



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: November 28, 2016  
Contact: Margaret Wittgens  
Contact No.: 604.638.8227  
RTS No.: 11441  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: December 14, 2016

TO: Standing Committee on City Finance and Services  
FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services  
SUBJECT: 800 Robson Plaza Update

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

THAT Council receive for information an update on the conceptual design for the plaza on 800 Robson.

### ***REPORT SUMMARY***

This report addresses Council's April 2016 direction to staff to initiate a process for the design, construction, and long term management (stewardship) of the permanent public plaza at 800 Robson, and report back.

To inform plaza design, engagement was undertaken from September to December 2016 which reaffirmed support for the permanent public plaza at 800 Robson and offered insights into design and programming desires from the public, the Province, tenants, and stakeholder groups.

Based on this feedback a concept for the 800 block of Robson Street has been designed which transforms this street to a plaza, integrated with the surrounding precinct, providing a flexible space that supports a variety of planned and spontaneous activities.

Implementation of the 800 Robson plaza is proposed for 2017 in coordination with construction of the North Plaza on the north side of the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Concurrently, work is also underway to create a stewardship plan for the 800 Robson plaza which will address how the space will be governed, programmed, operated and maintained, and funded.

### ***COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS***

On December 2, 2010, Council directed staff to continue working on a Downtown Public Space Plan including the examination of a public square on 800 Robson.

In October 2012, Council adopted the Transportation 2040 Plan containing a section on Walking and Public Spaces, which specifically speaks to the creation of public plazas and gathering spaces throughout the city, with a focus on 800 Robson as a potential public plaza.

On November 28, 2012, Council directed staff to continue to work on addressing the issues raised by the public and report back on impacts, challenges and opportunities for potentially creating a permanent public plaza on 800 Robson.

In April 2014, Council approved the Mayor's Engaged City Task Force's Final Report, which includes a goal to build community capacity through public, community and cultural space activation, helping increase Vancouverites' sense of belonging and inclusion.

In October 2014, Council adopted the Healthy City Strategy which supports greater social connections, increased sense of belonging, opportunities for creativity and active living by creating and enhancing wonderful temporary and permanent public places and spaces.

On April 20, 2016, Council approved the creation of a permanent public plaza on 800 Robson and directed staff to initiate a process for the design, construction and long term management of the new plaza and report back to Council by December 2016.

### ***CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The City Manager and General Manager of Engineering Services support the emerging design concept and approach for the permanent plaza on 800 Robson. With work currently underway on the redesigned North Plaza, the 800 Robson work will help to complete the Robson Square precinct. Staff will continue to work with adjacent landowners and key stakeholders to ensure the Robson Square precinct is well managed through a broader stewardship strategy supporting public life.

### ***REPORT***

#### ***Background/Context***

##### Site History

The 800 block of Robson Street, often referred to as Robson Square, is a city-serving public space with high social, cultural and political value, and a regional destination drawing residents and visitors to the heart of the city for expression, relaxation, and enjoyment.

Officially completed in 1983 with the opening of the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Arthur Erickson-designed and provincially owned Robson Square precinct transformed blocks 51, 61, and 71 into Vancouver's largest urban public space. Block 51, the northern-most of the three blocks, is leased to the City by the Province, with the old courthouse building subleased to the Vancouver Art Gallery (Figure 1).

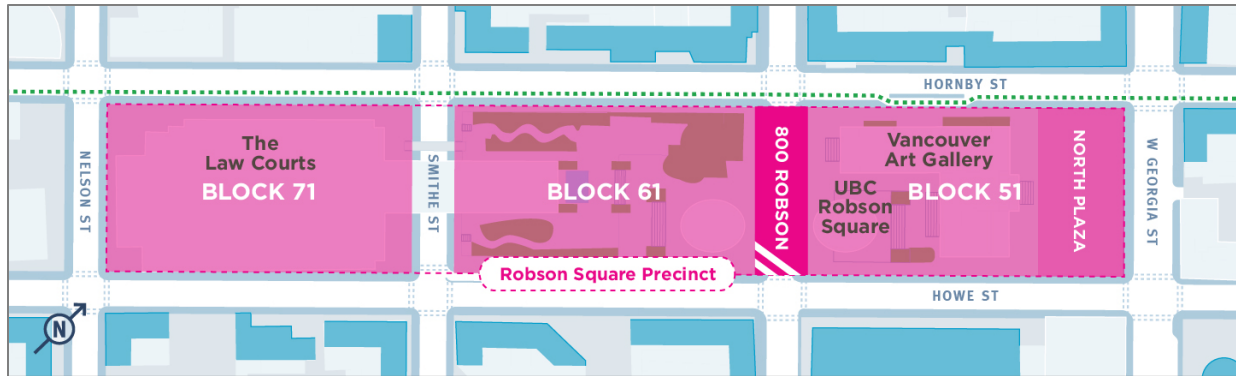


Figure 1: Context Map showing 800 Robson and the North Plaza within the Robson Square precinct.

The area has long held an important role in Vancouver's public life serving as an important central gathering place, and canvas for democratic expression, special events, filming, and other every day uses; Robson Square was identified as the most popular choice by Vancouver Public Space Network's 'Where's the Square' ideas competition in 2009 and served as the celebratory heart of Vancouver during the 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

Directed by Council to investigate the public's interest in converting 800 Robson to a permanent public plaza, VIVA Vancouver, the City's public space program, held annual design-build competitions on the closed street during the summer months from 2011 through to 2015, which built strong interest in a permanent plaza at this location.

On April 20, 2016 Council approved the conversion of the 800 Robson Street to a permanent public plaza and directed staff to initiate a process for the design, construction, and long term management of the permanent plaza.

The North Plaza, Vancouver's primary formal gathering space, has been redesigned to integrate with the other public spaces throughout blocks 51, 61, and 71; construction began in July 2016. In the design of the permanent plaza at 800 Robson there is an opportunity to further extend the established design approach for the Robson Square precinct.

## ***Strategic Analysis***

### Project Scope

The in-scope area of the work to design and build the plaza on 800 Robson consists of the City street right of way between the existing property lines of blocks 51 and 61, extending through the adjacent intersections to include the 700 and 900 blocks of Robson Street.

As part of the project, the City expects to review the adjacent cycling network and rebuild the Hornby bike lanes to a higher standard between Smithe and West Georgia Streets, and work with the Province to improve the egress from the Law Courts at Hornby Street and Robson Street as represented in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Project scope showing 800 Robson and adjacent blocks.

While the plaza design is focused on the 800 Robson block, staff continue to work with the Province of BC, as an owner of the Robson Square precinct, and University of British Columbia, as a major tenant, to ensure the design integrates with and does not restrict future plans for the broader Robson Square area.

Permanently closing 800 Robson to vehicle traffic required a solution for the #5 Robson bus route which formerly passed through the block. The Downtown Local Bus Service Review process that was initiated in June 2013 and concluded in August 2015, identified changes to the downtown transit network that would address closing the 800 Robson block to vehicular traffic. In response to concerns about the removal of transit through 800 Robson, which was necessary to facilitate the creation of a permanent plaza, Council also directed staff to continue to work with TransLink, City Advisory Committees and West End transit users, including seniors and persons with disabilities to look at how to best serve transit users.

