



## REPORT

Report Date: March 15, 2022  
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Meeting Date: March 30, 2022  
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TO: Standing Committee on City Finance and Services  
FROM: General Manager, Engineering Services  
SUBJECT: Alcohol Consumption in Public Plazas Policy

### **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council approve the Alcohol Consumption in Public Plazas Policy as generally described in the report and attached in Appendix A.

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report shares results from the 2020 and 2021 pilots of alcohol consumption in public plazas and outlines the Alcohol Consumption in Public Plazas Policy put forward for Council's consideration. Given the success of the two previous pilots, the proposed Policy outlines a framework for a program that would operate similarly. It would enable legal drinking in select public plazas, co-managed by partner stewards, in order to provide lower-cost and flexible socializing options for residents, as well as continued support to local businesses.

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

**December 8, 2021:** Council approved, in principle, amendments to the City Land Regulation By-law No. 8735 to extend the Drinker's Lounge pilot at 111 Princess to March 31, 2022, and instructed staff to bring the by-law forward for enactment.

**July 6, 2021:** Council approved, in principle, amendments to the City Land Regulation By-law No. 8735 to allow a pilot for liquor consumption in three public plazas from July 15 to October 11, 2021, and instructed staff to bring the by-law forward for enactment.

**May 18, 2021:** Council approved, in principle, amendments to the City Land Regulation By-law No. 8735 to allow a pilot for liquor consumption in three public plazas from May 31 to October 11, 2021, and to extend the Drinker’s Lounge pilot to 7 days a week until December 31, 2021, and instructed staff to bring the by-law forward for enactment.

**March 30, 2021:** Council directed staff to revisit the 2020 alcohol consumption pilot to consider timely reactivation of last summer’s pilot plazas, and add any new locations that might equitably support local food and drink services that cannot otherwise provide patio spaces, as well as safe social gathering for Vancouverites.

**February 24, 2021:** Council approved, in principle, amendments to the City Land Regulation By-law No. 8735 to allow a pilot for liquor consumption at a proposed parklet at 111 Princess (“Drinker’s Lounge”) from March 1 to July 31, 2021, and instructed staff to bring the by-law forward for enactment. Council also approved a Social Policy grant totalling \$25,000 to the PHS Community Services Society to support the pilot, and directed staff to report back in Q2 2021 on the implementation and considerations for extension.

**July 29, 2020:** Council approved, in principle, amendments to the City Land Regulation By-law No. 8735 to allow a pilot for liquor consumption in four public plazas, and instructed staff to bring the by-law forward for enactment. Staff were also directed to report back in Spring 2021 on the feasibility of enabling licensed restaurants to allow patrons to consume an alcoholic beverage while waiting for a table adjacent to the food establishment.

**June 23, 2020:** Council directed staff to prepare a by-law pursuant to Section 73 subsections (2), (3) and (4) of the Liquor Control and Licensing Act, to allow a pilot for liquor consumption in select public places under jurisdiction of the City. Staff were directed to create limited spaces for responsible consumption of alcohol in public, and to consult with VPD, VCH, internal stakeholders, local Business Improvement Associations and businesses, to recommend appropriate locations and hours for consumption of alcohol in specified public spaces.

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

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

### ***REPORT***

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

##### Overview of Pilots

On June 23, 2020, Council directed staff to develop a pilot to allow for public consumption of alcohol in designated public spaces. The goal of this motion was to support communities and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the food service industry, and to provide additional opportunities for people to safely socialize in public spaces, in light of public health restrictions on indoor gatherings.

Staff engaged closely with Vancouver Coastal Health (“VCH”), Vancouver Police Department (“VPD”), the Park Board (“Parks”) and internal departments to develop site criteria, management plans, and a monitoring and evaluation plan. Location proposals were received via an

'Expression of Interest' (EOI) issued to local BIAs and community partners. Council approved the Alcohol Consumption in Public Spaces Pilot and the required by-law on July 29, 2020, and the pilot ran from August 10, 2020 to October 12, 2020.

