

# Guidelines for Assessing Parklet Applications

## Background

Parklets are non-permanent areas constructed in on-street carparks that are designed to increase pedestrian activity in urban areas. They can be used for alfresco dining, seating, and providing space and opportunities to introduce greenery and design features to urban walkways.

Recently, Council has received several requests to allow parklets to replace on-street carparks. Any decision to allow a parklet must consider the unique circumstances of the Far North District. Council does not currently have guidelines, procedures, or tools in place to assist with this decision making. Parklets should be considered as part of a local area placemaking plan and be informed by a parking strategy.

In the absence of strategic policy instruments, Community Boards are in the best position to make a placemaking decision on a parklet application. Community Boards will need to consider the impact a parklet will have on the surrounding community including but not limited to the impact on other businesses, access to facilities, and availability of other parking.

As parklets are within the road corridor, any decision to allow a parklet must consider technical aspects which protect the integrity of the road, and the health and safety of the public. The Northland Transportation Alliance will assess a parklet application against the required technical aspects.

Note, where it is intended the use of a parklet is to provide hospitality services, it will be a requirement of the applicant to apply for an al-fresco dining permit or variation to their current al-fresco conditions and alcohol licensing conditions. This process is separate to the parklet application process.

## Legislative Context

Under section 357 of the Local Government Act 1974 any activity, building, other obstacle or thing that encroaches on a road, must be authorised by Council. Under this legislation, Far North District Council and the Northland Transportation Alliance have the authority to permit parklets.

Under section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002, decisions made by the Council (and therefore those delegated to the Community Boards), should promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of communities in the Far North district. Placemaking decisions, including parklets, should take all four wellbeings into account.

## Objective

The objective of these guidelines is to support Community Boards to make a placemaking decision regarding a parklet application.

## Guidelines

The guidelines below have been developed to support Community Boards when considering an application for a parklet. In reaching a decision on a parklet, careful thought must be given to a variety of issues and perspectives, to ensure the parklet decision is robust and serves to support the community at large.

Before an application is submitted for consideration to the Community Board, the applicant must first complete the Parklet Self-Assessment. This looks at aspects such as accessibility, safety, context, and required technical specifications.

### **Impact on other businesses**

Many small businesses and essential services rely on roadside parking for their customers. A reduction in the number of roadside parks may impact other businesses negatively who do not benefit from the use of the parklet.

Community Boards should consider whether:

- other businesses will be negatively impacted by activity on a parklet
- the reduction in parking will affect access to other businesses
- the identified location is near essential services
- there is acceptance from neighbouring businesses
- a parklet for one business allows for equal opportunities for other businesses

### **Impact on parking**

The rural nature of the Far North means driving and parking in town is often the only reliable method of transport to access townships. Population projections expect the Far North District to continue to experience population growth. There is also limited public transport within the Far North District.

Community Boards should consider whether:

- a reduction in parking will affect customers seeking access to businesses in the vicinity
- there are enough parking spaces to service current demand
- peak demand for parking can accommodate a reduction in parking spaces
- seasonal visitors will have available parking
- walking distances from alternative carparks in the area are practical for those with accessibility needs
- the area is serviced by public transport

### **Placemaking rationale**

Placemaking is a multi-faceted place-based approach to community planning. Placemaking invites people to work together to make a place better, for others and for the place itself, now and into the future. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote environmental, cultural, social, and economic well-being.

When considering wellbeing, all four aspects should be taken into account. For example, if a proposed activity would enhance economic wellbeing for a business, but would also diminish social or environmental wellbeing through removal of public access to a green space, on balance it may not promote wellbeing overall.

Community Boards should consider whether:

- a parklet would support the growth of an area
- the parklet will provide greater amenity to all members of the public
- the parklet will support all four well-brings (environmental, social, cultural, and economic), through enhancing and promoting
  - Tourism activity
  - Social space
  - Recreational opportunities
  - Walking access
  - Greenery and design amenity
- the wider community supports the installation of a parklet
- Council is encouraging alternative means of transport

## Next Steps

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A decision in favour of a parklet indicates that key factors have been considered and the outcome achieved will benefit the community at large and contribute to community wellbeing (environmental, social, cultural and economic) as per the purpose of local government under section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002.

Once Community Boards have approved the parklet application from a placemaking perspective, the application will be referred on to the Northland Transport Alliance for technical consideration.

In addition, where the intended use of a parklet is to provide hospitality services, the applicant must also apply for an alfresco dining permit or variation to their current alfresco conditions and alcohol licensing conditions. This requirement is separate to the parklet application process.