

Long-term Parklets Survey Results

2022 - City of Albany



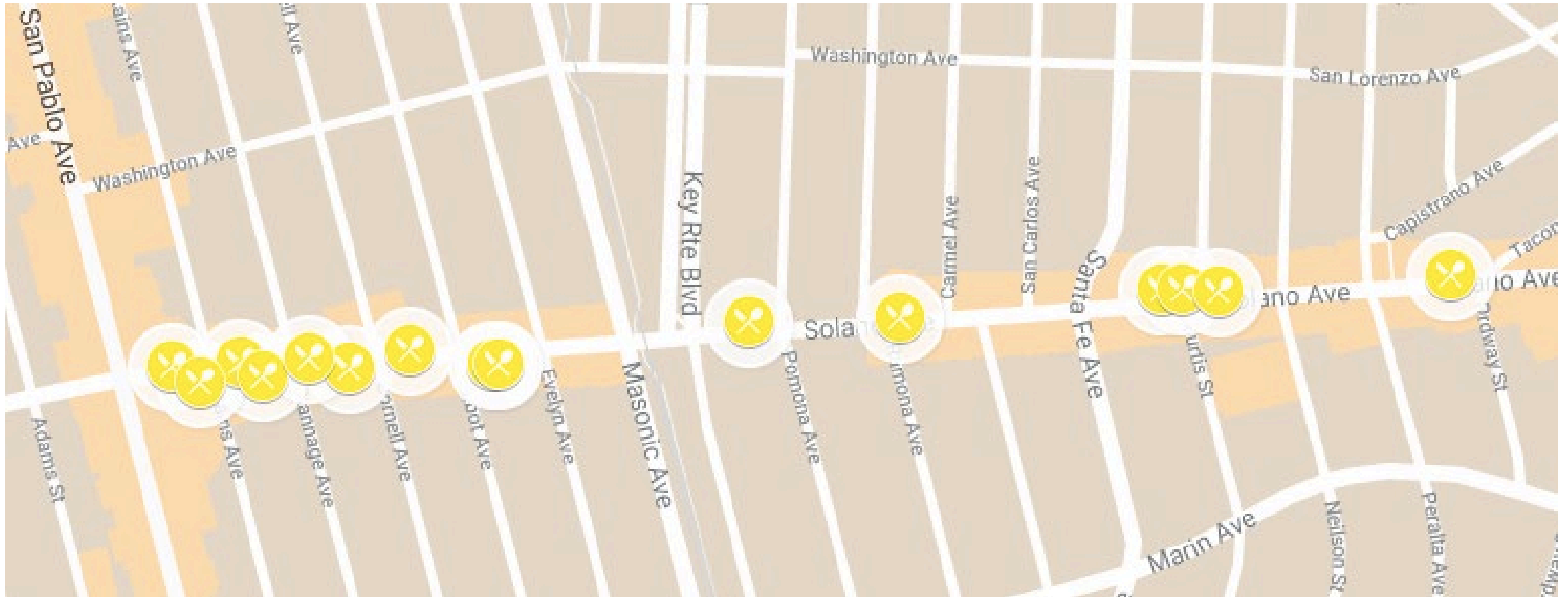
Introduction

This survey on Long-term Parklets in Albany is a part of the data collection on the outdoor commerce parklets in front of restaurants and storefronts. These are temporarily open in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This research was requested by Albany City Council and administered by the City of Albany. The purpose of this survey is to find out more about how Albany community members and businesses feel about these temporary parklets and whether there is interest in establishing a program to support long-term outdoor commerce parklets by the City of Albany.

- Surveys were open between December 17, 2021 and January 16, 2022.
- Two separate surveys were distributed:
 - Survey 1: To all community members (1,375 responses)
 - Survey 2: To businesses in Albany as well as Berkeley businesses in Albany's section of Solano Avenue (125 responses)



Current Installations



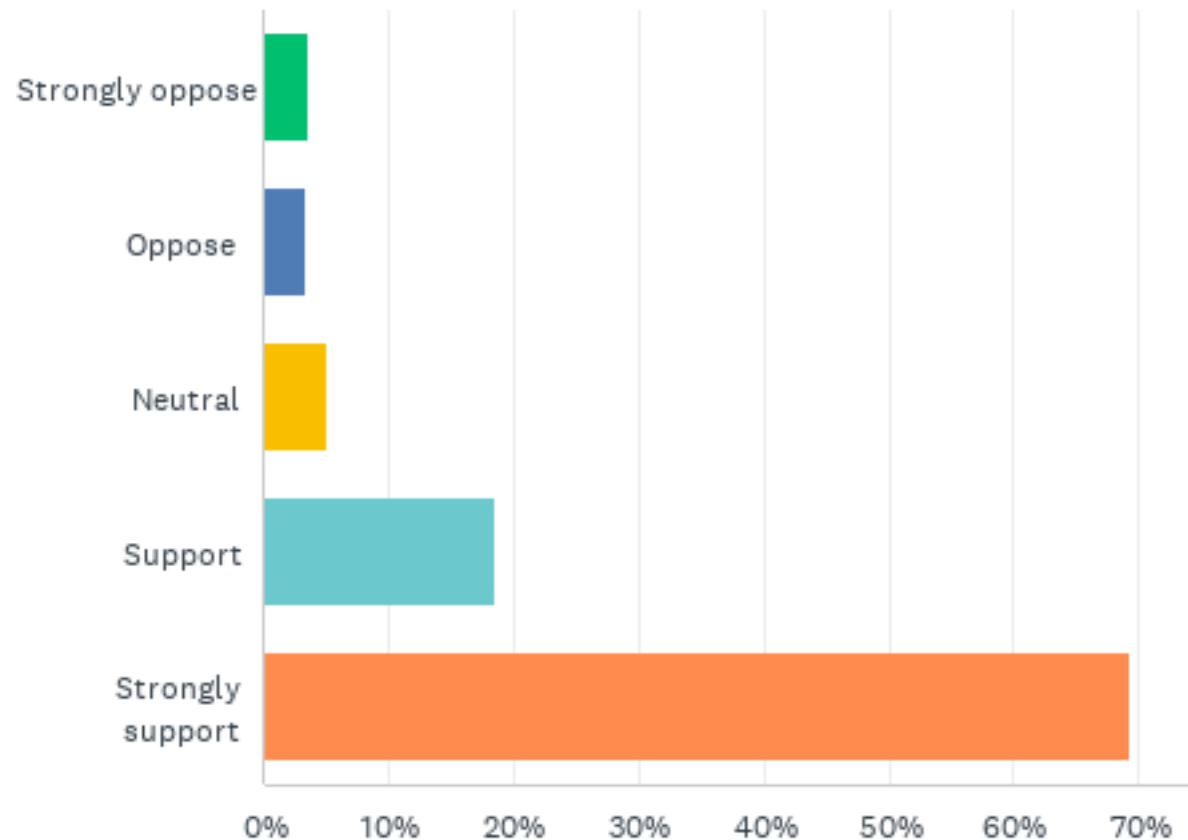
Community Survey

This survey garnered 1,375 total responses.

- Survey was distributed by the City through the following platforms
 - Albany eNews
 - City of Albany Facebook
 - City of Albany Instagram
 - Flyers with links to the survey provided to Solano Avenue storefronts for the public.



