

# DOWNTOWN MILAN PARKLET MANUAL

A Economic Vitality program of Downtown Milan and THE CITY OF MILAN



The Downtown Milan Parklet Manual was created by Downtown Milan Development Authority in collaboration with the City of Milan including Planning, Building Inspections, and the Milan Police Department.

Special recognition is given to the City of Grand Rapids and the City of San Francisco Parklet Manuals for inspiration and illustrations for this Manual.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABOUT</b>	1-2
Introduction	
Parklet History	
Purpose	
Funding & Maintenance	
Implications	
<b>GOALS</b>	3
Reimagine Potential of Streets	
Encourage Pedestrian Traffic	
Support Local Business	
Create Connections	
<b>CONSIDERATIONS</b>	3
<b>SITE SELECTION</b>	4-5
<b>GENERAL GUIDELINES</b>	5-6
<b>ENCLOSURE GUIDELINES</b>	7
<b>PLATFORM GUIDELINES</b>	8
<b>SUSTAINABLE DESIGN &amp; CONSTRUCTION</b>	9
<b>AMENITIES</b>	9
<b>ELIGIBILITY</b>	10
<b>FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS</b>	10
<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT</b>	11
<b>APPLICATION</b>	12-14
Required Materials	
Fees	
Application Form	
Submittal	



# ABOUT

The Downtown Milan Parklet Manual is a comprehensive overview of the goals, policies, processes, procedures, and guidelines for creating a parklet in Downtown Milan. Business owners, property owners, citizens, potential applicants, and designers are strongly encouraged to read the Parklet Manual in its entirety when they are first thinking about proposing a parklet and to refer to it often throughout the process. Understanding what the program is trying to achieve and the process and regulations for a successful parklet may reduce the time it takes to receive a permit and will likely result in a superior parklet design. Milan values and appreciates your willingness to devote your time, creativity, and resources to creating a parklet in your downtown. We look forward to collaborating with you on your parklet.

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of rethinking the use of spaces in downtown areas, making them more accessible to people, plays a critical role in community development. According to the Project for Public Spaces, “Placemaking is based on a simple principle: if you plan cities for cars and traffic, you will get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you will get people and places.”

Parklets convert curbside parking into vibrant community spaces. They contribute to the aesthetics of the streetscape, provide an economical solution to the need for increased public spaces, and provide amenities such as seating, planting, bike racks, and art.

While Parklets are funded and maintained by businesses and community organizations, they provide benefit to the entire community as well as visitors, and adjacent businesses. Parklets can also generate community and economic development by attracting more people to retail corridors where they are shopping, people watching or just plain having fun.

In Chicago, business owners located near parklets said they are better for business and attracted more foot traffic and customers to the street.

“It makes people comfortable,” “gives a better sense of community,” “slowed down traffic,” “gives us a better image,” “it’s attractive,” “makes the street look cleaner,” and that it’s better for business because “people sit and stare at the storefront windows.”

## PARKLET HISTORY

The term parklet was first used in San Francisco to describe the conversion of an automobile parking space into a mini- park for passive recreation.

The conversion is typically accomplished by building a platform on the pavement to extend the sidewalk, and then activating the space with amenities such as benches, planters, tables, or chairs.

Once installed, parklets provide an aesthetic enhancement to the streetscape and offer additional space for people to gather.

The first parklet was installed in San Francisco in 2009. The installation had its origins in Park(ing) Day, which encourages citizens across the world to install temporary parks in parking spaces. In 2011 Park(ing) Day resulted in 975 “parks” in 162 cities across 35 countries and 6 continents.

Based on the popularity of Park(ing) Day, the City of San Francisco was compelled to include parklets on a pilot basis in its Pavement to Parks Program.

The pilot was an instant success and resulted in parklets becoming a permanent feature of the Program.

As of 2012, 38 parklets have been installed throughout San Francisco, and there has been widespread duplication in cities across the country. New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Oakland, Philadelphia, and Long Beach, to name a few, have all installed parklets within the past three years.