On March 30, 2021, Council approved a motion recognizing the need to support businesses through a time of continued pandemic impacts, including directing staff to consider timely reactivation of 2020-approved pilot sites and new sites for alcohol consumption. Staff again received proposals from BIA and community partners who steward public plazas. Council approved the first three recommended sites for the 2021 pilot on May 18, 2021, and the second pilot began on May 31, 2021. Council approved an additional three sites on July 6, 2021, and these began on July 15, 2021. The pilot ran until October 11, 2021 at all six sites.

<b>2020 Pilot</b>		
<b>Site</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>Dates</b>
šxʷł̓enəq Xwtl'e7én̓k Square	Downtown Vancouver BIA	August 10 – October 12, 2020
Lot 19 Plaza	Downtown Vancouver BIA	August 10 – October 12, 2020
Bute-Robson Plaza	Robson Street Business Association	August 10 – October 12, 2020
Cambie-17 <sup>th</sup> Pop-up Plaza	Cambie Village Business Association	August 10 – October 12, 2020
<b>2021 Pilot</b>		
<b>Site</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>Dates</b>
800 Robson Plaza	Downtown Vancouver BIA	May 31 – October 11, 2021
Cambie-17 <sup>th</sup> Pop-up Plaza	Cambie Village Business Association	May 31 – October 11, 2021
Fraser-27 <sup>th</sup> Pop-up Plaza	Say Mercy! (restaurant)	May 31 – October 11, 2021
Maple-4 <sup>th</sup> Pop-up Plaza	Kitsilano West 4 <sup>th</sup> BIA	July 15 – October 11, 2021
Granville-13 <sup>th</sup> Pop-up Plaza	South Granville BIA	July 15 – October 11, 2021
Granville-14 <sup>th</sup> Pop-up Plaza	South Granville BIA	July 15 – October 11, 2021

During both pilots, staff worked closely with partners to identify, plan for, and mitigate risks associated with public alcohol consumption. Management plans were in place to ensure sites were well-managed on a day-to-day basis, including waste disposal and access to public washrooms. On-site signage was installed to provide information on health and safety resources, guidelines for keeping the plazas safe and comfortable for all users, and how to report emergencies or issues related to unsafe or disrespectful behaviours within the drinking areas.

In 2021, staff adapted the pilot to the presence of the memorial at 800 Robson Plaza for the 215 children whose remains were discovered on the site of the Kamloops residential school. The memorial began in late May and, out of respect, staff delayed the installation of pilot signage referencing alcohol until August and the plaza steward partner (DVBIA) cancelled their planned promotions of the space as a drinking-permitted plaza. These differences, along with reduced furniture and vending activity in the plaza, may have impacted awareness of the pilot in this location.

## Pilot Findings

For both the 2020 and 2021 pilots, monitoring and feedback methods included:

- Online public survey
- On-site public life monitoring
- 311 feedback
- Email feedback
- Partner/stakeholder feedback
- VPD analysis of calls for services
- VCH analysis of alcohol-related emergency department visits

Key findings from both pilots were consistent, with the 2021 pilot allowing staff to confirm and build on 2020 learnings. These findings are summarized below with more detail provided in Appendix B.

Findings confirmed by both pilots include:

- High levels of public and partner support for allowing drinking in public plazas;
- Monitoring did not identify any health, safety or nuisance issues as a result of the pilots;
- Drinking was a regular, but not predominant, activity in the pilot plazas;
- Public drinking took place respectfully and responsibly;
- Allowing drinking had a positive or neutral impact on people's experiences of plazas;
- Pilot sites increased the options available to people with less access to private outdoor spaces;
- Pilots were seen to have a positive or neutral impact on nearby residents and businesses; and
- Primary challenges of the pilots were operational, with portable washroom management and waste servicing the most consistent challenges.