Over the past few months staff from the City and TransLink have engaged in several constructive meetings with the City Advisory Committees and seniors groups in the West End. These meetings allowed stakeholders to have a more clear understanding of what analysis went into the alternative routings and how the preferred option was determined. In addition, City and TransLink staff were able to collect feedback and highlight the opportunities within the current routing of the #5 Robson bus route that aim to improve travel time, reliability and overall access for transit users. Staff also updated stakeholders on other changes to the local bus routes in the downtown including the new #6 routing east of Granville Street on Davie Street and along Cambie and Pender Streets (interlined with the #5) currently scheduled to take place on December 19, 2016.

### Engagement

Following Council's direction, a public engagement process was active between September to December 2016 and sought feedback from the public and interested parties in order to inform the key design principles and concepts for 800 Robson. In total, 2,200 surveys were completed online and in-person. The engagement summary report is included in Appendix A.

Themes from the engagement process included:

- respect original architectural and landscaping intent
- design a flexible, adaptive, and well-lit pedestrian-oriented space
- create a beautiful centrepiece at the heart of the city
- incorporate captivating public art installations
- improve connections to, from, through, and movement around the space
- develop a strong stewardship and management strategy
- maintain an inclusive, democratic space for residents, businesses and visitors

Further engagement will take place through the detailed design process and in the development of a stewardship plan.

### Design Objectives and Concept

Building on feedback from the engagement, a set of design objectives for 800 Robson were developed:

- Be an adaptive and flexible space that appeals to a wide range of users and uses.
- Serve as an important connector to business districts and important civic institutions.
- Be a safe, secured well-maintained and managed space throughout the year.
- Reinforce the architectural and landscape aesthetic of the Robson Square precinct by unifying the design elements of the adjacent blocks.
- Create a dynamic space that attracts people, activities, and gatherings.
- Be welcoming, inviting, and comfortable to all people regardless of age, ability, or demographic.
- Improve the interface between different modes of transportation adjacent to and through the site.
- Transform the lead in blocks to the site to signal a transition to the public plaza and unify the Robson Street character.

The emerging design concept is consistent with Erickson's original look and feel of the broader Robson Square precinct. Particular key themes of this initial design concept include levelling the street, defining the block ends, and improving the connections to, from, through and around the space as outlined below. Figure 3 illustrates the design concept incorporating the key themes.

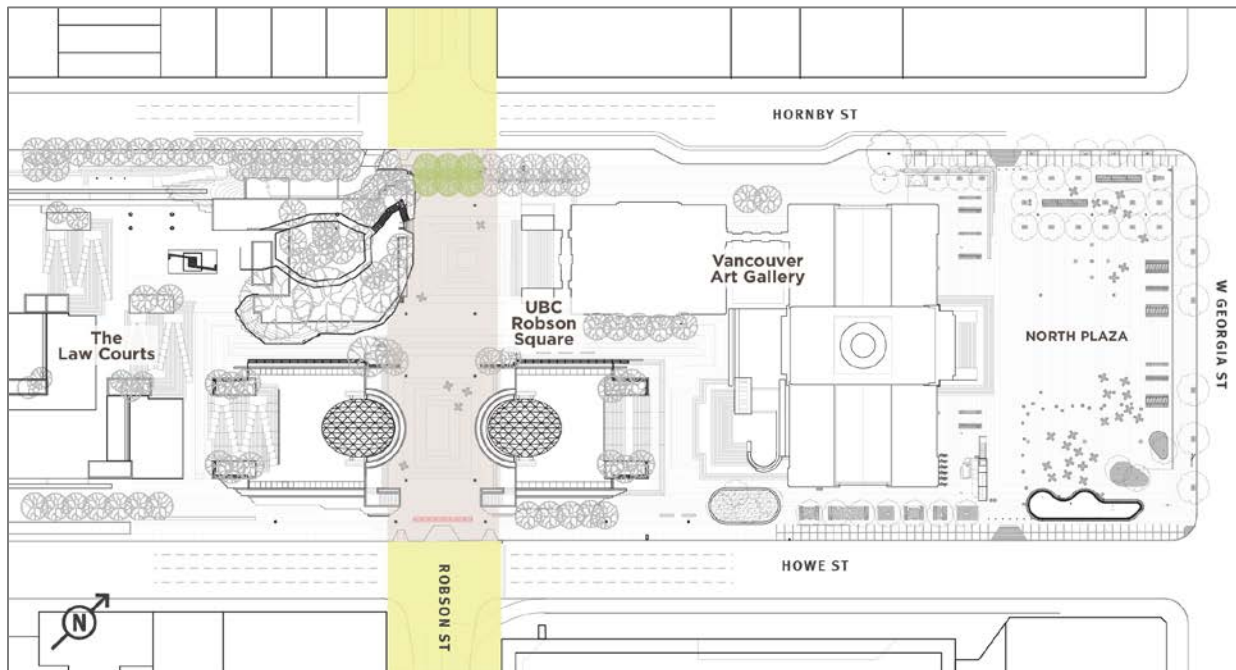


Figure 3: Concept for 800 Robson Plaza.

### *Levelling the Street*

The existing curbs and roadway on 800 Robson act as barriers to the north-south movement through the site. To address this, a continuous surface will be created with a concrete and granite paving treatment consistent with the surrounding Robson Square precinct, including the North Plaza currently under construction (Figure 4). This will create an accessible and flexible canvas for any number of formal or informal activities, such as public art installations, gatherings or festivals, while maintaining comfortable passage for everyone moving through the plaza.





Figure 4: Concept looking west from mid-block 800 Robson St.

### *Defining Block Ends*

In order to support the feeling of a public plaza and announce the arrival to the Robson Square precinct from the east and west, the emerging design concept envisions redefining the block ends in a combination of street furniture and landscaping, reflecting Arthur Erickson's and Cornelia Oberlander's vision for the site (Figure 5). These defined block ends bring an added benefit of acting as a strong visual cue of the plaza when seen from a distance, while maintaining open sight-lines and permeable access for the plaza.



Figure 5: Concept looking west toward 800 Robson St from Howe St.

### *Improving the connections*

The importance of integrating the design for the plaza into the surrounding street network was a recurring theme throughout the engagement process. Due to the required traffic pattern changes, there is an opportunity to make improvements to the 700 and 900 blocks of Robson Street towards Burrard and Granville Streets, and along Hornby Street towards Smith and West Georgia Streets. These will be explored along with the detailed design of the plaza, looking for opportunities to extend elements of the Robson Square precinct design language to these blocks, maintaining active transportation through the space at pedestrian speed.

### *Additional features*

Levelling the street, defining the block ends, and improving the connection with adjacent blocks and intersections will create a consistent base upon which additional details will be added.

- Elements like movable and permanent seating, lighting, signage, bike parking, public bike share, and other street furniture will be incorporated into the final design.
- Access to site services such as power and water will be integrated into the detailed design to support programming such as events, public art, street vending, and food carts.
- Two fully accessible automated public washrooms will be available around the Robson Square precinct; the existing location on 700 block of Robson will remain and a second location will be installed in the North Plaza in spring 2017.
- Wayfinding will be incorporated to help navigate and promote key attractions and elements.

### Plaza Stewardship

Until 2016, 800 Robson and bordering spaces functioned primarily as a street right-of-way with edges, open to all modes of transportation. With the transition from street to plaza, those edges, including street curbs and property lines, will begin to blur and the need for a coordinated stewardship approach will increase.

To bring the emerging design concept to life, and supported by the public engagement findings, staff and stakeholders have initiated discussion regarding the creation of a sustainable plaza stewardship strategy. Staff are also actively researching other cities' innovative and successful approaches to public space stewardship. Through this work, the process for how the 800 Robson plaza and broader precinct will be governed, programmed, operated, maintained, and funded – its “stewardship” – will be determined.

