown Los Angeles	8-11 ppl/hour on average
Philadelphia	Well-performing parklets averaged 5 ppl/hour Underutilized parklets saw 1.5 or fewer ppl/hour on average.
Seattle	6 ppl/hour on average with a range of 2-16 ppl/hour.

Findings

- The parklets created an active space at Holy Guacamole, a sometimes active space at Finn McCool's, and an inactive public space at Ashland Hill.
- Parklets increased the proportion of people sitting in the study area, even at less well-used parklet sites.
- People in the parklets are eating, drinking, socializing, and using their phones, demonstrating that this public space functions like a park or other well-designed public spaces with little to no nuisance behavior or police activity occurring.
- The parklets did not increase bicycling or walking in the corridor.
- Parklets are well-liked, well-maintained, and people feel safe and comfortable.
- A variety of people visit the parklets.
- The majority of people in the parklets purchase something from an adjacent business.

The following pages outline these findings in detail.

The parklets created an active space at Holy Guacamole, a sometimes active space at Finn McCool's, and an inactive public space at Ashland Hill.

Our parklet occupancy counts showed that by far, the Holy Guacamole parklet is substantially more occupied than the other two locations. This site averaged 12 people per hour, with the highest use on weekend mornings. Conversely, hardly anyone was observed using the Ashland Hill parklet, with an average hourly occupancy of 1.15 persons/hr.

Finn McCool's saw an hourly average of 4 people/hr. This average is skewed by the high occupancy during Saturday night on our data collection period when a large event entered Finn McCool's.

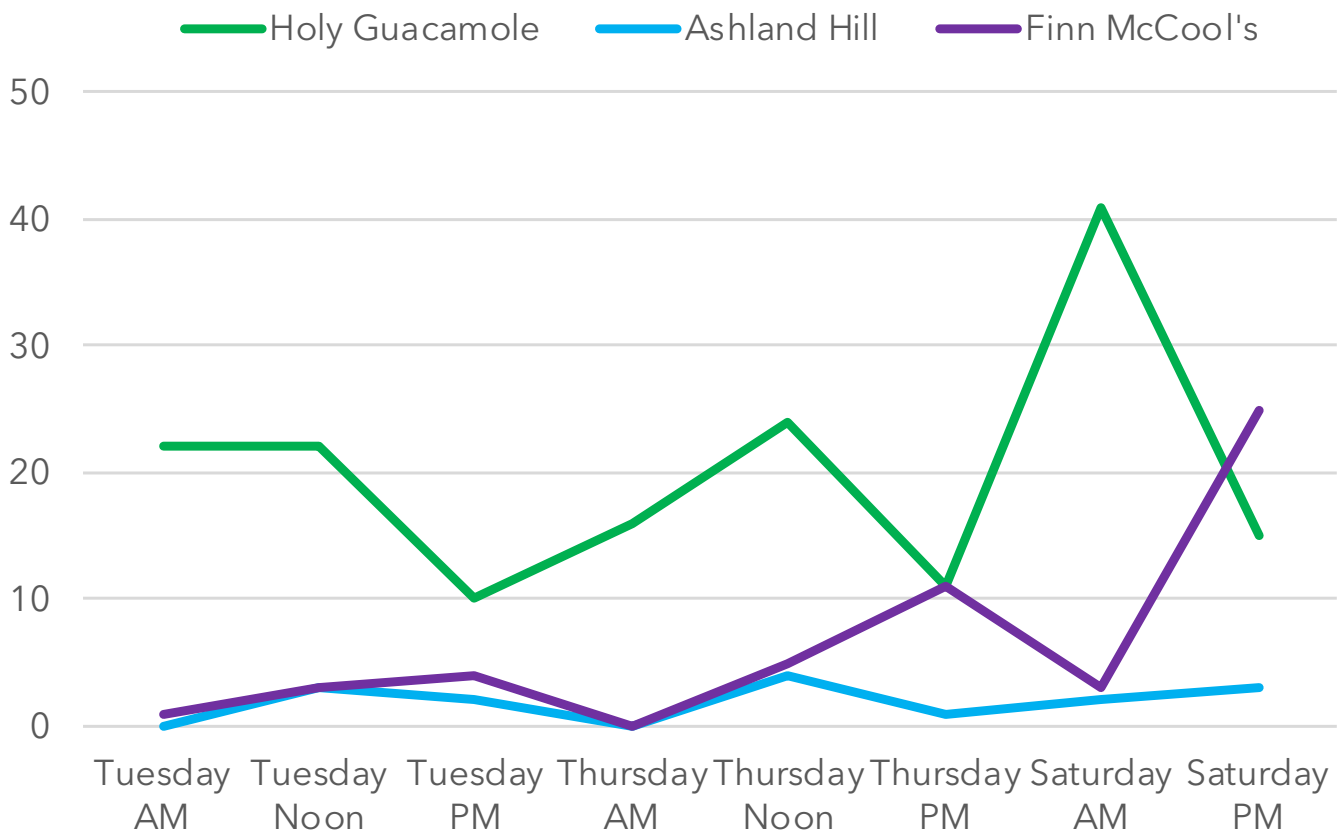


Figure 14 (above): Parklet occupancy rates

Parklets increased the proportion of people sitting in the study area, even at less well-used parklet sites.

