



BROAD STREET PARKLET

2018 IMPACT REPORT


Project Overview

WHAT IS A PARKLET?



Parklets are small public parks that aim to improve the pedestrian experience in urban neighborhoods. They create safe, clean, green, walkable communities and are typically installed within the space of a single parking spot. This placement extends the sidewalk outward to include more green space and seating for local foot traffic. Parklets offer a place to stop and rest while visiting a particular city neighborhood. In many cases, parklets partner with local artists, musicians, and businesses to offer a range of family-friendly activities in areas that would otherwise not have space for such events.

PROJECT HISTORY



In 2017, after seeing the success of Parklets in places such as San Francisco and NYC, a Lehigh professor—Karen Beck Pooley—decided to bring the idea to the Lehigh Valley. That summer, a small group of students designed, constructed, installed, and tested a variety of different parklet concepts around North and South Bethlehem. The students collected feedback on these short-term "Pop-up Parklets," which was used by the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 teams to design a full-season parklet with higher quality materials and semi-permanent features such as greenery and light fixtures. The Summer 2018 team finished this design and installed it on Broad Street in front of Joe's Tavern, a long-term partner of the Lehigh Valley Parklet project. During the four months the parklet was on Broad Street, the Summer team collected extensive user data through a series of observations and surveys, which we then analyzed to measure its social impact.

WHY USE PARKLETS?

Parklets are a valuable addition to the community for a number of reasons. Here are just a few:



Low Cost

For as little as \$1,000 parklets can make a meaningful impact on a neighborhood.



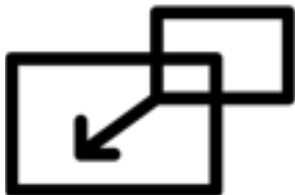
Seasonal

Installs and uninstalls in just a few minutes keeping the city, and the snowplows, happy.



Customizable

Parklets are designed to fit the neighborhood where it is located, creating many possibilities.



Compact

Parklets are small, typically designed to fit within a parking space, making them a great solution to many urban planning needs.

Partnership opportunities available for the Summer 2019 season. Contact Karen Beck Pooley at kbp312@lehigh.edu for more information.



MEET THE NEIGHBORHOOD

BROAD & NEW ST.

Broad & New is home to a wide variety of businesses and amenities. These include: transportation services (one LANTA bus stop & several metered parking spots), workplaces (such as the business plaza & PowerSchool), restaurants (such as Joe's Tavern, Brick Pizza, Rosanna's, Billy's Diner, The Melting Pot, Subway), and a number of other businesses (such as Merchants Bank, Broad Street Mini Mart, Beauty Alibi Salon, Exclusive Cutz Barbershop).

Broad & New is separated from Main Street by the old Boyd Theatre, a half-block section of New Street where blighted properties unfortunately serve as a natural stopping point for many individuals who are exploring Downtown Bethlehem. This section of New Street is also where sidewalks begin to narrow and public seating begins to disappear. These factors made Broad & New an opportune test site to measure the impact a parklet has on a local Lehigh Valley neighborhood.



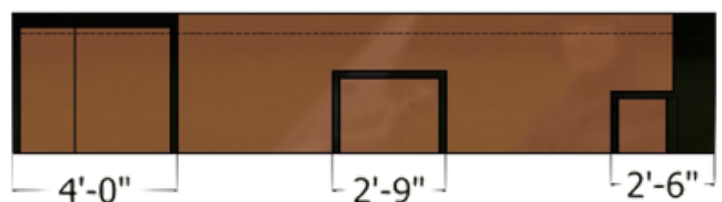
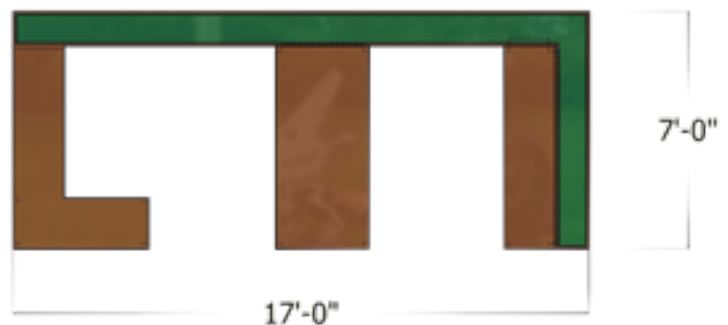
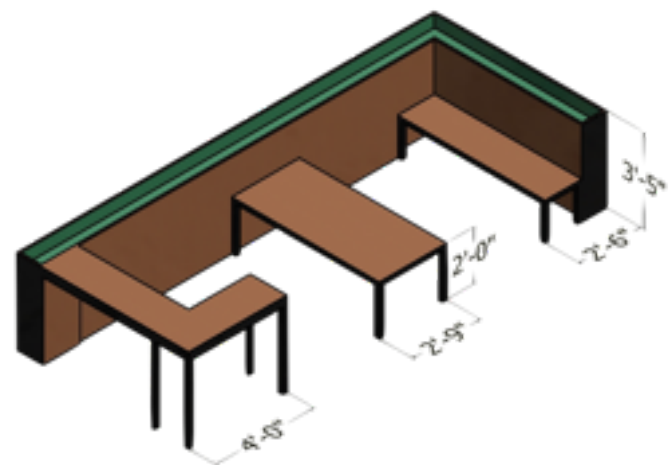
This map shows the area surrounding the Broad Street Parklet. The shaded blue area represents the space covered by our on-site observations, roughly half a block of Broad Street between New and Guetter.



DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

The Broad Street Parklet fits up to 12 people, which includes seating for nine. The design fits into an on-street parking space. The flowerbeds add nearly 30 feet of greenery to the neighborhood while the colors match those of our partnering business, Joe's. Together, these design features maintain the look and feel of the area.

We constructed the parklet out of 2x4s, plywood, and reclaimed pallets, keeping the cost low while still providing users with a number of safety features, including a chest-high wall to keep people from being exposed to the road, and reflective parking stops surrounding the parklet.



These diagrams were used in the construction of the Broad Street parklet.



TOTAL COST

Construction \$800

Lumber \$200

Hardware \$50

Paint \$100

Greenery \$400

Installation \$50

Marketing \$150

Signage \$50

Promotions \$50

Event Supplies \$50

BPA Parking Meter Fee \$700

Grand Total \$1,650

COST SHARING

Parklets are a multi-stakeholder project. The Broad Street Parklet, for example, was a collaboration between Lehigh University and Joe's Tavern with additional support from the city. This opens up a number of possibilities when it comes to sharing costs. This parklet was funded through community donations, research grants, and contributions from Joe's; however, future projects may consider additional funding models.

2018 Impact Analysis

METHODOLOGY

Pedestrian Observations

We conducted regular on-site observations at the Broad Street Parklet location. In fifteen-minute intervals, the observer recorded the Group Size, Age, Gender, Activity, Time Spent on Street, and Method of Transportation for each person who entered the half-block observation zone. We recorded the behaviors of 1,000 pedestrians prior to installing the parklet as a baseline measure and then collected nearly 3,000 more throughout the summer, looking for changes in foot traffic patterns and visitor behavior.

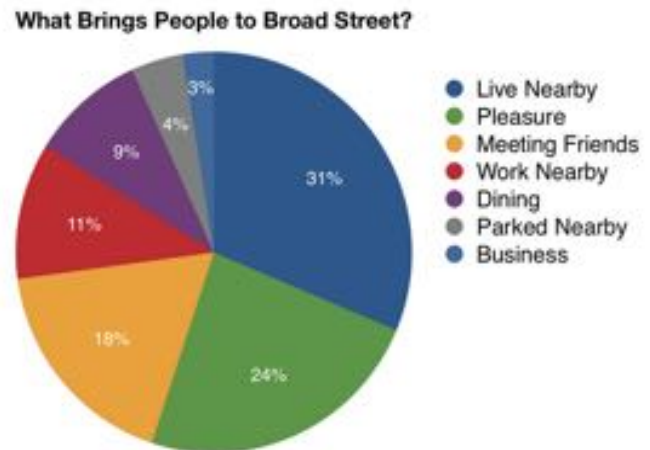
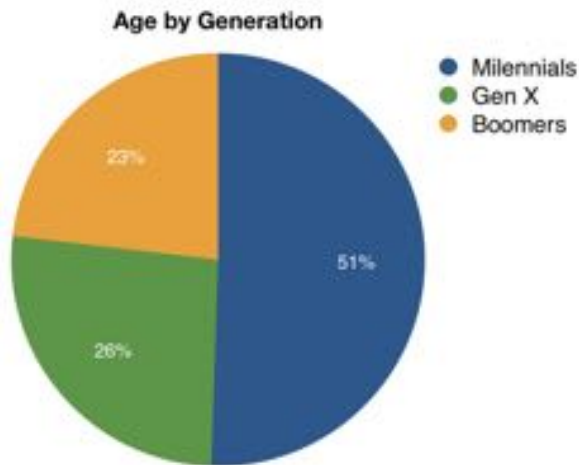
Parklet User Survey

The survey consists of 24 questions divided into three sections: experience, design, and demographics. The experience section asked participants to describe their perceptions of Broad Street and consider how the parklet influences their beliefs about the neighborhood. The design section asked participants to rank specific aspects of the parklet's construction quality and assess its location on Broad Street. The demographics section gave us a sense of who was using the parklet.