Additional findings from the 2021 pilot include:

- Pilot was similarly successful in a broader range of locations, with new partners, and during a period of fewer pandemic public health measures;
- Continued support for local businesses – in the online public survey, a large majority of respondents who drank alcohol in a pilot site purchased their drinks and/or food from a nearby business;
- Top three selected benefits of pilot in public survey: *'More opportunities to enjoy the outdoors – not everyone has a private yard or patio'* (425), *'more opportunities to enjoy take-out, picnics, and food/beverages'* (246), *'more affordable or accessible than restaurant patios'* (228); and
- Top three selected concerns about pilot in public survey: *'I don't think there are concerns'* (253); *'More waste and littering'* (237); *'People being loud, obnoxious, and creating nuisances'* (185).

## Alcohol in Parks Pilot

Between July and October 2021, the Vancouver Park Board also ran an Alcohol in Parks Pilot at 22 park sites across the city. (The Park Board did not run a pilot in 2020.) Key findings from the pilot include a generally supportive public response to drinking in parks, a need for improved clarity on pilot site boundaries, and a need for more recycling facilities at park sites. Data

analysis by VCH and VPD did not identify recurring health or safety issues resulting from this pilot. On February 7, 2022, the Board passed a motion directing Parks staff to implement a second pilot for 2022, with considerations given to lessons learned in 2021, and to report back with recommendations for next steps beyond the pilot. Parks staff are expected to report back in the spring. If the proposed Policy is approved, City staff will continue to coordinate with Parks staff on next steps for both initiatives.

## ***Strategic Analysis***

### Proposed Alcohol Consumption in Public Plazas Policy

Both the 2020 and 2021 pilots supported residents and businesses by providing a safe social environment for alcohol consumption during the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic public health measures. The benefits of this initiative can extend beyond the pandemic by continuing to enable a lower-cost and flexible socializing option for residents and supporting businesses to expand their take-out offerings.

The proposed Alcohol Consumption in Public Plazas Policy (see Appendix A) is a framework for a continued partner-based program to enable legal drinking in select public plazas. The program is a modest approach that can continue to operate within existing staff and budget resources in the short term, with opportunities to expand to a more comprehensive approach in the future.

The proposed Policy outlines:

- Intent and Principles
- Site Criteria and Requirements,
- Implementation Process,
- Site Management and Monitoring, and
- City and Partner Roles.

Specific locations will remain subject to Council approval on an annual basis.

Prospective sites will be considered through an expression of interest process open to plaza steward partners. Staff will evaluate sites using both partner and locational criteria, including stable and active steward partners, up-to-date management plans, site size and visibility, compatibility of adjacent and nearby land uses, distance to public transit network, public washroom access, capacity and locations of garbage and recycling receptacles, and existing urban health issues or safety concerns within or near sites.

Recommended sites will be brought forward to Council for consideration and by-law amendment once per year, and recommended by-law amendments will allow alcohol consumption on a seasonal basis to start. Future expansion to a year-round program will be considered.

Plazas will continue to be managed by the City and steward partners according to pre-existing agreements and management plans, with added components around signage, public washroom access, and monitoring. In transitioning from the pilots to a longer-term program, specific monitoring and public surveys would be replaced with regular communication with steward partners and other stakeholders; tracking public feedback received via 3-1-1 and email would be ongoing.

### Program Benefits and Opportunities

The two summer pilots demonstrated that there is broad public and partner support for allowing drinking in select plazas, and that it has not resulted in any identified health, safety, or nuisance issues. The proposed Policy would continue to enable spaces for residents to responsibly enjoy an alcoholic drink outdoors whether or not they have access to a backyard or other private outdoor space, and in a way that can be more affordable and accessible than a restaurant patio. Parks-led pilot spaces offer similar opportunities, but plazas are unique in that they are often adjacent to commercial high streets, offering proximity to food and beverage businesses, as well as offering different opportunities for geographical access.

Working toward greater equity and inclusivity in public space is a key goal of this and other public space initiatives. The modest approach taken in this proposed Policy means that, in the short term, the program would remain limited to existing plaza spaces that have interested and sufficiently-resourced steward partners. Where possible, staff will explore discrete projects in collaboration with community partners and social service providers to enable spaces focused on harm reduction and equitable access, such as the Drinker's Lounge parklet in the Downtown Eastside. If additional budget can be secured in the future, opportunities to expand the program toward a more equitable geographic reach can be explored in collaboration with community partners and Parks staff, and additional options for public washroom access can be considered.

