



# 800 Robson Street: Creation of a Permanent Public Plaza

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Presentation to Vancouver City Council  
April 20, 2016

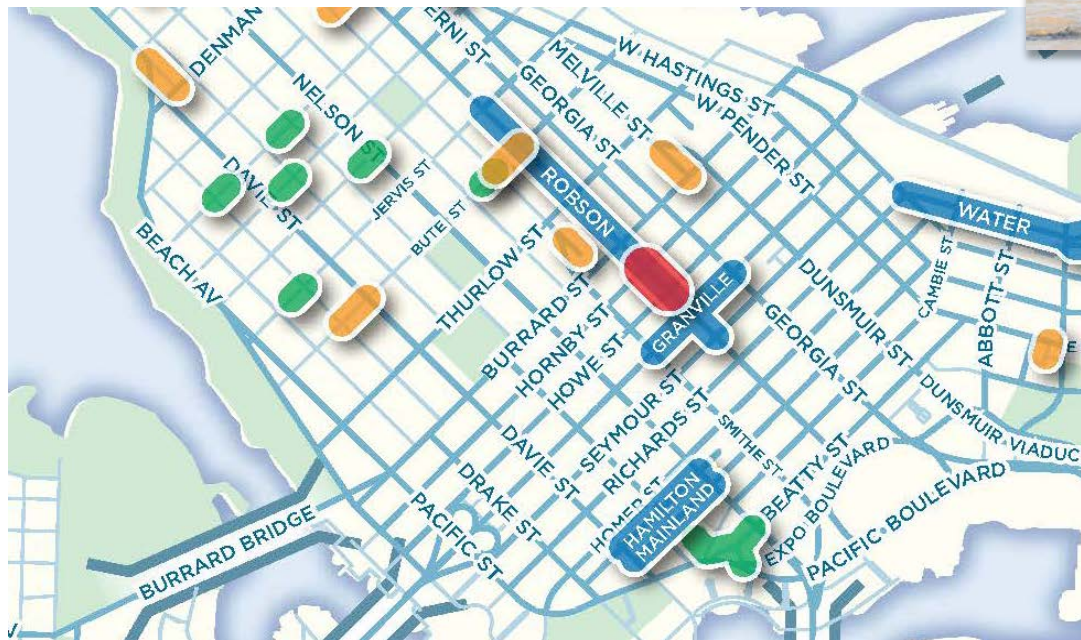
- **Purpose**

- Report back on impacts, challenges and opportunities for potentially creating a permanent public square on 800 Robson Street

