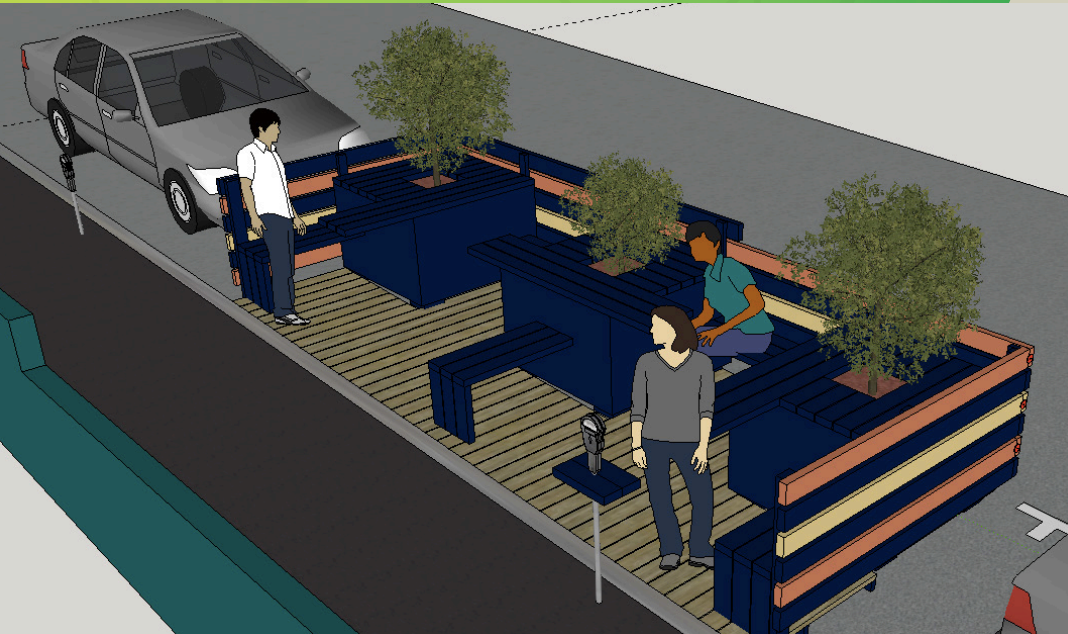


KAIMUKI PARKLETS

Building back better with local businesses and the community, one space at a time



WHY WAS IT RIGHT FOR KAIMUKI?

► During the COVID-19 pandemic, many local businesses struggled, particularly businesses in smaller spaces where re-configuring for social distancing was complicated or near impossible. Particularly when business was more likely to be local and from nearby neighborhoods, transforming empty public on-street parking spots for local businesses and residents seemed to be a much better use of public space, especially when businesses need more space to effectively social distance. Working with neighborhood organizations and local businesses, Better Block Hawai'i installed three one-space parklets. Each parklet was built in partnership with Re-Use Hawai'i, a nonprofit construction material reclamation business, and then decorated by local artists and shaded with locally appropriate plantings.

What's a "Quick Build"?

Hawai'i faces many different challenges, from the climate crisis to street safety, and from the cost of living to weakening community cohesion. However, many of these can be tackled simultaneously and incrementally—and right now—by re-imagining and re-purposing our public spaces and streets for people more than just cars. When we do so through quick builds, we gain new spaces for walking and biking, community gathering, commerce, and more!

Quick-build projects, by definition, take less than a year to plan and implement, and use flexible installation materials such as paint and moveable barriers to catalyze long-term change in our neighborhoods and streets. Although much smaller in scale than large infrastructure projects, we know that quick builds can create positive outcomes, such as:

- **Expanding active transportation and transit accessibility through new pedestrian and bike spaces.**

Walking is three times more common in a community with pedestrian-friendly streets than in otherwise comparable

communities that are less conducive to foot travel.¹ So if walking conditions improve, then more people will feel safe and walk. This is similarly true with bicycling, new mobility options, and transit access.

- **Creating more dynamic and potentially profitable spaces through parklets.** Just one parklet can help double a small restaurants or businesses space, particularly important during pandemic times with social distancing requirements. In many places, parklets have increased foot traffic and, in some cases, revenues for local businesses.²

PARTNERS:

Better Block Hawai'i
Re-Use Hawai'i
Envision Kaimuki
Kaimuki Neighborhood Board No. 4
AARP
Trees for Honolulu's Future
Ulupono Initiative
Local artists Kris Goto, Kim Sielback,
and James Melon
Local businesses Bean About Town,
Surfing Pig, and JuicyBrew

- **Catalyzing community gathering events through open streets or ciclovías.** Completely reimagining the full purpose of streets away from vehicle travel, toward accessibility and more active living options, can in some cases result in the health benefits outweighing the costs of these events by 2 to 1.³

With quick builds, we can see if the new design or event works before investing significant capital resources (e.g., Will people bike and walk here? Does business improve? Do community members like the new community spaces and feel more connected?).

¹ <https://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm4.htm>

² <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/interim-design-strategies/parklets/>

³ <https://usa.streetsblog.org/2011/12/21/health-benefits-of-ciclovía-events-outweigh-costs/>

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What Did We Learn?

Develop projects with and by the community, not just for the community. When developed as a community, especially when several different and diverse partners are brought together, the process strengthens social networks and a shared sense of purpose and place. Community-based or development organizations can offer great forums for this type of process.

Budget for contingencies. Future projects need to account for possible subsequent reversals of flexible allowances that have been granted for quick builds. Efforts should be made to document and formalize granted flexibility to mitigate possible reversion to older policies (e.g., following government staff turnover). If not formalized, other individuals pursuing similar projects may not be aware nor able to take advantage this flexibility, for which there is now precedent.

Work with nearby champions. Identifying and working with partnering businesses that have open mindsets about shared use and shared kuleana for public space are crucial. It is important to obtain very clear understandings of desired programmed uses, limited time-frames, available budgets, ability to make subsequent adjustments, and addressing unintended outcomes or future incidents. ■

Impact: On any given day, it's estimated that anywhere from **60 to 120 people** enjoy these parklets.

