# StreetBox PHL

# Park(let) Here: Organizational and Demographic Preconditions for the Development of Parklets in Philadelphia

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Parklets are small platforms that transform on-street parking spaces into small parks. They are a popular intervention associated with "tactical urbanism," or the use of low-cost, temporary modifications to public spaces to enliven street life. Since 2010, cities across the United States have established formal procedures for businesses or non-profits to establish parklets to improve conditions for pedestrians and promote commercial corridor activity. Research into parklets to date has largely focused on parklet design, impacts on parking supply, and the behaviors of parklet users as well as pedestrians. What is missing is a stronger understanding of where parklets will be successful and what some of the preconditions for that success are.

To support a better understanding of the factors behind a parklet's success—where success is defined as installation for more than one year (or warm-weather season)—the authors surveyed the operators and non-profits who have installed, operated, and maintained over 12 parklets in Philadelphia. They also surveyed a control population of Philadelphia businesses and nonprofits. To consider the impacts of the built environment and demographics on parklet success more broadly, the authors analyzed the characteristics of all Census block groups containing parklets across America from 2010 to 2015.

Using surveys, Census data, as well as tax documents allowed the authors to compare the neighborhoods that host parklets with their cities as a whole, while also focusing more narrowly on the fundraising and staffing capacity of parklet hosts working through the administrative framework established by the City of Philadelphia. These data provide insight into the capacity of operators to manage public space, negotiate conflict, and interface with the government. What ultimately emerges is a better picture of the factors associated with a parklet's success, and with alternative uses of parking spaces more generally.

Parklets will be successful in neighborhoods with less parking demand, and higher density. They are more likely to be developed front of stores that serve food and beverage, and to be successful in neighborhoods with lots of renters. Parklets built in conjunction with non-profits will be more successful if said non-profits have both history of, and capacity for place-making activities. All of which suggests that the "market" for place-making interventions requires not only understanding land-use tenure, and commuting patterns, but the capacity of local organizations to support innovative uses of the right-of-way (ROW). For Philadelphia, this research highlights the importance of an organized non-profit sector in championing such innovation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW
### Parklet Evaluation
A significant portion of the literature devoted to parklets aims to assess parklet impacts. Beginning in 2011, city officials and researchers started measuring parklet use as well as the impact of parklets on pedestrian traffic. These studies, conducted in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York City, used a variety of methods to consider impacts on parking availability and pedestrian behaviors, as well as the most common activities within the parklets. These studies generally evaluated the impacts of the parklets on different transportation modes:

- *Parklets' impact on parking supply* – Studies find that parklets have not significantly decreased neighborhood parking availability. Daniella Dai's study for the Congress of New Urbanism of a San Francisco parklet on Valencia Street found that the parklet did not significantly impact parking and noted that occupancy ratios remained stable on blocks of Valencia without parklets (*2*). Similarly, UCLA researchers in 2013 did not observe an impact on parking occupancy ratios (*3*)

- *Parklet's impact on pedestrian activity*: The 2013 UCLA evaluation of two (of four) parklets in Los Angeles found that while each parklet saw an increase in pedestrian and bicycle traffic, each performed slightly differently. Studies of parklets in New York (*4*) and San Francisco (*5*) also reported positive impact on pedestrian activity. Across these studies, parklets seem to positively impact pedestrian activity, but not consistently. The difference in peak times between coasts — East Coast parklets experiencing peaks during lunch hours and West Coast usage peaking during the evening — could be explained either by regional climate impacts, by land use, or by local conditions and socialization patterns.

Several studies also evaluated how parklets have been used across the US. They have found that parklets' impacts and utilization are found to be highly dependent on interdependent variables that range from parking supply to shade:

- *Parklet utilization:*
According to the 2013 UCLA evaluation, uses generally involved eating and drinking, or use of electronic devices.  Others have also evaluated different aspects of parklet occupancy, length of use (6), and percentage of parklet utilized (7).  A 2015 University City District (UCD) report, *The Case for Parklets* (*8*), documents user activity in six parklets in University City, Philadelphia during the summer of 2013. The study not only measured similar impacts as their NYC and LA counterparts, but also noted that parklet installation coincided with a substantial boost in sales for nearby businesses (an average of 20%). Additionally, the study found that parklets created substantial spillover effects, activating nearby sidewalks and spaces.