Not surprisingly, parklet areas saw increases in the proportion of people sitting after parklet installation. Pre-parklet installation, we found more people seated near the Holy Guacamole site as compared to the other places mostly due to the small table located at Groundworks. Ashland Hill and Finn McCool's had no formal seating available before the parklet installation, although people sat informally on top of the low-wall bordering the parking lot by Ashland Hill.

Even given the existing seats near Holy Guacamole, this site saw the most substantial and dramatic change in the proportion of people sitting. After parklet installation, people sitting at Holy Guacamole outnumbered people standing.

The control blocks saw higher proportions of people standing after the parklet installation and little difference overall from the amount of people sitting pre-parklet installation.

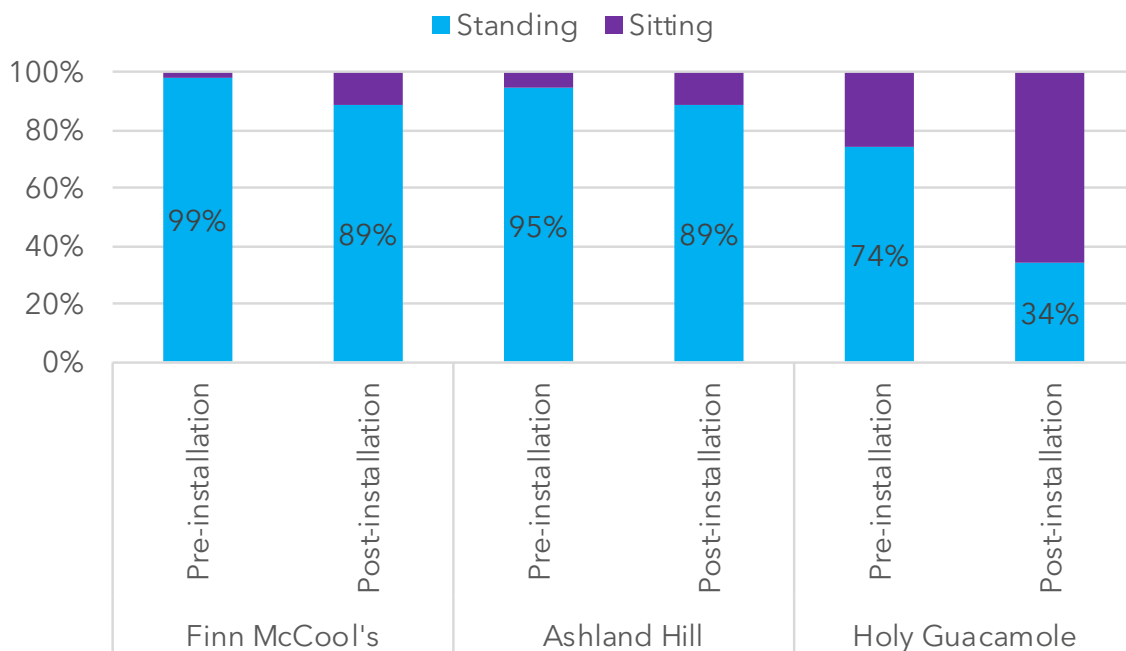


Figure 15: Postures in parklet sites

People in the parklets are eating, drinking, socializing, and using their phones, demonstrating that this public space functions like a park or other well-designed public spaces with little to no nuisance behavior or police activity occurring.

Eating/drinking, spending time on the phone, and socializing were the most commonly observed parklet activities. We observed three instances of panhandling and zero instances of sleeping in the parklets. Smoking, which is not allowed in the parklets, was observed on rare occasion.

The Santa Monica Police Department had a total of eight calls for service to the parklets but noted that none of these calls resulted in any police action. Most commonly, by the time the police arrived the issue was resolved.

ACTIVITY	HOLY GUAC.	FINN MCCOOL'S	ASHLAND HILL
Eating or drinking	98	10	5
On the phone	53	11	2
Socializing	22	9	
Waiting (Lyft/Uber, table, otherwise)	2	1	3
Reading	1		
Working (Writing or on the computer)	4		
Smoking	2	1	
Caregiving (tending to a small child)	1		1

Table 5: Parklet activities



The parklets did not increase bicycling or walking in the corridor.

