

We “Heart” Our Public Parklets

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On Friday, September 15, 2017, planners, artists, activists and musicians took to the streets of Honolulu; reclaiming outdoor spaces that are usually reserved for vehicles and demonstrating the possibilities if these spaces were reserved for people rather than cars. Park(ing) Day is an annual worldwide event where parking spaces are turned into “parklets”: public parks or other spaces for people to enjoy. This event was an outlet for creative interdisciplinary endeavors, team work, civic engagement, unscripted social interactions, generosity, kōkua and fun; celebrating streets as places for people not just vehicles. Participants in Park(ing) Day 2017 included:

- ChadLou’s Coffee Roasters
- SSFM International & Mark’s Garage
- Friends of Ha’ikū Stairs
- AECOM
- PBR Hawaii
- HHF Planners & Biki Bike Share
- WCIT, Malama Kipuka & DTL
- WRNS Studio
- Fishcake & Boxjelly

A unifying theme that was evident in all the independently designed parklets was the use of reclaimed, upcycled, repurposed and found items: art installations and furniture constructed out of old cardboard; pergola of invasive bamboo; chairs, benches and bike racks constructed out of old pallets. This stems from a shared goal to avoid unnecessary consumerism and waste. It was clearly important to all participants in the design and installation of parklets that they heralded an underlying message of sustainability and respect for the ‘āina.



PBR Hawaii Upcycled Cardboard Furniture

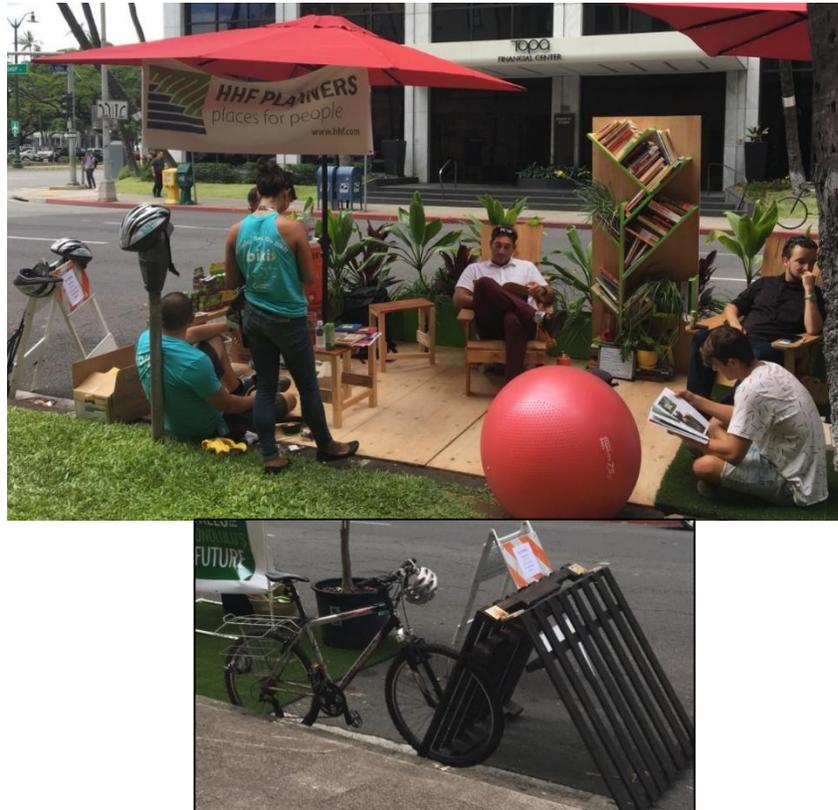
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HHF Planners and Biki Bike Library Lounge with Upcycled Pallet Chairs and Bike Rack

The remarkable climate and weather in Hawai'i creates an exceptional opportunity for use of outdoor spaces. Many of those who have chosen to make Hawai'i their home have traded in indoor square footage for year-round use of shared public outdoor spaces. In spite of this, there are relatively few restaurants or other establishments that offer outdoor areas for their patrons and the public.

ChadLou's Coffee Roasters in Kailua took advantage of Park(ing) Day to expand their café experience and outdoor seating into the adjacent parking stalls. The opportunity demonstrated by this one day expansion has inspired the owner of coffee roaster in partnership with the building owner to pursue permits and authorizations that will allow for a permanent parklet at this location in the future.

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ChadLou's Coffee Roaster's Expanded Outdoor Experience
Sources: Photo provided by Ernest Shin with Friends of Ha'ikū

This event fostered the opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration. Members of *Friends of Ha'ikū Stairs* met community members and State Senator Will Espero in support of saving the Stairs. The team also met with Adriane Truluck, a Historic Landscape Architect with AECOM interested in the historic significance of the Stairs in the large context of the Coast Artillery Corps, the coast defenses network that was established across Oah'u following the December 7, 1941 Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor.



Friends of Ha'ikū Stairs Working to Save a Piece of Hawai'i and National History and Public Access for the People

Photo Credit: Ernest Shin with Friends of Ha'ikū Stairs

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In addition to promoting expansion of public outdoor spaces many of the parklets championed other causes, such as bicycle infrastructure, the bike share program, landscaping with and preservation of native plants, invasive species control, and the lost pastime of reading books. The day started early with coffee-in-hand for installation of parklets, and went late with an after-party and live music provided by SSFM and Mark's Garage.



AECOM Repurposed Bamboo Pergola under Construction



SSFM International and Mark's Garage After-Party

Photo Credit: Carlos Kelton with SSFM International