## Organizational Capacity
Given that many parklet programs begin as pilots, it is no surprise that much of the literature focuses on their impacts in order to justify parklets' existence. However there are other factors to consider when predicting the successful establishment of parklets.

Municipalities have established administrative, technical, and legal requirements that businesses or non-profits must meet prior to installing a parklet. In San Francisco, businesses or non-profits must interface with three different departments and navigate a 15-step process of technical and legal requirements (1). A parklet host's ability to install a parklet generally rests on the willingness of a surrounding community to sign, or write letters, in support of the loss of on-street parking.  In Philadelphia, parklet hosts must obtain the support not only of abutting property owners, but also of 51% of residents or businesses along the block. In San Francisco, potential parklet operators may see their proposal debated in a public hearing if there are objections to the parklet in question.  Such requirements indicate the importance of organizational capacity to successful parklet installation under these frameworks.

Norman Glickman and Lisa Servon devote their article *More than Bricks and Sticks: Five Components of Community Development Corporation Capacity* to developing a greater understanding of organizational capacity.  Glickman and Servon review and define a variety of core competencies that measure the capacity for non-profits and CDCs to develop housing, engage in economic development and provide other social services.  They do so in an effort to better understand the obstacles facing CDCs as they become "more active in economic development and employment training, pursuits that present even greater challenges to these organizations..."  They recognize that capacity cannot be measured solely in production output

(such as in housing units developed) but rather by "the development of the physical and financial assets of community organizations and the neighborhoods they serve. CDCs use financial support, technical assistance, and political backing from outside the community to give them legitimacy and allow them to handle more work." Glickman and Servon define the five components of capacity as:

1. Resource Capacity - "The ability to increase, manage, and sustain funding";
2. Organizational Capacity - "the ways that staff, boards of directors, and others carry out the functions of nonprofits";
3. Programmatic Capacity "respond to the growing and changing needs of the communities they represent";
4. Networking Capacity - "The ability to build networks with other organizations";
5. Political Capacity - "refers to CDCs' influence with government officials at all levels. According to Vidal (1992, 14), ''the successful support of CDC activities requires government agencies to adapt public programs and agency operating procedures to CDCs' distinctive capabilities and needs…political capacity reflects a CDC's legitimacy within the community it serves." *(9)*

A recent study of recently-established pedestrian plazas (comes close to examining the role that organizational capacity plays in the adoption of alternative uses of public streets. In several cities across the country, municipalities have allowed third-parties to convert underutilized segments of the cartway (or travel lane) into places for pedestrian use or seating, generally called pedestrian plazas. While pedestrian plazas and parklets are substantively different in terms of the complexity of design, development, and management, Gary Benjamin's 2013 study of plazas yields several relevant conclusions. According to Benjamin:

- There are 67 BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) in New York, and their budgets range from $53,000-$13,000,000, with an annual budget of ~$1.3 million. BIDs managing pedestrian plazas averaged a ~$4.7 million budget, nearly three and a half times the size of an average BID not managing a pedestrian plaza.
- There are 10 BID's in San Francisco, and their budgets range from ~$75,000-3,000,000, with an annual budget of ~$920,000. BIDs managing pedestrian plazas averaged a $1.5 million budget, nearly one and a half time times the size of an average BID not managing a pedestrian plaza. (*10*)

The study found that in New York, a BID did not need to exceed the median BID income to host a pedestrian plaza, but the staff size was higher than the average BID. San Francisco's experience is relatively similar, which suggests that organizational capacity is a better indicator of success than a simplistic measurement of the size of an organization's budget. Vaidila Satvika, former New York plaza program director, is quoted in the study saying, "I don't think that just by having a big budget, you'll be a success. … It's more about the organizational focus" (*11*). Benjamin continues, noting:

According to interviewees, BID standing in the community is not very important. As demonstrated in the BID revenue analysis above, the size of the BID's revenue, which often correlates with a BID's standing in the community, is relevant to the scale of project a BID will be able to manage. Interviewee agencies and BIDs did not register "age of BID" or similar indicator of "standing" as very important in managing a plaza successfully. (*12*)

Benjamin's study focuses on some key aspects of organizational capacity and focus, and suggests that organizational capacity is important for parklets, as well. Benjamin's study did not however consider the receptivity of surrounding communities to pedestrian plaza interventions.