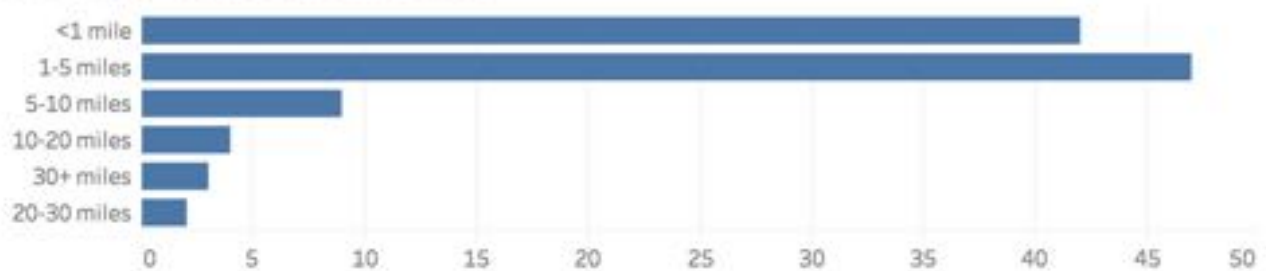
In addition to the numeric ratings, survey respondents were also invited to share their rationale through a series of short answer questions. These open-ended questions asked participants to think about what additional events, amenities, and design elements they would like to see in future parklets.

DEMOGRAPHICS

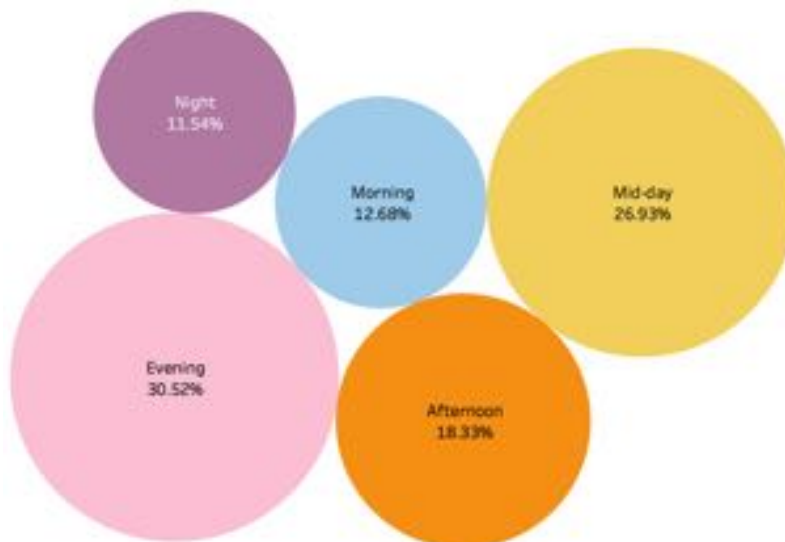
In total, we collected 120 parklet user surveys and conducted 72 15-minute on-site observations during which time we recorded the pedestrian behavior of over 3,900 individuals. Below are some of the overall demographic data we saw:



Distance Traveled to Parklet



When do People Visit Broad Street?



What does this all mean?

This demographic data suggests that Broad Street is home to a range of pedestrian activity related to both work and play. The neighborhood is frequented throughout the day by adults of every age from 20 to over 70.

Most importantly, this data shows the parklet primarily serves the local community, especially those who live within a 5-mile radius.