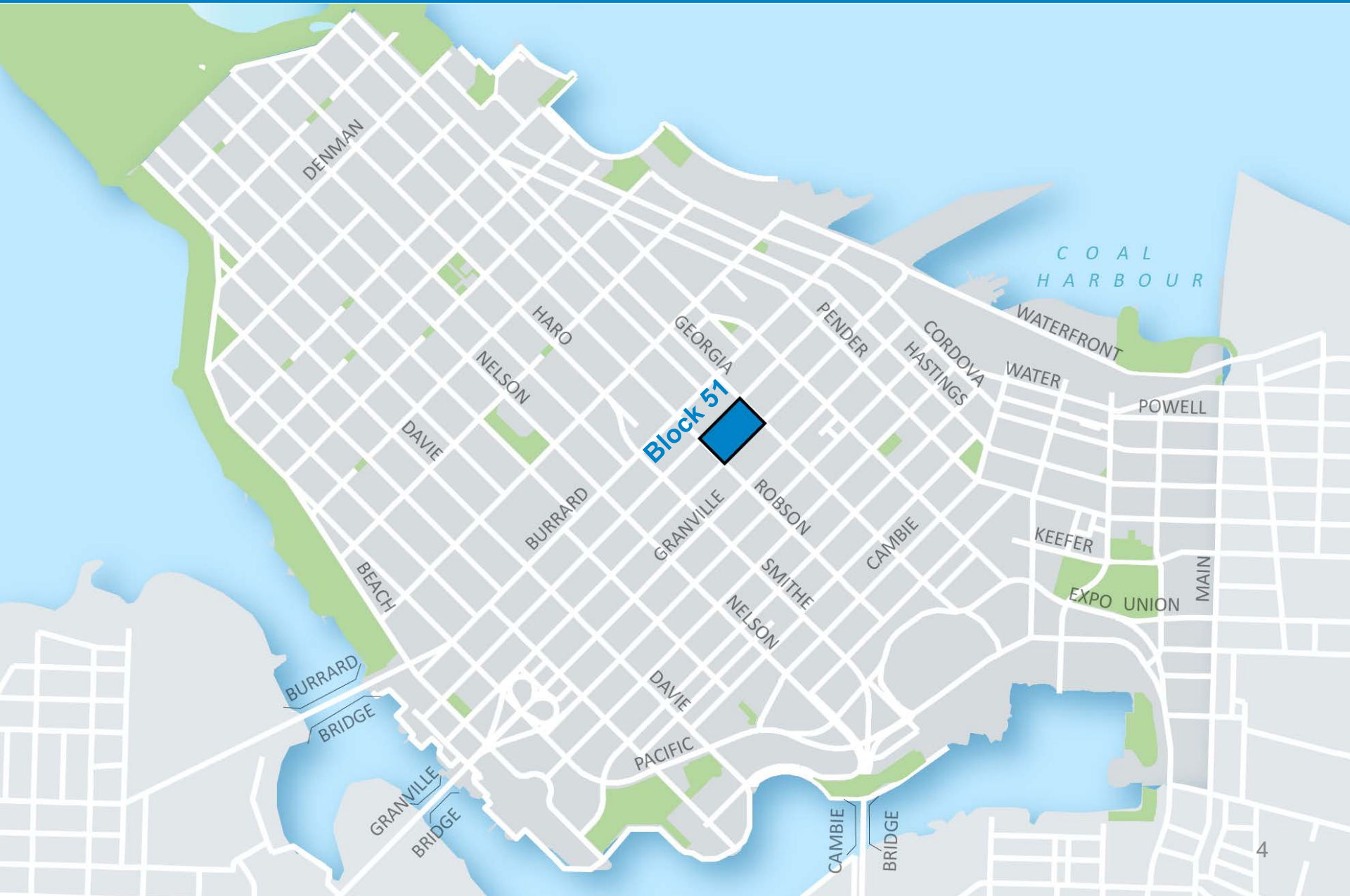
- **Recommendations**

- Approve the closure of 800 Robson Street to motor vehicle traffic to create a permanent public plaza
- Direct staff to initiate a process for the design, construction and long term management of the new plaza

- Policy documents
  - Greenest City Action Plan
  - Transportation 2040 Plan
  - Engaged City Task Force Final Report
  - Healthy City Strategy



# Downtown Context Map



# The Two Sides of Block 51

- Block 51 is Vancouver's preferred central gathering place
- 800 Robson Street is smaller in scale and feels more intimate and informal
- The North Plaza is larger, more formal and more visible





Corduroy Road installation on  
800-block Robson St

BURES  
MILLER  
21 JUNE -  
21 SEPT 2014



真善忍 結束迫害 15 Years Too Long STOP the persecution of FalunGong in China 停止迫害法輪功 解體中共 法輪大法