We found moderate increases in both cycling and walking volumes after parklet installation. The change year-to-year varies greatly between locations and time of day. Detailed count information is provided in Appendix B. Both cycling and pedestrian volume increases occurred across the whole study area, demonstrating this finding is likely not related to the parklets themselves but larger overall shifts in transportation and land use.

For context, this section of Main Street sees some of the highest bicycle volumes in the city, according to the 2013 city-wide counting efforts. While pedestrian volumes are moderate relative to the City as a whole, there are typically people walking along Main Street, even with many narrow sidewalks.

While the parklets are a pedestrian and cycling amenity, they do not appear to be a destination that brings more people Main Street. From the survey data, we saw no change in how people got to Main Street before and after parklet installation. These survey results help to underscore the finding from the bicycle and pedestrian counts that the parklets themselves did not directly change walking or cycling volumes.

	BICYCLE VOLUME CHANGE	PEDESTRIAN VOLUME CHANGE
Holy Guacamole parklet	+14%	+7%
Between Finn McCool's and Ashland Hill parklets	+15.5%	+6%
Context block (The Victorian)	0%	+5%
Control Block	+13%	+4%

	STREET SURVEY 2016	STREET SURVEY 2017	PARKLET SURVEY 2017
Walking	43%	46%	40%
Car	40%	35%	42%
Bicycle	8%	12%	9%
Bus	6%	1%	3%
TNC (Lyft/Uber)	3%	6%	5%
Skateboard	1%	0%	2%

Table 6 (top): Bicycle and pedestrian volume changes

Table 7 (bottom) Survey mode of arrival

Parklets are well-liked, well-maintained, and people feel safe and comfortable there.

Drawing from both the street survey and the parklet survey, we found a number of positive aspects that people liked. We found that not only is the Holy Guacamole parklet well-used, it is also well-frequented. Three-quarters of the parklet survey respondents had visited the parklets before the survey day, and the vast majority (80%) of respondents visit the parklets weekly or more frequently. People enjoy the space, the majority of respondents would not change anything about the sites (with the caveat these surveys were mostly from Holy Guacamole). 9 out of 10 respondents would like to see more parklets in Santa Monica. Detailed survey results from both the street and parklet surveys are found in Appendix C.

When asked their favorite feature, people most commonly liked, simply, the additional outdoor space and seating. The word cloud below summarizes the “favorite features” with the size of the words representing the frequency of response. Approximately four times more people had sat in a

parklet post-installation; and the percent of people who had no idea what a parklet was decreased from 64% pre-installation to 43% post-installation. We suspect some people may have known what a parklet is if described, but they may not know the term “parklet.”

Even with the limited knowledge of parklets, street survey respondents showed strong enthusiasm for the concept. Before installation, 81% of people said they would like to see parklets on Main Street. After installation, the vast majority of people (92%) who knew what parklets are said they like the Main Street parklets.

However popular, we do not believe the parklets are the primary reason people are visiting Main Street. From the street surveys, we saw that people came to Main Street to eat or drink or because they live nearby. There was no change in the reasons people visited Main Street after parklet installation. Further, knowledge of parklets did not change much even after the parklets were installed. Pre-installation, 30% of respondents knew what a parklet was, and only 35% of people knew what one was post-installation.



Figure 16: Favorite parklet feature wordcloud

Perceptions of cleanliness, safety, and ease of socialization

The street and parklet surveys asked a variety of questions about how people perceived Main Street. While the parklets added new public space, we saw little change in the ease of finding a place to socialize or talk with others based on the street survey results.

The parklet survey included a similar but slightly different question: "How easy it is to talk to others in the parklet?" In that case, 52% of people in the parklets said it was "very easy" to talk to others there.

People found Main Street to be clean, in both the pre- and post-installation survey years. People in the parklets perceived these sites to be cleaner than Main Street overall.

While the overall feelings of safety on Main Street decreased between 2016 and 2017, we overwhelmingly found that people felt safer in the parklets than on our study area portion of Main Street. Since people feel very safe in the parklets, we do not believe that the parklets are what contributed to the decreased feelings of safety along Main Street.

