



Staff Report

January 20, 2026 Council Workshop Meeting

Downtown Parklet Program Options

Presenter: Alan Peters, Community Development Director / Scott Collins, Public Works Director

Time Estimate: 30 minutes

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BACKGROUND: The City of Camas has been exploring opportunities to enhance the downtown public realm and support economic vitality through placemaking improvements that encourage people to visit, linger, and spend time in the downtown core. One tool increasingly used by cities to advance these goals is the implementation of downtown parklets, which are small public spaces typically constructed within on-street parking stalls and designed to expand pedestrian space for seating, landscaping, and community activation.

Over the past two years, the City of Camas has been developing a Downtown Subarea Plan to guide future growth and investment within the downtown core. A partial draft of the plan was released in July 2025. Key themes from this public outreach during plan development include preserving downtown's historic character, supporting increases in density and mixed-use development, improving pedestrian safety, providing more open and gathering spaces, and developing a vibrant civic hub. The draft plan identifies parklets as a potential tool to enhance urban amenities and civic life downtown.

Parklets have been considered locally in recent years through both COVID-era temporary outdoor seating permits and post-COVID requests from downtown businesses. During the pandemic, temporary permits were issued to allow expanded outdoor operating areas in response to statewide restrictions. These permits were later rescinded in 2022 and the installations were removed. In 2023, the Parking Advisory Committee and City Council held discussions regarding parklets, and Council elected to revisit the topic through the Downtown Subarea Planning process.

Since that time, the City has continued to partner with local stakeholders, including the Downtown Camas Association (DCA) and participating downtown businesses, to allow limited parklet use through special event permitting. This experience has helped the City evaluate how parklets may function in Camas and identify key considerations related to safety, maintenance, accessibility, operations, and impacts to parking and circulation.

SUMMARY: Council is requested to provide policy consensus regarding a potential Downtown Parklet Program, including the preferred implementation approach. Options include:

1. Continuing a temporary/special event model,
2. Establishing a seasonal or semi-permanent program, or
3. Exploring a year-round/permanent installation model.

Council consensus will allow staff to develop the appropriate framework for permitting, design standards, maintenance and operations, accessibility requirements, and enforcement, and to coordinate with applicable stakeholders prior to program implementation.

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY: Downtown parklets can enhance the public realm by creating small gathering spaces that support a vibrant, walkable downtown and encourage people to spend more time in the city center. They can also support local economic vitality by increasing foot traffic and visibility for downtown businesses while providing flexible, scalable placemaking improvements consistent with the Downtown Subarea Plan.

STRATEGIC PLAN: This item aligns with the City's Strategic Plan element Vibrant Community Amenities by supporting downtown placemaking efforts that enhance the pedestrian environment and provide additional public gathering space. It also supports Safe & Accessible Community and Economic Prosperity by encouraging walkability and downtown activation.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES: Potential challenges include the loss of on-street parking stalls in the downtown core, where convenient parking is already limited and impacts may be a concern for businesses and visitors.

BUDGET IMPACT: There is no direct budget impact associated with Council providing policy consensus at this time. Any future budget impacts will depend on the parklet program model selected (temporary, seasonal, or permanent) and the associated permitting, design, and safety requirements. If Council supports implementation, staff will return with recommended program details.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends Council provide policy consensus on the preferred Downtown Parklet Program approach (temporary, seasonal, permanent, hybrid, or no program). Staff will develop the appropriate program framework consistent with Council consensus and return with implementation materials for Council consideration.