Key considerations of the stewardship strategy include:

- Landownership and lease agreements of the precinct to inform the governance structure;
- Programming vision for the space including scale and frequency to inform future planned and spontaneous activations;
- Management, operations, security and maintenance of the site to respect adjacent landowners and tenants, support on-site users, and keep the plaza clean and comfortable; and
- Financial, environmental and social sustainability practices to inform a funding model.



A holistic approach to plaza stewardship is reflective of Erickson's original vision of a continuous, inviting, well-maintained public space across blocks 51, 61, and 71. The Strategy will help ensure 800 Robson and the Robson Square precinct remains dynamic, safe, and comfortable for all while supporting a range of different activities and gatherings, and movement through the space.

### Implementation Schedule

A phased and accelerated construction schedule will focus on creating a level surface in order to allow programming activities next summer. Construction is planned to initiate upon completion of the North Plaza in 2017. The three phased implementation approach is:

- Phase I: Plaza construction will begin (levelling the street right-of-way) in spring 2017.
- Phase II: Public realm and transportation improvements to the plaza and of the 700 and 900 blocks of Robson, Hornby Street bike lanes, and intersections (Figure 2) in fall 2017 and be complete by early 2018.
- Phase III: Future opportunities to improve public realm elements and partner projects.

The proposed implementation schedule is aggressive. Schedule risk will be managed through undertaking an implementation risk assessment and ensuring construction phasing maximizes opportunities through the summer months and minimizes impact on planned programming.

Concurrent to detailed design and construction, further research and engagement with key stakeholders will be conducted into the preferred funding and governance models. A new stewardship framework will be developed during construction from March to June 2017 in order to be tested and operationalized upon construction completion, while maintaining flexibility to respond to new opportunities and unexpected challenges. The stewardship strategy will be refined over time and further details will be included in a December 2017 report back to Council on plaza stewardship.

### Near-term improvements and programming

While the detailed design work is underway in early 2017, the plaza on 800 Robson will continue to be programmed and improvements will begin to signal the permanent changes on the way:

- The temporary plastic and wooden barricades currently preventing vehicle traffic from entering 800 Robson will be replaced with semi-permanent folding bollards to improve the look and feel of the block.
- Movable street furniture and umbrellas will once again be made available.
- Central to the city, both 800 Robson and the North Plaza provide exceptional opportunities for public art. The Public Art Program will explore models for projects and pursue opportunities and partnerships for pilot projects, with potential source of funds being the Public Art Boost or existing capital allocation.
- Events and other activations to enliven the plaza will continue to be permitted through the City's Film and Special Events Office.

## ***Implications/Related Issues/Risk (if applicable)***

### ***Financial***

The estimated total cost of all engineering capital works related to the 800 Robson plaza is \$6.5 million. The breakdown of the work and associated costs, subject to change through detailed design, include:

- Plaza design and construction - \$3.5 million which includes any costs incurred in 2017 related to the development and implementation of the plaza stewardship strategy.
- Transportation works including design and construction of the 700- and 900-blocks of Robson Street, intersections of Robson and Hornby, and Robson and Howe, electrical upgrades and temporary overhead trolley work by Coast Mountain Bus Service - \$3 million.

The \$6.5 million in estimated total cost forms part of the recommended 2017 Capital Budget subject to Council approval on December 13, 2016.

Incremental operating costs will be assessed as part of the stewardship strategy and reported back to Council with the December 2017 update.

### ***Environmental***

This work supports key strategic plans and the three pillars of sustainability (social, environmental and economic) through:

- Creating public spaces that strengthen public life and cultural experiences;
- Encouraging active modes of transportation;
- Providing opportunities for greater social connection;
- Exploring green infrastructure opportunities; and
- Supporting economic opportunities and local businesses.

### ***Legal***

As outlined previously, the Robson Square precinct is home to multiple landowners and lease holders, and the jurisdictionally complex nature of this site remains important in this process.

## ***CONCLUSION***

Transforming 800 Robson from street to plaza is consistent with Council approved direction to provide better quality spaces for people, and supports goals identified in existing policy documents including Transportation 2040, Greenest City 2020, and the Healthy City Strategy. Thanks to the effort and feedback from the public and all owners and stakeholders, an exciting public plaza concept emerged that is both easily defined and flexible to support a diverse array of programming. The design will solidify the role of 800 Robson in the public life of the city as the place to seek entertainment, expression, and enjoyment. It will complete the decades-long transformation of the Robson Square precinct into the celebrated heart of Vancouver.

Staff will advance the concept design to implementation and report back in December 2017 with an update on the broader plaza stewardship strategy.

## ***APPENDIX A: Summary of 800 Robson Public and Key Stakeholder Engagement***

### **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As directed by Council in April 2016, City staff designed and implemented a process to engage the public and key stakeholders on the 800 Robson plaza project. The intent of the consultation was to gain input from a wide cross section of plaza users (Vancouver residents, businesses, and visitors,) and to also gain insight from the Province, tenants, and stakeholder groups.

Through this process, 800 Robson was reaffirmed as a key central gathering space in Vancouver. Its proximity to shopping, food, arts and culture along with downtown offices, the Vancouver Art Gallery, and the Law Courts, draws many people to the area. While the majority of people are passing through on foot, many stay to relax, eat, or meet up with others.

Certain themes from the findings included accessibility and sustainability, which will help guide future design modifications. Providing enhanced public realm amenities such as landscaping, lighting, seating, public art, public washrooms and additional litter containers also ranked high as desired elements for the area. Some form of weather protection was identified as a positive enhancement to the plaza. Also expressed was the most appropriate way to support active transportation through and around the heavily pedestrian-oriented space.

An important project goal strengthened through this engagement process is that of enhancing the space in a way that ensures it is safe, inviting, and welcoming to all; supporting the development of the City's broader stewardship strategy.

800 Robson is a special space in the city. There is an exceptional opportunity to build on the positive aspects of the plaza in the creation of an integrated and connected space that can continue to serve as the central gathering space at the city's heart. Conversations and engagement on more detailed elements of the plaza design and stewardship plan will continue through 2017.

### **2. ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

- To initiate a conversation about the role of a public square in the city
- To shape the guiding principles for the design of the 800 Robson plaza and the stewardship plan
- To consult on the look, feel and use of the future plaza

### **3. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT METHODS AND OUTREACH**

#### *Open Houses*

The City held two on-site engagement open houses on the 800 block of Robson to gather feedback from the general public on the use and design of the future plaza.

The first open house was held on Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup> from 11am-6pm to capture weekday users, including the lunch time business crowd, as well as participants attending the international Pro Walk Pro Bike Pro Place conference.

The second on-site engagement event was held on Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup> from 11am-3pm to capture input from plaza visitors who might typically visit the space on weekends.

There was strong attendance at both events by a variety of plaza users.

#### *Questionnaire*

Visitors to both open houses were encouraged to fill out a printed questionnaire. An online version of the questionnaire was programmed on Talk Vancouver and an invitation to complete the questionnaire was sent to all Talk Vancouver members. Links to the questionnaire were also available on [vancouver.ca/vivarobson](http://vancouver.ca/vivarobson), and advertised in on-site signage, the City's website, social media accounts and business cards handed out on-site. The online questionnaire launched on September 12 and closed on October 2, 2016.

#### *Outreach*

A variety of methods were used to notify the public about the project and opportunities to provide feedback. The following provides a synopsis of notification methods.

