



**AIA**  
Pittsburgh

Design Pittsburgh 2018

Young Architects Studio Competition (YASC) Submission Criteria

## INTRODUCTION

Now in its eighth year, the goal of this competition is to engage young architects, emerging design professionals, and students by challenging them to find innovative ways to approach a regional design challenge.

## ELIGIBILITY

Enter the competition as an **individual** or create a **design team!**

Entrants are welcome to submit individual entries or design team entries. Individual entries must come from either an architecture graduate or undergraduate.

### Architecture Graduates:

Individual architecture graduates, who have been out of school for no more than ten years, are eligible to enter this competition. Entrants may or may not be licensed to practice architecture. AIA membership is not required; however, entrants must be located within AIA Pittsburgh's **11-county chapter area**.

### Architecture Undergraduates:

Individual architecture undergraduates, who are currently enrolled in an architecture program, are eligible to enter this competition. AIA membership is not required; however, entrants must be located within AIA Pittsburgh's **11-county chapter area**.

### Design Teams:

The teams must be lead by an architecture graduate and/or undergraduate. Teams can include graduates, who have been out of school for no more than ten years, or undergraduates in a design industry related field which can include, but is not limited to, engineers, landscape architects, or artists. All team members must be located within AIA Pittsburgh's **11-county chapter area**.

## THE CHALLENGE

### Spark: a temporary parklet, rethinking public space

#YAFforSPARK

The Spark program is part of the City of Pittsburgh's overall strategy for creating safe, complete streets and new open spaces. [Complete streets](#) balance the needs of people walking, riding bicycles, taking transit, or moving around in private automobiles. Streets and sidewalks make up to fifty percent of the City's land area and are an integral part of our daily experience. Many sidewalks are narrow and leave little space for public life. **Sparks extend the sidewalk into a street's parking lane, providing space for gathering and a respite in the sidewalk network.** New open spaces created through the addition of a small park to a streetscape add to the City's inventory of larger parks and playgrounds.

In 2018, the City of Pittsburgh offered an opportunity to build small parks in the right-of-way through a pilot program. **A Spark is a temporary, public seating area comprised of the space usually taken up by 1-2 parallel parking spaces.** They are placed in commercial areas and are intended to generate more on-street pedestrian activity that supports nearby businesses.

Sparks are created by changing the use of one to two parking spaces and, in their place, **building a semi-permanent platform which extends the sidewalk into the street.** This platform is buffered from the street by a railing or barrier and can contain plantings, furniture, and other creative pedestrian amenities.

- Sparks are public spaces
- Commercial activity is not allowed in a Spark
- Alcohol is not allowed in a Spark
- Sparks must be removed in the winter

The City of Pittsburgh launched Spark as a Pilot in February 2018, and the first four Sparks were built in May 2018. This year's YASC requests participants to come up with a Spark design which might be part of the City of Pittsburgh's 2019 Spark initiative. The winning Spark submitted to the YASC will be submitted to the City for future consideration.

The Spark parklets in the Pilot by the City of Pittsburgh were sponsored by private businesses. **For the YASC 2018, we only recommend that YASC participants design a Spark to be nearby a specific type of business / commercial activity (i.e. a flower shop, yoga studio, library) and be compatible with its practice.** For example, how would a Spark in front of a bookstore engage people with reading material or storytelling?

### SPARKS ARE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Sparks must uphold the standards in the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines. Applicants are responsible for familiarizing themselves with these standards, but a few considerations specific to Sparks are:

- Entry must be at least 48" wide and sloped less than 2%
- Gaps between the sidewalk and Spark deck must be less than 1/2" in all dimensions
- Include a wheelchair turning space (T shape or circle)
- Include 30" x 48" clear floor area
- If tables, counters, benches or other furniture is provided, at least one of each type must be accessible.

## Guidelines for Spark (adapted from the City of Pittsburgh SPARK pilot)

Sparks should be designed for **easy installation and removal**. Thus, the platform may NOT be attached to or damage the street. It may be acceptable to bolt the platform to the curb, but a restoration plan must be included.

**Dimensions** - There must be a 4-foot buffer from adjacent parking spaces on each side of the Spark. Parking spaces are 20 ft long, so a Spark comprised of 2 parking spaces could be expected to be about 32 feet in length. Sparks must be set back 2 feet from the outside edge of driveways. In terms of width, the outer edge of the Spark must be 12 inches from the nearest travel lane.