## PURPOSE

Although parklets are becoming extremely popular, it is important to clarify their role in the public realm and the downtown experience in general. In most examples, including San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Oakland, parklets are open to anyone and act in the spirit of a public park. They are prohibited from receiving table service from adjacent restaurants and must comply with the standards of the American Disabilities Act. Additionally, except for a small plaque recognizing donors, advertising is prohibited. In this manner parklets reclaim part of the street as a public space for people and provide an economical solution for increasing public open space.

While accessibility is a common feature, there are examples of parklets installed solely to augment and enhance businesses. In Long Beach, CA for example, parklets act as additional outdoor seating for restaurants. The restaurants have the ability to restrict access to their patrons only, and the parklets are only available for use during restaurant hours. Though this limits the type of user, it can serve as a powerful economic development tool, a method for invigorating the public realm, and provide unique marketing potential for businesses.

“A good city is like a good party - people stay longer than is really necessary, because they enjoy themselves.”

-Danish urbanist Jan Gehl

## FUNDING & MAINTENANCE

Funding for parklets is most often the responsibility of the applicant seeking to have it installed. Typical costs may include design, fabrication, and installation - and may approach \$10,000 - \$20,000.

Once a parklet is installed, it is the responsibility of the business/propertyowner to oversee maintenance, security, and general upkeep. In most instances there is also a requirement for additional liability insurance to cover the parklet. The amount of liability coverage required ranges from \$1 to \$3 million.

## IMPLICATIONS

Parklets offer a unique opportunity for cities and downtowns to improve the public realm and create spaces for pedestrians to socialize and linger.

Though modest in size, parklets are significant in their representation of prioritizing people over automobiles.

Parklets can provide similar benefits to traditional parks with relatively low installation and maintenance costs. In some cases, they have also proven to be extremely effective in increasing pedestrian traffic and providing economic advantages for businesses.

For example, a report from the transportation planning firm Nelson/Nygaard cited a strong increase in retail sales for businesses adjacent to parklets. The same report also cited a 77 percent increase in pedestrians seated in front of businesses.

As more cities and downtowns become aware of these advantages, it can be expected for parklets to continue to grow in popularity. With this, the trend of reclaiming space for people will continue, one parking space at a time.

## GOALS

### REIMAGINE THE POTENTIAL OF STREETS

Parklets promote a low-cost, easily implementable approach to public space improvement through projects that energize and reinvent the public realm. They help address the desire and need for increased public open space.

### ENCOURAGE PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY and NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

Parklets provide pocket spaces for pedestrians to sit and relax, while also improving walkability. Parklets encourage walking by providing pedestrian amenities like street furniture, landscaping, and public art. Parklets often provide bicycle parking and ultimately encourage other modes of non-motorized transportation throughout the downtown area.

### SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS

Parklets attract attention to businesses and provide additional seating that can be used by customers and pedestrians. A parklet also beautifies the street and creates a neighborhood destination.

### CREATE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Parklets provide a public place for neighbors to meet and get to know one another.

## CONSIDERATIONS

### PARKLETS SHOULD BE WELCOMING

Parklet design should convey a physical appearance that is inviting and accessible. Accordingly, many of the guidelines listed in this manual are intended to ensure parklets are designed to feel welcoming and inviting to all users.

### BUILD FOR THE URBAN LANDSCAPE

Despite their small scale, parklets can pose deceptively challenging design problems. Parklet designs must consider issues like maintaining access for persons with disabilities on sloped streets or maintaining positive drainage underneath the parklet structure. Parklets must also be designed to be easily removed without damaging the curb, sidewalk, or underlying street or roadway, yet be durable enough to withstand the pressures of being outside in the urban landscape.

