Places for People
Downtown Public Space Strategy
City of Vancouver
Council Recommendations

A. THAT Council approve the Downtown Public Space Strategy, as outlined in this report and attached in Appendix A.

B. THAT staff be directed to apply the principles of the Downtown Public Space Strategy to public life and local business COVID-19 pandemic recovery initiatives, and related policy and planning initiatives.

C. FURTHER, that staff be directed to adapt the Strategic Directions to input into city-wide policy, including the Vancouver Plan and community and area plans.
Agenda

01 Public Space & Public Life
   COVID-19 Pandemic

02 Places for People: Downtown
   Public Space Strategy

03 Implementation
   i. Short-term: Public Life, Local
      Business & Mobility Recovery
   ii. Long-term: Building the
        Downtown Public Space Framework
          and Supporting City-wide Recovery
Public Life

- Economic Development
- Attracting & Retaining Talent
- Civic Engagement
- Opportunity
- Trust
- Affordability
- Local Identity
- Health
- Equity & Access
- Sustainability
- Safety
- Resilience
- Social Capital
Public Space
COVID-19 Response & Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that Public Space and Public Life are more important than ever to our communities and the function of our city.
Public space and park use has significantly increased in many parts of the city.
This strategy is the first initiative to come out of Places for People.

Places for People

Downtown Public Space Strategy
A New Approach to Public Space Planning and Design

- People First
  A focus on public life.

- Public Life Data
  Measuring what people do, where they are.

- Participatory Engagement
  Invitation for people to directly participate.

- Intentional Improvement
  Finding gaps in public spaces and public space functions.
Building on
A Legacy of Placemaking and Livability
Mural Programs

Uninterrupted

VIVA Vancouver

Pavement to Plazas

City Studio

Green Streets

and

Innovative Programs & Partnerships
Rich First Nations History and Cultural Foundation

Continue to work with the Musqueam Indian Band, the Squamish Nation, the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and urban Indigenous communities to inform the creation, design and programming of public spaces.
Strategy Objectives

1. Establish clear **Vision and Values** for a holistic public space network.

2. Provides **Strategic Directions** on the delivery, design, use and stewardship of public space.

3. Establish a **Public Space Framework** for short and mid-term actions to accelerate the transformation of the public realm.
Missing high level policy for Downtown.
Demand
Downtown Growth & Increasing Use
The public realm will need to work harder to accommodate more people

137,000 residents
150,000 jobs
Tourism growth

+30,000 residents by 2041
+75,000 jobs by 2041
+ 1000s of visitors daily
Developing the Strategy

Diverse Public and Stakeholder Engagement

13,000+ people engaged at events & online

4,800+ people at pop-up events

150 kids are new Urban Explorers

500+ attendees at speaking events

6 Public Walking Tours meeting and ongoing commitment to Framework for City of Reconciliation

2,500+ people took the online survey

1,200+ participants at Hot Tea - Rain City
Analysis

Public Space & Public Life Study

- 115 locations across the Downtown
- Measuring a diversity of public spaces and activity
- Largest study of its kind completed in North America
- +500 volunteers!
Study Public Life in Public Space

METHODOLOGY

Observe how people use public space

Survey people on their experience of public space

Count movement through public space

Observe who is and who is not using public space

Measure Public Space Quality

Study Seasonality

Summer & Winter

2 Snapshot Days

Weekday + Weekend

Diversity of Spaces

Plazas, parks, streets, laneways, seawall and beaches
Strategic Directions

1. For All, by All
2. The “Right” Supply
3. Design for People
4. Day-long, Year-long
5. Nature and Resilience
6. Connecting Places
For All, by All

Provide public space that feels welcoming and safe for people of all ages, genders, backgrounds and abilities. Encourage people to create, activate and be stewards of public space.
Objective

Work with MST Nations and urban Indigenous communities to create opportunities for their leadership in the creation, design and use of public space.
Objective

Engage women, persons of colour and others who are traditionally under-represented in public space. Develop principles for applying an intersectional lens to public space design and stewardship.

For All, by All

Canada Day - Robson Street, Vancouver
Objective
Develop and adopt universal accessibility design guidelines for transportation design and public realm projects (in progress).

Objective
Explore opportunities to improve access to public restrooms, drinking fountains, and other public hygiene amenities.
Objective
Ensure ongoing engagement with those who most regularly use public space, including persons who are street-involved, to foster more inclusive design and management of public space, and mitigate potential displacement.
The “Right” Supply

Provide an ample, appropriate and equitable supply of public spaces across neighbourhoods.
Objective

Provide a variety of spaces in each neighbourhood, to meet a full range of functions such as socializing, rest and contemplation, commerce, play, celebration, and cultural and civic expression.
Objective

Continue to **innovate, test & create new forms** of public space in street right-of-way, such as pavement-to-plazas, parklets & curbside patios.
Objective
Update POPS policy to help secure, retain & improve these spaces as an integral part of the public realm.