HIGHLIGHTS & KEY FINDINGS

Below are some of the Broad Street Parklet's most impressive results revealing the social and economic value of parklets in the Lehigh Valley:

2x

**INCREASE IN
STATIONARY
ACTIVITY**

66
minutes

**REPORTED AVERAGE
TIME SPENT IN
PARKLET PER VISIT**

\$56

**REPORTED AVERAGE
SPENT AT NEARBY
BUSINESSES PER VISIT**

KEY PARKLET USER PERCEPTIONS

Out of 120 people surveyed, here is how the majority felt on three important issues:

85%

**AGREED THAT THE
PARKLET IMPROVED
THE NEIGHBORHOOD**

78%

**AGREED THAT THE
PARKLET WAS A
GOOD USE OF A
PARKING SPACE**

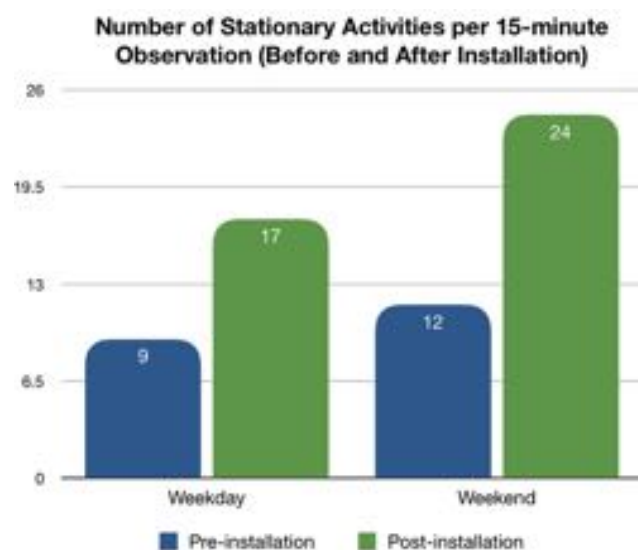
75%

**AGREED THAT THE
PARKLET MADE THEM
MORE LIKELY TO
VISIT LOCAL
BUSINESSES**



IMPROVING WALKABILITY

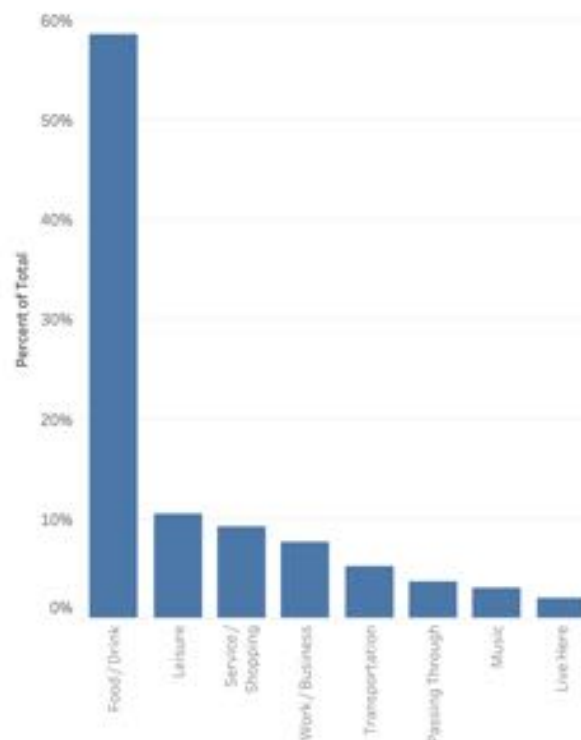
Prior to the parklet's installation, our data found that Broad and New was primarily a throughway, an area where most individuals passed through on their way to somewhere else. While people still use Broad Street for this purpose when the parklet was there, we saw a significant increase in the number of people who stopped in the area, at least for a little while.



The graph to the left shows a notable rise in stationary activity after the parklet was installed on Broad Street. These individuals remained in the area for more than a minute and engaged in at least one stationary activity below.

The graph to the right shows stationary visitors participating in a wide range of neighborhood activities, including food & drink, local commerce, and other leisure time activities such as walking a dog or meeting up with a friend.

Overview of Broad Street Activities
For Stationary Pedestrians





INSPIRING ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

One of our main goals this summer was to determine the economic value of having a parklet in the community. For Joe's, this value was clear: as the inside of their establishment filled up in the evening, the parklet served as additional space for patrons to enjoy their food and beverages. With Joe's open building design, the parklet felt like a natural extension of the place. However, this was not the only benefit. Every business owner we talked to in the Broad & New neighborhood was excited to see the parklet back for a second summer. It gave Subway patron's next door a place to enjoy their meal outdoors and provided others visiting the nearby businesses a place to rest. Parklet users visited places as far as four blocks away.