##### 1. Online and Social Media

- City of Vancouver website: [vancouver.ca/vivarobson](http://vancouver.ca/vivarobson)
- Social media campaign to encourage feedback through Twitter and Instagram: [vivarobson.hscampaigns.com](http://vivarobson.hscampaigns.com); hashtag: #vivarobson
- Email invitation to members of the City's public engagement panel Talk Vancouver.

##### 2. On-site Signage

- A temporary application of 150 large scale decals on the street that posed questions to the public about the possible look and feel of the future plaza
- Several informational posters were provided within the 800 block of Robson Street attached to light poles and on the hoarding of the Vancouver Art Gallery Annex stairs under construction at the time

##### 3. Advertising

- The second on-site engagement event was advertised in local newspapers: 24, Metro, and Georgia Straight

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY	Approx. No.
On-site participants (Thursday, Sept. 15 and Saturday, Sept. 24, 2016) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion with City staff</li> <li>• Hardcopy feedback forms (see online engagement statistics)</li> <li>• Post-It Posters asking the public to provide for one word about 800 Robson 'Now' and in the 'Future'. (77 completed)</li> <li>• Post-It Note comments placed on an aerial of the project area (72 responses)</li> </ul>	500 people
Feedback Forms completed (survey launched Sept. 12, closed Oct. 2)	2,198 (includes 200 questionnaires completed in person)
Twitter + Instagram postings + comments	530
Individual project-related emails (vivarobson@vancouver.ca)	32
Earned Media	

#### 4. SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

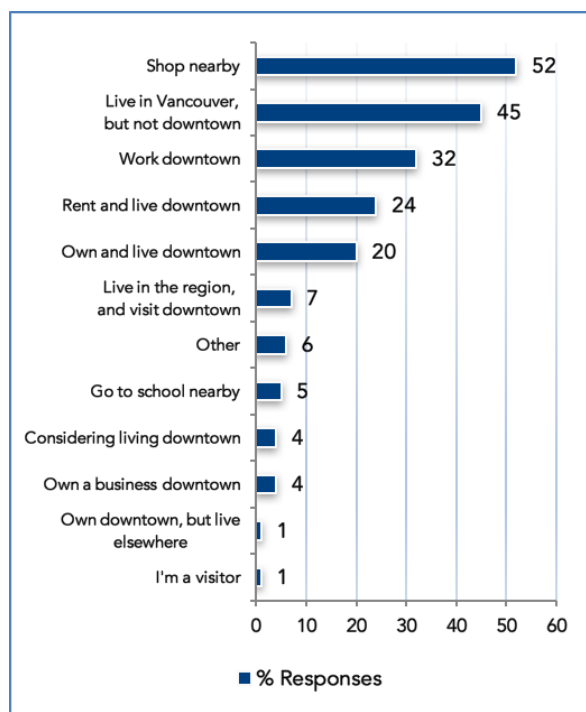
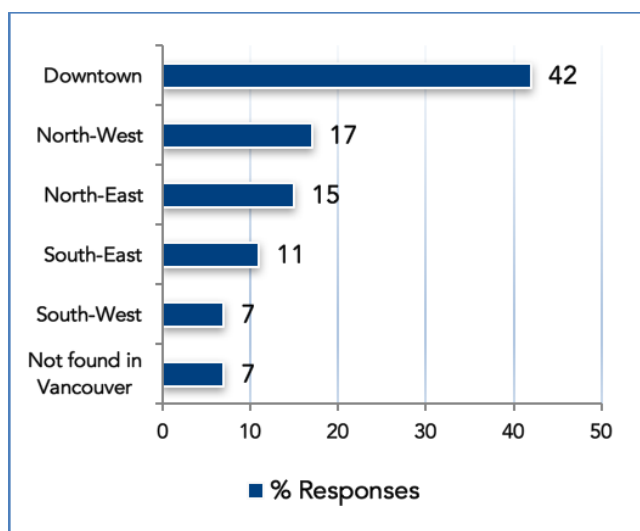
The City received a total of 2,198 completed responses to the questionnaire. The complete questionnaire, found as Schedule 1 of this Appendix A, asked a series of questions to better understand:

- What makes this area unique;
- How frequently participants visit 800 Robson;
- How people arrive and what features are important to allow people to move through the block;
- Potential design features and elements;
- How to make this area a rainy city plaza;
- Should the Viva Vancouver design competitions and installations continue in the future;
- How people envision using the space in the future;
- Frequency of programmed activities; and
- Suggestions for project objectives.

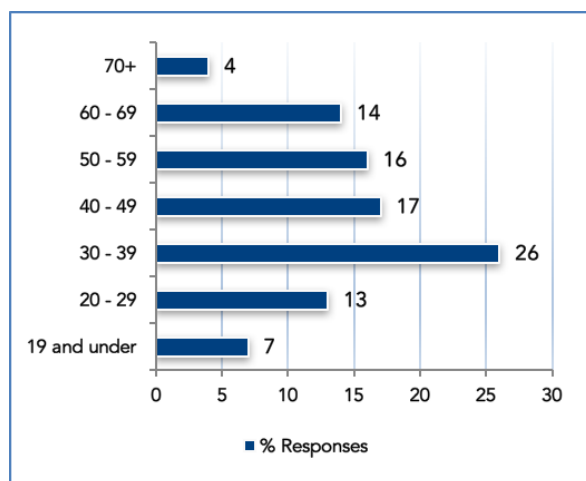
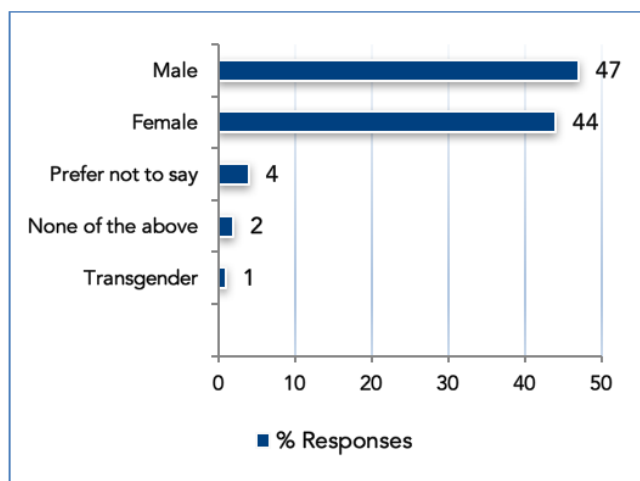
The results from the closed-ended questionnaire items, along with the most common themes identified from the open-ended responses can be found beginning on page 5 of this appendix.

The following overview and tables provide a snapshot of demographic profile of respondents to the survey.

- There was an even split between those that live downtown (44%) versus those living outside the downtown core (45%);
- There was a relatively even split between respondents who identify as female (44%) and male (47%);
- The age group that responded the most were between the ages of 30-39 years of age (26%)



Connection to the area



Demographics



### Unique Qualities of Robson

#### Q1: In your opinion, what makes 800 Robson Street unique within Vancouver?

Of the total 2,198 completed questionnaires, approximately 1,770 people responded to this open-ended question regarding the unique qualities of 800 Robson. These are the qualities which one might most readily use to differentiate the plaza on 800 Robson amongst the array of other public spaces in Vancouver. The most popular comment about the space is that it is a central location or heart in the city that is both a hub and an oasis. People described 800 Robson as a place to gather, including for demonstrations, to watch or meet people, to relax, and to enjoy the sun.

The pedestrian focus and large numbers of pedestrians is seen as very positive. However, in relation to unique attributes related to access, people are still concerned with the new No. 5 bus route and traffic impacts due to the road closure.