法輪大法好  
DIFA DAFA



Protest on 800-block Robson St



Ziplining on 800-block Robson St during the 2010 Olympics





The Vancouver International Jazz Festival at the North Plaza

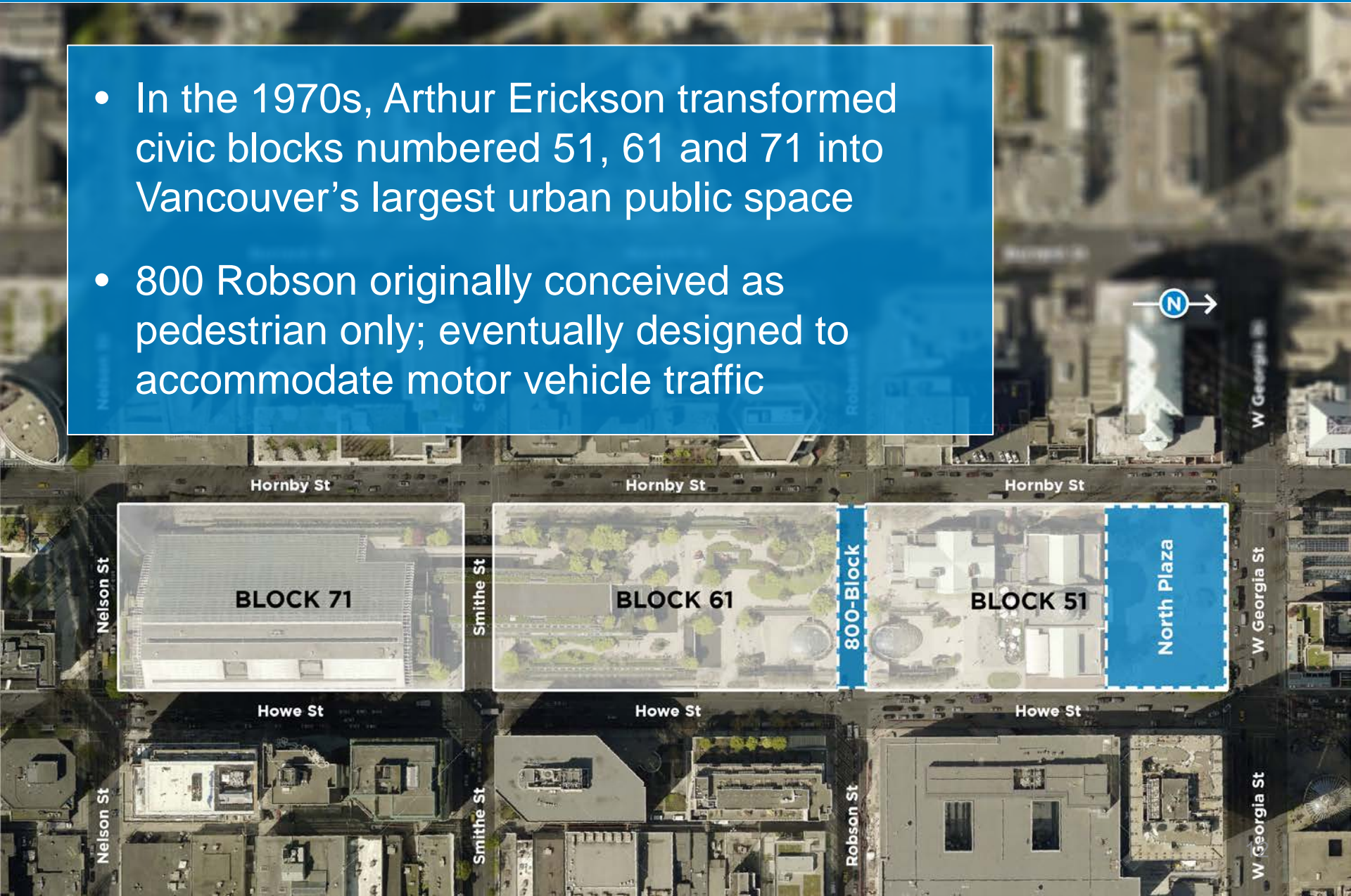




Pillow Fight at the North Plaza

# Site History: Robson Square and Law Court Complex

- In the 1970s, Arthur Erickson transformed civic blocks numbered 51, 61 and 71 into Vancouver's largest urban public space
- 800 Robson originally conceived as pedestrian only; eventually designed to accommodate motor vehicle traffic



# Construction of the North Plaza to begin this July





# A Rare Placemaking Opportunity





Portland's Pioneer Courthouse Square





# Toronto's Dundas Square

Photo credit: Mark Watmough @ Flickr



London's Trafalgar Square

Photo credit: Christian Reimer @ Flickr

## Summertime Monitoring: e.g. intercept survey (City)



2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

**Public Square  
Petition**  
(Vancouver Public  
Space Network)

- Over 1,900 participants

**Block 51  
(City)**

- Over 2,900 participants
- Over 2,100 surveys

**Downtown Bus  
Service Review**  
(City and TransLink)

- Over 2,400 participants

**Reimagine  
Downtown**  
(DVBIA)

- Over 11,000 engaged

# Key Stakeholder Outreach in Early 2016



- Province of British Columbia
- TransLink
- Key Area Stakeholders
- Affected BIAs

