Boston had allowed parklets for years, so why did we have so few of them?

- Heavy burden for private proponents:
  - Design
  - Permit
  - Build/install
  - Maintain
  - Pay City for lost meter revenue
  - Deconstruct
  - Store
  - Reinstall

- No financial return, because it’s public space
Step one: reduce barriers

- Provide clear design guidelines
- Streamline permitting process and get departments on board ahead of time
- Eliminate requirement to pay the City for lost meter revenue
- Expand the sidewalk cafe program to allow more options for revenue-generating outdoor seating
Step two: direct support

- Create a new City program to fund a number of parklets and plazas each year
- Provide support for installation and removal
- Provide space in City properties to store over the winter
Purpose of the Tactical Public Realm Guidelines

Encourage tactical transformation of the public realm by making the process as easy and transparent as possible.
Audiences for the Tactical Public Realm Guidelines

- Potential proponents of tactical interventions
  - Small businesses, neighborhood organizations (little funding/resources)
  - Developers (significant funding/resources)
- Internal City stakeholders
Boston Tactical Public Realm

Beta Blocks: serve as testing areas where new street ideas, materials, and technology can be easily piloted and evaluated.

Benches: can be integrated with digital features to provide solar-powered phone charging and measure activity in outdoor spaces.

Open Streets: inclusive, temporarily closed streets to car hosts and frees streets for pedestrians, recreation, and community events.

Banners: placed consistently along main streets, bring vibrancy to streets and contribute to placemaking.

Tactical Plazas: transform underutilized pedestrian and irregular intersections into pedestrian-only gathering spaces.

Parklets: repurpose on-street parking spaces into public spaces for socializing and gathering.

Outdoor Cafes: add activity to the street and seasonally expand spaces for businesses and patrons.

Temporary Art: activates public spaces with physical installations and performances by local residents and artists.

Paint Box: celebrates local artists by bringing their original designs to utility boxes.

Public Space Invitational: challenges designers, artists, and engineers to reimagine Boston's public spaces.
What is a tactical plaza (or parklet, etc.)?

Why are they worth doing?
Where should (or shouldn’t) a parklet be installed?

What are the design requirements?

**General Requirements**

- **Context and Location Criteria**

Parklets are best suited for streets that have relatively narrow sidewalks and no public open space in the immediate vicinity. They are especially well-suited to neighborhood business districts like small Main Street Districts, where there is a concentration of street activity, but retail footprints are smaller, and sidewalks often lack space for benches or outdoor seating. Parklets should be located as close as possible to existing hubs of activity, such as cafes, shops, and other popular destinations. The most successful Parklets are in the center of a business district, and are immediately adjacent to an active ground-floor use.

There are a few types of locations where installing a successful Parklet may be more difficult. Parklets are less well suited for busy arterial streets with heavy or fast-moving traffic. Also, Parklets may serve no real purpose if they are located too close to an existing public open space, such as a park.

**Design and Placement**

- **A** Typical width occupied along street: 2 parking spaces
- **B** Distance from platform to wheel stop: 5”
- **C** Maximum platform width from curb: 7”
- **D** Platform is flush with curb and maintains minimum drainage
- **E** Minimum side edge height: 17”
- **F** Minimum overhead clearance: 88”
- **G** Street edge height: 30-40”
- **H** Minimum distance from fire hydrant to Parklet: 15”

An accessible curb ramp and platform can also be used to create a Parklet directly on the pavement:

How do you get a plaza permitted?

What are the roles of the Community Partner vs. the City?
Established permitting process for street murals: led by Boston Art Commission, with BTD review.

**Context and Location Criteria**

Street Murals are best suited to neighborhood residential streets. Murals can be located mid-block or within intersections. A mural can take on various designs, but should not include any colors or shapes that could be perceived as traffic control indicators, and thus confuse people about the appropriate path of travel. The design and installation of a mural should be collaborative and involve community members and local residents.

**General Location Criteria**

- Murals can be located only on residential streets and streets classified as "local" according to the federal functional classification system.
- Designs should avoid pedestrian paths of travel and should not impede existing street parking or traffic control indicators, such as crosswalks, lane lines, regulatory signs, etc.
- Pavement must be in good condition.
- Murals should not be installed in locations scheduled for repaving or utility work within 3 months of painting.

**Design Criteria**

- Designs should not include any shapes or colors that could be perceived as traffic control indicators, or be mistaken for directions to the roadway user or pedestrian.
- Designs should not include shapes or color contrast that would confuse persons with vision impairment.
- Colors must be non-reflective and must not resemble existing traffic control devices.
- Designs should not invite pedestrians to linger or be distracted in the street.
- Designs should not include words or universally recognized symbols, logos, or trademarked materials, or advertisements.
- Paint must be slip resistant.

**Possible Mural Locations**

**Mid-block**

Different types of streets can be appropriate locations for mid-block murals. Neighborhood Residential and Shared Streets are the most typical locations for mid-block murals. Murals in higher-traffic locations will need more frequent repainting. See more on Neighborhood Residential and Shared Streets in the Boston Complete Streets Guidelines (http://bostoncompletestreets.org/guidelines).

**Intersections**

Murals in intersections are most appropriate on lower-volume streets with no traffic signals—in particular, Neighborhood Residential and Shared Streets.

- Designs should have a small enough coverage area to avoid rear from turning vehicles.
- Any artistic design within an intersection must not indicate to pedestrians, cyclists, or drivers a path of travel that is contrary to the existing or traditional route.
- Designs must not interfere with crosswalks. There should not be lines, painting lane markings, that indicate a path of travel—unless they reinforce the expected path of travel.

**Painted curb extensions at intersections**

Painted curb extensions can help calm turning traffic and increase visibility for pedestrians, but should not encourage pedestrians to stand in the street while waiting to cross.

- Any artistic design should increase visibility for pedestrians and drivers.
- The painted curb extension must look distinct from the sidewalk, and should not suggest that the painted curb extension is part of the sidewalk.
Multiple new options for sidewalk cafes!