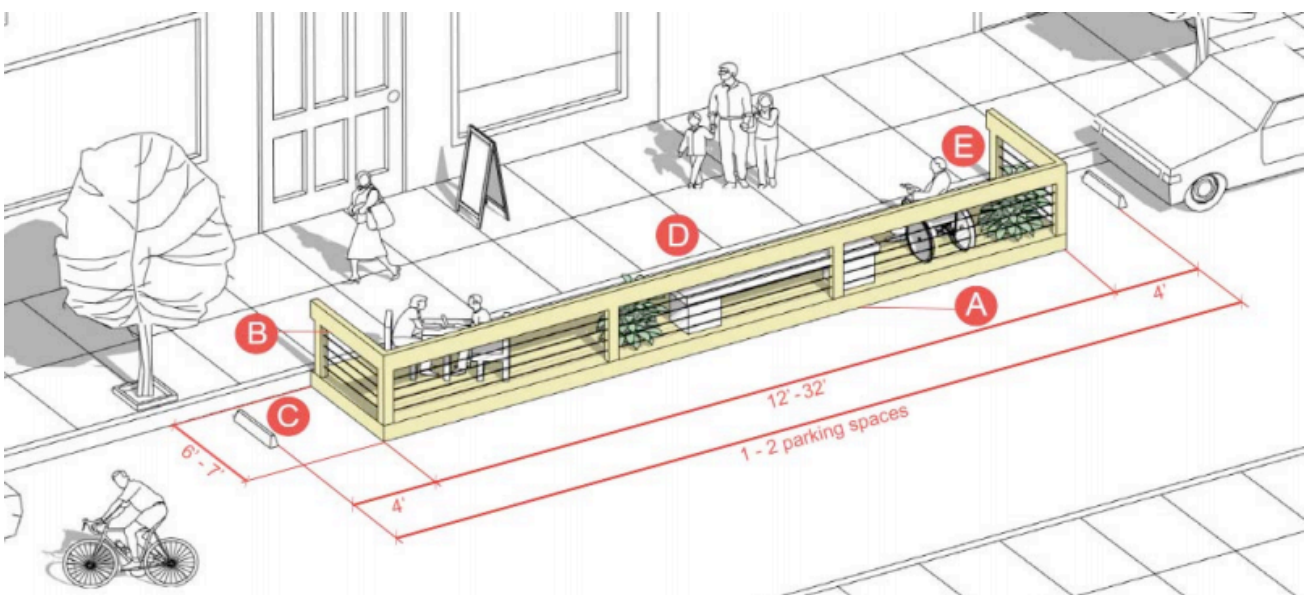
**a) Platform** - The platform should be built such that the Spark becomes an extension of the sidewalk. It is also required that the platform rest area has a maximum slope of 2%. The platform must be able to support 100 lb per square foot of live load. To withstand bumps, the outside edge of the platform closest to the street should contain a beam of pressure-treated lumber with a cross-section of 6" x 6", or equivalent.

**b) Railing / Buffer** - All Sparks must have some form of a continuous vertical buffer around the street edges. Buffers can be planters, railings, cabling, or other creative approaches. They must be between 36 and 42 inches and must be able to withstand a 200 lb horizontal force. It is encouraged that these buffers do not impede the visual of the street.

**c) Wheel stop** - Rubber wheel stops are also required. A 3 ft wheel stop must be installed one foot from the curb at the edge of the front and back of the Spark. In addition, reflected elements are required at all outside corners, these usually take the form of soft-hit posts.

**d) Amenities** - These can include permanent or movable seating, planters, bicycle parking etc.

**e) Drainage** - The platform must be built so as not to impede drainage, most designs allow stormwater to flow along the curb under the platform as it does now.



(image credit: San Francisco Parklet manual 2.2, 2015, p. ii, SF planning )

## The Successful Design Shall:

Provide a short written statement on how the immediate neighborhood will benefit from the Spark, and design a congruent project addressing as many of the following points:

- Creativity
- Safety for Pedestrians
- Welcoming communities
- Affordability of construction
- Accessibility
- Smart construction methods

The design should be both memorable and impactful while promoting principles of safety, creativity and diversity that create healthy environments for all residents and visitors. The proposed design is supposed to develop an appropriate character/place/ experience suited to Pittsburgh, and respect historic assets when applicable.

