

CHULA VISTA

Shared Streets Pilot Program Summary

Pilot Summary

In August, the City of Chula Vista revitalized Third Avenue by implementing two components:

1. “Parklets” in underutilized parking spaces to increase space available to pedestrians and non-motorized road users using AASHTO Type I A-frame barricades and traffic cones.

Parklets convert underutilized parking spaces to public seating platforms to establish neighborhood character. Parklets offer many amenities that complement existing businesses and residential areas with features such as greenery, outdoor seating, bike racks, and micromobility options.

2. Nightly closures of Third Avenue to vehicular traffic.

Third Avenue is a popular street in the City of Chula Vista. Reductions of space devoted to vehicular traffic are intended to allow pedestrians and bicyclists to safely traverse the portion of Third Avenue that is one of the segments in the City with the highest concentration of consistent pedestrian traffic while encouraging social distancing and outdoor dining in the process. The closures occurred every Sunday in August from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m

Challenges

Upon receiving further input from the community, the City determined that road closures on Third Avenue should be limited to the segment between E Street and Center Street where pedestrian trips were more concentrated, and only on weekends when patronage of the businesses is more common.

Aside from the ongoing pandemic, another challenge in implementing this project was the active road construction project on Third Ave from F Street to E Street. Although there was no construction on the weekends, there was still some traffic control on the road (median construction) and sidewalks near E Street. Construction is expected to be completed by the end of September 2020.

Other challenges is the type of businesses that participated in the program. Most featured restaurants and eateries. However, banquet halls, clothing rental shops, and accounting



*Parklets revitalize existing parking spaces.
Source: NACTO*



In light of the pandemic, Chula Vista transformed existing parking into parklet-like dining. Source: City of Chula Vista



The Shared Streets Grant allowed local businesses to provide outdoor dining options. Source: City of Chula Vista

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and legal offices were unable to participate in this pilot due to business closure mandates from the County of San Diego.

Successes

These temporary shared street improvements helped residents comply with COVID-19 public health guidelines while enhancing public spaces. By giving residents street space in the form of parklets and occasional evening street closures, residents could dine and shop at local retailers while maintaining social distance protocols.

Approximately 50 businesses took part in this pilot with 15 of them setting up permanent structures on the street that feature some sort of fencing. One business even went as far as pursuing a permit to allow parklet style dining even after the duration of the pilot and the pandemic.

Another success was the collaboration of the City with the prospective partners. The City was quick to approve permits for businesses to allocate dining on the sidewalks and Third Ave. Moreover, the City worked with MTS to construct a plan for busses to move bus stops on Sundays that were in the path of the participating businesses to a nearby temporary location. These accommodations allowed the pilot to be successful.

Resources

SANDAG

sandag.org/sharedstreets

City of Chula Vista

chulavistaca.gov/Home/Components/News/News/3151/6921

NACTO

nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/interim-design-strategies/parklets/

Impact

Adoption of the Shared Streets strategy was considerable among businesses on Third Avenue. On July 14, the City Council established formal procedures and guidelines to construct longer-term parklet projects along Third Avenue as well as to implement the originally proposed street closure. One business has already started pursuing this option. Moreover, several businesses are still safely participating in outdoor dining on Third Avenue while following social distancing protocols despite the ongoing pandemic. This pilot and the permits that the City granted even allowed several businesses to stay open and not be forced to close for months at a time.

Marketing

The City and the Third Avenue Street Association used social media to advertise the pilot while encouraging residents to support the local businesses. Several positive comments were received under the postings including ones encouraging the City to expand this pilot beyond Third Ave and to other areas. Other comments encouraged the City to expand this program for other businesses in the future such as nail salons, barber shops, and banquet halls. Moreover, the City posted about the pilot under the “news” component of their personal website. Other local newspapers that reported on the grant awardation also aided in advertising the pilot.