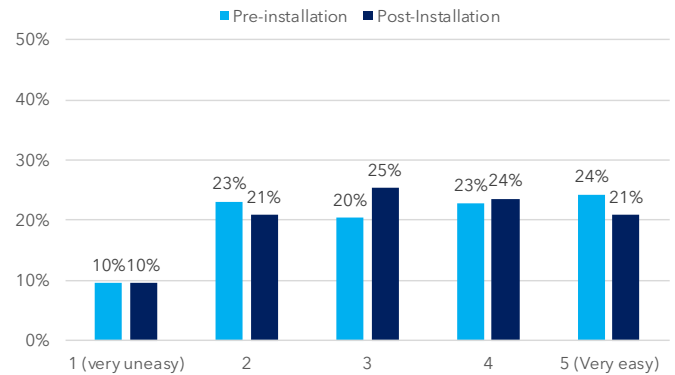


Figure 17: Ease of socializing on Main Street

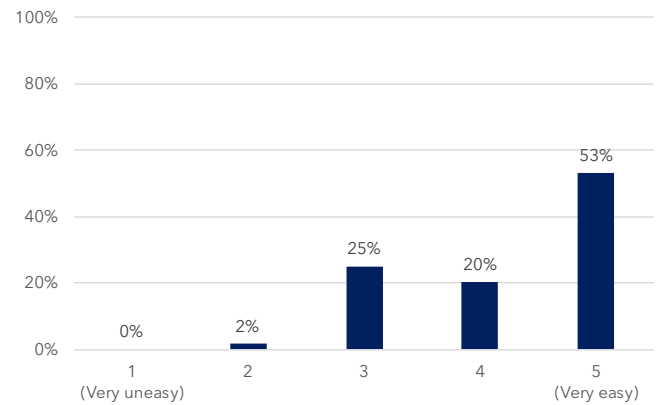


Figure 18: Ease of socializing in the parklets

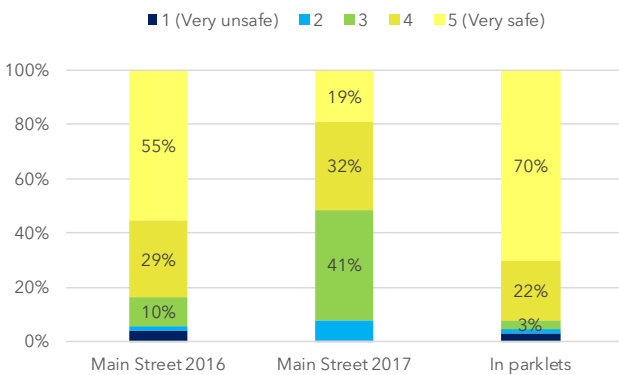


Figure 19: Safety perceptions

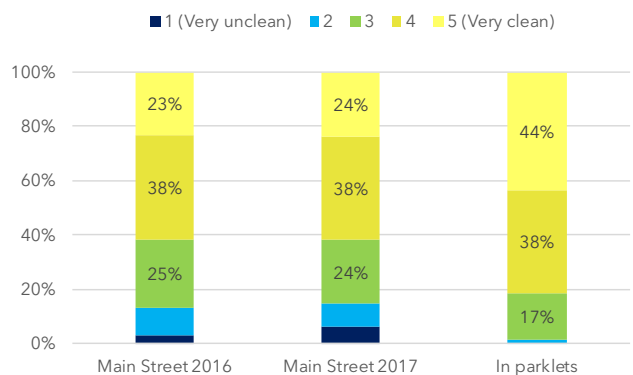


Figure 20: Cleanliness perceptions

A variety of people visit the parklets

Parklet demographics are important to track because parklets are intended to be used by everyone. We combined the findings from our activity observations and demographics from parklet survey respondents to get a picture of who's using the parklet.

Women and men used the parklets in fairly even proportions. We observed 47% women in the parklets and 41% female parklet survey respondents. The majority of people in the parklets are from Santa Monica (45%) or the adjacent neighborhoods (12% in Venice and 7% in Marina Del Ray).

People in the parklets appear to be slightly younger than people on Main Street, and people on Main Street and those in the parklets are younger, on average, than Santa Monica as a whole (comparing data from the American Community Survey). Overall, the parklets appear to be serving a fairly similar population as the people on Main Street and who live in the area.

The majority of people in the parklets purchase something from an adjacent business

We found that the overwhelming majority of parklet visitors made a purchase at a nearby business. Parklet visitors were also more likely to make a purchase compared to people in the street survey.

In 2017, 94% of parklet visitors reported making a purchase, whereas 57% of Main Street visitors made a purchase. The overwhelming connection between parklet use and consumer behavior may indicate that people are unsure whether they can visit the parklets without purchasing something.

AGE RANGE	PARKLET SURVEY 2017	STREET SURVEY 2017	CITY WIDE
18-38	41%	46%	30%
35-49	43%	27%	29%
50-65	14.5%	18%	24%
65+	1.5%	9%	18%

RACE / ETHNICITY	PARKLET SURVEY 2017	STREET SURVEY 2017	CITY WIDE
White	72%	70%	65.4%
Hispanic/Latino	17.5%	12%	16.1%
Asian	0%	5%	10%
Black	3.5%	3%	4.1%
Other (Middle Eastern & Pacific Islander)	5.25%	2%	--
Two or more races	1.75%		--

Table 8: Parklet survey demographics

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Santa Monica Main Street parklet pilot program introduced new public space for people where they socialized, ate, drank, rested, and enjoyed their neighborhood commercial corridor. Expanding this program to a permanent part of the Main Street can continue to spread these benefits to more places and more people.