POPS:
Privately owned public space

Park Place Plaza, Vancouver
3

Design for People

Provide high-quality, well-designed and well-managed public spaces to support public life.
Objective

Foster **people-first streets** by using the street-right-of-way **efficiently and creatively**, to maximize public **space** and support a vibrant public life, while maintaining transportation functions.
**Objective**

Supporting infrastructure for zero emissions vehicles.

**Objective**

Ensure public space use to support the film industry.

**Objective**

Continue to provide consistent, appropriate service levels of maintenance and waste management for streets and public spaces.
Objective

Ensure that plazas and gathering spaces have infrastructure to support diverse programming and events.
Day-long, Year-long

Provide safe, welcoming and enjoyable public spaces through all seasons, both day and night.
Objective
Promote creative, rain-friendly programming, including delivering winning entries from VIVA’s Life Between Umbrellas competition.
Objective

Invite a greater variety of people to night life areas, by introducing new day-time and early-evening uses, and adding amenities for safety and comfort (e.g. washrooms and support services).
5 Nature & Resilience

Consider the natural environment, urban hydrology, disaster response and climate resiliency when planning the public realm.
Objective

Create “blue-green” corridors that manage rainwater, contribute to the urban forest, and provide active transportation routes.
Objective

Explore the harvesting and reuse of water from private property as a source of street tree irrigation.

Encourage interactive and educational elements to engage the public on the function of rainwater.
Ensure that the public space network is well connected and easy to navigate for people walking, rolling and cycling.
Objective

Integrate transit stations into the public realm and establish them as gateways to the Downtown.
Objective
Strengthen ‘shore-to-core connections’ by providing enhanced routes for walking, cycling and rolling across the peninsula.
Section 2

Next Steps: Stages of Implementation

1. Apply to recovery work by phasing
2. Integrate into capital projects and future planning
3. Adapt into city-wide planning, including Vancouver Plan and key area plans
Next Steps

1. **COVID Recovery Response Updates**

1. Temporary Murals
2. Temporary Expedited Patio Program (TEPP)
3. Temporary Plazas / Flexible Use Spaces
4. Room to Queue/Move
5. Slow Streets
Response Update
Temporary Murals

- Over 8 weeks
- 122 Storefronts
- 128 Artists
- Partners:
  - Independent Artists and Arts Organizations
  - Independent Property Owners/Tenants
  - Gastown BIA
  - VMF (partnered with Downtown Vancouver BIA, South Granville BIA, Robson BIA, VanCity, Goodbye Graffiti)
Response Update | Temporary Patios

Temporary (June-Oct)
No permit fees
Within 2 business days
Temporary Expedited Patios
Response Update
Temporary Recovery Plazas

- **22 BIAs** Project Coordinator assigned to each interested BIA.
- Ideas range from single temporary patios to multi-block public plazas.
- **9 side street plazas** in development. Linear plazas (curb lane closures) being scoped in 11 BIAs.
- First plazas installed **this week**.
- Close coordination with Translink and other recovery work (R2Q/M, Slow Streets)
NEW – Commerce in Public Space

Developing new ways to allow business activity in plazas

- **Exclusive Use**: Allow businesses to use parking spaces retail, services or commerce (ie. ‘non-restaurant’ patios)

- **Shared Use**: Allow businesses to hold activities in ‘open space’ in side street plazas (ie. fitness classes, market stall, etc.)

License Agreements to allow BIAs to manage, program & steward recovery plazas

Response Update
Flexible Use Spaces
Response Update
Room to Queue

- 15 installed
- Coordinated approach with BIAs and considering requests in non-BIA areas
Response Update
Room to Move

• 2km cycling path on Beach Avenue to complement Stanley Park road closures
• Creates more space for people walking along seawall

5,100 cycling trips per day (average) on Stanley Park Drive at Second Beach
Response Update

Slow Streets

- 24km routes with barriers and signs; ongoing planning to expand.
- Focus on **tactical traffic calming** to reduce motor vehicle volumes on existing routes
Next Steps

2. Integrate into Capital Projects & Future Planning

- Inform better results and coordination of ongoing and planned projects
- No new funding

Examples of Previously Approved Projects

- Bute Street Greenway
- Robson Village Public Realm Improvements
- Waterfront Parks Master Planning
Next Steps

3. Foundation for City-wide Planning

- City-wide and Neighbourhood Public Space Public Life Planning and Studies
- Broadway and Station Area Planning
- Economic Lands & Economy Review
- Climate Emergency Action Plan
Strategic Directions

Provide a foundation for the city-wide public space, public life strategy

1. For All, by All
2. The “Right” Supply
3. Design for People
4. Day-long, Year-long
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6. Connecting Places