61%

**REPORTED VISITING
A BUSINESS ALONG
WITH THE PARKLET**

\$56

**REPORTED AVERAGE
SPENT AT NEARBY
BUSINESSES PER VISIT**

55%

**REPORTED SPENDING
MONEY AT JOE'S
WHILE USING PARKLET**

13%

**REPORTED SPENDING
MONEY AT SOME
OTHER RESTAURANT**

BUSINESSES MENTIONED

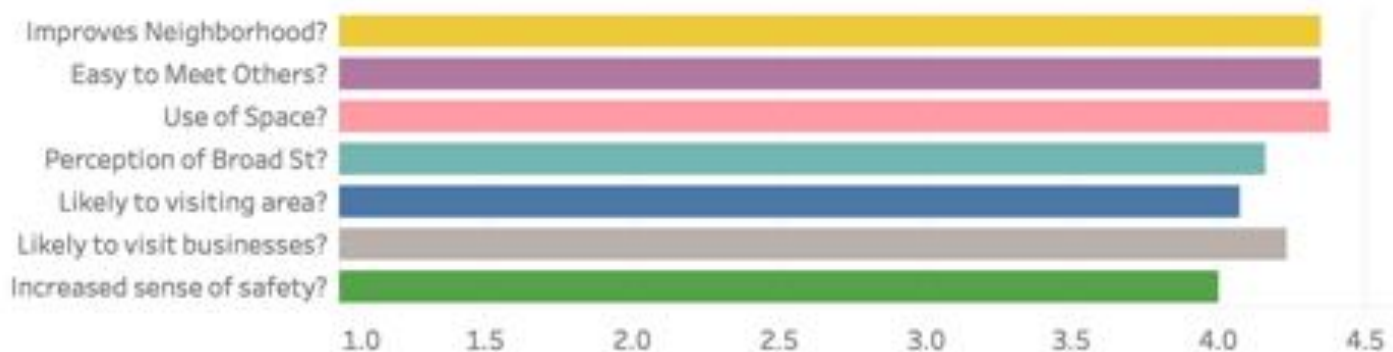
**JOE'S | MINI MART | TWISTED OLIVE
TAPAS | JOHNNY'S | PLAZA | SALON
RIPPER'S | MERCHANT'S BANK | 7-11
ROSANNA'S | AARDVARK | RED STAG
THE BRICK | METRO PCS | URBANO
INTO THE MYST | DEMOCRATIC CLUB
MORAVIAN BOOKSTORE | & MORE**



LOCAL PERCEPTIONS

Throughout the summer, we collected parklet users' perception of the Broad Street Parklet design. We asked visitors how they felt about a number of design features on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Here's how they felt on a number of important issues:

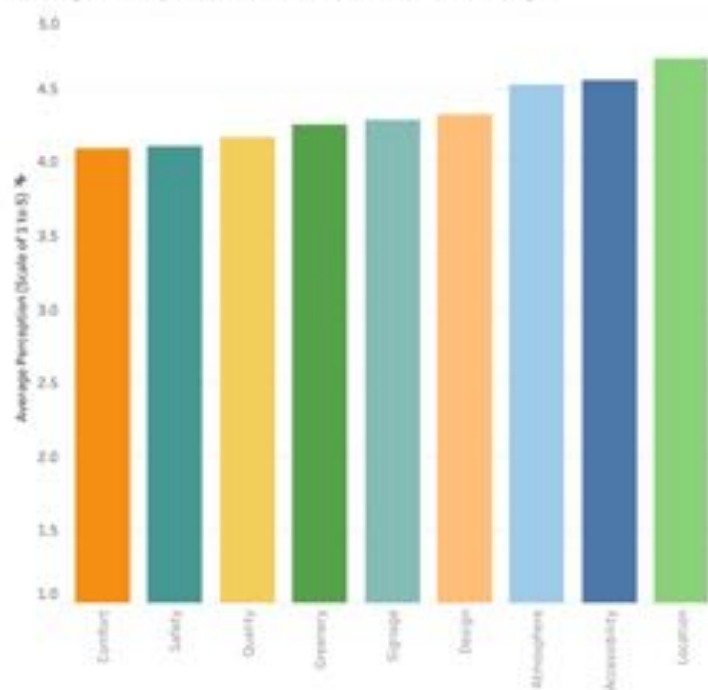
Average Perception of the Parklet's Impact on Neighborhood



As these two graphs show, parklet users were overwhelmingly happy with the parklet design and quality. Collectively, respondents believed strongly that a parklet improves the neighborhood in a variety of ways, including its appeal and their sense of safety.

Parklet users overwhelmingly approved of the design as well. While a number of respondents offered suggestions to make the parklet more comfortable, there was nevertheless strong support for the parklet's location, atmosphere, and accessibility.