### DESIGN IS ITERATIVE

Design is by nature an iterative process — in this case between the applicant, the designer, and the City. At times this process can feel subjective. The City's intent is not to impose a particular design aesthetic onto your parklet, but to promote unique parklets with a look and feel to reflect the individual character, location and creativity of the parklet applicant and designer. The guidelines are also intended to ensure that parklets are safe for the people who inhabit them and are accessible to all.

### UPKEEP AND MAINTENANCE IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

You are required to keep your parklet well maintained and in good repair. Parklet applicants are encouraged to develop a maintenance plan for keeping the parklet free of debris, grime, and graffiti, and to keep all plants in good health. Parklet applicants are also required to sweep the area surrounding the parklet and keep it litter-free because city street sweepers are unable to reach the curb-line immediately adjacent to your parklet.

# PARKLET SITE SELECTION

The areas shaded in green on this map are located within the Downtown Development Authority's (DDA)/Milan Main Street district. These areas may be appropriate for parklet locations



## SPEED LIMIT

The proposed location shall have a posted speed limit of 25 mph or less. Streets with higher speed limits may be considered on a case by case basis.

## CORNER LOCATIONS

The proposed parklet site shall be located at least 20 feet from an intersection. Variations may be considered on a case by case basis. If proposed on a corner, the parklet must be protected by a bollard, sidewalk bulb-out, or other similar feature.

## PARKING SPACES

Parklets can be positioned along the curb line on streets where on-street parking spaces exist. They will be considered in any location where there are or would be space(s) for on-street parallel parking. Other proposed locations will be considered on a case by case basis.

## DRIVEWAYS

Parklets may be installed in front of a driveway if the applicant is the owner of the driveway or obtains written permission from the property owner to install the parklet. If the driveway has been abandoned or no longer provides access to off-street parking space, the driveway may be incorporated into the parklet design.

## UTILITIES

Parklets shall not be allowed in front of fire department connections and fire hydrants, or over manhole covers, public utilities, or catch basins. Curb and roadside drainage shall not be impeded by the parklet. Additionally, parklets shall not inhibit the access to valves, manholes, or surface features that require access for inspections, operations, or service.

## CITY PROJECTS

As part of its initial screening process, the City will review proposed parklet locations for potential conflicts with future programmed projects. Proposed locations may be rejected if there is pending streetscape improvement work planned.

## BUFFER FROM ADJACENT PARKING SPACES

In cases where there are adjacent parking spaces, parklets shall be required to have soft hit posts, wheel stops, or some other buffer to prevent conflicts with parking cars.

## PROXIMITY TO OTHER PARKLETS

As the number of parklets in Downtown increases, over saturation may become an issue. The DDA and the City will consider parklet proposals from under-represented business types and areas within the district

# GENERAL GUIDELINES

## DURATION AND USE

Approved parklets shall be permitted for installation from May 1 – October 31\* and must be designed for easy de-installation. All approved parklets are temporary installations and are subject to removal per the terms of the Parklet Guide. Parklets should be in use and accessible during that business's hours of operation (weather permitting).

## ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All parklets must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and be accessible to all users, including people with physical disabilities, wheelchair users, and those with impaired vision.

## REQUIRED MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION

Applicants shall be required to submit a security deposit to ensure the costs to maintain and/or remove a parklet are covered or to repair any damage to city property.

## ADVERTISING

Advertising on the parklet structure is prohibited.

## PRE-APPROVED USE

Permitted use of parklets include: green space, bicycle parking, and/or outdoor seating. Other parklet uses will be considered by Downtown Milan Development Authority and the City of Milan Building and Planning department on a case-by-case basis.

## BUILDING PERMIT

A building permit is not required for a deck corresponding to the dimensions of a parking space and flush with the sidewalk, including built-in planters and/or railings. A building permit is required for any other structures, such as a raised platform or roof



## PUBLIC OUTREACH

Demonstrating support for your parklet from adjacent businesses, residents, and neighborhood organizations is important. While full consensus is not required, those applications that do not include documentation of outreach will not be considered. At a minimum, you should notify any businesses which front and are adjacent to your proposed parklet location. Further, if you do not own your property, you are required to notify the property owner and provide documentation of their approval for the installation.