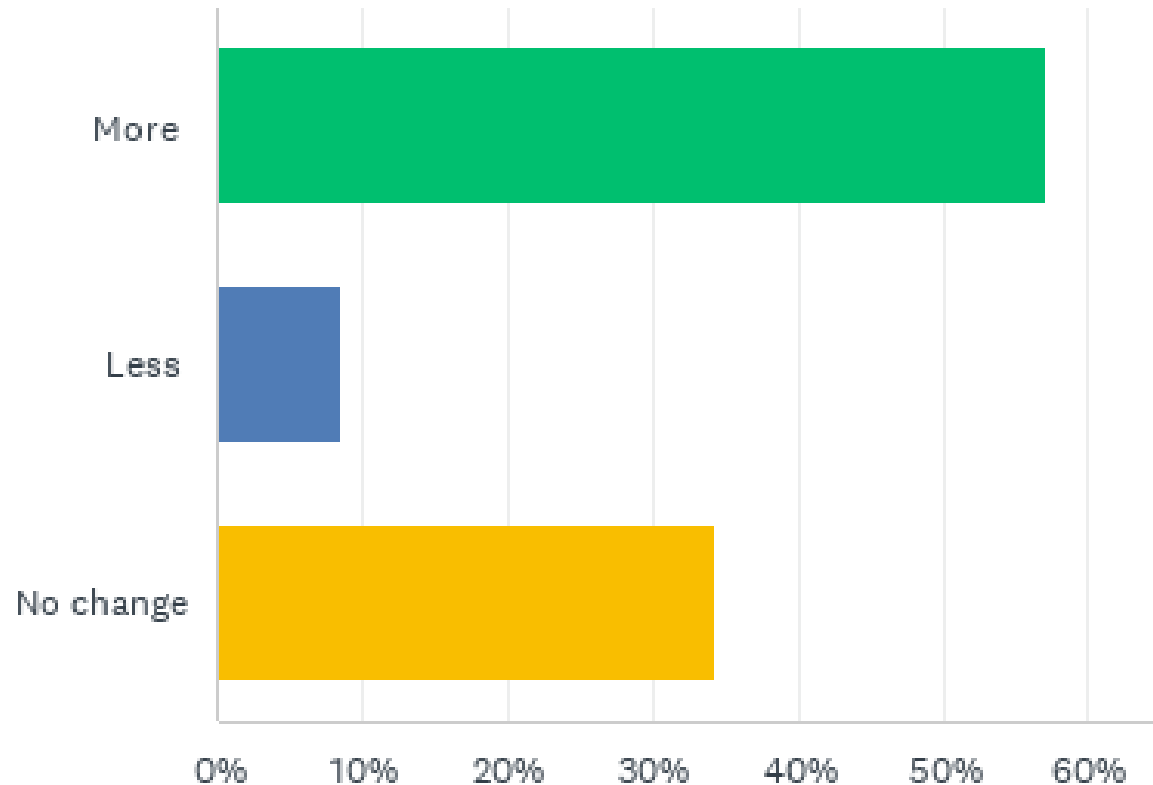
What are your opinions about the temporary parklets that were installed after the COVID-19 Pandemic began?



General Comments

- Makes Albany feel more alive. Creates more enjoyable public spaces.
- Nice to have option to eat outside with nice Bay Area weather.
- Important for COVID-19 safety and to keep restaurants going.
- Increases sense of community.
- Should be well constructed.
- Too congestive.

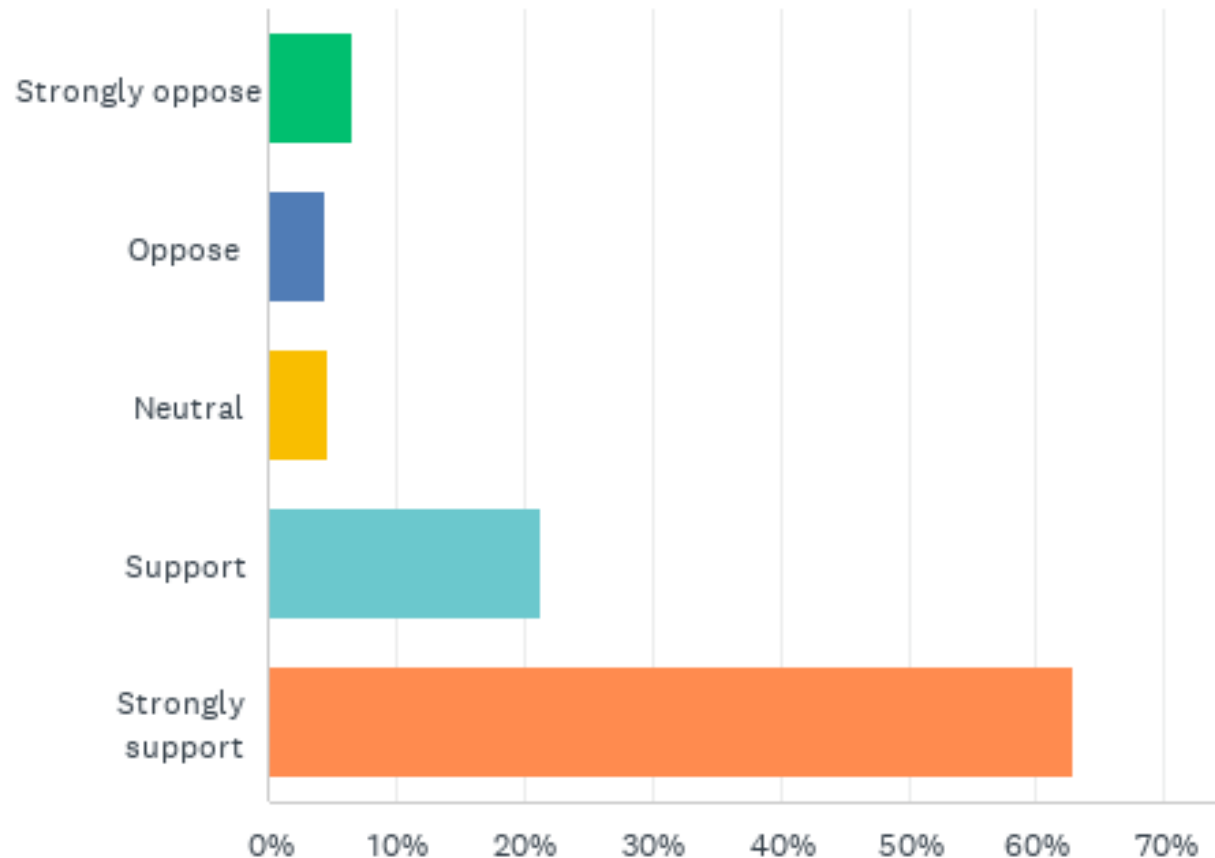
Following the temporary installation of parklets on Solano Avenue, how much time and/or money are you spending at businesses on Solano Avenue?



General Statistics:

- 57.12% - More
- 8.59% - Less
- 34.29% - No change

What is your current opinion on a potential permanent parklet program?



General Comments

- The parklets add a nice ambience to the community.
- The loss of parking is a small price to pay towards having a lively and enjoyable Solano Ave.
- The parklets reduce available parking.
- Reduce the number of Parklets
- Allocation of the space must be conducted through an open and fair process.

Feedback provided for the following elements of a potential parklet program:

Pedestrian access

- Make sure sidewalks are kept clear for pedestrian pass-through.
- Encourage parklets that are elevated to the sidewalk level.
- The high-density restaurant area between San Pablo and Evelyn Aves should be pedestrian only.
- Prefers tables in parklets instead of the sidewalk, so there is better pedestrian access to the sidewalks.

Safety

- Cars have always driven too fast on Solano, so no change. Parklets actually seems to slow things down.
- Add more signage and lights to make the parklets more visible to autos.
- Must be ADA compliant.
- Should have solid protective barrier.
- Concern that people sitting in the parklets are not well protected from errant vehicles.

Use of public space for commercial activity

- Trading public street space for park space with food service is seen as good trade-off.
- Should be some permit fee for using public space, maybe to fund parking lots.
- Harms non-restaurant businesses by reducing parking.
- Too much space is being used up for commercial activity.

Feedback provided for the following elements of a potential permanent parklet program:

Concentration and spacing of installations

- One per block to be shared by businesses.
- This could be better. Some are big, but seldom use the space. Others are perfect.
- Higher concentration means livelier street.
- Installations should be well-spaced so that they don't feel suffocating.