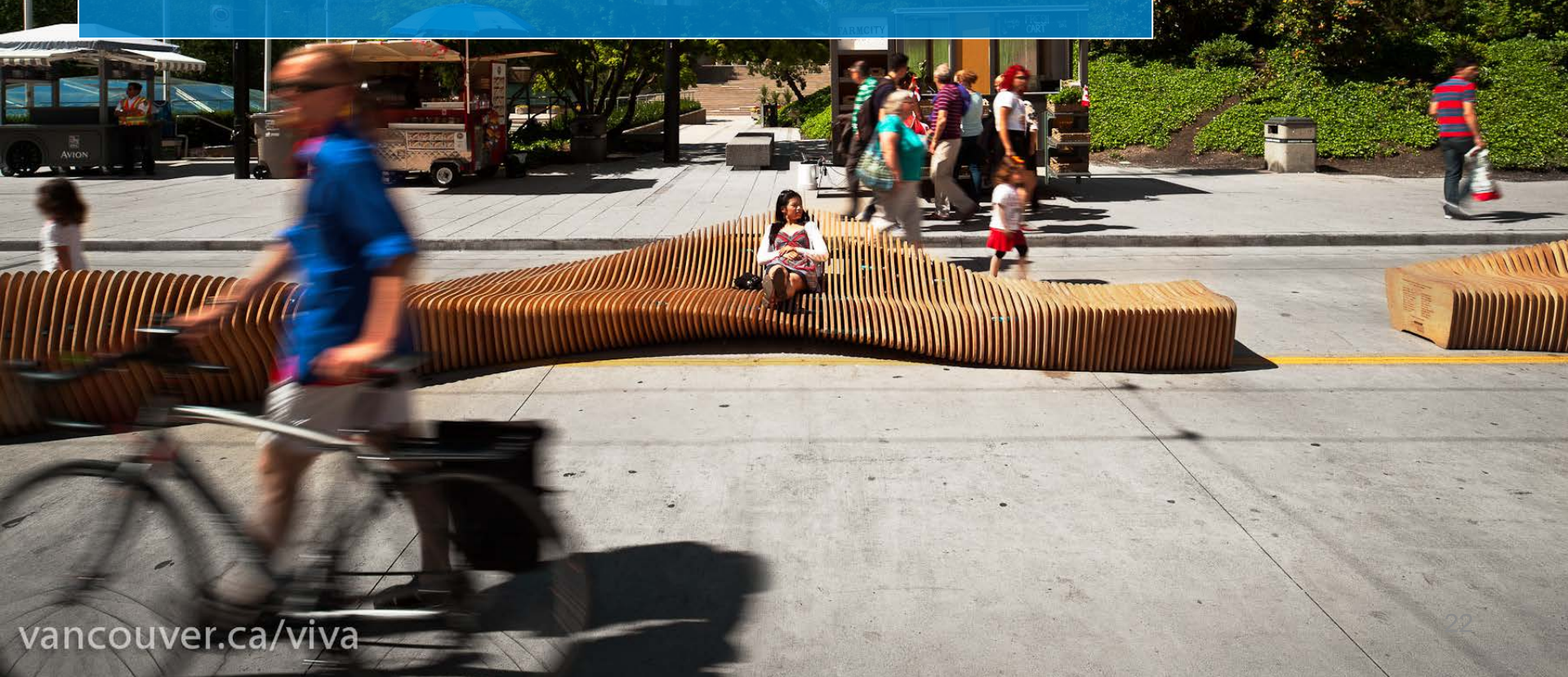
- West End Seniors
- City Advisory Committees
- Vancouver Public Space Network



- **Block 51 (2012)**
  - 64% of respondents had a preference for 800 Robson Street to function as a permanent public space
- **Summertime monitoring (2011-2015)**
  - In 2015, 98% of respondents said the summertime plaza contributes to a vibrant and fun walking environment
  - In 2015, 94% of businesses experienced positive or neutral/no noticeable impact to their sales from the summertime plaza
- **Questions raised include:**
  - Approach to programming and maintenance
  - Inclusive design

## Key Area Stakeholders Generally Supportive

- Questions raised include:
  - Approach to activities and programming
  - Year-round maintenance and management of the space
  - Parking egress on Hornby St.