The following is a list of potential stakeholders who should be included as part of the public outreach process.

- **PROPERTY OWNERS:** Applicants are required to notify the property owner(s) from whom they lease their space and whose property fronts the proposed parklet. If you own your property, indicate that in your outreach package.
- **ADJACENT BUSINESSES:** At a minimum, you should notify any businesses which front and are adjacent to your proposed parklet location.
- **OTHER BUSINESSES ON THE BLOCK:** You are encouraged to notify neighboring businesses that are not immediately adjacent to your parklet.

Full consensus in support of your parklet is not required. However, signed letters of support are the most effective tool for demonstrating effective outreach and support for your parklet. If you are unable to obtain a letter of support from the stakeholders listed above, please submit a copy of the correspondence which demonstrates that you notified them of your intent to install a parklet.

## PARKLET PROTECTION & SAFETY

The parklet is required to have safety stops in place at both ends of the Parklet and on the street-facing side of the parklet.

Images below are for illustrative purposes only. Specifications for required safety stops are forthcoming.

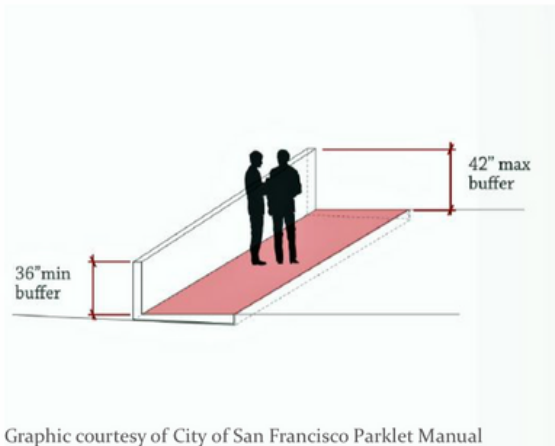
These items will be provided and installed by the City of Milan for a seasonal rental/installation cost of \$50 each (number required for each parklet varies by size and location)



# ENCLOSURE GUIDELINES

## BUFFERS ON THE EDGES

All parklets shall have an edge to buffer the street. This can take the form of planters, railing, cabling, or some other appropriate buffer. The height and scale of the buffer required will vary depending on context of the site.



## MAINTAIN A VISUAL CONNECTION TO THE STREET

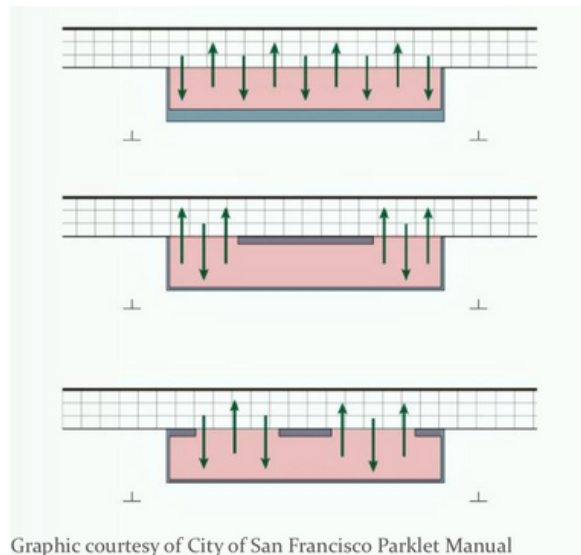
Parklet designs must maintain a visual connection to the street and not obstruct sight lines to existing businesses or roadway signage. Continuous opaque walls above forty-two inches that block views into the parklet from the surrounding streetscape are prohibited. You are allowed to include columns, overhangs, and other vertical elements with approval by the City of Milan Building Department (structural and safety) and Milan DDA/Main Street (design).