Recommendations for the current pilot sites

While the program was successful overall, each parklet site had distinctly different performance. While the Holy Guacamole site is successfully achieving nearly all the goals, the other two sites are underutilized. Given our observations and analysis, we recommend the City, in close coordination with parklet operators, take the following two actions with these existing sites.

Redesign the furniture at Finn McCool's

The Finn McCool's site features very little movable furniture, and the seating is not available for many hours of the week. The tables take up the majority of the space and cannot be moved to fit visitor's needs. In contrast, Holy Guacamole has no "tables" per se. Rather, visitors use the benches, stools, or ledges as tables and can move the chairs around to suit their group size and dynamic. The parklet may be more successful if the seating is more flexible and more obviously public. Finding an additional partner who can place the furniture out earlier in the day could also benefit this site.

Remove and relocate the Ashland Hill parklet and use the space for other streetscape improvements

The Ashland Hill parklet is not successful and it does not appear much could be done to increase the likelihood of success in its current location. High-levels of sun exposure can make for an unpleasant environment. While the operator does place at least one umbrella, it only covers a small portion of the site. Further, the low number of proximate businesses likely contribute to the low occupancy rate. We find these barriers to be hard to overcome at this particular location. We recommend the city consider relocating the parklet shell to another location and consider this location for other pedestrian and bicycle amenities such as a bike corral or an area to park scooters and dockless bicycles.



Figure 21: Typical occupancy at Ashland Hill parklet

Recommendations for a Main Street parklet program

If the City elects to expand this into a permanent program, two lessons learned from this pilot and evaluation, and other cities experience that can make a permanent program even more successful than this pilot.

1. Set program goals commensurate with what parklets can achieve

Based on our analysis, there are a number of goals that a parklet program could achieve.

These include:

- Creating an active, aesthetically pleasing, public space
- Providing safe, comfortable, and useful public spaces within the right-of-way
- Supplying new spaces for community interaction
- Allowing local businesses to actively participate in streetscape improvements

Overall, the City should seek to help create active parklets where occupancy is at least 5 people/hour on average. We also recommend that future parklets be constructed at the cost to the operator as this will likely deter parklets from being placed in low-utilization locations. This is commonplace for parklet programs in the United States.

We recommend the city remove increasing bicycling and walking volumes as a parklet program goal. Even the incredibly successful Holy Guacamole site failed to reach this goal, a common occurrence also in other successful programs in peer cities. More direct transportation investments like increasing the on-street bicycle network or density increases are likely a better way to achieve this goal.

2. Create strong site selection criteria

While there is no exact formula for parklet success, we believe that a variety of conditions contribute to the ultimate success of any particular parklet. While no other city has included business proximity or type in their parklet selection criteria, we believe this was a major contributor to the success of the Holy Guacamole site. Both Holy Guacamole and Groundworks coffee are take-out oriented businesses within 30 ft. of the parklet. Therefore, we encourage Santa Monica to consider parklets to be located with at least two, if not more, businesses within 30 feet of the site. This will likely help the parklet belong to more than one business, possibly attracting more visitors. The table on the following page outlines potential criteria for selecting future parklet locations.

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	MOTIVATIONS
Business proximity and type	At least 2 businesses within 30 ft of the parklet, with take-out businesses preferred.	Holy Guacamole and Groundworks' close proximity and take-out nature help bring a lot of visitors who may sit at the parklet.
Bike lane adjacency	Parklets with bike lanes have a buffer from car travel.	Main Street is a good candidate, other cities give bonus points to parklets adjacent to bike lanes.
Number of travel lanes	Streets with fewer travel lanes are preferred.	Main Street fits this criteria and other cities usually limit parklets to smaller streets.
Hours of business operation	Morning hours are preferred to evening hours, and the more open hours the better.	People are more likely to visit the parklets in the morning or lunchtime and having businesses open at these times contributes to higher parklet occupancy rates.
Public seating design	Movable furniture should look less like café seating and have more seating than tables.	Seating design at the Holy Guacamole site appears to contribute to its success. Other cities include this criteria as a part of their parklet applications.
Shade	Located under trees or on a more shady side of the street.	Sun exposure at Ashland Hill likely hurts occupancy, and limited exposure to the sun is better for public health.

Table 9: Potential Site Criteria



2906

BIKE ATTACK
ELECTRIC

BIKE ATTACK ELECTRIC

BIKE ATTACK ELECTRIC

SCOTT

OPEN

BIKE ATTACK ELECTRIC

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Santa Monica Parklet Street Survey - 2016



Researchers at the UCLA School of Public Affairs are working with the City of Santa Monica to gather information. Participation is voluntary and should take less than 5 minutes. You must be at least 18 years of age to take this survey. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer, and you may end the survey at any time. All responses will remain anonymous. If you have questions about the survey, please contact Madeline Bronzen (Project Manager, UCLA) at (424) 255-8737.

