

ITEM #:	<u>9</u>
DATE:	<u>05-26-26</u>
DEPT:	<u>Admin</u>

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: OUTDOOR DINING PILOT PROGRAM FUNDING (PARKLETS)

BACKGROUND:

Downtown Ames approved the Downtown Guiding Vision document in spring 2025. The Guiding Vision includes a wide range of initiatives for both short and long term implementation. The City Council requested that Downtown Ames formulate an implementation committee to help prioritize both Downtown Ames efforts, as well as requests for City assistance. In December 2025, an update was provided to City Council about short term priorities. At that time, the concept of enhancing outdoor dining opportunities with "parklets" in parking spaces was discussed as a priority for 2026.

Parklets are intended to expand usable outdoor space for an individual business beyond the small sidewalk cafe options that already exist. A seasonal reusable platform would be constructed in the street to create additional space for outdoor use. Attached is a concept drawing of the platform. Furnishings would be provided by the individual business.

Construction of the parklets requires City approval of a sidewalk cafe permit for outdoor dining by individual businesses. Two requests for such permits are on this same agenda for Della Viti and Sam's Place.

The Downtown Ames committee is requesting the City Council provide up to \$10,000 of assistance towards a pilot program for outdoor dining with parklets. Downtown Ames has secured some sponsorships and donations for the construction of two platforms for use in 2026. The requested funding would help supplement the costs of construction, marketing, and promotional materials for the program, including support for spring 2027 requests. Expenses would be reimbursed by the City with invoices for hard costs related to the program through June 1, 2027.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve up to \$10,000 of funding from the City Council Contingency Account for an outdoor dining pilot parklet program to be reimbursed to Downtown Ames for invoiced hard costs of the program through June 1, 2027.
2. Modify the recommended budget or requirements of the request.
3. Provide no funding for the pilot program.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

City staff believes that the proposed design for the proposed parklets can conform to City standards. However, when an individual site application is received, the City staff will review it to make sure the parklet addresses safety, drainage, and access issues.

The overall program is likely to displace four (4) total parking spaces from June 1 through October 1. The individual businesses who obtain an outdoor dining permit for the use of a parklet will have to reimburse the City for the loss parking space revenue.

The platform design is intended to be reusable. Downtown Ames has secured storage of the platforms in the offseason. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative 1.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Parklet Concept Details](#)