



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 19, 2020

Streetscape Pilot Program Update

At the Monday, June 15, 2020 City Council Meeting, Councilwoman and Downtown Master Plan Committee Chair Maureen Copelof presented a proposed pilot parklet concept for the downtown streetscape response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She also described other initiatives that the City of Brevard, the Heart of Brevard, and the Downtown Master Plan Committee developed in partnership to help businesses and residents comply with capacity restrictions and social distancing guidelines.

After Copelof's presentation, the partner organizations received significant input and insightful questions about the parklets displayed in the preliminary concept sketches. Based on this feedback, the partners concluded that the pilot parklet concept developed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic needs more thorough research and evaluation. Responses to the pandemic need to be immediate and equitable to benefit downtown businesses, and the partner organizations determined the proposed parklet project cannot move forward without further review and planning.

The partner organizations agreed that a parklet pilot program is still valuable and should be pursued outside of the COVID-19 emergency response strategy. Therefore, the partners have referred the Streetscape Pilot Program, including the parklet concept, to the Downtown Master Plan Committee as a future agenda item.

When asked about this decision, Maureen Copelof said, "As we took the conceptual design of the parklet proposal forward, and looked at implementation steps, we realized that trying to accomplish this as an immediate response to an emergency situation—the pandemic—was not a viable option. In order to really benefit from developing parklets in downtown, we need to build a strong foundation with clearly defined processes, more time to refine the design concept into a build ready plan, and an analysis of funding sources and impacts. We will continue to work on all these issues as part of a longer-term effort within the Downtown Master Plan Committee."

Going forward, the City, the Heart of Brevard, and the Downtown Master Plan Committee will focus their efforts on tools readily available to immediately assist businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic. These tools may include curbside pickup utilizing existing parking spaces, additional outdoor public dining and seating, hand sanitizing stations, and resources and marketing materials for businesses and visitors alike. The materials released will benefit businesses throughout the downtown core and the city as a whole.

"We will continue to advocate for and work with our downtown businesses to provide resources and solutions that best fit their needs during the ongoing pandemic," shared Heart of Brevard Executive Director Nicole Bentley. "We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the City and Downtown Master Plan Committee to explore a parklet pilot program that promotes the economic vitality and vibrancy of downtown."

A full update will be given at the next City Council meeting on June 29.