

Berkeley Parklets, Bike Corrals, and Art Lots

▪ **Project Lead:** Arami Matevosyan

Sponsor: College of Environmental Design

TGIF Grant: \$16,000

Project Theme: Transportation and Urban Development

Project Location:

2015 Application Submission

Status: In Progress

Project Description:

The purpose of this project is to:

- Involve UC Berkeley students and affiliated adjunct faculty as leaders in a community effort to create sustainable alternatives to automobile-centric transportation;
- Educate and provide experience for students and community members about the design/build process;
- Create an affordable parklet prototype that can be replicated.

Goals:

- Create a long-term vehicle for teaching UC Berkeley students about developing urban micro spaces as vehicles for promoting transportation and urban sustainability alternatives;
- Engage students as leaders in promoting long-term environmental justice in Berkeley's most disadvantaged neighborhood(s) that can potentially be replicated in other neighborhoods;
- Bring experts in the field and community leaders together to collaborate on project with students;
- Share expert experience and knowledge with students in order to create a robust "How To" booklet as a sharable resource.

Timeline:

Task	Expected or Actual Completion Date
Find Studio Instructor	7/17/2015
Meet with "Friends of Adeline"	8/1/2015
Meet with City of Berkeley to review parklet regulations	8/4/2015
Plan Studio course	8/7/2015
Send Internship Opportunity flyer for the project	8/7/2015
Introduce project to Studio	8/26/2015
Hire 1-2 interns	8/28/2015
Community Meeting	September 2015

Parking Day - Community Engagement	9/19/2015
Community Meeting	October 2015
Start paperwork for DeCal	October 2015
Community Meeting	November 2015
Submit paperwork for DeCal	November 2015
Choose design for parklet	11/23-30/2015
Create and submit building and design permits	11/23-30/2015
Create list of construction materials to purchase	December 2015
Create parklet prototype	12/7/2015
Start of DeCal	January 2016
Begin construction of parklet and artlot	January 2016
Complete parklet and artlot	End of February/beginning of March 2016
Start parklet deliverable packet ("How-To")	March 2016
Create final poster for TGIF project	April 2016
Community group check-ins	Every other week with an in-person meeting on the fourth Friday of the month (essentially bi-monthly meetings)

Accomplishments:

- Settled on weekly meeting times:

-The official team meetings are held Fridays from 5:30pm to 6:30/7pm at Geoffrey Holton & Associates (1743 Alcatraz Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94703). The overall team includes: Youth Spirit Artworks (YSA), Geoffrey Holton & Associates (GHA), Ecology Center, City of Berkeley/Berkeley Climate Action Coalition Transportation Working Group (BCAC TWG), the College of Environmental Design (CED), and The Green Initiative Fund (TGIF). YSA and GHA are the two business where the parklet is considered to be built.

- Created a new architecture studio course:

-Project organizers were able to work with CED Dean of Architecture, Tom Buresh, and faculty instructor, Keith Plymale, to create a new type of architecture upper-division studio course to garner student experience in working with real clients (the Lorin District community) to create models, permit drawings to submit to the city, and a prototype installation.

- Confirmed intern team:

-Although the project proposal initially stated 1-2 interns to be hired for the project for about 8-12 hours/week, the project organizers were able to work with the students and hire 4 interns, each working 4-5 hours/week on very specific projects. The hired interns and their responsibilities are as follows:

- Hannah Stommel: Studio design process documentation; marketing
- Laura Yopez: Studio design process documentation; event planning
- Audrey Nguyen: Social media; designer
- Haile Shavers: Website development; youth education

- Participating in parking day:

-The CED architecture studio students were able to reserve two parking spaces in front of GHA for Parking Day (9/18) from the morning well into the afternoon. The students had their project design ideas on display

and were open to comments, questions, and suggestions. Arami was able to talk to new Berkeley residents about the project and answer many of their complex questions!! Pictures of the event are included at the end up the report.

- Design

-The project has a nearly finalized plan for the parklet and is awaiting the review of the structural engineer to submit it to the city for permitting review. The table and stool design is still evolving and the main focus of the DeCal class, but it should not impact the permitting process. Additionally, Arami built two models (the first representing the original orientation of the parklet and the second representing the inverted orientation of the parklet) for the community to decide which orientation they would like best - the community decided to stick to the original orientation.

- DeCal

-The DeCal participants visited 6-7 parklets in San Francisco and drew inspiration for their own designs. During the last class, they built models of their ideas for the table and stools and discussed the strengths, weaknesses, and potential for each design. So far there are about 9-10 students in the class with one student auditing. Students taking the course for 2 units are required to attend team meetings to gain a greater perspective of the politics behind the process.

- Funding

-The project organizers were able to receive the SERC Fellowship and will be participating in 3 separate meetings with SERC as well as including 2 evaluations (mid and final) for the DeCal. The first meeting will take place on Thursday, March 3rd.

- Contractor

-Rebuilding Together has agreed to work as a contractor on the project. In order for the project to qualify under their requirements, the project must join the parklet to making some renovations in YSA (to qualify for HUD funding from the city).