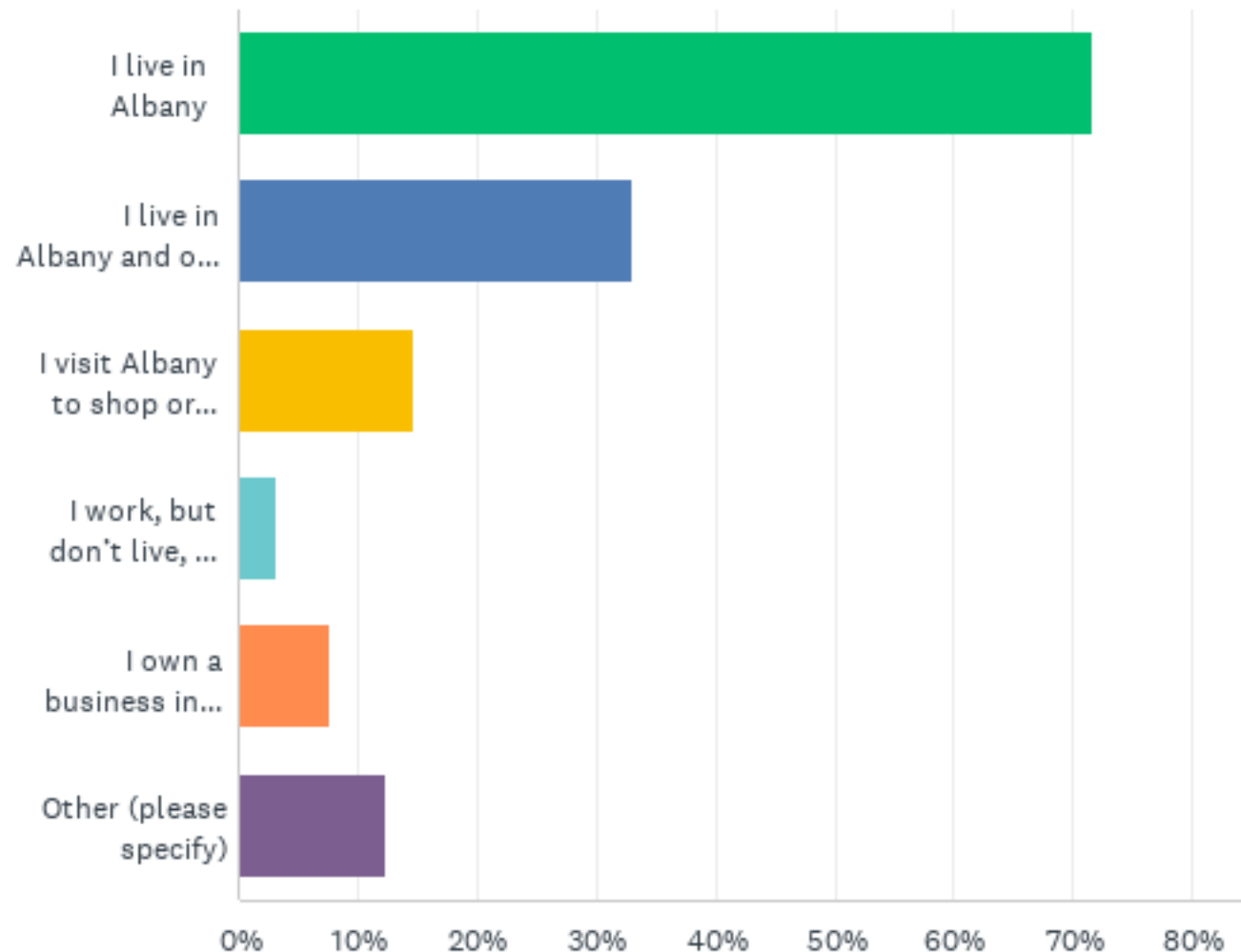
Parking and access to businesses

- Add more parking.
- So far this has not been an issue but would prefer to see more public transit access before prioritizing additional parking.
- Parking can be an issue, but the parklets encourage walkability.
- Needs to be a balance of parklets and parking.

Other:

- Encourage more natural look/greenery with parklets (plants, wood, turf,...)
- Require a minimum quality threshold.

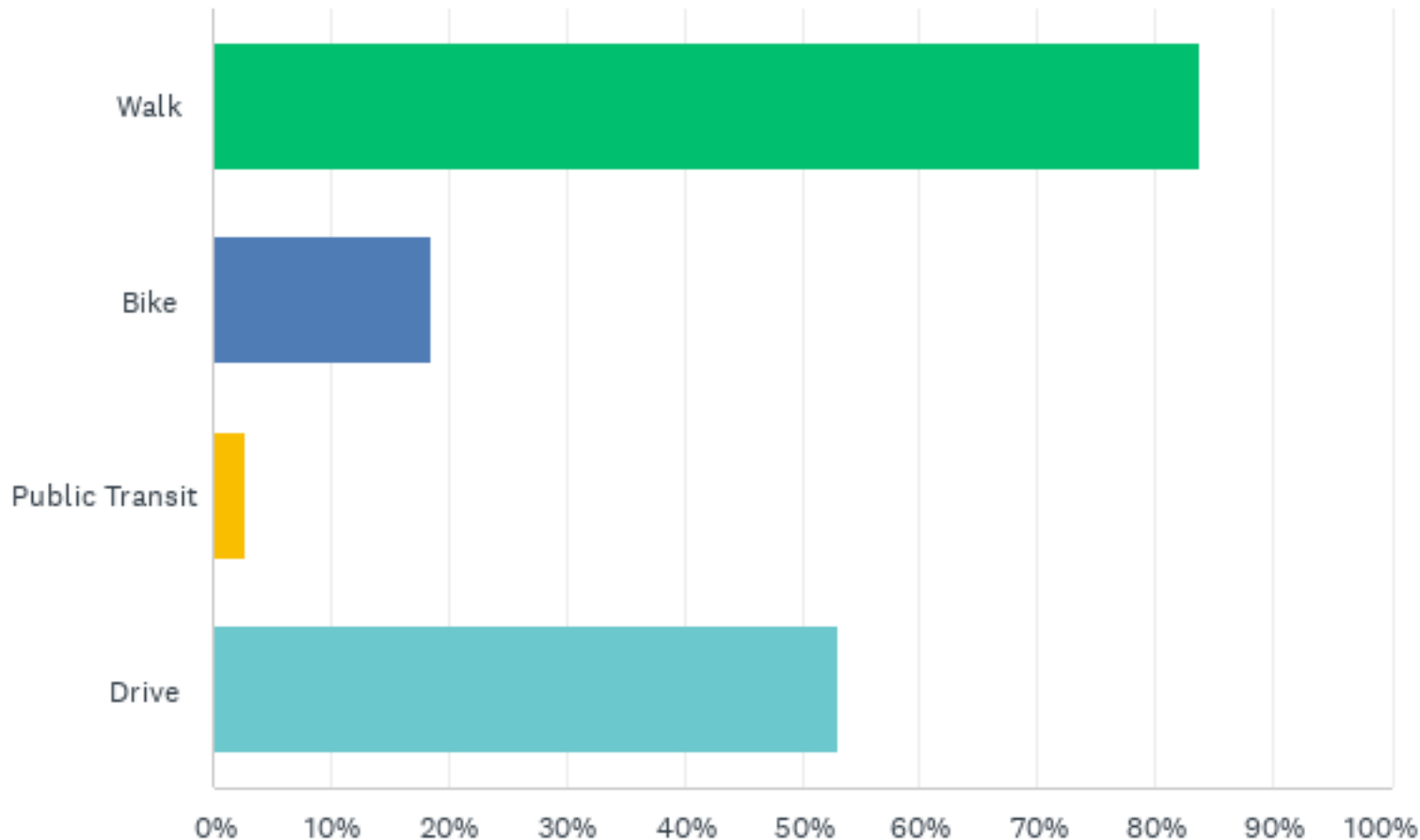
Please describe your relationship to Albany. (check all that apply)



General Statistics:

- Multiple options could be selected.
- 73.23% of Survey takers live in Albany.
- 33.31% of survey takers live one block from Solano.
- 14.08% don't live in Albany.
- 7.67% own a business in Albany.