## Other Key Stakeholders

- Questions raised include:
  - West End Seniors
    - Concerns with the new #5 bus route and connections to key destinations in the downtown
  - Affected BIAs
    - Traffic impacts
    - Year round programming and management of space



# Seasonal Approach to Closures

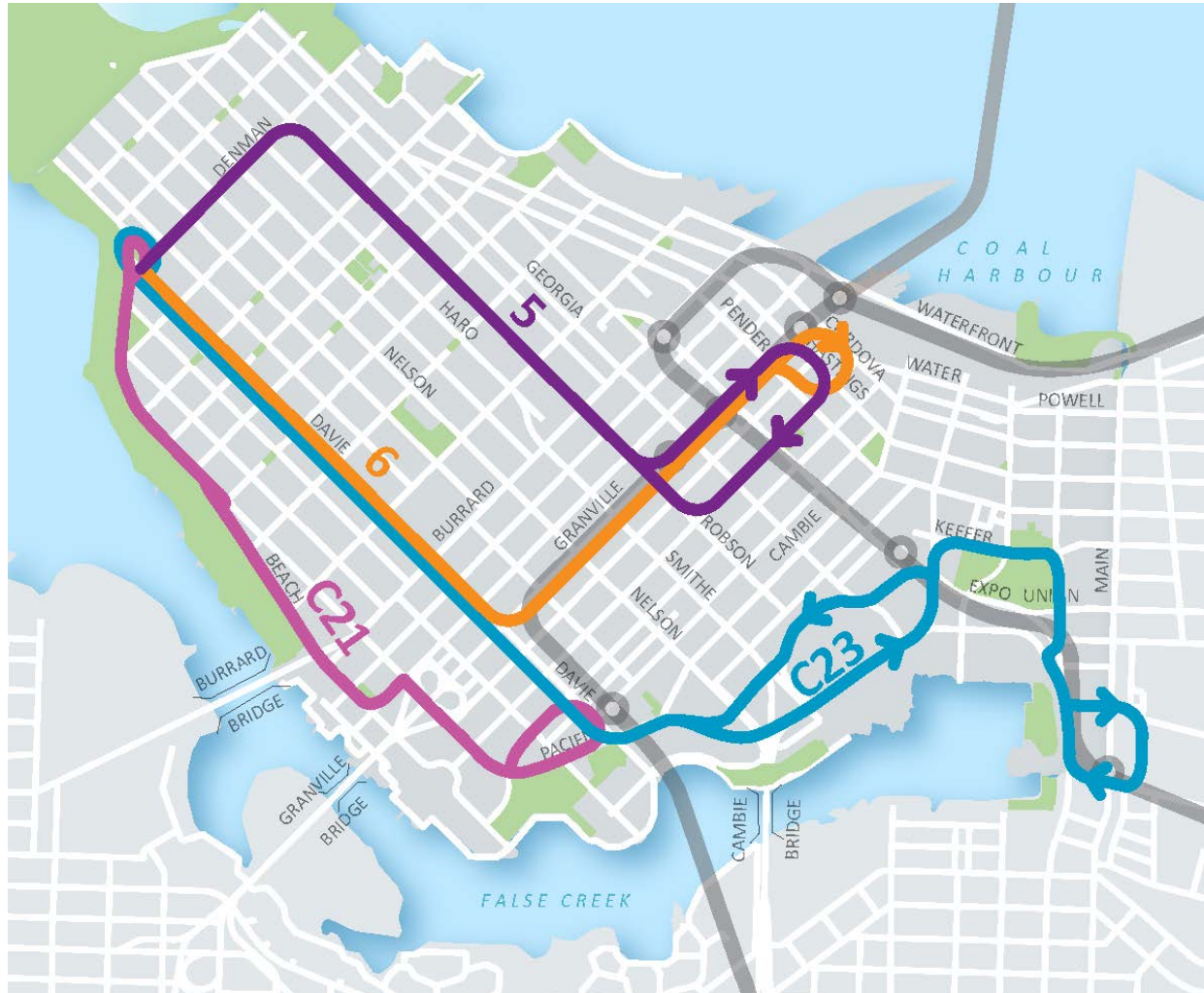
A seasonal approach limits placemaking opportunities and our ability to implement long term transportation solutions.