Challenges:

- Intern miscommunication and delays

- Project Website:

-Website is still in progress

- Lorin District Community approval:

-There are some community members who are very against the project and we are looking into ways to reach out to them and change Community Meetings dates and times so that more people can attend the meetings and pitch their ideas and concerns. Basically, the project needs to gain the trust of the community but it has proved to be very difficult.

- Engineering Review/Permitting

-The engineer who has agreed to work with on the project still has to submit his reviews and calculations for the parklet. We cannot proceed with the permit submittal without his input and he is expected to submit his preliminary review of the design by March 4th. This pushes the permit submittal to be on March 11 (instead of the beginning of March). There is also the potential that the city's planning department may prolong the permit review process anywhere from 3-6 months, even though we have built rapport and support from the mayor's office from the beginning of the project. It may just be interdepartmental miscommunication or lack of communication because the project's contact with the city had formerly suggested to them that the city would "streamline" the process for them. Project organizers have gone above and beyond the necessary measures of gaining community input and support, so hopefully when the city reviews the permit that will take that into consideration and quickly review the architectural and structural drawings for the parklet.

- Contractor/City of Berkeley

-Rebuilding Together, the project's chosen contractor, met with the city of Berkeley to O.K. their community service partnership with our parklet project. The reason for this is that Rebuilding Together receives HUD funds (Housing and Urban Development) for its projects. In order for the city to approve the use of HUD funds for the project, it needs to directly benefit urban development (in this case the parklet is in the public right-of-way so we coupled the parklet with some renovations at YSA to meet the criteria) and reside in a low-income neighborhood. Now, the Lorin District qualified as a low-income district in the last census (2010), but now the city told Rebuilding Together that if they keep track of the census and they see that the neighborhood no longer qualifies as low-income, Rebuilding Together would have to forfeit all funds.

▪ Interns

-The interns do not have as much work to do this semester as they did in the fall. The DeCal was supposed to be completely intern facilitated but since no one was available from that time, Arami ended up taking the workload. Otherwise, project lead decided to let the interns work on creating the booklet that documents the community engagement process of creating a holistic, community parklet instead of making that a requirement for the DeCal class to tackle.

Timeline Progress:

- Currently the project is on schedule unless the Lorin District community completely wants to shut down the project.
- While the project is not necessarily behind, it has new obstacles preventing it from moving forward as quickly as it would like. These more or less tie to how much the city would like to cooperate with the project in approving the permit and not blocking funding for Rebuilding Together. The project organizers' goal is to submit the permit by March 11th and to begin construction in April, but that all depends on the city's permit review. If they prolong the review and approval, then there is a real possibility that the project will need to push construction to May or potentially June.

Budget Update/Expenditures to Date:

- The only expenditures to date are the intern stipends and the purchase of print and model construction materials for the DeCal class. I still need to submit a recalculated budget and extra funds request, but we do not have a complete tally for all the materials that we will need for the actual construction of the parklet.

Metrics:

<i>Metric Planned (Event, Campaign, Education, etc.)</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Notes Results/Outcomes</i>
Community Meeting #1	Introduce the project and gain input.	~20 people	Completed	Mixed feelings in the community.
Community Meeting #2 (PARKING DAY)	Reserve a parking space for parking day and set up architecture students' work to showcase ideas about the potential parklet design; encourage people passing by to comment on the ideas and talk to the students and the team.	N/A	Completed	The architecture students were not as engaging with their models to people passing by; miscommunication between YSA and the architecture students in working together; some people in the neighborhood came up to look at the design models and asked questions.
	Meet the community			BREAKTHROUGH: Cleared up the miscommunication that we we are not going to

Community Meeting #3	halfway in understanding why they do not want a parklet in the neighborhood and what they would want in the space instead.	~15-20 people	Completed	build 3 parklets on one street; the community came on board with the project once we mentioned moving the site of the parklet to around the corner.
Community Meeting #4	Encourage more detailed ideas and preferences of what the community would like to have incorporated in the parklet.	~15-20 people	Completed	Community members appear to be content with whatever design we implement; no constructive feedback.
Architecture Studio Final Review	The architecture students present three group projects: 1 for the artlot design and 2 different parklet designs.	~ 20-30 people	Completed	The design for the artlot was most liked, though the material construction for one of the parklet designs was also interesting; overall, the parklet designs were lacking in addressing the issues that were discussed in the community meetings and did not appear structurally feasible.
Parklet Design Community Engagement	Restructure the design of the parklet done by the architecture students so that it is more in line with the desires of the community, as well as structurally sound.	~15 people	Completed	Lots of good discussion on the design and organic growth of prominent features in the parklet, such as a gazebo and large table.
Parklet Design Showcase Community Discussion	Community decides whether they like the original orientation of the parklet or the inverted orientation. Additionally, the color of the parklet is discussed, as well as any questions or issues with the design.	~20 people	Completed	The community likes the original orientation of the parklet; the color of the parklet will be subtle so as to not compete with the Mural; overall, the community likes the parklet (from whoever attended the meeting).

Education and Outreach:

- The DeCal has been discussing issues of gentrification, tactical urbanism, micro-enterprise, and community engagement in its classes. There is a related reading each week - during March the students will complete their designs for the table and stools and during April the students will create a "How-To" parklet manual for the city of Berkeley.
- **Facebook**
- Flyer for previous community meeting: