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## City Turning Pavement into a Pair of 'Parklets'

By Cathy Tyson



Photo provided

can be a viable public amenity.

While adjacent business owners are looking forward to the casual garden spots, they are not meant to be used exclusively by those business. Instead, pedestrians, dog walkers, folks strolling by with a coffee or ice cream, along with take-out food patrons, are welcome to sit, relax and enjoy the parklet.

Young Yoon is the owner of Panache Caffé, and she said she and the managers of Oyama Sushi and 360 Burrito have come together and agreed to water plants and keep the space tidy. There's a mutual interest for the city and adjacent business owners to maintain the spaces. If it turns out the experiment is a bust, the city can always pull the plug, and remove one or both parklets, if necessary.

Materials were donated last year by a Lafayette resident for the demonstration parklet which will be reused. Railings, pressure treated redwood decking, on-street protection and seating are estimated to be less than \$5,000 for the second parklet. City staff visited Martinez and worked off of its design as a template.

"It's kind of like building a puzzle," said Adam Foster, Lafayette's code enforcement officer and assistant planner who has been working on the parklet project along with transportation planner James Hinkamp. He explained that a sturdy frame is drilled into the asphalt and component deck tiles are inserted into the framework.

"That makes perfect sense to me," said council member Traci Reilly about the parklet that will be installed in front of 360 Burrito and the two adjacent businesses. The isolated parking spots are located at the awkward Dolores Drive and Mountain View Drive intersection near Trader Joe's, where the cross streets jog to the left.

Landlord Jim Dudum wrote a letter supporting the trial parklet that will be installed in the right-of-way in front of his building at the corner of Mt. View Drive, calling it a nice addition that adds to the beauty and uniqueness of the property.

One resident who is a frequent visitor at San Francisco's parklets came to the June 13 city council meeting to voice his support. "You can't be a community at 35 miles per hour," he said.

Burton Valley resident James McFadden also chimed in that adding parklets will make the downtown more pedestrian-friendly for more residents. "I think it's really important."

Parklet organizers are planning to update the city council around Oct. 1 with feedback on the

After a trial run at the Art and Wine festival, city leaders approved a four-month pilot program to evaluate two "parklets" downtown. Lafayette is the first city in Lamorinda to be joining other municipalities including Berkeley, San Francisco, Seattle and Philadelphia that have embraced the popular concept.

The test drive will repurpose existing public parking spaces at two locations, one in front of El Jarro restaurant and the other in front of Oyama Sushi, Panache Caffé and 360 Gourmet Burrito. They will be transformed into public gathering spaces with seating platforms that are flush with the sidewalk, planters, and, of course, a barrier to separate the space from traffic. The bare bones parklets are slated to be installed on July 1 and remain through Nov. 1 to gain data on their usage in a variety of weather conditions and to see if they

trial run. Time will tell if the fresh new parklets add vibrancy to the neighborhood, and encourage drivers to slow down. Mt. Diablo Boulevard cuts a wide swath through the city, offering more space for cars than for pedestrians. Is Lafayette ready to add a bit more space for people?

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