## EXTEND THE SIDEWALK

Parklets should be designed as an extension of the sidewalk, with point(s) of entry along the curbside edge. Must be in compliance with ADA regulations for pedestrian access.

## CONSIDER THE BACK OF THE PARKLET

While not visible from the sidewalk, the parklet's back is highly visible from across the street. Large blank walls are not permitted. Must consider design and aesthetics from all sides.



## MATERIALS

All materials must be high quality, durable, and capable of withstanding heavy use and exposure to the elements.

# PLATFORM GUIDELINES

The platform provides the structural base for the parklet.

## BOLTING

Bolting into the street or penetrating the surface of the roadway in any way is strongly discouraged and will not be allowed without a restoration plan and a bond posted by the applicant and their contractor for disassembly. Penetrating a street or sidewalk where snowmelt exists is not permitted. Parklets may be bolted to the existing curb, with specific restoration requirements.

## PLATFORM SURFACE

The top of the parklet platform must be flush with the sidewalk with a maximum gap of one-half inch.

## PLATFORM SETBACKS

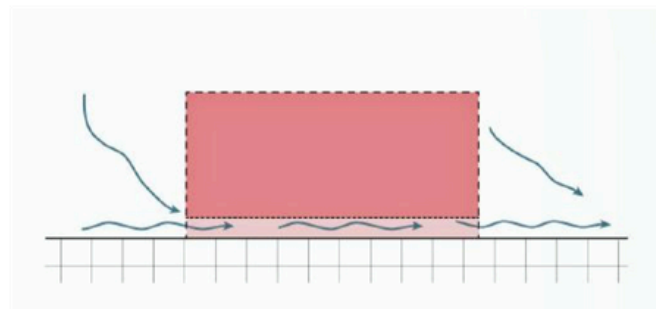
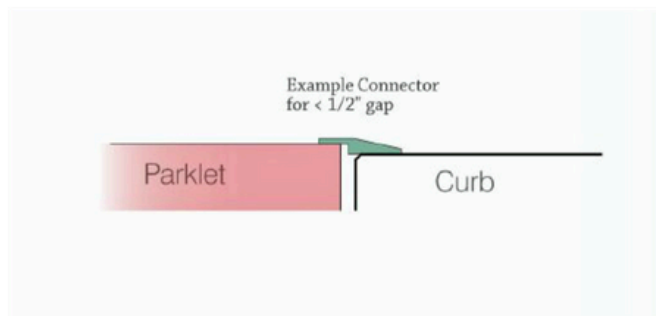
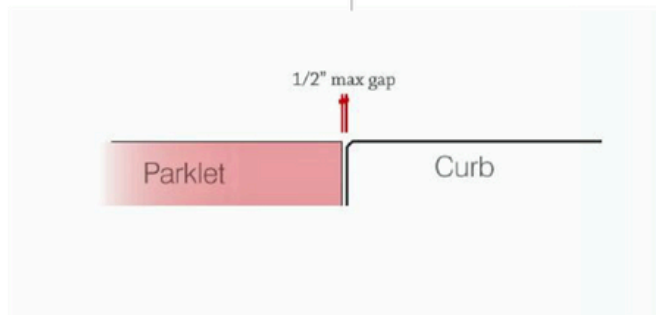
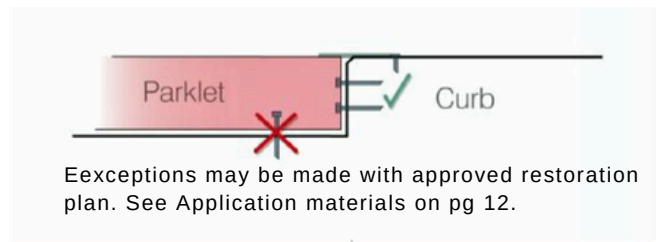
The platform must be setback two feet on all sides not adjacent to the sidewalk.

## SURFACE MATERIALS

Loose particles, such as sand or loose stone, are not permitted on the parklet.

