

## Parklets and Streateries FAQ

### What's a parklet?

A parklet is a small segment of the right-of-way that has been converted from a private automobile parking space to a public space for all to enjoy. Parklets are generally one or two parking spaces long, although they can stretch for an entire block face or more.

### What's a streatory?

You can think of a streatory as a combination of a parklet and a sidewalk café. For most hours of the day, a streatory is an open space constructed in the parking lane outside a local business (like a parklet). During the hosting restaurant's business hours, a streatory provides space for table service and is used exclusively by the business, like a sidewalk café. Streateries are a new way to activate Seattle's parklets and promote the economic vitality of commercial districts. They provide space for café seating in neighborhoods with narrow sidewalks and support our vibrant café culture.

### What's the purpose of parklets and streateries?

We live in a city with a limited number of neighborhood parks and open spaces. Parklets provide valuable privately-funded and privately-maintained public spaces for people to read, sip a cup of coffee, enjoy a bite to eat, and socialize. Parklets convert on-street parking spaces into community gathering places, creating more vibrant commercial districts. Streateries are a new way to support these goals while also responding to the demand for more outdoor café seating in Seattle, particularly in areas where sidewalks are too narrow for sidewalk cafés.

### How do I apply for a parklet or streatory?

To apply for a parklet or streatory, please read through the Parklet Handbook and Streatory Supplement to learn about the application process and see what you'll need to consider when building a parklet or streatory. Once you're ready to apply, you can submit your initial application package to [parklets@seattle.gov](mailto:parklets@seattle.gov) or in person on the 23rd floor of the Seattle Municipal Tower at 700 5th Ave.

Additional questions about the application process can be directed to [parklets@seattle.gov](mailto:parklets@seattle.gov).

### Are parklets open to the public? What about streateries?

Parklets are free and open for everyone to enjoy 24 hours a day. Streateries are open to the public at all hours outside of café service hours. Each streatory will feature a sign indicating which hours are for business customers and which hours the space is public.

## How did parklets and streateries begin in Seattle?

Local businesses interested in building parklets began approaching us in 2011. While receptive to the idea, we lacked a program (or any guidelines or requirements) for parklet development. After discussions with the Mayor, the City Council, and several City of Seattle departments, SDOT launched a Pilot Parklet Program in the summer of 2013. The pilot program began with only three parklet hosts before it was extended through 2014 to explore how well parklets would serve Seattle's diverse neighborhoods. Following a successful evaluation of the pilot program, we made the Parklet Program permanent in 2015 and launched the Streatery Pilot Program to test new activation opportunities for parklets. The streateries will be evaluated before a permanent program is considered.



*The streatery at Montana Bar on Capitol Hill started as a parklet and was the first to open in Seattle.  
Photo by: Seattle Bike Blog*

## How does SDOT decide where to build parklets and streateries? Does the City impose them on neighborhoods?

SDOT doesn't build parklets or streateries. Local businesses, community organizations, and other hosts apply for and construct their own parklets and streateries. An application may be denied if the proposed site is not fit to host a parklet or streatery; if there's insufficient parking supply in the neighborhood; or if there is a lack of community support. But SDOT never imposes a parklet or streatery on a neighborhood; parklets and streateries are always community-initiated, neighborhood-driven, and privately-funded projects.

## Do parklets and streateries require community support for approval?

Yes. As part of the parklet application process, potential hosts need to provide at least three letters of community support and submit proof that they have contacted their local neighborhood or business association. For streateries, one additional letter—four total—is required, and streatery hosts must also submit a petition of support.

A 14-day public comment period is required after your concept design is complete. SDOT will issue a public notice of the application and begin the comment period. Notices will be mailed to all street-level businesses and residents within 200 feet of the proposed parklet or streaterly location, posted in the window of the hosting or adjacent business, and listed on our website. Comments may be submitted to SDOT either by emailing [parklets@seattle.gov](mailto:parklets@seattle.gov) or in writing to:

Seattle Department of Transportation  
Attn: Public Space Management Program  
PO Box 34996  
Seattle, WA 98124-4996.

We will consider all public feedback when making a final decision on a parklet or streaterly application.