How do you usually travel to Solano? (select all that apply)



Statistics:

- Multiple options could be selected.
- 83.68% of survey takers walk to Solano
- 17.91% of survey takers bike to Solano.
- 2.61% of survey takers take Public Transit to Solano.
- 53.09% of survey takers drive to Solano.

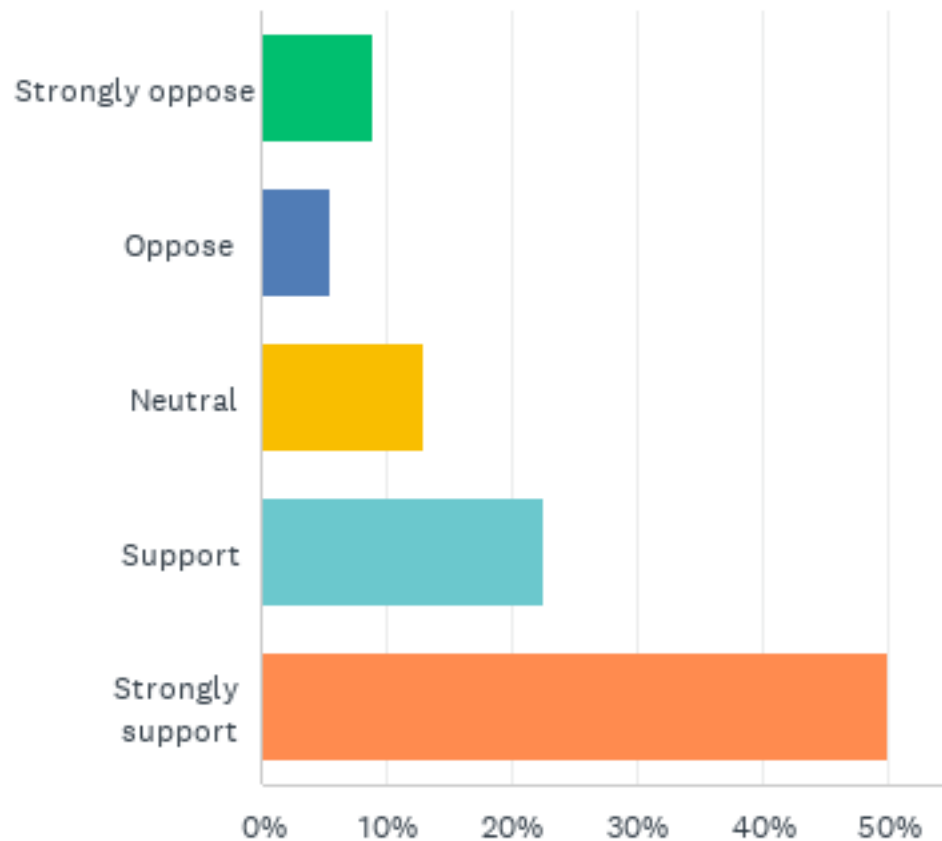
Business Survey

This survey garnered 125 total responses.

- Survey was distributed by the City through the following platforms
 - Information provided in business license renewal letters
 - City of Albany business email list
 - Distributed by City staff to storefronts on Solano Avenue between San Pablo and Tulare Ave.



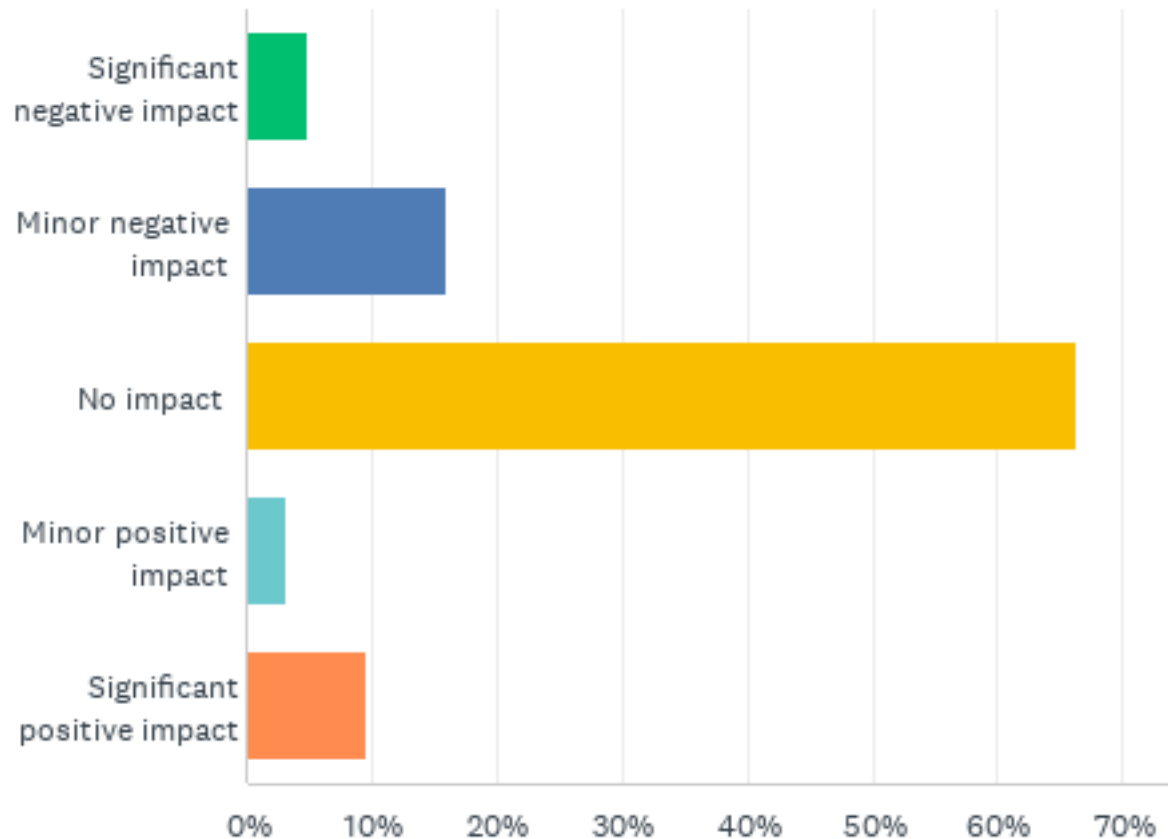
What are your opinions about the temporary parklets that were installed after the COVID-19 Pandemic began?



General Comments

- Positive for restaurants when eating inside not allowed.
- Contributed to atmosphere and community spirit.
- Negatively impacted parking, which deterred potential customers, especially those from outside Albany.
- Unsafe due to nearby car traffic and barriers that are not strong enough.
- Sound and music should be reviewed prior to final decisions.
- Encourages people enjoying outdoor space and city walkability.
- Street sweepers cannot clean where parklets are.