## JUDGING CRITERIA

All judging will be **completely anonymous**.

Judges will consider the following:

- Comprehensive quality of the author's written statement
- How well the design solution communicates its vision and detail.
- Creativity of the design, materials, explanation, and solution
- Constructability of the solution, and sustainability of the materials
- Ease of recycling the Spark components, at the end of the life cycle

## AWARDS

The YASC entries will be judged by measuring the architect's performance against each project's potential and not in competition with each other. Thus, projects of ordinary program can merit an award based on the architect's skill in optimizing the design opportunity.

The awards given will be:

**Award of Excellence** – Only one Award of Excellence will be given in this category. In addition to a certificate, the recipient(s) will receive an undisclosed gift to be revealed during the Design Awards Ceremony.

**People's Choice Award** - This category reflects the public's popular vote for a favorite project. Votes will be collected on the AIA Pittsburgh's online exhibit featuring Design Pittsburgh's Design Award Submissions.

## THE SUBMISSION PROCESS

All project entries will be submitted via DropBox.

1. Submit a submission request form along with the entry fee. See submission request form for details.
2. Once AIA Pittsburgh has received your submission request form, you will receive an email inviting you to your personalized YASC DropBox folder.

Note: If you do not have a DropBox account, you will be prompted to create one when you receive the invitation.

## DIGITAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

For each project entry, please include the following items in your electronic submission folder via [DropBox.com](https://www.dropbox.com):

- Entry
- Project Summary
- Publication & Print

### Entry

For Jury Use

- **Four 8.5x11 pages** compiled into a single PDF file (150 dpi). File names shall contain the name of the project title and the author's name:

YASC\_ProjectTitle\_FirstLast.pdf

- One of the pages must be the title page and contain the designer's written approach to the problem, research, ideas, and other statements supporting the author's response to the challenge. Images are also encouraged on this slide.
- The remaining three pages must contain images illustrating the designer's understanding and solution to the design challenge.
- There should be no reference to the author's identity in the body of any of the pages contained in the entry folder.

### Project Summary

For Jury Use

- The one-page **project summary sheet** must include key project images and an at-a-glance abridgment of the project, and be formatted for an 8.5 x 11 printout. File name shall be labeled:

YASC\_FirstLast\_Summary.pdf

## Publication & Print

Images used for print, web, and exhibit publication should be the best representation of the designer's solution to the design challenge.

### **For Print: Please format to a SQUARE.**

- **One file formatted to 34" x 34" at 300 dpi**, saved as a PDF. This file can contain text and imagery. It should focus on visual impact, as this will be displayed in the Design Pittsburgh exhibition viewed by the general public and the architecture community.

- File name shall be labeled:

YASC\_FirstLast\_Exhibit\_DP18.pdf

### **For Digital Gallery and Media Outlets:**

Two files not to exceed 1000 x 1000 pixels each, at 100 dpi, saved as a JPG or PNG. File name shall be labeled:

YASC\_FirstLast\_Media\_01.JPG

## DEADLINES

**Sunday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Submission Request Forms must be turned in to the AIA Pittsburgh office. Please submit by email at [submissions@aiapgh.org](mailto:submissions@aiapgh.org) or via fax at 412.471.9501.

**Sunday, September 9<sup>th</sup>:** Project submissions must be received by AIA Pittsburgh via DropBox by midnight to be eligible for judging.

## LIABILITY CLAUSE

AIA Pittsburgh assumes no liability for original drawings and other submission materials or loss or damage to any part of the submission. AIA Pittsburgh retains the right to reproduce any of the submission materials in its publications, educational programs, and web site, and guarantees that credit will be given to the designer. Please check all information for correct spelling and accuracy since it will be used for publication. By making a submission, the entrant agrees that the information contained in this form is correct and complete, and that the entrant will hold harmless AIA Pittsburgh for any and all damage arising out of the use of the information contained herein. Any errors or omissions are the complete responsibility of the entrant. The entrant further certifies that permission has been obtained from the owner, developer, and photographer of the project to publish photographs, drawings, and other information included in the submission (and releases and authorizes AIA Pittsburgh to use all such materials).

AIA Pittsburgh  
[info@aiapgh.org](mailto:info@aiapgh.org) | 412.471.9548  
925 Liberty Avenue, Suite 700  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222