## METHODOLOGY

The authors developed a series of tools (datasets, surveys, case studies) in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of the capacity of communities to embrace the reallocation of a parking space. To assess the full scope of parklet adoption across the United States, the authors relied on internet (Google) news services and previously published resources. Mapping these locations allowed the authors to use American Community Survey (ACS) data to evaluate how parklets' neighborhoods compare to their respective cities, and to each other.

While demographic analysis can provide a broad understanding of the preconditions for parklets, . to evaluate organizational capacity, the authors compared publicly available tax data filed by the non-profit CDCs where available. They also developed case studies to illustrate the local political concerns that impact the longevity of parklets. They complemented this work with a survey sent both to the non-profits (such as community development corporations, business improvement districts, neighborhood improvement districts, and special services districts) that supported the development of parklets within their service boundary, as well as to for-profit businesses who operate or previously operated parklets. This survey was also distributed to a control group of non-profit partners (Partners) and parklet operators (Operators) whose service boundaries and commercial corridors' were similar to that of the parklet operators and partners.

More detailed descriptions of the various datasets, surveys, and tools used by the authors can be found below.

### National Parklet Dataset

The authors assembled a dataset that identified all the operationally active parklets within the United State between 2010-2015. This supported the development of a sense of the full scope of parklet proliferation across the US required culling information from a variety of sources. These sources ranged from (but not limited to): official government websites, Google News searches and previously published programmatic research such as the City of San Francisco parklet management program, Pavement to Parks,

Geo-locating the existing parklets and associating them with appropriate census block group level of data of the American Community Survey, using the five-year estimates from 2009-2014, the authors were able to build a portrait of how people in those neighborhoods travel and their socio-economic composition.

Augmenting the datasets' demographic analysis was a broader analysis. Drawn from a variety of internet resources, the authors noted whether the parklet in front of an establishment that served food, and whether the parklet developed with the support of a nonprofit. When such data were not readily available using internet resources, the authors contacted the relevant and responsible agencies.

Such data provided the authors a sense of what neighborhoods, and what businesses are most likely to support both the removal of parking, and its replacement with a significant investment in the right-of-way.

### Local NGO Technical Capacity Dataset

Based upon a combination of tax filling data and budgetary data, the authors were able build datasets that enabled a multi-faceted understanding of the technical capacity of parklet partners, their controls, and their potential differences between each other and the larger set of CDC's and BID's and NID's across the city. Control CDC's included in the NGO dataset were a universe of CDC's that were both current members of the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations (a trade association for CDC's in Philadelphia, and the best proxy for a comprehensive list of community development corporations within the city) and had geographic boundaries that over lapped with control corridors. The data set utilized the aforementioned data to examine 23 NGO's, CDC's and special services districts.

Utilizing the NGO budgets, websites, and tax filings such (IRS Form 990's) for these 23 entities, the authors were able compare the financial capacity, number of staff, and mission orientation of various nonprofits. The authors sought to see whether there was a difference between NGO's that do engage in place-making and those that do not, and those that support parklets (and those that do not) and those that do not.

### Survey

Demographic data only measures the potential scope of parklet receptive neighborhoods. Understanding the capacity of both partners and operators requires relying upon survey data. The authors developed and administered (with the support of the Temple University Institute of Survey Research) a survey of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have sponsored or supported the development parklets, as well as the businesses that operate parklets, and their counterparts who did not in analogous corridors.