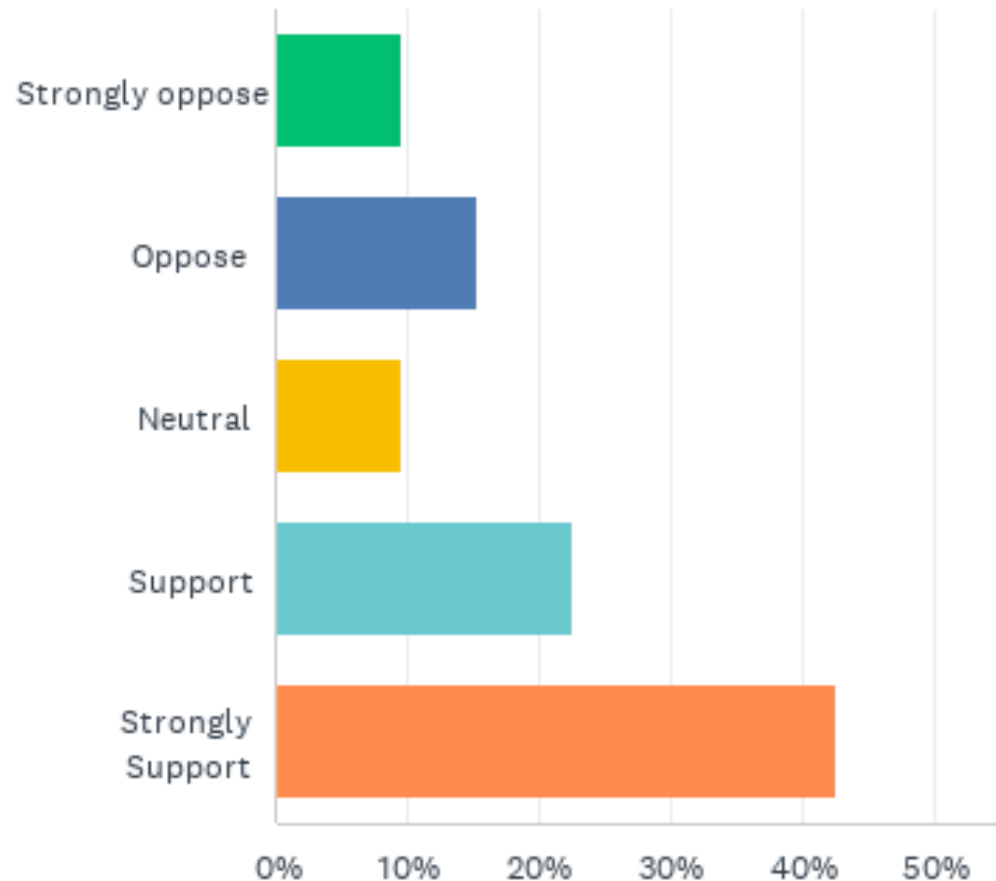
How has the current temporary parklet program impacted your business?



General Comments

- Fewer parking spaces for customers and clients.
- Parking issues negatively impacts stores where customers buy products that must be transported by automobile.
- Some businesses that do not have a parklet near them felt they would face greater parking issues if one was nearby.
- Can go to parklets with clients in more enjoyable outdoor environment.
- Beneficial for restaurants.
- The visual perception of a bustling, thriving Solano Ave encourages folks to explore and support neighboring businesses.

What is your current opinion on a potential permanent parklet program?



General Comments

- Only benefits those that have one.
- Support for program with thorough review process.
- Would prefer to have the parking spaces back when restaurants no longer have restrictions.
- Designs must be ADA compliant.
- Only highly used during dinner time.
- Too early to make decision.
- Unfair when businesses only pay for square footage of interior space.

Feedback provided for the following elements of a potential permanent parklet program:

Design of installations

- Should be durable, visually appealing.
- Should not excessively block view of other businesses. Not on corners.
- Portable and seasonal.
- Should have a guideline and properly designed by certified professionals such as architects.

Safety

- Must meet same safety requirements as Albany's bus stop parklets.
- Use of reflectors for drivers and bicyclists.
- Must have liability insurance to cover parklets
- Must not impede vision of drivers

Use of public space for commercial activity

- Liability issues should be addressed clearly.
- Require appropriate fee for utilization.
- No concerns if well-spaced out and no long-term commitments.
- Needs to have equity across all merchants.

Cost of program

- Should be charged based on square footage of space.
- Should be supported by taxpayer funds.
- Should be covered by the business and not the City.
- Keep it simple so costs don't get out of hand.

Feedback provided for the following elements of a potential permanent parklet program:

Maintenance of installations

- Should be clarified with guidelines.
- Private owners should maintain space.
- Who pays to remove it if owner goes out of business?

Concentration and spacing of installations

- Should have restrictions and guidelines per block.
- One per block, not on corners, two parking spaces wide.
- Make it multi-use to serve multiple businesses in one parklet.

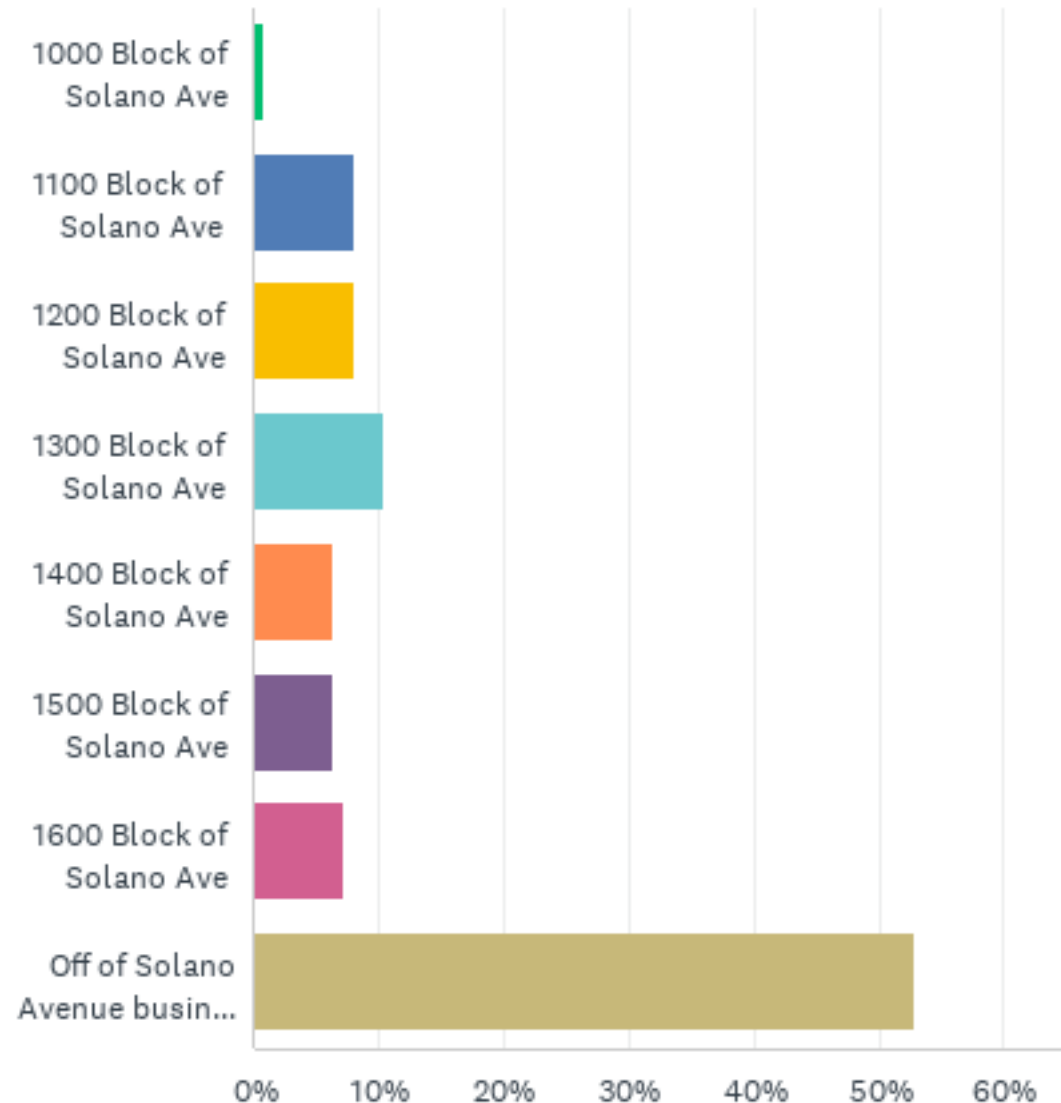
Pedestrian access

- Sidewalk space sometimes used as well, which makes it harder for people with mobility issues.
- Should not block pedestrian traffic flow.