### **Are parklets and streateries temporary or permanent?**

Parklets and streateries are not permanently affixed to the roadway or sidewalk in any fashion. However, if it remains well-maintained, the parklet or streaterly host may apply for annual renewals. SDOT will carefully consider any community feedback when evaluating renewal applications, and may require replacement of elements experiencing routine wear-and-tear.

### **Who pays for parklets and streateries?**

Parklets and streateries are paid for privately. Hosts pay for design, materials, construction, and maintenance costs, as well as for review and permit fees. Additionally, hosts pay a square foot occupation fee and a paid parking replacement fee each year in exchange for being able to use their streaterly for private café seating during their hours of operation.

### **Can residents and community organizations host parklets and streateries, or just businesses?**

Anyone can apply to host a parklet. However, a streaterly can only be hosted by a business that is licensed to serve food and/or alcohol and offers table service. We recommend that all parklet and streaterly hosts consider hiring professional design services to ensure that their projects meet safety, accessibility, and design standards. Hosts also need to consider their ability to maintain their parklet or streaterly after it's installed.



*The Uptown Parklet at SIFF Cinema is hosted by the Uptown Alliance, a local community group.*

### **Do parklets and streateries close at night?**

Parklets are free to (responsibly!) enjoy 24 hours a day, and streateries are open to the public during non-serving hours.

### **Can I drink alcoholic beverages in a parklet or streatory?**

Parklets are public spaces, just like a plaza or a park, so you can't drink in a parklet. If the hosting business has a liquor license to serve alcohol to their customers, you would be able to drink alcohol during their serving hours – after hours, the same rules as parklets apply.

### **Can I smoke in a parklet or streatory?**

No. Out of respect for other users, smoking is prohibited in parklets and streateries.

### **Who is responsible for maintaining parklets and streateries?**

The parklet or streatory host. The host must ensure the parklet or streatory is clean and free of rubbish daily, as well as keep elements in a state of good repair. Streatory hosts are required to store all serving items outside the seating area when the streatory is open to the public.

### **What about parking? How does SDOT ensure there will still be ample parking in neighborhoods served by parklets and streateries?**

Balancing use of the right of way is always tricky, and parking availability is a factor we consider when reviewing parklet and streatory applications. We have parking data for neighborhoods throughout the city, which we use to help make our decisions.

**Is there a cap on the number of parklets or streateries allowed per block or per neighborhood?**

There is no set limit on the number of parklets or streateries that are allowed per block or per neighborhood. However, we give priority to parklets and streateries that are proposed in areas of the city with less open space and/or limited sidewalk space. We also require that hosts exhibit a strong level of support from their local community. If a neighborhood believes that a certain area has already reached a sufficient density of parklets or streateries, that will be taken into consideration when applications are evaluated for the area.

**I'm a business owner who loves my neighborhood and would really like to provide my community with a parklet or streatory, but the initial costs are kind of intimidating. Do businesses who sponsor parklets and streateries tend to see any benefits?**

Parklet and streatory hosts in Seattle have reported significant benefits from their parklets and streateries. Based on our evaluations of these programs, we've found that both hosts and nearby businesses have experienced an increase in foot traffic and an increase in sales due to the installation of a parklet or streatory on their block. Additionally, 100 percent of parklet and streatory hosts have said they would recommend the program to other Seattle businesses. The evaluation report online provides more information about the business impact of parklets and streateries.

We also have several funding resources available to help reduce the cost of your project, found on our parklets and streateries program page.

**How does SDOT ensure that parklets and streateries are safe?**

Safety is our highest priority when reviewing parklet and streatory applications. Every parklet and streatory is subject to specific design and siting standards to ensure that it will remain safe for its users and the traveling public. As standard features, every parklet and streatory is required to have wheel stops and flexible delineator posts on its outside edges to increase awareness of the space and prevent cars from hitting it. Parklet and streatory applications are also reviewed by SDOT's Traffic Engineers to ensure that they will not obstruct sightlines or impact safety for other users of the street.

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For further questions, please contact us at [parklets@seattle.gov](mailto:parklets@seattle.gov) or at (206) 684-5267.