


Agenda Report Reviewed by:

City Manager: 

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM

Meeting Date: November 7, 2023
To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Toni Bertolero, Engineering/GHD
Mario Landeros, City Engineer
Subject: South Main Street Parklet Project
Recommendation: Receive information regarding Caltrans directive to remove the temporary parklet at South Main Street fronting Retrograde Coffee and Sunshine Café; and Approve Authorization of Suspension of Enforcement of One Hour Parking During Holiday Season of November 20, 2023, to January 5, 2024
Funding: Currently Budgeted: Yes No Not Applicable

Account Code: [Fill in Account Number]

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: Yes (Finance Initialed _____) No (Finance Exempt)

INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE:

The item is to provide the Council information regarding Caltrans directive to remove the temporary parklet at South Main Street fronting Retrograde Coffee and Sunshine Café and to request that Council authorize suspension of enforcement of one-hour parking during the holiday season of November 20, 2023, through January 5, 2024.

BACKGROUND:

Parklets were allowed as temporary installations during the City’s pandemic response effort in support of local businesses. The City of Sebastopol deployed a variety of strategies to allow more flexible use of City right-of-way to support public health and economic recovery during the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, including 10-minute temporary parking, use of the Downtown Plaza for public outdoor dining, more flexible approvals for sidewalk dining, and temporary installation of parklets.

At the October 6, 2020 meeting, Council directed staff to submit a Caltrans encroachment permit application for parklets at three locations:

1. In front of “Screamin’ Mimi’s/Create It/The Face Place/Thrive Yogo” on Sebastopol Avenue north side at Depot Street;
2. In front of “People’s Music/Sumbody” on N. Main Street, west side, the block between McKinley St. and Bodega Ave, south of the McKinley crosswalk; and
3. In front of “Sunshine Café/Retrograde Coffee Roasters” on South Main Street, west side, mid-block between Bodega Avenue and Burnett Street.

Caltrans approved the encroachment permit for the three temporary parklets and extended the permit until December 31, 2022. On December 31, 2022, the Caltrans encroachment permit for the temporary parklets expired (However, Caltrans representatives indicated that the South Main Street parklet could remain while the

encroachment permit for the permanent parklet is in the process.) According to Caltrans, no further extensions would be given.

At the February 15, 2022, meeting, Council directed staff to move forward with applying for an encroachment permit with Caltrans for installation of a permanent parklet at the South Main Street location only. Feedback from the public included possible installation of parklets on local streets and developing parklet design guidelines. The City Engineer applied for the encroachment permit and in the meanwhile, Caltrans indicated that the City would be allowed to continue with the South Main Street parklet while Caltrans reviews the permit.

At the July 5, 2022, meeting, Council approved the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Capital Improvement Plan which included funding for the South Main Street Parklet with a caveat that staff receive further direction at a future meeting due to incomplete information from Caltrans on the requirements for encroachment permits for permanent parklets. The South Main Parklet project approved funding includes developing parklet design guidelines and construction of a permanent parklet at this location.

On September 20, 2022, Council reaffirmed the direction to staff to move forward with the Caltrans encroachment permit for a permanent parklet at the South Main Street location and the preparation of a parklets guidelines. Council also directed staff to reach out to the downtown business community and the Planning Commission for input to the guidelines. On behalf of the City, the City Engineer prepared an encroachment permit application to Caltrans for the installation of a permanent parklet at the South Main Street location.

On December 31, 2022, the Caltrans encroachment permit for the temporary parklets expired. The City Engineer confirmed with a Caltrans representative that the South Main Street parklet could remain while the encroachment permit for the permanent parklet is in the process. Public Works staff removed the two temporary parklets on Sebastopol Road/Depot Street, and on No. Main Street were removed by Public Works staff in January 2023.

On April 4, 2023, Council approved the Parklets Program Guidelines for permanent parklet(s) on Caltrans right-of-way (ROW) and local streets in preparation for the design and encroachment permit application for the South Main Street Parklet and directed staff to move forward with the encroachment permit application for a permanent parklet at South Main Street.

On July 5, 2023, Council adopted the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Capital Improvement Plan Budget but due to the fiscal constraints of the General Fund, Council decided not to fund this project. Instead it was decided that if the project were to move forward, that the construction and ongoing maintenance of the South Main Street permanent parklet be funded with private funds. Council directed staff to speak with the property owners fronting the parklet regarding their interest in paying for the construction and ongoing maintenance of the parklet.

DISCUSSION:

As noted, Caltrans has required that the temporary parklet on Main Street be removed by December 31, 2023. The City Engineer met with the owner of Retrograde Coffee Roaster (Retrograde) on October 23, 2023, and with the owner of Sunshine Café on October 20, 2023, which are the businesses directly in front of the existing temporary parklet. Both owners were informed that Caltrans is requiring the temporary parklet be removed by December 31, 2023.

As for the permanent parklet, both owners were also informed that to move forward final design (plans and specifications), construction, maintenance and the annual Caltrans lease payment will have to be funded with private funds. Previously Retrograde had been interested in participating in funding a permanent parklet, however due to unforeseen events is no longer interested in going forward with a permanent parklet.

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Furthermore, Retrograde has requested that the existing parklet be removed if possible before the Thanksgiving holiday so that parking in front of the business becomes available for customers. In contrast, Sunshine Café is interested in a permanent parklet and is willing to participate in funding the project and would seek means for broader funding participation by others (private business grants, fund-raising campaign, etc.)

Based on the discussions with both property owners and given Caltrans directive that the temporary parklet be removed by the end of the year, the following next steps will occur, upon Council's approval:

- Public Works staff will remove the temporary parklet before Thanksgiving (i.e., by November 20, 2023);
- Suspension of parking enforcement of one-hour parking in downtown area from November 20, 2023 through January 5, 2024;
- Send a letter from the City Manager to the Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce informing them of the parking enforcement and to ask that downtown businesses inform their employees not to park in the one-hour parking zone to allow the use by patrons doing business in the area.
- Staff will share information with Council when Sunshine Café has new information pertaining to their ongoing campaign for securing interests and funding from other private parties for the design, permitting, construction, and maintenance of a future permanent parklet at the South Main Street location fronting Retrograde/Sunshine Café.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The proposed action is exempt Yes No from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

GOALS:

This action supports the following City Council Goals and General Plan Actions:

Goal 1 – Maintain the long-term financial stability and sustainability of the City of Sebastopol and operate City government in a fiscally responsible and responsive manner.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, if staff receives public comments from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report, such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of the agenda item.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The project is currently unfunded so there will be no fiscal impact. Public Works staff will be performing the removal of the temporary parklet and such work is funded through routine Public Works operating budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Sebastopol City Council receive this information and authorize Public Works staff to remove the temporary parklet located on South Main Street in front of Retrograde Coffee and Sunshine Café by November 20, 2023, and authorize the suspension of enforcement of one-hour parking during the holiday season of November 20, 2023 through January 5, 2024.

Attachment:

Location Map for South Main Street temporary parklet



LOCATION MAP

EXISTING SOUTH MAIN STREET
TEMPORARY PARKLET
(TO BE REMOVED)
DOWNTOWN SEBASTOPOL