Parking and access to businesses

- Some feel that side street parking is still available.
- Free and easy parking has been a business attraction in Albany compared to other commercial areas.
- Parklets should be a part of large plan that includes building parking lots and improving public transit.

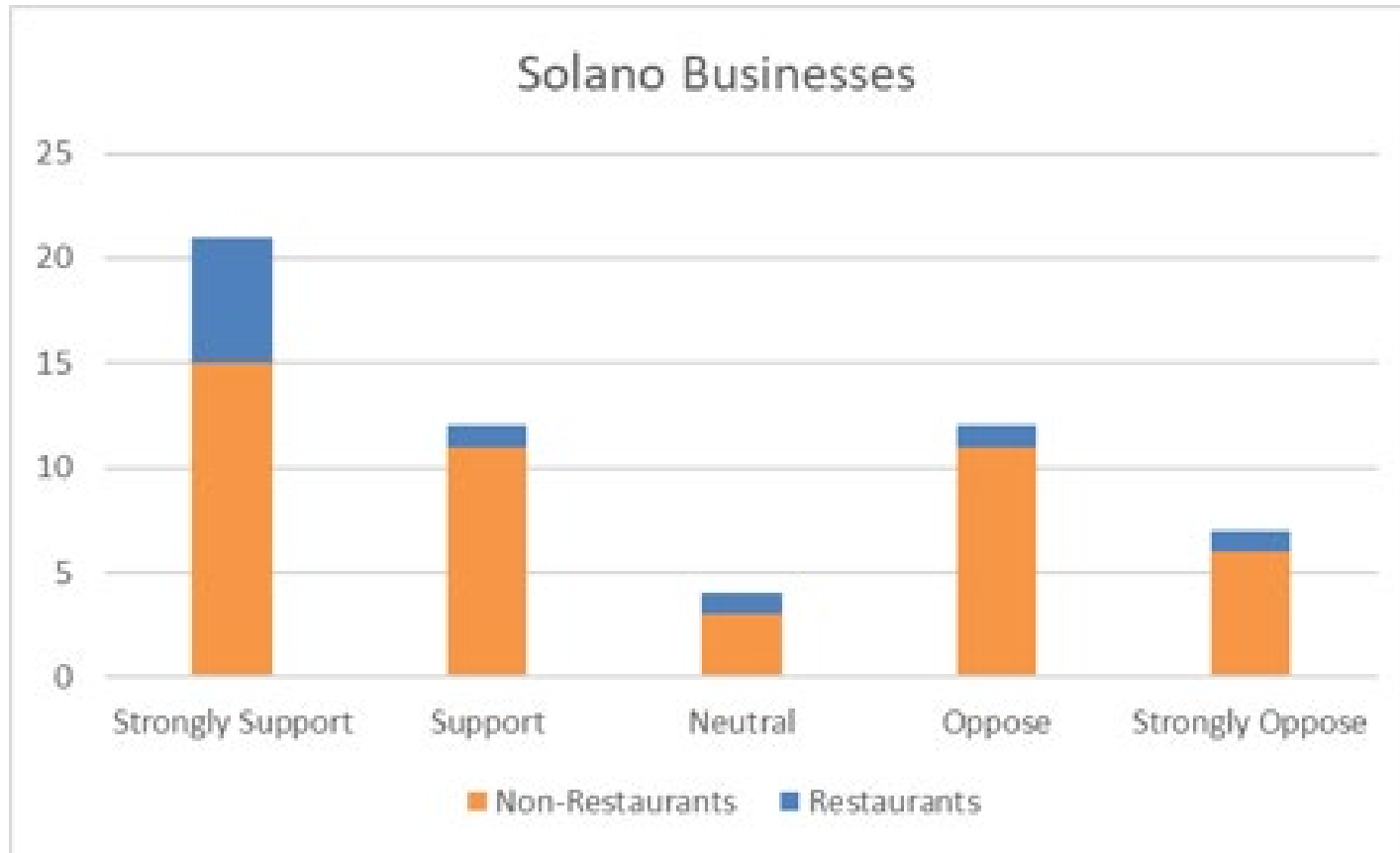
On which block is your business located?



Statistic:

- 47.58% of survey takers have business on Solano Ave.

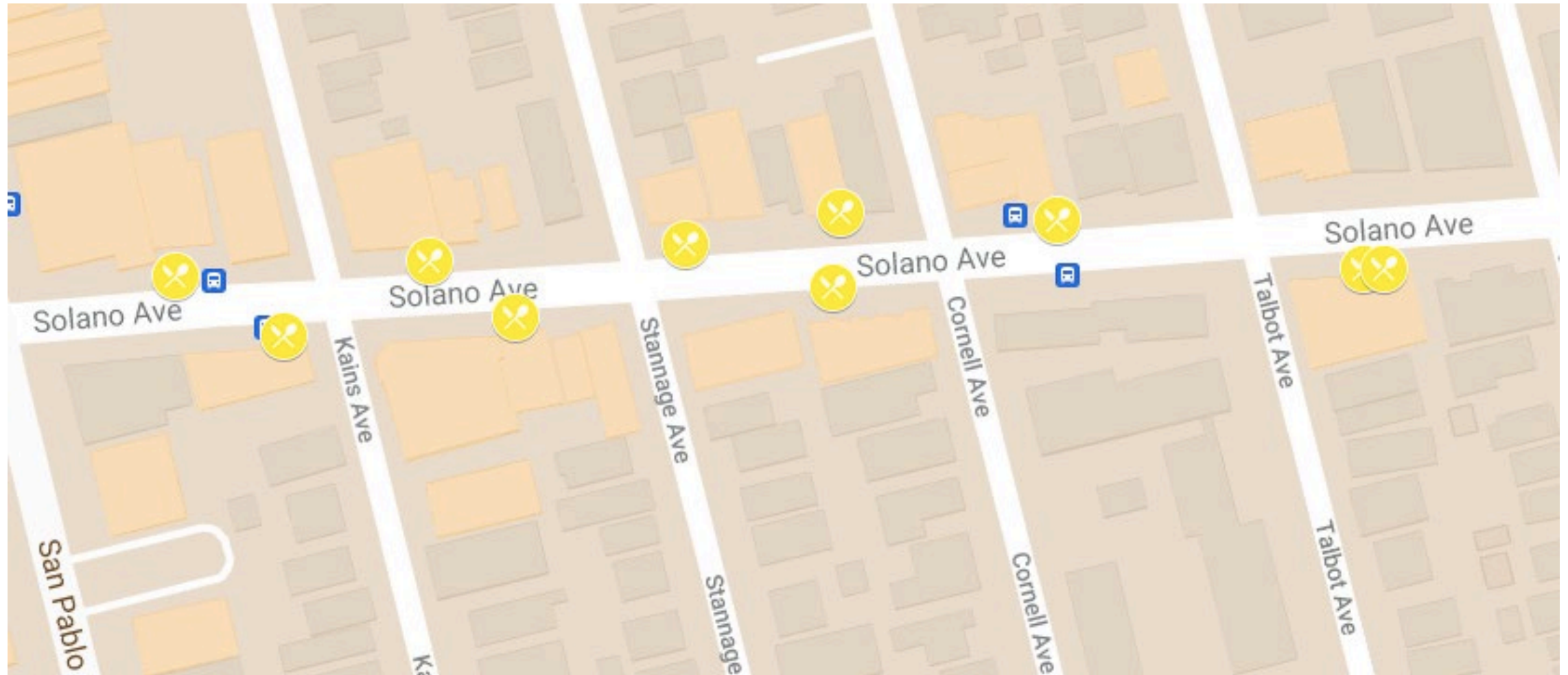
Solano Businesses: Opinions on a permanent parklet program