TABLE 1 Philadelphia Survey Response

| COHORT | Universe | Successfully Contacted | Completed Surveys |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Operator* | 15 | 3 | 2 |
| *Sponsor* | 7 | 4 | 3 |
| *Control Operator* | 560 | 93 | 89 |
| *Control Sponsor* | 23 | 22 | 6 |
| *Former Sponsor* | 2 | 2 | 1 |

To establish a set of control commercial corridors the authors relied upon a 2009 study conducted by Econsult, funded by the William Penn Foundation titled *Commercial Corridors: A Strategic Investment Framework For Philadelphia*. (*13*) In it Econsult utilized a variety of methods, using a similar (though more robust) blend of surveys, tax records, and demographics to develop a list of attributes by which one could measure the relationship of a commercial corridor to its immediate neighborhood and the larger region. Philadelphia's parklets all appeared on commercial corridors classified by Econsult as being accessed primarily by pedestrians or transit users, or on more mixed commercial corridors, but not (for instance) with industrial, or auto-oriented, commercial corridors. Philadelphia Parklets served commercial corridors that were deemed, neighborhood centers, neighborhood subcenters, community centers, or specialty centers, but none were on corridors that had a city wide, or regional draw.

The survey's controls were therefore businesses and non-profits who were either along, or overlapped with, commercial corridors which exhibited similar regional draw, and access attributes. As will be noted later, the preponderance of parklet operators sell food, and or, drink. Thus the operator survey was from

a universe of 560 restaurants (or other purveyors of food and drink) that applied for or renewed food licenses in 2015. Surveyors were only able to contact and survey 93 of said restaurants (Control Operator). Partner controls were members of the Philadelphia Association for Community Development Corporations (the trade association for Philadelphia CDC's) whose corridors overlapped with the control corridors (Control Sponsor).

## HISTORY OF PARKLETS IN PHILADELPHIA

In 2012, the City of Philadelphia's Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities (MOTU) used $30,000 to seed a parklet program, as part of a larger series of investments in what the City calls "pedestrian enhancements" to demonstrate the administration's commitment to alternative modes of transportation. Partnering with the City's Department of Commerce (Commerce), MOTU released an RFP for partners to develop parklets in locations across the City. Commerce's reluctance to play favorites with private businesses meant that only non-profits were eligible to apply for funding (though they could partner with businesses themselves). Six NGO's representing neighborhoods from Philadelphia's Chinatown to Fishtown (a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood) won grants to develop parklets along their commercial corridors. Between 2012 and 2015 parklets debuted in fifteen locations, four of which did not sustain parklets for more than a year.  One geographic area, West Philadelphia, has been host to a majority of the city's parklets, thanks to the work of the University City District (UCD) which deploys 6 parklets on an annual basis in conjunction with neighborhood businesses. Today the Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems (OTIS), the successor to MOTU, manages the Parklet Program.  The City, having been authorized by a Bill #130950-A in 2014 to create the Pedestrian Enhancement Permit, created regulations and program application to govern the management of parklets across what is now six different neighborhoods. These regulations systematize the ability to develop parklets, much like other City economic development programs, and loading zone applications.  Parklet establishment in Philadelphia requires not only a letter of support from the property owner in front of which the parklet will be situated, and the two immediately adjacent  property owners, as well as a petition indicating the support of 51% of neighbors, it also requires a letter of support from the district councilperson.  Parklets must also pass a design review process before approval and parklet operators must sign an operating and maintenance agreement with the city as well as insure them. It is important to note that while the currnet parklet program in Philadelphia does not require a non-profit partner to be established, none-the-less, the vast preponderance of Philadelphia's parklets are operated by businesses in partnership with NGO's. The authors found this ability to utilize and ease of access to government programming which these non-profits display, played a significant role in the development of parklets in Philadelphia

## PHILADELPHIA CASE STUDIES

Philadelphia has been host to 15 parklets, on par for cities such as NYC, Portland, and Chicago (16, 14, and 9 respectively).  Though it has more than the national median of ~2 parklets per city, Philadelphia has far fewer than the national leader, San Francisco, with 62.

However unlike most American parklets, a majority of Philadelphia's parklets are operated in conjunction with non-profits (a Philadelphia parklet is three times as likely to be developed in partnership with a non-governmental organization, as a parklet elsewhere in the US). Outside of UCD's portfolio of parklets, a majority of the extant parklets were funded by Philadelphia's initial grant funding.