## DRAINAGE

The parklet cannot impede the flow of curbside drainage. Covering openings at either end of the parklet with screens to prevent blockage from debris is encouraged.



graphics courtesy of San Francisco Parklet guide

"Parklets can also generate community and economic development by attracting more people to retail corridors where they are shopping, people watching or just plain having fun."

-Holly Moskerintz, National Association of Realtors

# SUSTAINABLE DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

## LOCALLY SOURCED MATERIALS

Sourcing locally produced materials for your parklet is strongly encouraged and supports our local economy and reduces the energy and resources used during construction.

## RECYCLED AND RECLAIMED MATERIALS

Choosing recycled and reclaimed materials for your parklet can reduce construction costs and keeps materials out of landfills.

## LOW EMISSION MATERIALS

Choosing paints, stains, glues, and other materials that emit zero or low levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) helps improve air quality as well as the health of the people who are constructing your parklet.

## AVOID PLASTIC

Plastic of any kind, including plexi-glass, is strongly discouraged. The use of plastic may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## MATERIALS THAT ARE EASY TO MAINTAIN

Have a strategy for removing graffiti, and replacing or repairing damaged parklet features such as plants, railings, or other elements. Whereas some materials may cost more initially, they may ultimately save money in maintenance costs. For example, aluminum costs roughly three times as much as steel but when tagged, it can simply be cleaned with acetone. Parklet owners are ultimately responsible for making sure their parklet is kept clean and in good repair.

# AMENITIES

## INTEGRATE AMENITIES INTO STRUCTURE

Parklets may include permanent seating integrated into the structure. Bike racks or landscaped areas should also be considered as part of the design (see below).

## MOVEABLE SEATING

If you choose to use movable tables and chairs, they should be durable and comfortable for individuals and groups of all ages and abilities. They must be secured during non-operational hours.

## PLANTINGS

Integrated planting is strongly encouraged.



## LIGHTING

Lighting elements are encouraged and permitted but may require a separate electrical permit. Extension cords are not permitted.

## BICYCLE PARKING

Integrated bicycle parking is encouraged. Bike racks can be integrated into the structure or installed adjacent to the parklet.



# RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT

Successful applicants are required to commit to the following:

## INSURANCE

You will be required to carry commercial general liability insurance with at least a \$1,000,000 limit as per City Risk Management policies. Most businesses already carry this insurance; please check with your provider.

## CLEANING

You will be required to keep the parklet free of debris, grime, and graffiti. You must clean the surface of the parklet and clean out the area beneath the parklet at least once a week. Seating should be dried after rainfall if necessary.

## LANDSCAPING

You must keep plants in good health, including watering, weeding, and trimming when necessary.

## MOVABLE FURNITURE

Any movable items, such as tables and chairs, must be either locked down at night or taken inside. Unsecured furniture that is not a permanent feature of the parklet is not permitted after business hours.

## DISASSEMBLY

Applicants are responsible for completing disassembly and storing their parklet from November - April.

## REPORTING

An annual report documenting the performance of each individual parklet, and the program as a whole, shall be produced. A template for reporting your parklet's performance will be provided by Milan Main Street.





## ELIGIBILITY

The following entities are eligible to apply for the installation of a parklet:

- Property owners
- Storefront business owners (with property owner's permission)
- Non-profit institutions
- Community organizations
- Schools

*Other applicants may be considered on a case-by-case basis.*

## FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

### COSTS

- The applicant is responsible for all costs and fees associated with the design and installation of the parklet.
- Parklets typically cost from \$10,000 - \$20,000, depending on design factors, size, and material choice.
- The applicant is responsible for all costs associated with maintenance and storage of parklet.

### FEES

The following fees are required for installation of a parklet.

- Application Fee: \$100
- Parklet Fee: \$150 per space per monthly fee, can be paid monthly.
- Security Deposit: \$1,000: This is refundable at the end of the season less any costs for repairs to streetscape caused by the parklet.