# Permanent Closure Offers Opportunity For Transit Consistency and Predictability

- Existing route for the #5 Robson

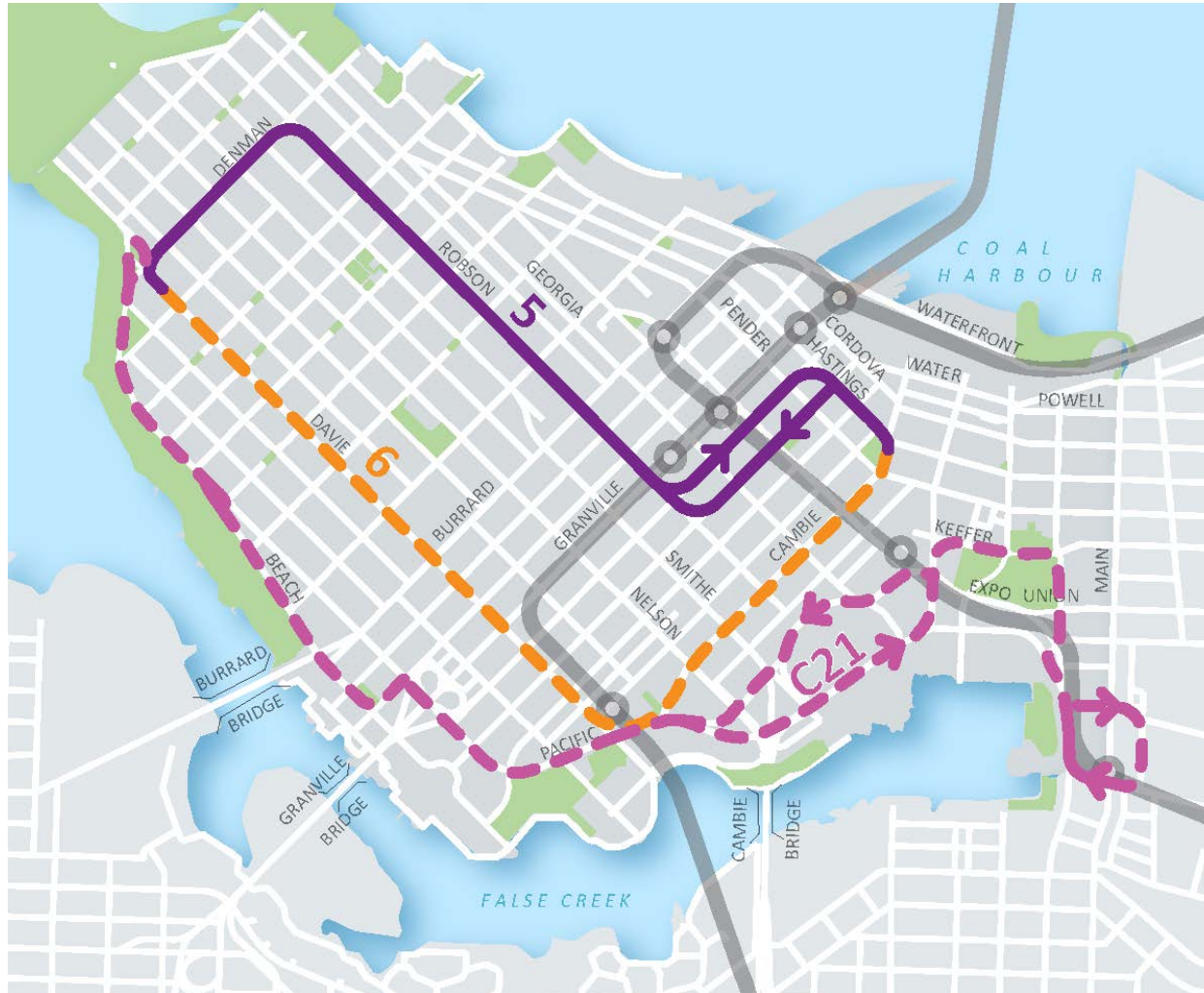


## Downtown Bus Service Review

- Key motivators for undertaking the study
- Significant technical work by City and TransLink staff
- Broad public consultation process