The case studies provided below illustrate the history of a select series of parklets in Philadelphia and the forces behind a given parklet's creation and tenure.

### University City and UCD

In August 2011, University City District (a special services district that manages in place-making and job training initiatives) deployed Philadelphia's first parklet, at Green Line Cafe on Baltimore Avenue. UCD is a special services district in the University City area of West Philadelphia that invests in public spaces, addresses crime and public safety, and connects low-income residents to careers. Late in 2011, UCD introduced a second parklet on Lancaster Avenue near Powelton Pizza and Green Line Cafe, which did not return the following year due to low usage, but was instead brought to 44th Street adjacent to Honest Tom's Taco Shop and Lil' Pop Shop. These first parklets were funded through foundation grants. Also in 2012, a property owner partnered with UCD to fund a third parklet at the newly opened Ramen Bar on Locust Street. In 2013, UCD unveiled three additional parklets: at Manakeesh Cafe and Bakery on Walnut Street, Fu-Wah Mini Market on 47th Street, and Little Baby's Ice Cream on Catharine Street. The Walnut Street parklet was not well used - due to the prevalence of more attractive seating inside Manakeesh and a side patio - and was thus relocated to eventually merge with the 47th Street parklet. In 2015, UCD deployed Philadelphia's longest parklet (60 feet long) on 40th Street, which was funded by three adjacent businesses: Hai Street Kitchen, Jake's Sandwich Board, and Zesto Pizza & Grill.

### Logan and Logan CDC

Logan CDC was one of the original successful parklet grant program applicants in 2012.  A Community Development Corporation in a distressed community in North Philadelphia, Logan CDC supported educational and job training activities, and advanced neighborhood organizing, among other community development related efforts. The CDC worked with the Logan branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia to place a parklet on what was a largely residential street for two years.  With in-kind technical design support from the National Organization of Minority Architects, monetary support from neighborhood partners, Logan was able to build a parklet that was host to significant community programming: from movie nights and board game rentals, to health screenings.  In 2014, suffering from the lack of sustainable or sufficient funding, the CDC closed shop, and the parklet did not reappear in 2015.

### South Street and the South of South Neighborhood Association

The South of South Neighborhood Association worked with Pumpkin Market to develop a parklet on South Street, a storied commercial corridor in Center City Philadelphia.  SOSNA has an active and engaged neighborhood membership who had engaged in significant place making activities, advocating for pedestrian plazas, and conducting "Better Block" tactical intervention weekends, prior to developing a parklet in conjunction with a local businesswoman.  The parklet was installed next to a small prepared foods and cafe and a vacant lot.  In 2014 when the parklet was set to be renewed, the developer that owned the vacant lot next door began redeveloping their property and contested the parklets continued placement.  The developer was concerned that it would impede construction activities and present a safety hazard whose risk he was not willing to bear.  The small business which had contributed financially to the parklet's development felt threatened by the developer and was particularly concerned about any alterations to the parklet's siting and resisted any changes requested of the government by the neighboring

developer.  Ultimately, the parklet placed at 1610 South Street was removed, though the specific parklet structure was redeployed to another business within the neighborhood.  The small store that had hosted also eventually closed.  Shortly thereafter SOSNA helped another small business develop a different parklet on South Street.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS
### Parklets, Nationwide
Nationally between 2010 and 2015, on average, 31 parklets debuted each year, for a total of 189 parklets. These parklets, which were operational for at least one season, appeared in 43 cities across the United States.  These cities ranged in population from 7,760 (Montpeleier City, Vermont) to 8,354,889 (New York City, New York).  Nationally, 75% of parklets were developed by private businesses and 80% of parklets were placed in front of establishments that served food, beverage, or both.  Parklets can be supported in almost any size city, but are most likely to be operated by businesses in the food service industry.