# APPLICATION INFORMATION

The following elements **MUST** be included as part of your final application:

## 1. Completed Parklet Program

**Application:** The Parklet Program application can be found on page 13 of this manual.

2. **Security Deposit:** A \$1,000 refundable security deposit is required as part of the parklet application. This is to ensure that the costs to maintain and/or remove a parklet are covered. This amount is refundable at season end less any damage costs.

3. **Application Fee:** A non-refundable application fee of \$100 must be included with your application packet.

4. **Street and Curb Restoration Plan:** This is required for any parklet installation that bolts or otherwise mechanically fastens to, or penetrates the surface of, the roadway or other street elements such as curbs. *Note: a larger security deposit may be required depending on the specifics of this plan.*

5. **Parklet Location and Context Plan:** This drawing shows the parklet in relation to the surrounding streetscape context and should include:

- Your building and adjacent properties
- Existing curb cuts and/or driveways
- Adjacent traffic lanes
- Existing parking spots with dimensions
- Other existing sidewalk features near proposed parklet (fire hydrants, street lights, bike racks, etc.)
- Existing trees and tree pits
- Proposed parklet footprint and dimensions, including setback dimensions (48 inches from adjacent parking spaces and 12 inches from adjacent traffic lanes).

## 6. Detailed Parklet Plan and

**Elevations from all sides:** The parklet plan (top-view drawing of your design) and the parklet elevations (side-view drawings of your design) should include:

- Various elements of the design
- The materials proposed for use in the design
- Dimensions of parklet and parklet elements (including buffer areas)

## 7. Construction and disassembly

**plans:** These drawings show how your parklet will be assembled and constructed. It should also detail a plan for disassembly. Be sure to also include the following in this plan:

- Any hardware such as fasteners to be used in the construction process
- A detail showing / explaining how you will maintain positive drainage flow along the curb line and how you will access the draining channel if it gets blocked.

## 8. Documentation of community outreach and letters of support



# PARKLET PROGRAM APPLICATION

## APPLICANT INFORMATION

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION/BUSINESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROJECT INFORMATION

ESTIMATED PROJECT COST: \_\_\_\_\_

SQUARE FOOTAGE OF PARKLET: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL PARKING SPACES REQUESTED (max 2): \_\_\_\_\_

REQUESTED PARKLET LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

HOURS OF OPERATION:

SUNDAY: \_\_\_\_\_

MONDAY: \_\_\_\_\_

TUESDAY: \_\_\_\_\_

WEDNESDAY: \_\_\_\_\_

THURSDAY: \_\_\_\_\_

FRIDAY: \_\_\_\_\_

SATURDAY: \_\_\_\_\_

INSTALLATION

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

REMOVAL

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION: (use additional sheet if needed and submit with application)

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## OWNER'S SIGNATURE

The undersigned hereby affirms and acknowledges that he, or she, or they the owner(s) of the property described in the application, are aware of the contents of this application, and hereby authorize the application to submit this application for the installation of a parklet.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**BE SURE TO INCLUDE ALL ITEMS NOTED ON PREVIOUS PAGE WITH THIS APPLICATION**

# SUBMITTAL & QUESTIONS

## CONTACT

Jessica Meingasner  
Downtown Milan Director  
(734) 776-8834  
DDAMilanMi@gmail.com

## SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO

EMAIL:  
DDAMilanMi@gmail.com

MAIL:  
Downtown Milan Development Authority  
153 E. Main Street  
Milan, MI, 48160

## APPLICATION REVIEW AND NOTIFICATION

Applications will be reviewed and approved as received by the Parklet Application Review Committee.

The committee is comprised of 2-3 DDA Board members, DDA Executive Director, Milan Chief of Police, Milan City Administrator.

Please allow 2 - 4 weeks from submission of application for review and notification.

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# DOWNTOWN MILAN PARKLET MANUAL



153 E. Main Street - Milan, MI 48160