1. Which of the following best describes you? (Select only one)

- Neighborhood Resident
- Los Angeles Resident
- Santa Monica Resident
- Tourist
- Other: _____

2. What brings you to Main Street? (check all that apply)

- I live nearby I work nearby
- Shopping Exercise
- To eat/drink Entertainment/Socializing
- Passing through to somewhere else
- Other: _____

3. How often do you visit this portion of Main Street?

- Daily
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- Rarely (once every few months)
- Almost never

4. How often do you encounter people you know on Main Street?

- Daily
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- Rarely (once every few months)
- Almost never

5. How did you arrive on Main Street today?

- Drove a car Bus
- Taxi/Lyft/Uber Breeze bike By foot
- Scooter/motorcycle My bike
- Other: _____

6. How long did it take you to get here?

- Less than 5 minutes 5-15 minutes
- 16-30 minutes More than 30 minutes

7. How much time do you typically spend here when you visit this street segment?

- Less than 10 minutes 10-30 minutes
- 31 minutes - 1 hour More than 1 hour

8. Do you usually visit with:

- Myself With my family/children
- With friends/co-workers
- With parents/other older adults
- Other: _____

9. Do you typically purchase anything while visiting?

- Yes Sometimes No

10. Do you know what a parklet is?

- Yes Yes, and I've sat in one No

11. Would you like to see a parklet on main street?

- Yes No

If "No," why not?

12. What is your perspective of the amount of people on the sidewalk?

- 1 2 3 4 5
Too Few Too Many

13. What is your perception of the amount of car traffic?

- 1 2 3 4 5
Too Few Too Many

14. How safe do you feel on Main Street?

- 1 2 3 4 5
Very unsafe Very safe

15. How clean do you feel Main Street is?

- 1 2 3 4 5
Very Unclean Very Clean

16. How easy is it to find a place to socialize or talk with others on Main Street, not including stores and restaurants?

- 1 2 3 4 5
Very Uneasy Very Easy

17. What is your age?

- 18-35 35-49 50-65 65+

18. What best describes you?

- Female Male Transgender
- Other: _____

19. How would you describe your ethnicity/race? (check all that apply)

- Hispanic/Latino Black
- White Asian
- Native Hawaiian
- Other: _____

20. What is your home's zip code? _____

Santa Monica Parklet Street Survey - 2017



Researchers at the UCLA School of Public Affairs are working with the City of Santa Monica to gather information. Participation is voluntary and should take less than 5 minutes. You must be at least 18 years of age to take this survey. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer, and you may end the survey at any time. All responses will remain anonymous. If you have questions about the survey, please contact Madeline Bronzen (Project Manager, UCLA) at (424) 255-8737.

1. Which of the following best describes you? (Select only one)

- Neighborhood Resident
- Los Angeles Resident
- Santa Monica Resident
- Tourist
- Other: _____

2. What brings you to Main Street? (check all that apply)

- I live nearby I work nearby
- Shopping Exercise
- To eat/drink Entertainment/Socializing
- Passing through to somewhere else
- Other: _____

3. How often do you visit this portion of Main Street?

- Daily
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- Rarely (once every few months)
- Almost never

4. How often do you encounter people you know on Main Street?

- Daily
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- Rarely (once every few months)
- Almost never

5. How did you arrive on Main Street today?

- Drove a car Bus
- Taxi/Lyft/Uber Breeze bike By foot
- Scooter/motorcycle My bike
- Other: _____

6. How long did it take you to get here?

- Less than 5 minutes 5-15 minutes
- 16-30 minutes More than 30 minutes

7. How much time do you typically spend here when you visit this street segment?

- Less than 10 minutes 10-30 minutes
- 31 minutes - 1 hour More than 1 hour

8. Do you usually visit with:

- Myself With my family/children
- With friends/co-workers
- With parents/other older adults
- Other: _____

9. Do you typically purchase anything while visiting?

- Yes Sometimes No

10. Do you know what a parklet is?

- Yes Yes, and I've sat in one No

11. Do you like the parklets on Main Street?

- Yes No

If "No," why not?

12. What is your perspective of the amount of people on the sidewalk?

- 1 2 3 4 5
Too Few Too Many

13. What is your perception of the amount of car traffic?

- 1 2 3 4 5
Too Few Too Many

14. How safe do you feel on Main Street?

- 1 2 3 4 5
Very unsafe Very safe

15. How clean do you feel Main Street is?

- 1 2 3 4 5
Very Unclean Very Clean

16. How easy is it to find a place to socialize or talk with others on Main Street, not including stores and restaurants?