Vibrancy, arts and culture, iconic architecture and landscaping, and the skating rink were identified as attributes unique amongst all other public spaces in the city, in addition to 800 Robson's close connection to major shopping areas and neighbourhoods.

Some unique qualities we heard:

*“So many people pass through this area and a plaza is essential to create a meeting place where people will want to be.”*

*“It's in the heart of the city, but at the same time it's like no other place in the city.”*

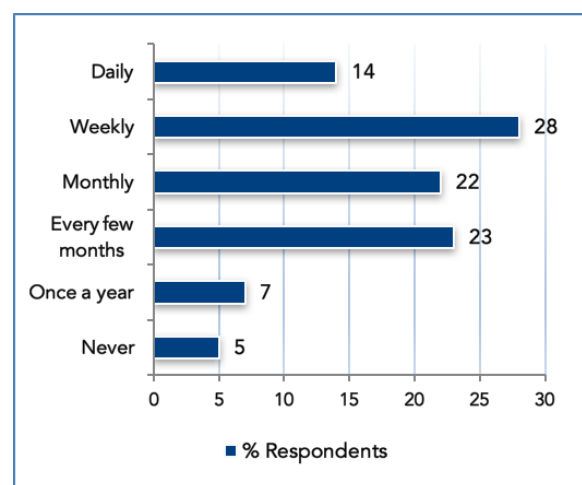
*“It's like an urban community center, with places for learning, social meetup, and exercise on the [skating] rink.”*

Details on the types of activities and programming people wish to see more of in the future can be found in response to Q7 on page 8 of this report.

### Visitation

#### Q2: In the last year, how frequently did you visit 800 Robson Street?

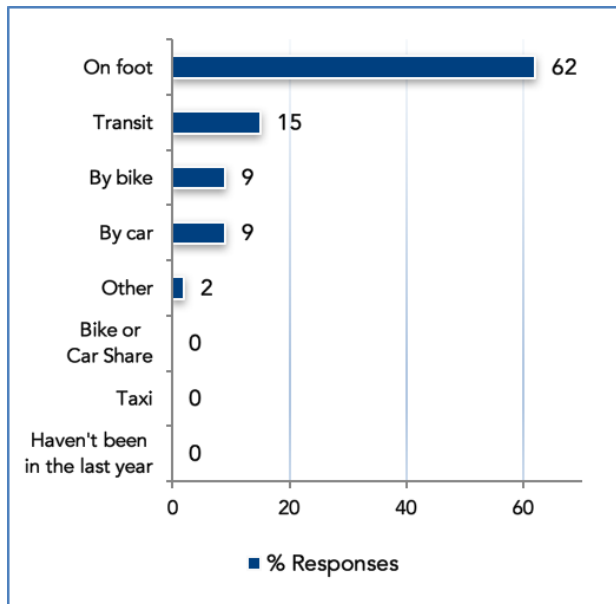
The majority of people who responded visit this section of Robson Street at least once a month or more (64%). When asked the open-ended question - Why do you visit this section of Robson Street? - respondents most commonly indicated they are passing through (43%) or work or live nearby (21%). The remainder of people (66%) are there enjoy the space and its amenities; to access services, to eat, for events, to relax, to shop, for activities, to meet others, for demonstrations,



Frequency of Visits

or to be in the sunshine.

**Modes of Visitation**



Primary mode of transportation to 800 Robson

**Q3a: The City’s Transportation 2040 Plan identifies 800 Robson Street as a potential pedestrian priority space. We understand that many people pass through this block on their way to other destinations. Monitoring has shown that during the summer season approximately 2,500 pedestrians travel through this space an hour. What’s your primary mode of transportation when you visit 800 Robson Street?**

All questionnaire respondents answered this question. As the table to the left indicates, the primary mode of transportation respondents used to travel to/from 800 Robson is on foot.

**Q3b: As we design this public plaza, what features are important to you to allow movement through the block?**

1,815 respondents answered this open-ended question. Common responses indicated a desire to level the plaza and remove the curbs, and keep the plaza flexible, accessible and clutter-free allowing movement in all directions. A number of people commented on the heavy pedestrian flows through the area.

53% of responses identified this space as a key pedestrian area. Suggestions to assist with movement through the space included: street furniture, lighting, durable materials, and art.

Some ideas we heard:

*“Take out curbs for total accessibility.”*

*“While I primarily walk there, I also cycle to and through the area. I think the plaza needs to be permeable to slow, courteous cycling.”*

*“Wide walkway with good lighting and some interesting features, art, fountains.”*