Across the US, Parklets were located in neighborhoods (as defined for the purposes of this study by their census block group) that were roughly as racially diverse as their host cities, were (with the exception of San Francisco) roughly as wealthy, though more likely to have bachelor degrees. The residents of parklet host neighborhoods were, on average roughly the same (median) age as the rest of the residents of their host cities (35 and 36 years old respectively).  Nationally parklets were located in neighborhoods with median household incomes that were 12% higher than the median household incomes of their host cities, however this is largely due to the large number of parklets in San Francisco.  If one were to remove San Francisco's parklets from national averages, the difference between parklet host neighborhoods and their host cities is much smaller and in fact reversed.  There were more marked demographic differences between parklet host neighborhoods and their host cities when it came to the education of residents in their respective neighborhoods:  residents of parklet host neighborhoods were 30% more likely to have bachelor degrees, than their host cities.  Furthermore residents of parklet host neighborhoods were significantly more likely to be part of a non-family household than their host cities and were far more likely to rent than own. On the one hand the demographic comparisons makes it difficult to claim that parklets will only thrive in what is popularly imagined as gentrifying neighborhoods (in so far as such neighborhoods are bother whiter and wealthier than other sections of the city).  On the other, with significantly high portions of rentals, and bachelor degrees (as compared to their host cities) parklet host neighborhoods are likely to be adjacent to universities and the antecedent gentrification which occurs by virtue of such proximity.

In fact the most consistent and striking demographic differences between parklet host neighborhoods and their host cities can be found when examining density and modal characteristics of the neighborhoods in question. Residents of parklet host neighborhoods also live 5 times more densely than the rest of the citizens in their cities.  This density is correlated with the high percentage of parklet host neighborhood residents who utilize alternative modes of transportation to get to work.   Residents of parklet neighborhoods are far less likely to drive to work than the rest of their fellow city residents. Residents of parklet host neighborhoods are also more than twice as likely to take transit, twice as likely to bike to work, and three times as likely to walk to work.

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TABLE 1  Modal Split; a comparison between host city and parklet host neighborhoods

| MODE | Drive Alone | Transit | Bike | Walk |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *City* | 66% | 10% | 2% | 6% |
| *Parklet* | 38% | 28% | 4% | 17% |

In so far as demographic preconditions for parklet success are concerned, density is destiny, supporting alternative modes of transportation and a community willing to lose a few parking spaces.

This overview of national parklet demographic data suggests that operators are most likely to find less opposition to the replacement of parking spaces with parklets in dense neighborhoods, with large populations of renters, and a residential population that utilizes alternative modes of transportation to get to work.

*"Failed" Parklets*

Not all parklets re-appear year after year: parklet "failure" can occur for a number of reasons, be it site specific construction concerns, or the loss of support in a neighborhood for the renewal of the relevant license.  Only 18 parklets, or ~10% of parklets nationally, failed to reappear in the same location the following year.  Those that were not able to sustain support tended to have a higher portion of non-family households and had residents who drove more than their neighbors in parklet supportive communities. Neighborhoods with failed parklets were also less dense and had residents who earned over $7,000 less than those neighbors whose parklets are still operational. This confirms the importance of density and alternative transportation options as far as parklet supportive factors are concerned. It also suggests that parklets are also more likely to appear in neighborhoods within a certain income range (i.e. as noted earlier while parklets nationally are likely to have the same median household income as their host cities, perhaps they are not supported in significantly poorer neighborhoods).

## Demographic Pre Conditions for Parklets in Philadelphia

Similar to cities across the US, Philadelphia's 15 parklets have been found in neighborhoods that are more multi-modal than the city as a whole. Philadelphia's parklets also have similar ratios of renters to owners as do other cities with parklets. Apart from this there are here are some significant differences between parklet host neighborhoods in Philadelphia and those across the US.

In Philadelphia, Parklets were located in neighborhoods that were; not as diverse as the city as a whole: Philadelphia's parklet host neighborhoods had half as many African Americans as the city as a whole. Philadelphians living in neighborhoods with parklets tended to be younger and have marginally less money per house hold.

Philadelphia parklets are found in neighborhoods with lower unemployment rates , and while, like other cities, more residents in neighborhoods hosting parklets had bachelor degrees than the rest of the Philadelphia, they had fewer masters degrees than the rest of the city.  Philadelphia's "failed" parklets were more likely to be found in neighborhoods with a higher non-white population and less density than those neighborhoods with parklets with longer tenure.