- 1 2 3 4 5
Very Uneasy Very Easy

17. What is your age?

- 18-35 35-49 50-65 65+

18. What best describes you?

- Female Male Transgender
- Other: _____

19. How would you describe your ethnicity/race? (check all that apply)

- Hispanic/Latino Black
- White Asian
- Native Hawaiian
- Other: _____

20. What is your home's zip code? _____

APPENDIX B: DETAILED SURVEY RESPONSES

Street Surveys

Reason for Visiting Main Street	Pre-Installation		Post-Installation	
To eat/drink	89	27%	80	22%
I live nearby	77	22%	84	24%
I work nearby	46	12%	51	14%
Entertainment/Socializing	32	10%	31	9%
Shopping	32	9%	37	10%
Exercise	27	8%	33	9%
Pass through	10	3%	28	8%
Errand	9	3%	7	2%
Other	7	2%	6	2%
Beach	5	2%	0	0
	334		357	100%
How often do you visit this portion of main street?	Pre-Installation		Post-Installation	
Daily	112	41%	73	32%
A few times a week	61	23%	66	29%
A few times a month	37	14%	43	19%
Rarely	35	13%	24	10%
Almost never	22	8%	24	10%
	267	100%	230	100%
How often do you encounter people you know on Main Street?	Pre-Installation		Post-Installation	
Daily	72	26%	53	23%
A few times a week	53	20%	37	16%
A few times a month	40	15%	33	14%
Rarely	45	18%	55	24%
Almost never	58	21%	50	22%
	268	100%	228	100%
Who do you usually come with?	Pre-Installation		Post-Installation	
Myself	101	39%	88	39%
Myself and others	23	8%	21	9%
With Others	63	25%	66	29%
With others, including my family/children	16	6%	8	4%
With my family /children	46	17%	35	16%
Others including older adults	13	4%	6	3%
	262	100%	224	100%

How did you arrive here today?	Pre-Installation		Post-Installation	
Foot	115	43%	103	46%
Car	111	40%	79	35%
Bike	20	8%	27	12%
Bus	15	6%	2	1%
TNC	9	3%	14	6%
Skateboard	2	1%	1	0%
Do you typically purchase anything while visiting?	Pre-Installation		Post-Installation	
Yes	163	61%	127	57%
Sometimes	66	26%	70	31%
No	32	13%	27	12%
	261	100%	224	100%
Do you know what a parklet is?	Pre-Installation		Post-Installation	
Yes	83	30%	79	35%
Yes and I've sat in one before	17	6%	51	22%
No	168	64%	98	43%
	268		228	
Do you like the parklets on Main Street?	Post-installation			
Yes	160	89%		
No	20	11%		
	180			

Reasons why people do not like the parklets on Main Street:

- Aesthetics (4)
- Not clearly public (2)
- Opportunity cost (10)
- Parking loss (4)
- Traffic increase (10)
- Homelessness (1)

What is your perception of the number of people on the sidewalk?	Pre-Installation		Post-Installation	
1 (too few)	17	7%	18	8%
2	33	13%	43	19%
3	171	64%	137	61%
4	35	13%	20	9%
5 (Too many)	11	4%	8	4%
	267	100%	226	100%
What is your perception of the amount of car traffic on the street?	Pre-Installation		Post-Installation	
1 (too little)	2	0%	1	0%
2	15	5%	17	8%
3	100	38%	92	41%
4	82	30%	73	32%
5 (Too much)	68	26%	43	19%
	267	100%	226	100%
How safe do you feel on Main Street?	Pre-Installation		Post-Installation	
1 (very unsafe)	10	4%	1	0%
2	6	2%	17	8%
3	27	10%	92	41%
4	80	29%	73	32%
5 (Very safe)	144	55%	43	19%
	267	100%	226	100%
How clean do you feel Main Street is?	Pre-Installation		Post-Installation	
1 (very unclean)	8	3%	14	6%
2	28	10%	19	8%
3	66	25%	54	24%
4	105	38%	87	38%
5 (Very clean)	60	23%	54	24%
	267	100%	228	100%
How easy is it to find a place to socialize or talk with others on Main Street, not including stores and restaurants?	Pre-Installation		Post-Installation	
1 (very uneasy)	26	10%	21	10%
2	59	23%	46	21%
3	53	20%	56	25%
4	59	23%	52	24%
5 (Very easy)	66	24%	46	21%
	267	100%	228	100%