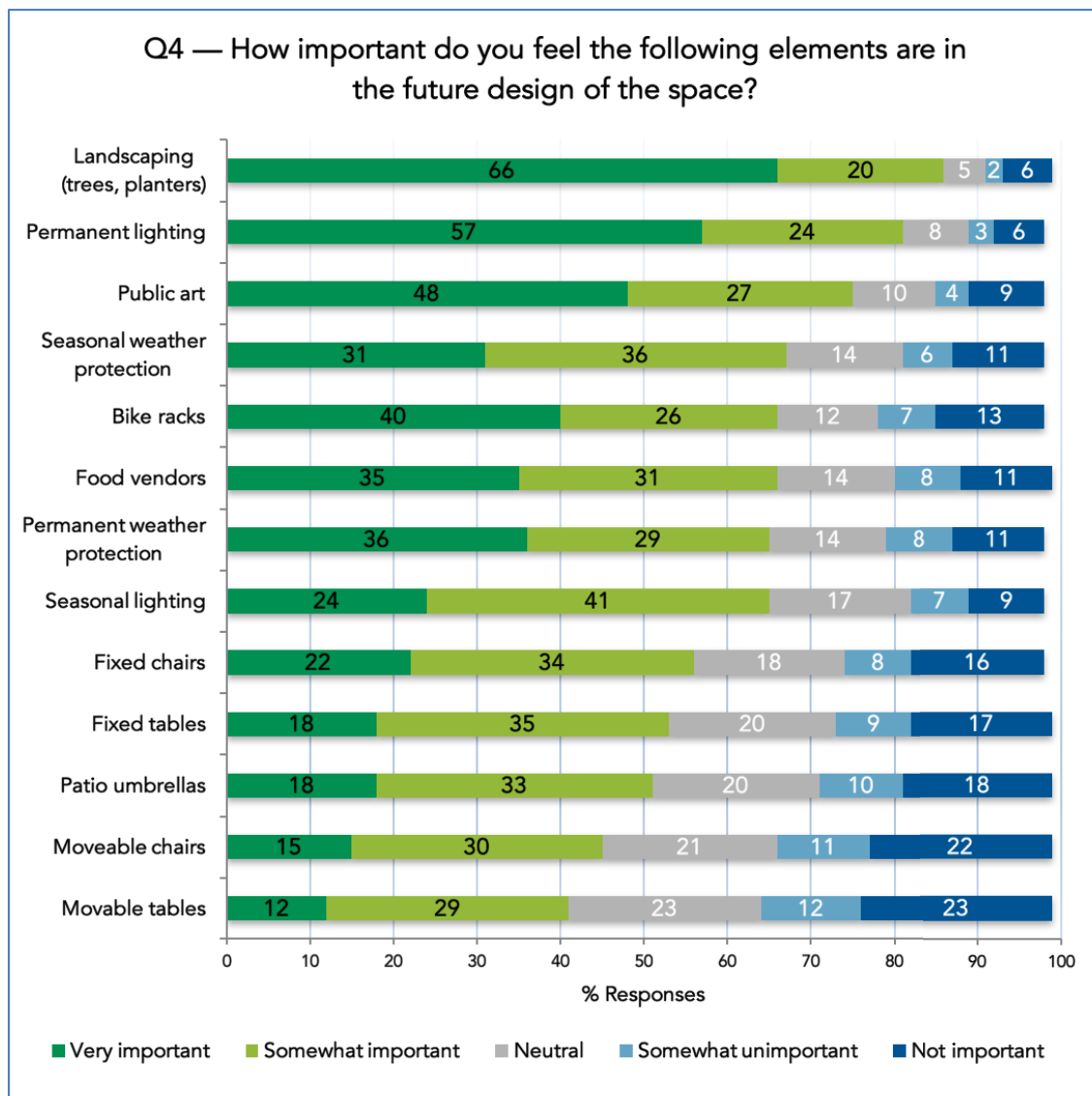
**Importance of Design Improvements**

**Q4a: How important do you feel the following elements are in the future design of this space?**

The closed portion of Q4 focused on understanding people’s preferences for design elements and features in the space. The intent of this question was to assist the design team in determining the right balance of features and open space. While no element was seen as unimportant, out of 2,198 responses, at least two thirds or more of respondents thought these top five elements were very important or somewhat important:

1. Landscape, trees and planting (86%);
2. Permanent lighting (81%);
3. Public art (75%);
4. Seasonal weather protection (67%); and
5. Bike racks (66%) and food vendors (66%).

Lastly, there was a preference for fixed seating and tables (56%; 53%) over moveable ones (45%; 41%).



Level of Support for Access and Amenity Improvements (% per option)

This question also provided an opportunity to provide additional open-ended feedback by asking the following:

**Q4b: Are there any other elements in the future design of this space that you think are important?**

Integration, that is, including other elements of the plaza into the greater Robson Square precinct to develop a consistent experience across ownership boundaries, was a common theme that surfaced (from the 1,330 responses to this question). Ideas included: a covered stage area, Wi-Fi, garbage cans that accommodate recycling and compost, and access to water, food, and toilet facilities.

### ***Elements of a Rainy City Plaza***

**Q5: What can we do to make this a great rainy weather plaza?**

The intent with this question was to come up with ideas for the space during the rainy fall and winter months. Weather protection was identified in nearly one quarter of the 1,600 responses to this question. While a third of those who commented on weather protection saw it as a positive addition, approximately 235 people (15%), responded with words to the effect of “leave it be, it rains in Vancouver and that’s fine.” This indicates some people felt weather protection was not necessary.

Some ideas we heard:

*“This is life in our city. Places to duck into to get out of the rain.”*

*“Add landscape features that offer some protection.”*

*“Canopy in one part for the artisans but rain is a local feature.”*

### ***Uses and Programming***

Questions Q6, Q7, and Q8 were all closed questions that focused on determining the type and level of uses and programming for the space.

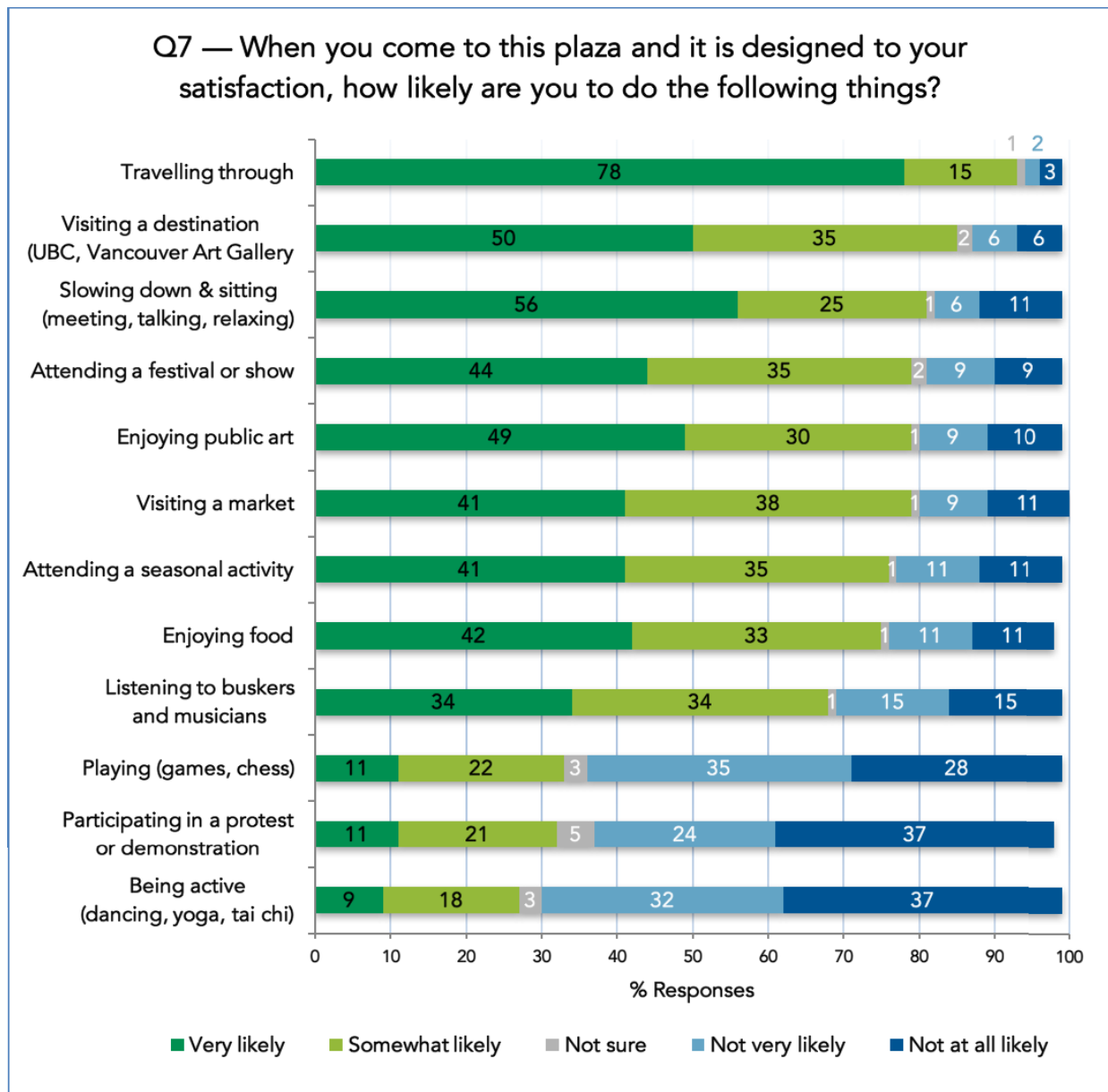
**Q6: For the last five summers, 800 Robson has been the site of Robson Redux, the annual design competition to transform the space. Installations have included Pop Rocks, Porch Parade, Picnurbia, Corduroy Road and Urban Reef. Do you want to see this or a similar competition continue to be a part of the future programming of the permanent plaza?**

Of the 2,198 responses to this question, 41% voted yes, they do want to see Robson Redux or a similar competition continue; 31% voted maybe and 27% voted no.

**Q7: In the future, when you come to this plaza and it is designed entirely to your satisfaction, how likely are you to do the following things?**

Respondents were asked to indicate how likely they were to engage in the activities listed.

Given the high volume of foot traffic currently in the 800 block of Robson, travelling through 800 Robson received the highest likelihood rating of 93%. Other activities respondents thought they were likely to engage in were: visiting a destination and slowing down, sitting, meeting and talking, and relaxing (81%), as well as attending a festival or show, enjoying public art and visiting a market (79%). Attending seasonal events (75%) and food (75%) also figured prominently.

