



Memorandum

To: Codes and Regulations Committee

Cc: Mayor Thomas P. McNamara
City Administrator Todd Cagnoni
Aldermen and Alderwomen of the City of Rockford

From: Martin Bloom – Sr. Project Manager – Permits and Special Events

RE: River District Association & City of Rockford Street Parklet Program

Date: June 8th, 2026

The River District Association & City of Rockford has re-developed a Parklet Program to enhance the downtown experience by converting select on-street parking spaces into temporary public gathering spaces. Parklets are intended to function as extensions of the public sidewalk and provide opportunities for seating, landscaping, bicycle parking, public art, and other pedestrian-oriented amenities.

The program operates seasonally from May 1 through October 31 and requires annual application and permit approval. Applicants must maintain and remove parklets at the end of each season and are responsible for all installation, maintenance, storage, and associated costs.

Businesses legally established in good standing adjacent to proposed Parklet area may apply for participation in the program. Establishments wishing to serve food or alcoholic beverages within a parklet must also obtain the appropriate Outdoor Sidewalk Café License and/or a Right of Way Encroachment Permit

The proposed Parklet Program establishes clear application procedures and design standards to ensure that installations are safe, accessible, and compatible with surrounding public infrastructure.



Key program requirements include:

- Parklets must be located on commercial corridors within the River District.
- Locations must be on streets with posted speed limits of 30 mph or less.
- Parklets may occupy no more than two parking spaces and cannot exceed 44 feet in length.
- Installations must not obstruct intersections, driveways, utility access, drainage structures, bus stops, loading zones, or accessible parking spaces.
- Parklets must provide appropriate pedestrian access and comply with all applicable accessibility requirements.
- Protective railings and barriers are required along the street-facing sides of the parklet.
- Advertising and commercial activities unrelated to the approved use are prohibited.
- Applicants are responsible for maintaining the parklet throughout the permit period.
- Parklets shall be removed at the request of the Public Works Director at his/her discretion

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the continued use of seasonal parklets within the River District and authorize the issuance of Right-of-Way Encroachment Permits for qualified applicants who meet all program requirements established by the City of Rockford and the River District Association (RDA).