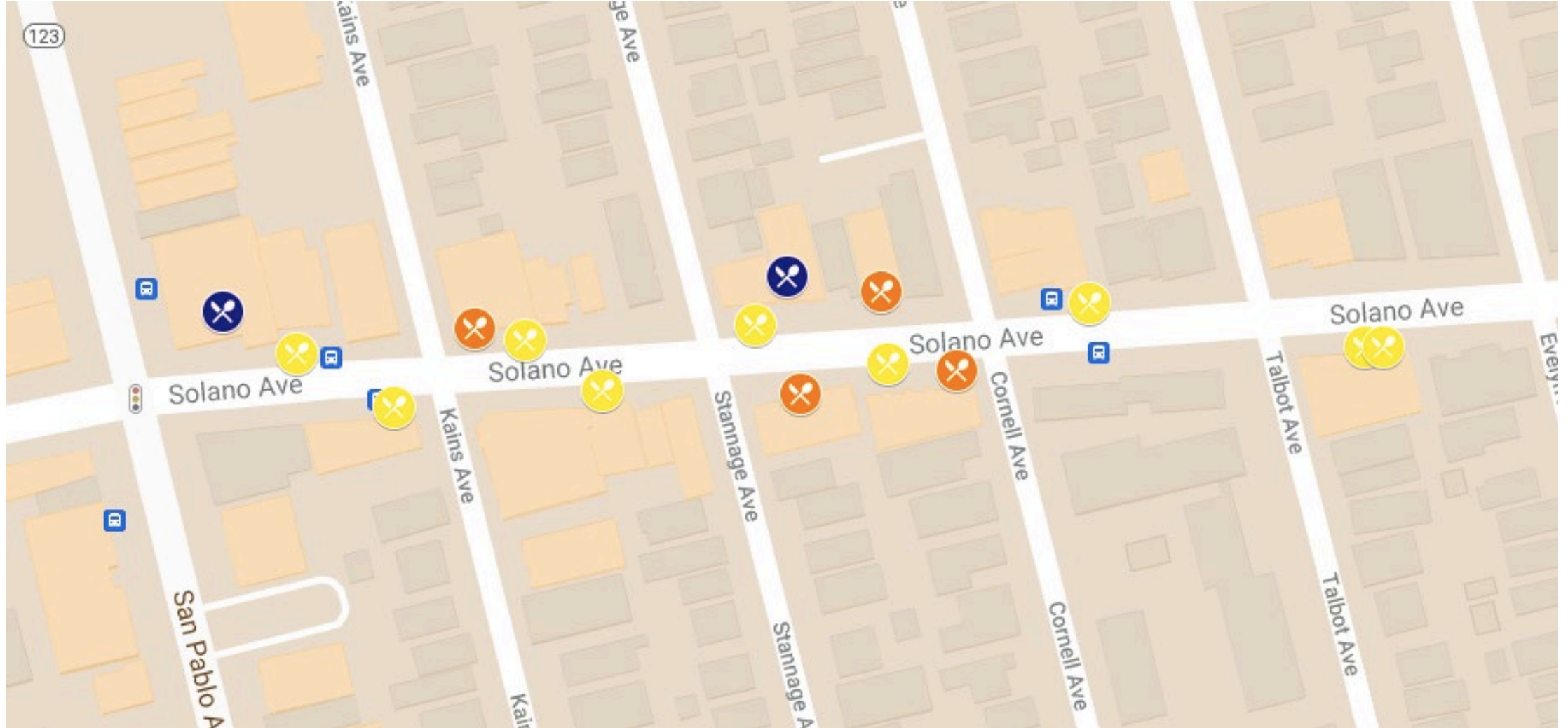
Note:

- **57% of non-restaurants on Solano support a permanent outdoor dining program**
- **Overall, 59% of Solano businesses support a permanent program**

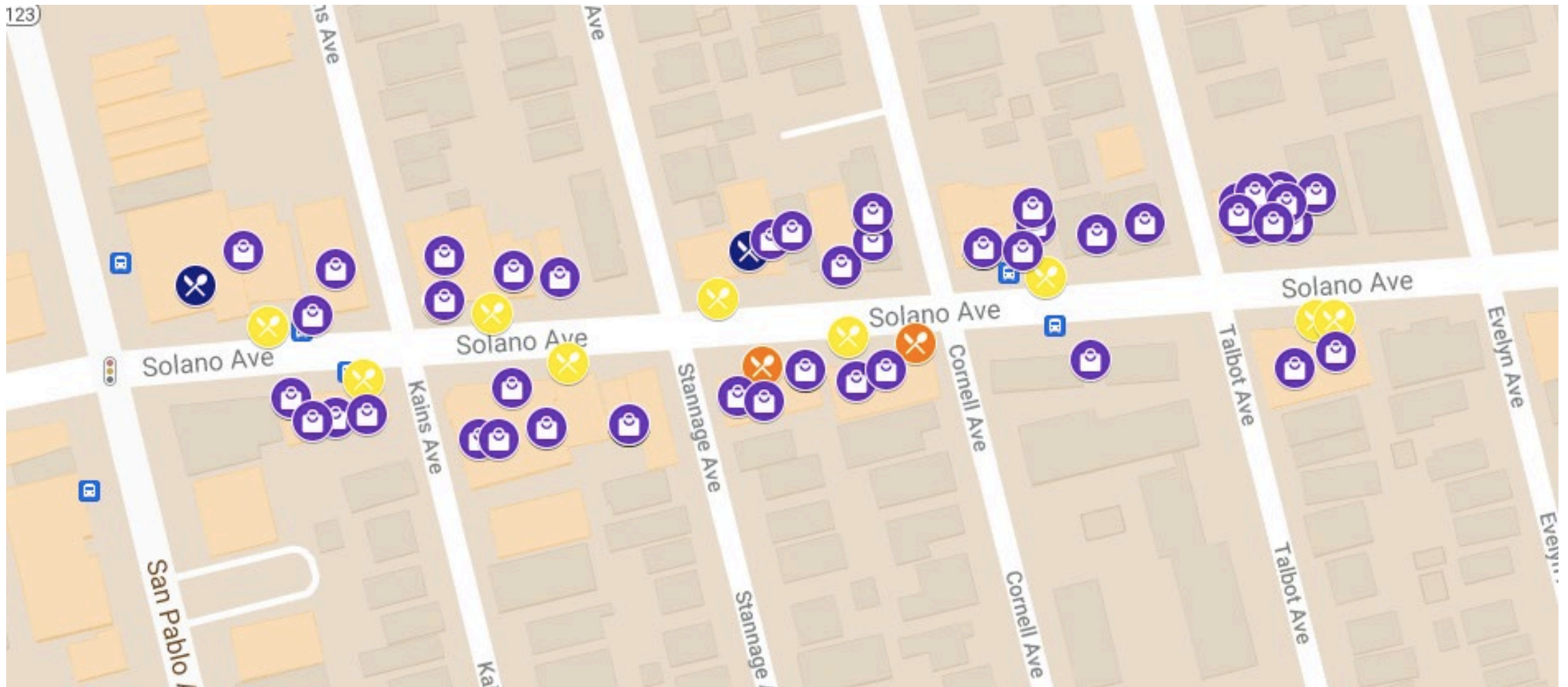
Concentration of parklets on Lower Solano



Concentration of parklets on Lower Solano



Concentration of parklets on Lower Solano



Opinions on a Permanent Parklet Program: Lower Solano Businesses



- Parklets currently occupy 22% of the parking spaces on Lower Solano
- 63% of Non-Restaurants support a permanent program