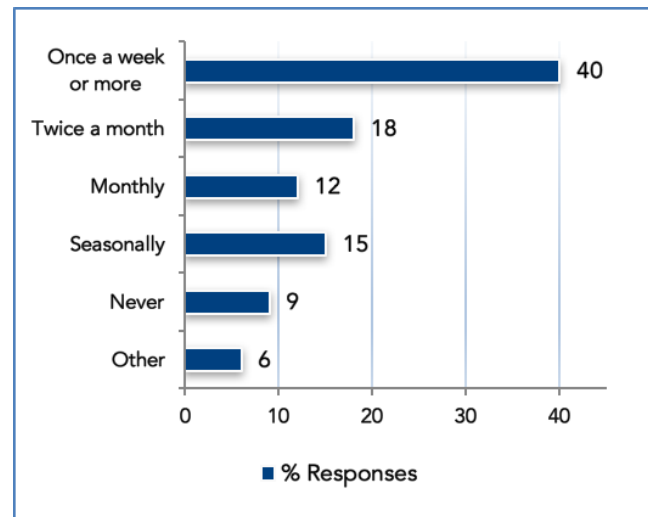


Level of Support for Various Uses

**Q8: In the future, how often should programmed activities happen in this space?**

The intent with this last programming question was to help determine the amount and frequency of programming for the space.

A high percentage of people (40%) indicated their preference for programmed activities to take place once a week or more.



Desired Frequency of Programming (shown as a percentage)

**Potential Goals and Principles**

**Q9: Are there any principles, goals or ideas that should be incorporated into the future design?**

The following categories and key words are example themes emerging from the responses which support the guiding principles. Approximately 1,440 people responded to this question.

- Sustainability
- Transportation and Accessibility
- Uses and Features
- Welcoming and Clean
- Democratic and Social Space
- Open Space
- Art/Culture
- Holistic

Some ideas we heard:

*“This is Vancouver’s premier public space and it should be given bold new life to welcome all Vancouverites to enjoy at all times of the year.”*

*“It should encompass greenery... and serve as an oasis in the city to teach people about Vancouver’s sustainable goals.”*

*“It should be a gathering space for all, that respect all who use the space and designed to facilitate as many uses as possible.”*



## **5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**

As summarized earlier, from mid-September until December 5<sup>th</sup>, the City held 24 meetings with 20 stakeholder groups with the intent of identifying concerns and opportunities to help guide future conceptual work.

Groups engaged included a variety of on-site stakeholders, those with a vested interest in the area, and City advisory committees.

These groups included:

### ***On-Site Stakeholders (Owners and Tenants)***

- Province of British Columbia
- Vancouver Art Gallery
- University of British Columbia
- Law Courts (including the Sheriff's Office)
- 800 Robson Street Vendors

### ***Stakeholders with a Vested Interest***

- TransLink
- Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association
- Robson Street Business Association
- Arthur Erickson Foundation
- West End Seniors Planning Table
- Vancouver Public Space Network
- HUB
- Vancouver Heritage Commission
- Select Film and Event Organizers

### ***City of Vancouver Advisory Committees***

- Active Transportation Policy Council
- Public Art Advisory Committee
- Seniors' Advisory Committee
- Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee
- Urban Design Panel
- City Asset Naming Committee

Forthcoming conversations with these and additional stakeholders will focus on detailed design.

## ***Key Themes***

Consistent with the findings from the public engagement process, the following key themes emerged from discussions with stakeholder groups:

### ***Design***

- Addressing the egress from the Law Courts underground parkade onto Hornby Street including sightlines with the bike lanes, vehicular exiting and emergency vehicle access to the space
- Removing the curbs and leveling the street to create a continuous surface across Robson Street and creating and preserving the plaza as a pedestrian-oriented space
- Respecting the existing architectural and landscape design intent
- Thoughtful selection of materials to help unify and create a sense of coherence across the distinct spaces of the North Plaza, Robson Square and the Law Court complex
- Introducing transitional design cues in the 700 and 900 blocks of Robson and maintaining visual access along Robson Street

### ***Movement***

- Improving traffic circulation and safety for all road users around the Robson Square precinct
- Maintaining and improving on site pedestrian circulation by minimizing obstructions and ensuring north-south movement remains open
- Addressing transit connections

### ***Use, Function and Management***

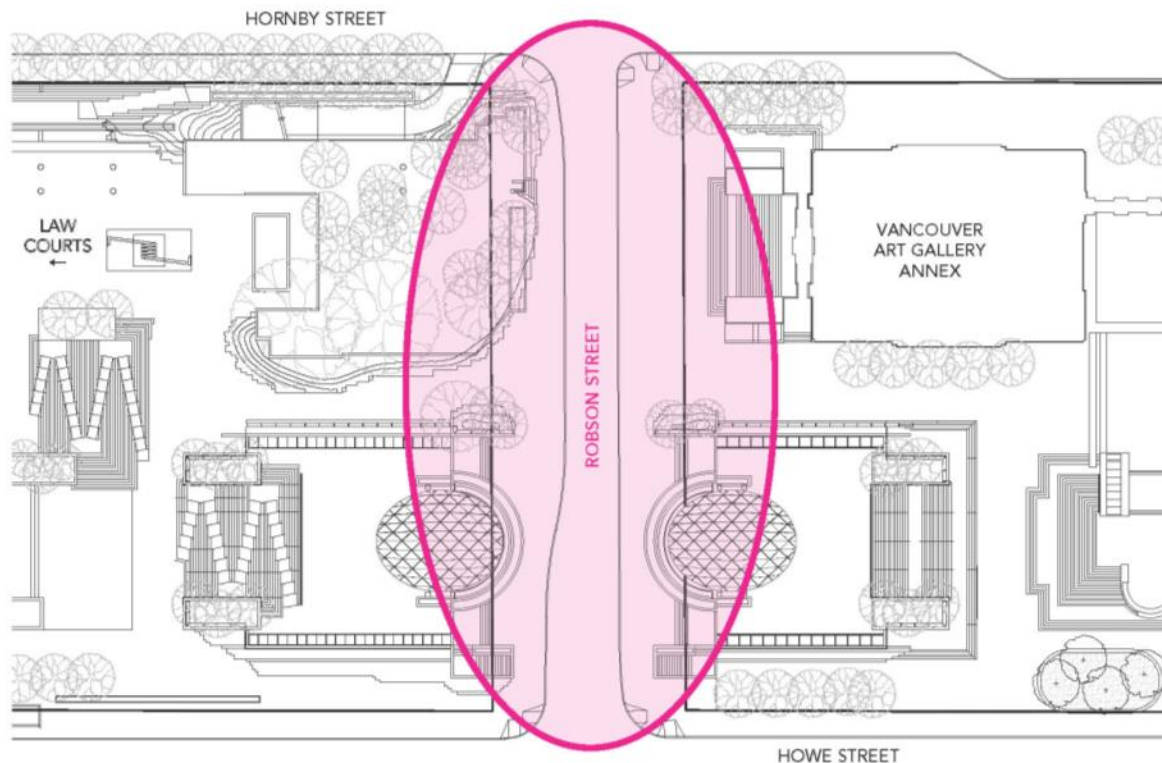
- Improving overall function and use of the site
- Maintaining and establishing respect for existing tenants on site
- Developing a comprehensive plaza stewardship strategy, including interesting, creative, proactive programming of the space, year-round
- Providing key amenities, such as seating, lighting, washrooms and electrical connections, making the space flexible for many uses
- Improving vertical connections, visibility of lower level uses and connections with anchor tenants
- Exploring feasibility of a multi-use kiosk, and other vending opportunities that do not compromise existing architectural intent
- Ensuring the space is safe, accessible, welcoming and inclusive and remains a democratically vital space