# Permanent Closure Offers Opportunity For Transit Consistency and Predictability

- Preferred route for the #5 Robson with no closures on 800 Robson

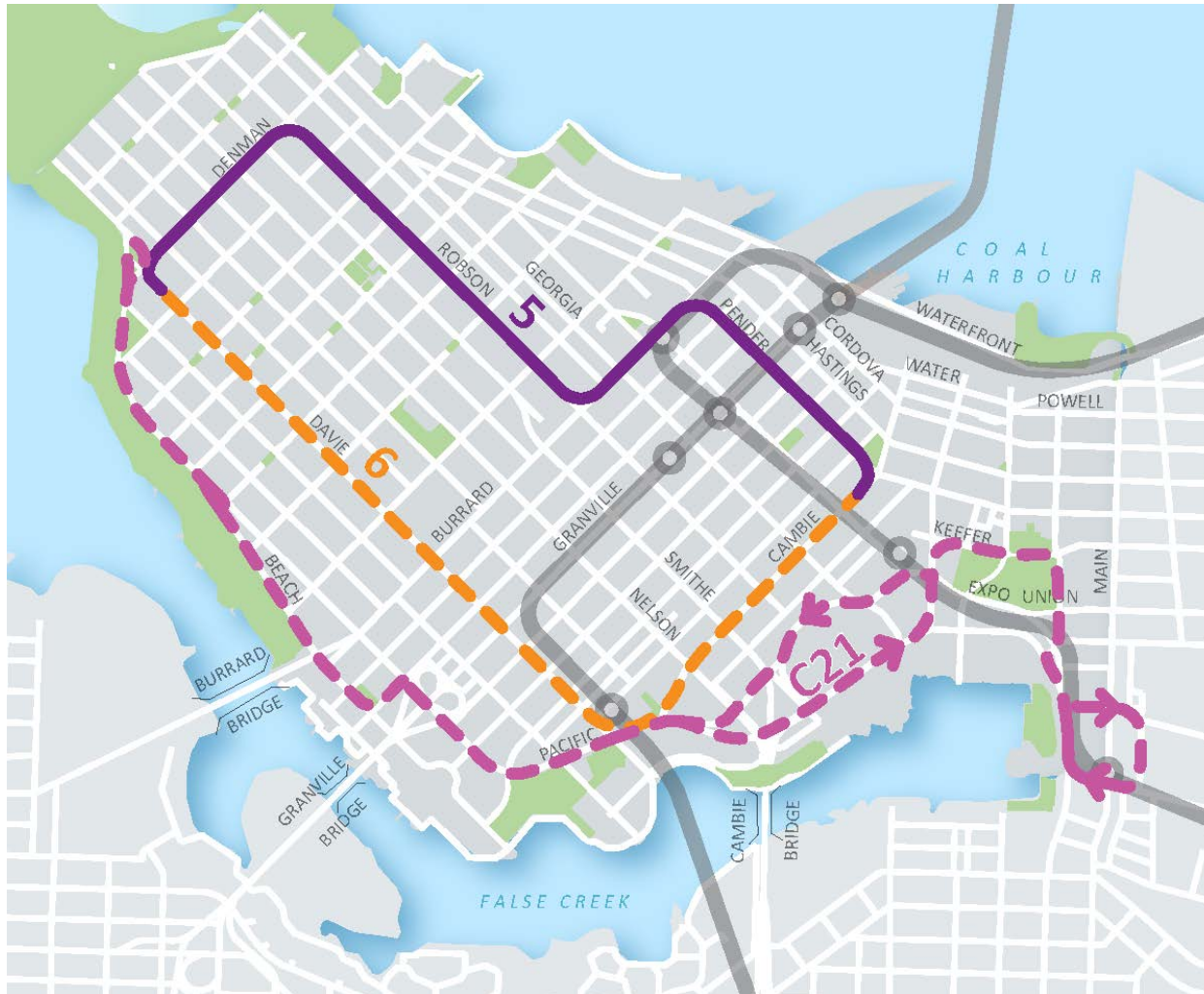


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