Opinions on a Permanent Parklet Program: Lower Solano Businesses

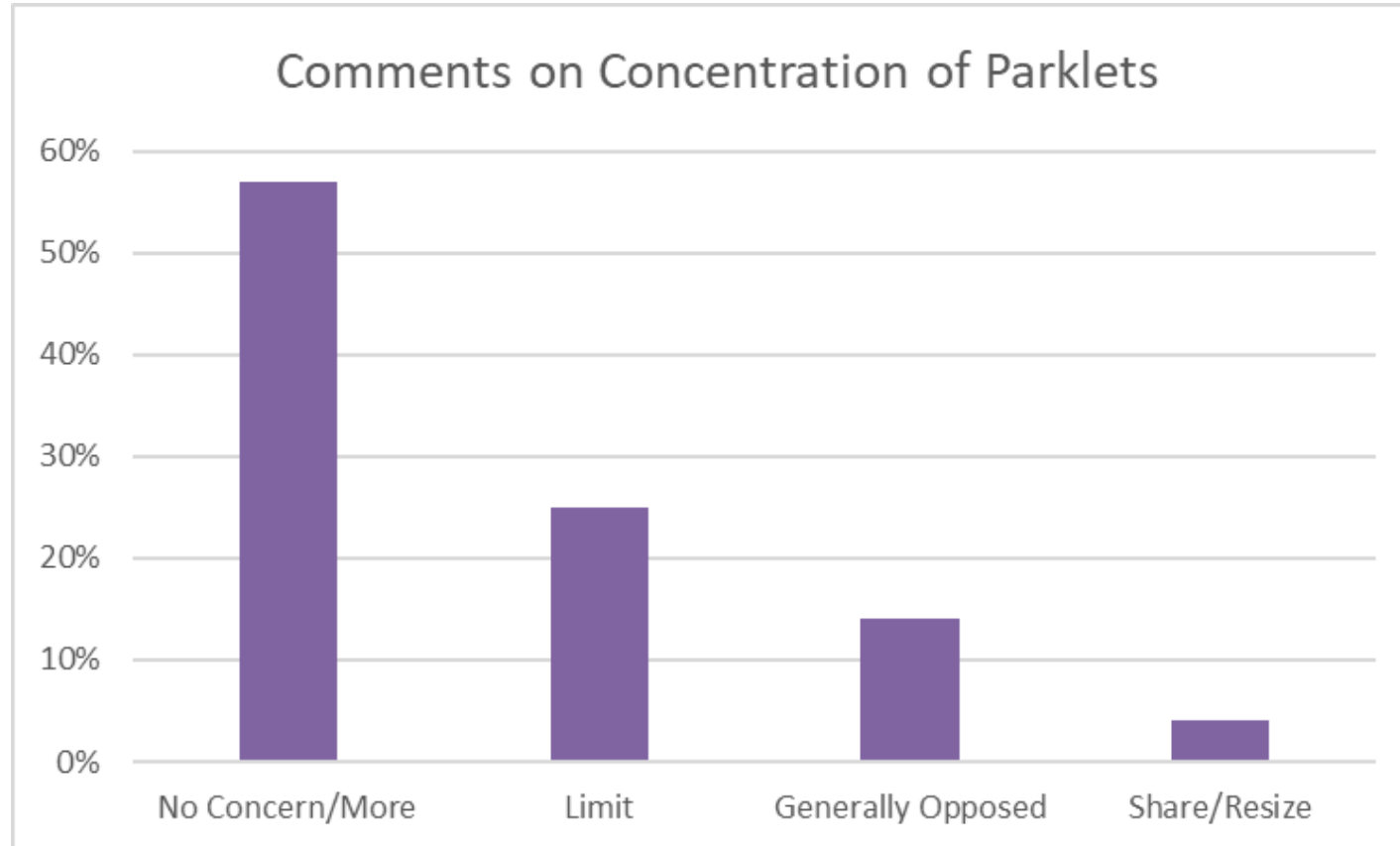
Pros

- Great for business
- Nice atmosphere, draws people to Solano
- Some businesses are online, no parking issue

Cons

- Lack of parking, obstructed sidewalk
- Safety concerns
- Privatization: should have fees for spaces, consider multiuse or public options

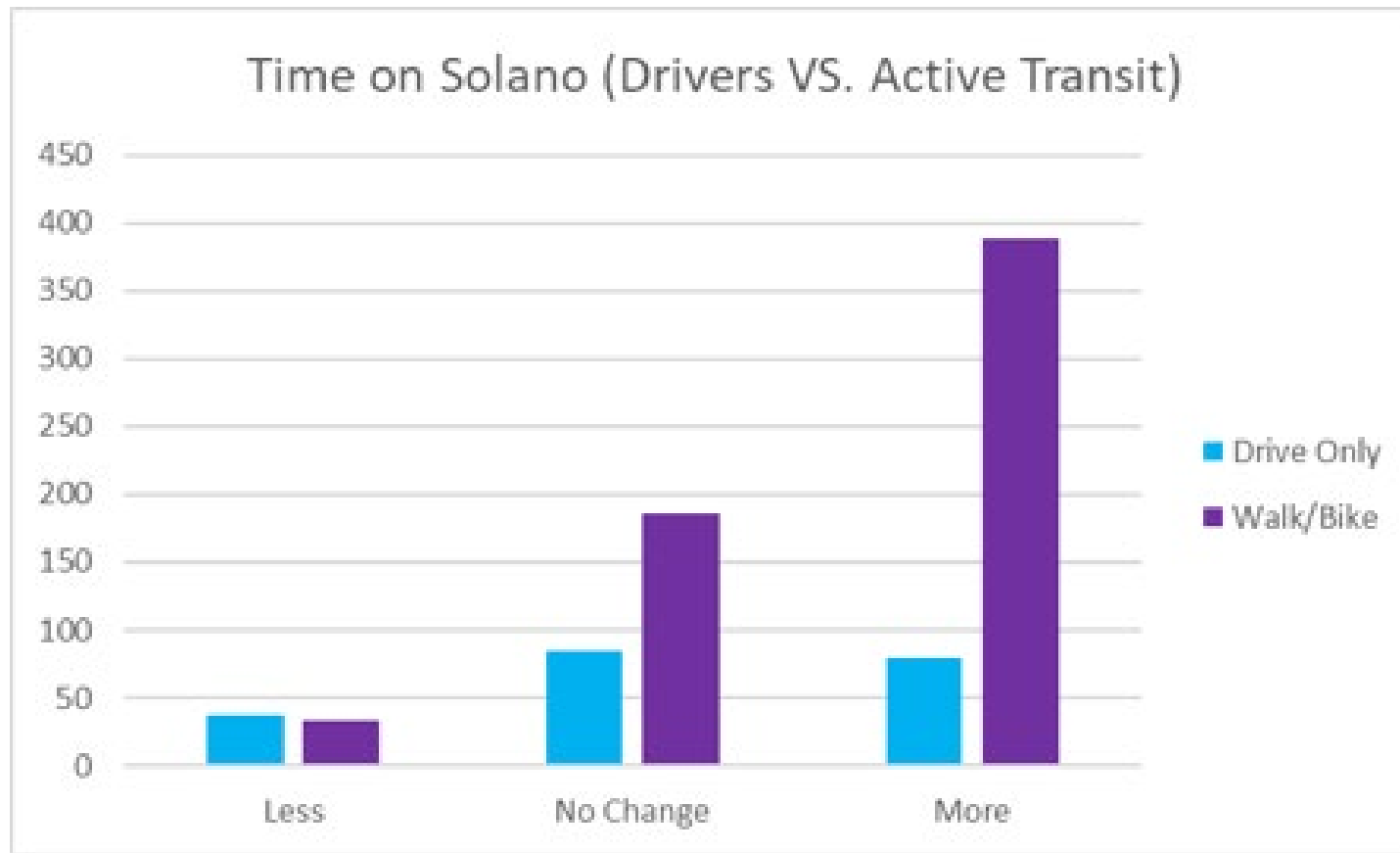
Community Survey: Concentration of Parklets



Suggestions

- **1-2 parklets per block**
- **Regulate open parking spaces between parklets**
- **Require minimum number or proportion of open spaces**

Community Survey: Time spent on Solano



- **Most active transit users spending more time on Solano**
- **Drivers are spending slightly more time on Solano**
- **About 15% of respondents only drive to Solano**