## **6. NEXT STEPS**

Taking the above into consideration, the next steps in the design process will be:

- Engage key area stakeholders to begin planning for the plaza stewardship strategy
- Engage stakeholders throughout the detailed design process

SCHEDULE 1



# #VIVAROBSON QUESTIONNAIRE

## 800 ROBSON STREET



800 Robson Street, between the Vancouver Art Gallery and the Law Courts, is set to transform into a permanent city-serving public plaza that will reflect the diversity of Vancouver and its users! Over the last five years, the City has been engaging with the public on the use of this space through past VIVA installations and various public consultation processes. This September, staff hope to build on their learnings and understanding of:

- How residents, businesses and users would like to use the space;
- What the space should look like;
- What kind of programming, if any, you would like to see in the space; and
- What movement through and around the plaza should be considered.

In the following months, we will be seeking your feedback to help transform this street into a plaza. Feedback you submit will help inform the look, feel and use of the permanent plaza. The results of what we hear will be available in the fall, along with details outlining next steps. We will be seeking your input and feedback in subsequent stages of work. Stay tuned for more information.

# #VIVAROBSON

**1** The 800 block of Robson Street (between Hornby and Howe) and the Vancouver Art Gallery's North Plaza, has long been the centre for Vancouverites to socialize, and display civil democracy and creative expression. In your opinion, what makes 800 Robson Street unique within Vancouver?

**2** In the last year, how frequently did you visit 800 Robson Street?

- DAILY   
  WEEKLY   
  MONTHLY   
  EVERY FEW MONTHS   
  ONCE LAST YEAR   
  NEVER

Why do you visit this section of Robson Street?

**3** The City's *Transportation 2040 Plan* identifies 800 Robson Street as a potential pedestrian priority space. We understand that many people pass through this block on their way to other destinations. Monitoring has shown that during the summer season approximately 2,500 pedestrians travel through this space an hour. What's your primary mode of transportation when you visit 800 Robson Street?

- ON FOOT   
  CAR   
  TAXI  
 BIKE   
  BIKE SHARE   
  I HAVEN'T BEEN THERE IN THE LAST YEAR  
 TRANSIT   
  CAR SHARE   
  OTHER (PLEASE DESCRIBE): \_\_\_\_\_

As we design this public plaza, what features are important to you to allow movement through the block?

**4** How important do you feel the following elements are in the future design of this space?

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	LESS IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL
Moveable chairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moveable tables	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patio umbrellas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fixed tables	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fixed chairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Permanent lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seasonal or temporary lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Permanent weather protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seasonal weather protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public art	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food vendors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bike racks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landscaping (trees, planters)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are there any other elements in the future design of this space that you think are important?

# SHARE WITH US!

#VIVAROBSON

**5** What can we do to make this a great rainy weather plaza?

**6** For the last five summers, 800 Robson has been the site of *Robson Redux*, the annual design competition to transform the space. Installations have included *Pop Rocks*, *Porch Parade*, *Picnurbia*, *Corduroy Road* and *Urban Reef*. Do you want to see this or a similar competition continue to be a part of the future programming of the permanent plaza?

YES                       NO                       MAYBE

**7** In the future, when you come to this plaza and it is designed entirely to your satisfaction, how likely are you to doing the following things?

	VERY LIKELY	SOMEWHAT LIKELY	NOT VERY LIKELY	NOT AT ALL LIKELY	DON'T KNOW/ NOT SURE
Slowing down and sitting <i>(i.e. meeting friends, talking to friends, relaxing, people watching)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enjoying food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening to buskers and musicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enjoying public art	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being active <i>(i.e. dancing, yoga, tai chi)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in a protest or demonstration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attending a festival or a show <i>(i.e. the Jazz Fest, Façade Fest)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attending a seasonal activity <i>(i.e. Christmas tree or menorah lighting)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playing <i>(i.e. chess, kids games)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visiting a market <i>(i.e. artisan market or farmers market)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visiting a destination <i>(i.e. Vancouver Art Gallery, UBC)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travelling through to another destination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**8** In the future, how often should programmed activities happen in this space?

DAILY                       TWICE A MONTH                       BY SEASON                       OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_  
 WEEKLY                       MONTHLY                       NEVER

**9** Are there any principles, goals or ideas that should be incorporated into the future design?

## DEMOGRAPHICS

It's important to us that we hear from a diverse group of people and perspectives. The following questions help us determine how the feedback we receive represents the community.

**10** What is your connection with this place? *(select all that apply)*

I...

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> RENT & LIVE IN DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER            | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER                  | <input type="checkbox"/> LIVE IN METRO VANCOUVER AND ARE VISITING DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OWN & LIVE IN DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER             | <input type="checkbox"/> GO TO SCHOOL IN DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER          | <input type="checkbox"/> I'M A VISITOR   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OWN IN DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER BUT LIVE ELSEWHERE | <input type="checkbox"/> SHOP IN DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER                  | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OWN A BUSINESS IN DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER         | <input type="checkbox"/> LIVE IN VANCOUVER OUTSIDE THE DOWNTOWN CORE |  |

**11** Please provide your home postal code: \_\_\_\_\_

**12** Which age category do you fall in?

- |   |                                    |   |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> UNDER 15 YEARS | <input type="checkbox"/> 30-39 YRS | <input type="checkbox"/> 60-69 YRS      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15-19 YRS      | <input type="checkbox"/> 40-49 YRS | <input type="checkbox"/> 70-79 YRS      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20-29 YRS      | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-59 YRS | <input type="checkbox"/> 80 YRS OR OVER |

**13** Do you identify as...?

- |                                 |  |  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSGENDER       | <input type="checkbox"/> NONE OF THE ABOVE. I IDENTIFY AS: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MALE   | <input type="checkbox"/> PREFER NOT TO SAY |  |

**14** How did you hear about the #VIVAROBSON (800 Robson) consultation and questionnaire? *(select all that apply)*

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> STICKERS ON STREET AT 800 ROBSON                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER MEDIA COVERAGE <i>(i.e. radio, television etc.)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> TWITTER                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TALK VANCOUVER EMAIL INVITATION                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> CITY OF VANCOUVER WEBSITE                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> EMAIL/LISTSERV                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> POSTER  | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER WEBSITE <i>(please specify)</i>                     | <input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY/FRIENDS <i>(word of mouth)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NEWSPAPER ARTICLE   | <input type="checkbox"/> INSTAGRAM   | <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T REMEMBER                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ONLINE ARTICLE <i>(i.e. Vancouver Hive, Vancouver is Awesome)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> FACEBOOK  | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER <i>(please specify):</i> _____  |

**15** Do you want to be added to our #VIVAROBSON email list to stay up to date on consultation activities? If yes, please leave us your email address:

\_\_\_\_\_

\*Your personal information is collected under the authority of section 26(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA). This information will be used for notification purposes of the above project. You may unsubscribe from the City's email list at any time by clicking the unsubscribe link that will appear at the bottom of each email. For questions about the City's collection of information on this form, please contact: Krisztina Kassay, City of Vancouver, 453 W 12th Ave, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4, vivarobson@vancouver.ca