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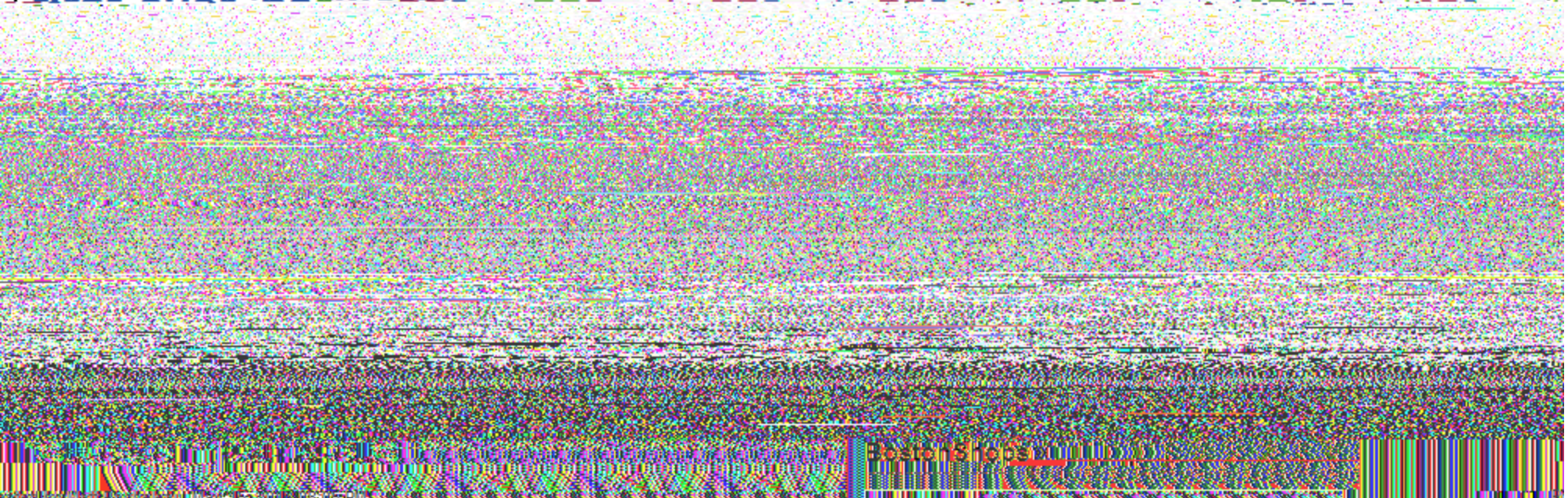
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Boston picks 3 sites for the city's first ever parklets



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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

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The city has selected three sites that will be home to Boston's first ever parklets.

Each of the **miniature parks** will use temporary plantings to convert two on-street parking spaces into vibrant outdoor public parks open during spring, summer and fall. The parklets will be dismantled and stored during winter.

Officials expect to install the first three parklets in late summer or early fall.



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...will mark the debut of the "Parklets" program that the city hopes to expand to more locations as soon as next spring.

The three sites chosen so far are at 174 Harvard Ave. in Allston at 931 Centre St. in Jamaica Plain and at 1524 Tremont St. in Mission Hill, said Vincent Gupta, director of policy and planning for the Boston Transportation Department. Officials are exploring several sites for a possible fourth parklet.

They will each be about the same length as two parking spaces, roughly 40 feet long, and about 7 feet wide, which, for safety purposes, is slightly narrower than the parking spaces' width.

Designs for the parklets have not been finalized, but each will feature some seating and some more open areas, he said.

Generally, parklets are built to allow for a mix of benches, tables, landscaping and bike parking. Other cities, like San Francisco and New York, have launched similar programs.

Each of the first three parklets in Boston will be different from one another, so officials can experiment with a few designs and so that each parklet fits with its neighborhood.

"We're not going to have a standard design for all of them," Gupta said.

The sites were also chosen because at each spot the city, which will pay to build and install the parklets, has found at least one neighboring business that volunteered help monitor the day-to-day upkeep of the parklets.

The idea being that there is someone that is the eyes and ears for each of these parklets and takes on some basic maintenance responsibilities such as cleaning up at the end of the day," Gupta said.

The "parklet partner" for the Allston site is @Union Café. In Jamaica Plain, El Charro and Sonia's Bridal will be co-"parklet partners." The Mission Hill parklet will be monitored by Mike's Donuts and Lilly's Gourmet Pasta.

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The partners do not get any special rights to their respective parklets. The parklets are open to the public, just like other city parks.

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service, advertising or selling products on the parklets is prohibited.

Parklets will be set up and taken down each year on a schedule similar to the subway bike share system, disappearing around late November and being put back up in early April.

He said earlier proposals to install parklets in more residential areas drew criticism from car owners worried about losing parking. But, in commercial districts, the idea has been well received, he said.

He worked with local merchants to make sure they're comfortable with the loss of parking in the area, and for the most part they felt this will create more activity and will help business and will be a benefit for the community and for residents," he said by phone Wednesday.

"In these three districts [chosen so far], they are all small business districts," he said. "In the communities surrounding the business districts, we haven't heard any complaints from residents, and there's been support from neighborhood groups."

He said city officials have held community meetings about the parklets planned for South End and Mission Hill and that a community meeting for Allston residents was scheduled for Wednesday night.

He said he expects the program will grow. But after this year, the city is expected to stop funding new parklets, which [the Globe has reported](#) will cost about \$12,000 each on average.

But the cost of installation and maintenance of parklets in Boston will be paid for by local businesses and other organizations, which will first have to get city approval before setting one up.

"We're a little bit of a catalyst for what we hope is a citywide program," he said. "We're testing an idea out and installing it on the street and we'd like to see what the response is. We don't know how many locations might emerge next year."

Contact Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.

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