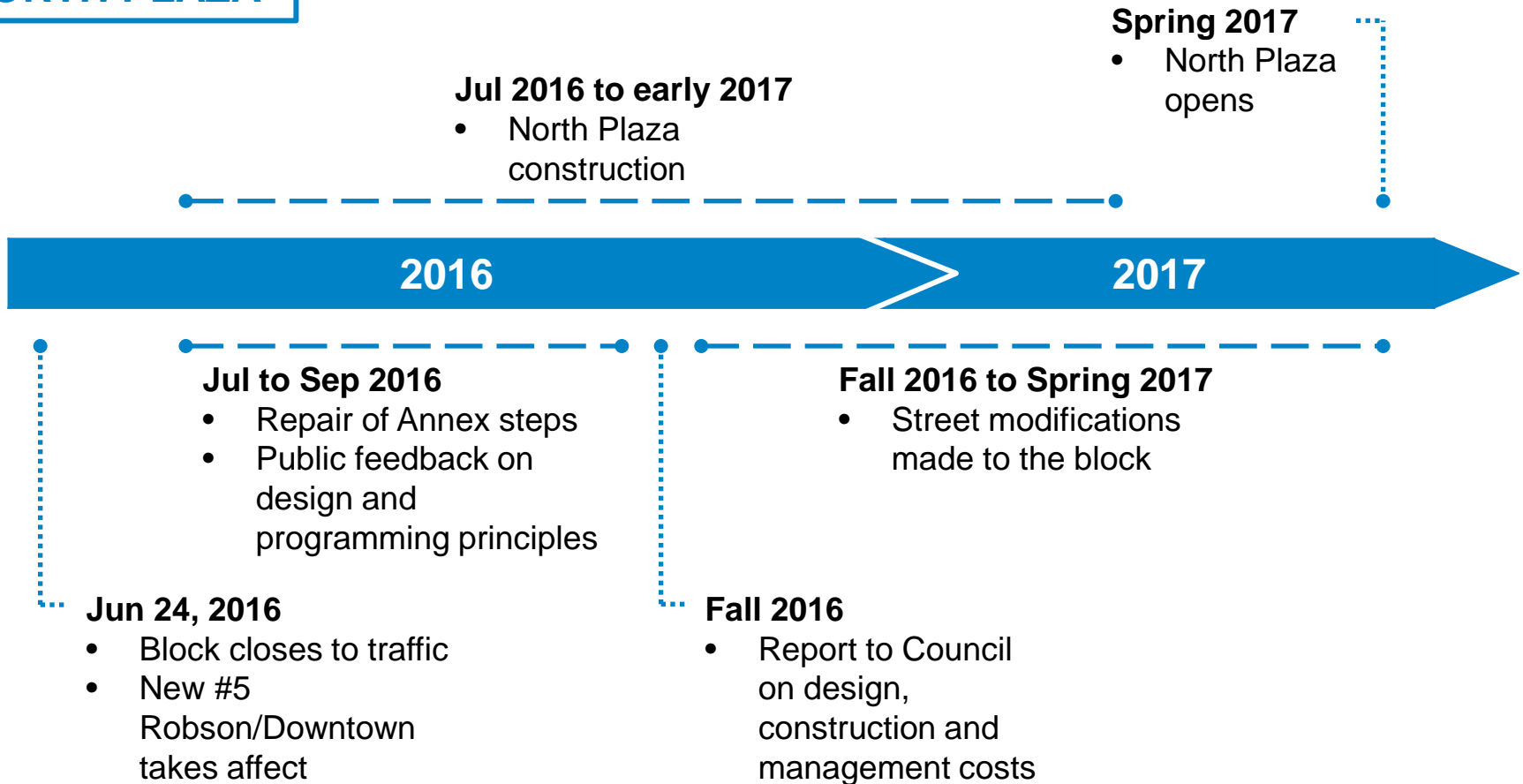
- Preferred route for the #5 Robson with closure(s) on 800 Robson



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## NORTH PLAZA



## 800 ROBSON

# Creating A Plaza in the Heart of Downtown