APPENDIX B: DETAILED SURVEY RESPONSES

Parklet Surveys

Reason for Visiting Main Street		
I live nearby	31	37%
To eat/drink	31	37%
Passing through to somewhere else	9	11%
I work nearby	7	8%
Shopping	2	2%
Entertainment/Socializing	3	4%
	83	100%
Have you been to the parklets before today?		
Daily	112	41%
A few times a week	61	23%
A few times a month	37	14%
Rarely	35	13%
Almost never	22	8%
	267	100%
How often do you come to the parklets?		
Daily	9	23%
A few times a week	11	28%
Weekly	12	30%
Monthly	8	20%
	40	100%
How did you get here today?		
Foot	26	40%
Car	27	42%
Bike	6	9%
Bus	2	3%
TNC	3	5%
Skateboard	1	2%
	65	100%
Did you purchase anything from the adjacent businesses today?		
Yes	59	92%
No	5	8%
	64	100%
Would you like to see more parklets in Santa Monica?		
Yes	60	89%
No	3	11%
	63	100%

How safe do you feel in the parklet?		
1 (Very unsafe)	2	3%
2	1	2%
3	2	3%
4	14	22%
5 (Very safe)	45	70%
	64	100%
How clean do you feel the parklet is?		
1 (very unclean)	0	0%
2	1	2%
3	11	17%
4	24	38%
5 (Very clean)	28	44%
	64	100%
How easy is it to talk to others in the parklet?		
1 (very uneasy)	0	0%
2	1	2%
3	16	25%
4	13	20%
5 (Very easy)	34	53%
	64	100%

Is there anything you would change about the parklet?

Half of people surveyed said they would change nothing about the parklets.

Suggestions for changes included:

- More parklet sites (4)
- More traffic protection (3)
- Better/more comfortable seating (3)
- Larger site (2)
- More plants (2)
- More seating (2)
- Outlets/solar charging (2)
- Add "bus your dishes" sign (1)
- Add umbrellas (1)
- Allow smoking (1)
- Chess boards/social interaction encouragement (1)
- Consistent seating (1)
- Dog amenities (1)
- More color (1)

APPENDIX C: DETAILED COUNT VOLUMES

Bicycle Counts

Location #1 Near Holy Guacamole Parklet	2016	2017	Percent Change
Northbound			
Weekday morning	90.5	149	65%
Weekday evening	112	89.5	-20%
Weekend	103	139	35%
Northbound average change	+27%		
Southbound			
Weekday morning	72.5	65.5	-10%
Weekday evening	94	112.5	20%
Weekend	126	120	-5%
Southbound average change	+2%		
Location total average change	+14%		
Location #2 Btwn. Finn's and Ashland Hill	2016	2017	Percent Change
Northbound			
Weekday morning	131	167	27%
Weekday evening	86.5	95	10%
Weekend	131	142	8%
Northbound average change	+27%		
Southbound			
Weekday morning	72.5	65.5	-10%
Weekday evening	94	112.5	20%
Weekend	126	120	-5%
Southbound average change	+2%		
Location total average change	+14%		
Location #3 Context block	2016	2017	Percent Change
Northbound weekend	163	146	-10%
Southbound weekend	107	118	10%
Location average change	0%		
Location #4 Control block	2016	2017	Percent Change
Northbound			
Weekday morning	135.5	159	17%
Weekday evening	83.5	77	-8%
Northbound average change	+5%		
Southbound			
Weekday morning			
Weekday evening			
Southbound average change	+21%		
Location average change	+13%		

APPENDIX C: DETAILED COUNT VOLUMES

Pedestrian Counts

Location #1 Near Holy Guacamole Parklet	2016	2017	Percent Change
East sidewalk			
Weekday morning	151	201.5	33%
Weekday evening	390	370.5	-5%
Weekend	503	574	14%
East sidewalk average change	+14%		
West sidewalk (parklet side)			
Weekday morning	155.5	176.5	14%
Weekday evening	445	351	-21%
Weekend	502	529	5%
West sidewalk average change	-12%		
Location total average change	+7%		
Location #2 Btwn. Finn's and Ashland Hill	2016	2017	Percent Change
East sidewalk (Ashland Hill side)			
Weekday morning	110	135.5	23%
Weekday evening	277.5	235.5	-15%
Weekend	483	464	-4%
East sidewalk average change	+1%		
West sidewalk (Finn McCool's side)			
Weekday morning	105	164.5	57%
Weekday evening	313.5	255.5	-19%
Weekend	540	491	-9%
West sidewalk average change	+10%		
Location total average change	+6%		
Location #3 Context block	2016	2017	Percent Change
East sidewalk weekend	418	412	-1%
West sidewalk weekend	299	336	12%
Location average change	5%		
Location #4 Control block	2016	2017	Percent Change
East sidewalk			
Weekday morning	139	93	-33%
Weekday evening	284.5	298	5%
East sidewalk average change	-14%		
West sidewalk			
Weekday morning	153	211	38%
Weekday evening	300	317	6%
West sidewalk average change	+22%		
Location average change	+4%		



QR code and informational text on a white sign.