Some of these differences (in age, for instance) may be attributable to the fact that nearly half of Philadelphia's current parklet portfolio is located in University City, home to a host of universities and thus a neighborhood with lots of students. And while some of these differences are easily attributable to the presence of universities, others are not as easily explainable. However none of these differences between Philadelphia's parklets and national averages are as significant as that of the presence of nonprofit partners and sponsors. As previously noted, unlike most American parklets, a majority of Philadelphia's parklets are operated in conjunction with non-profits. This prevalence of nonprofit participation in parklet development in Philadelphia suggests that Philadelphia is particularly well suited to also explore the relationship between third party, non-profit entities, and their technical and political capacity to impact the right-of-way.

## Organizational Preconditions for Parklet Success in Philadelphia

The authors found significant differences between the tax and budgetary information of those NGOs, from nonprofits to special services districts, that hosted parklets, and those that did not. NGOs in Philadelphia that helped sponsor parklets tended to have nearly twice as many employees as those that did not. Parklet sponsors tended to bring in nearly five times as much in revenue as control NGOs, whether this revenue was in the form of grants, donations, or program revenue. Parklet sponsors reported spending close to 15 times more on place-making activities than their control NGOs and nearly 6 times as much on economic development activities. Parklet Sponsors also spent on average nearly twice as much per employee, as their Control Sponsor counter parts.

Furthermore, on average, both Operators and Sponsors reported devoting two to three staff positions to developing the parklet, and working with the community and the community. However on average they reported using more (than three) staff to support building, and maintaining the parklet. Sponsors clearly have the capacity to do so, they reported having more than six times as much staff devoted to public space managements as their Control Sponsor counter parts reported[1]. Parklet Sponsors had a proven track record in investing in their internal capacity and public space programming.

There are additional differences related to experience with City government between Sponsors and Control Sponsor, and Operators and Control Operators. For instance, while control sponsors had virtually all accessed a variety of the economic development resources provided by the city, virtually none of the operators, control or otherwise had done so. Similarly, both Sponsors and Control Sponsors were far more likely to report positive relations with their district councilperson, while Operators and over 50% of Control Operators noted no engagement with their district councilperson. This suggests that, in Philadelphia, capacity is not measured simply by funding, programming, and staffing, but also access to City resources.

## CONCLUSION

Philadelphia's parklet program, established in 2012, was one of the nation's earliest. The program structure was designed to minimize the City's exposure to risk; the City initially required parklet hosts to be

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[1]This number is skewed by the number of staff UCD has devoted towards public space maintenance and management (15). However, excluding UCD in calculations, parklet sponsors had 3.75 more such staff than control NGO's.

established non-profits, and still requires hosts to gain evidence of ample community support to avoid substantial political opposition. The program's maintenance and operating agreements, insurance requirements, and design review process, while critical components of the City's risk reduction also increases the burden on potential parklet hosts.

Program structure has impacted the distribution of parklets across Philadelphia. Parklet program hosts are primarily non-profits with resources, capacity, and a history of public space management. That Philadelphia has a higher ratio of parklets associated with non-profit sponsors than the rest of the country, and that Philadelphia Sponsors are more likely to have interfaced with the government and politicians than Control Operators, suggests that, in Philadelphia, there has been a higher threshold for third parties to participate in the parklet program. Put another way, in Philadelphia, Parklets are more likely to be successful where both the built and civic environments are dense and robust.

Philadelphia's story has national implications. Philadelphia's parklets are found in neighborhoods whose nearby residents are willing to lose parking spaces; data show that these neighborhoods are denser and more multi-modal than the city as a whole.  However, multimodality and density are not enough. The relationship between municipalities, businesses, and non-profits significantly impact the growth and distribution of parklets. Non-profit and business owner awareness of the parklet program, estimation of its public benefits, and willingness to meet program requirements, are all critical to a parklet's success. Cities that are interested in encouraging community-driven public space improvements by permitting small changes in the use of the public right-of-way should consider how education and communication, even apart from direct investment, can make their programs more accessible.

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