Average Perception of Broad Street Parklet Design





ENHANCING LOCAL VIBE

When we first sat down with our local business partner, Shelly Salak of Joe's Tavern, the very first thing she talked about was the importance of neighborhood vibe. To make Broad & New a place people choose to visit, we hosted a series of community events that brought both new and old faces to the neighborhood to enjoy live music, games, and the arts.

PAINTING IN THE PARKLET



Events such as Painting in the Parklet and Party in the Parklet showed how a parklet could be a hub for community activity and enhancing neighborhood vibe. By the end of the parklet season, Bethlehem residents knew that the parklet was more than a public seating area; it was a place to enjoy Musikfest, watch the Celtic Classic Parade, and simply have a good time.

DID YOU KNOW?

The most frequently requested event suggested for the parklet was live music. Others included: more art events, Karaoke, board game meet-ups, library events (children's book readings and free library books), and even a chance to talk with politicians.

PARTY IN THE PARKLET



Future Visions

NEW PLACES & NEW DESIGNS

Parklets vary greatly in design and structure. This versatility allows us to design parklets that best fit the local environment and the needs of a given community. The possibilities for parklets are truly endless. Below are a few parklet projects from around the country that inspire us, but these are just the beginning. As long as the community supports public places, parklets can be used for any number of reasons from improving walkability and encouraging economic activity to promoting literacy or a healthy lifestyle. While checking out the designs below, imagine your own ideas as well. What can a parklet bring to your neighborhood?

DESIGN CONCEPT #1 FREE NEIGHBORHOOD GYM



*This parklet gives users an opportunity to use free fitness equipment in a natural setting.
Photo Credit: Fit-trail*

- Fitness parklets encourage healthy habits through their presence and ease of access.
- With several of these parklets placed around town, people can have fun and work out with neighbors while enjoying the outdoors.
- A fitness-themed parklet could be placed near a popular foot trail, such as Bethlehem's Greenway or the D&L, giving trail users a place to round out their routine.

Future Visions

DESIGN CONCEPT #2 PERFORMANCE STAGE



This parklet was built on wheels so it could be moved from place to place, serving as a mobile stage. Photo Credit: Brose Partington

- A mobile parklet can travel for area festivals and special events.
- A performance stage parklet gives neighborhoods without many public venues a place to gather and enjoy music and other live entertainment.
- The high mobility of this design allows a community to experiment with parklet location before setting one up for the entire summer.

DESIGN CONCEPT #3 LITTLE FREE LIBRARY



This parklet gives community members access to free books and a place to read them. Photo Credit: San Francisco Citizen

- This library-themed parklet is a great way for people to connect and learn through the power of literature.
- The "free library" concept allows community members to drop off a book or take one as they please, creating a sort of public book club.
- The minimalist design allows for a large amount of customization and could fit in areas too compact for a full-size parklet.

Future Visions

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Our partnership with Joe's Tavern is as strong as ever. During this past summer, we collaborated on a number of events and promotions that helped generate sales for the local pub and bring new people to the area. At the same time, Joe's invested their time and energy into the public parklet project, supporting us in our effort to improve the local community.

We are currently looking for additional business partnerships in the Lehigh Valley. On-site partners, such as Joe's, cover part of the costs of the parklet as well as maintain the parklet on a day-to-day basis, with the support of Lehigh University students and faculty. Parklets are proven to provide a unique opportunity for neighborhood businesses to increase local community traffic and improve the nearby atmosphere.

If you are interested in bringing a parklet to a neighborhood near you, please contact Karen Beck Pooley at kbp312@lehigh.edu.



*The Broad Street Parklet
in front of Joe's Tavern.
Photo Credit: WFMZ 69
News*



CONCLUDING REMARKS

In a busy neighborhood, a parklet can be seen by thousands of people daily, even if only a fraction of them actually enter the space. This is true of the Broad Street parklet where roughly 1 in 20 pedestrians visited the parklet. This adds up. As we've seen, parklets can change pedestrian behavior, improve walkability, make a neighborhood more inviting to visitors, and encourage economic activity. The Broad Street Parklet achieved all of this for less than a \$2,000 investment in the community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to thank the many sponsors, advocates, and donors that made this project possible. Our gratitude goes out to those who helped fund and support the Broad Street Parklet, including:

- Joe's Tavern Bar & Grill
- Neighbor's Home and Garden
- Lehigh University's Mountaintop Initiative
- City of Bethlehem
- Bethlehem Parking Authority

See you at a Lehigh Valley Parklet
near you in Summer 2019!



lehigh valley 
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