The proposed Policy has been informed by stakeholder and partner feedback. Monitoring by VCH and VPD for both pilot seasons did not identify any concerns related to the pilots (see Appendix B for further details). Details of the proposed Policy were shared with VCH and VPD, and no concerns about a continued program were expressed. If the Policy is approved, staff will continue to engage both VCH and VPD to review proposed sites and check in on implementation. Plaza steward partners who participated in the pilots expressed high levels of interest in a continued program, citing benefits of bringing people together and enhancing community enjoyment of plazas.

### Future Considerations

Staff may consider opportunities to further build on the alcohol consumption in public plazas program in future years. These considerations could include:

- Increase eligibility to a broader range of plazas and other public spaces, and seek opportunities to reach underserved areas;
- Seek new partnership opportunities, including with social service providers (e.g. Drinkers Lounge parklet at 111 Princess Ave);
- Explore potential of a year-round alcohol consumption in public plazas program; and
- Explore additional options for public washroom access (as citywide Washroom Strategy progresses).

While the program as currently proposed can be accommodated within existing public space budgets, pursuing some of these future considerations and expanding the program would require additional planning, resources and funding.

### ***Public/Civic Agency Input***

This Policy was informed by feedback from the public, partners, and stakeholders on the 2020 and 2021 pilots (outlined above), as well as additional consultation with partners and stakeholders.

### ***Implications/Related Issues/Risk***

#### ***Financial***

City costs for implementation of needed infrastructure such as portable washrooms, program signage, waste management, and other site specific needs will continue to be managed within existing Engineering budgets. Overall costs will be dependent on the number and type of locations that are approved each year. Costs for the 2021 pilot were approximately \$17,000, including temporary signage, notification mail-outs, and the installation and daily servicing of portable washrooms at three sites. These costs do not include staff time.

#### ***Legal***

All public plazas to be recommended for permitted alcohol consumption, as per the Policy, will be brought forward to Council for approval and by-law amendment. Section 73 of the Liquor Control and Licensing Act (BC) gives the City the authority to designate, by by-law, public places as places where liquor may be consumed, subject to certain requirements as set out in the Act and the Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation.

### ***CONCLUSION***

Allowing alcohol consumption in select public plazas, when managed safely, responsibly, and respectfully, can contribute to a social and engaged public life, and can help support local businesses. Two pilot seasons have demonstrated that there is a high degree of public and partner support for legal drinking in plazas, and have not raised any directly-connected health, safety, or nuisance issues. Should the policy recommendations in this report be approved by Council, the City will develop a continued alcohol consumption in plazas program that builds on the success of the two pilots, and provides opportunities for alcohol consumption in select public spaces, managed in close collaboration with steward partners and other key stakeholders.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Appendix A: DRAFT Corporate Policy – Alcohol Consumption in Public Plazas Policy

### 1. LEGAL

Section 73 of the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act (BC)*, gives the City of Vancouver the authority to designate, by by-law, public places as places where liquor may be consumed, subject to certain requirements as set out in the Act and the Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation. Vancouver City Council must approve amendments to the City Land Regulation By-law No. 8735 in order to designate certain public places over which the City has jurisdiction as places where liquor may be consumed.

### 2. SCOPE

This Policy only applies to select public plazas that are under the jurisdiction of the City of Vancouver, pursuant to Section 73 subsections (2), (3) and (4) of the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*. Public plazas are considered eligible subject to criteria set out in Section 6.

### 3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to set out a framework for a legal alcohol consumption program in select public plazas, after piloting in 2020 and 2021. Specific locations are subject to Council approval.

### 4. ADMINISTRATION OF POLICY

Council has designated the City Manager as the owner and administrator of this Policy. Except where separately authorized in writing by this Policy or the City Manager, this Policy is administered and managed by the City Manager. All sites recommended under this Policy, along with the related by-law amendments, will require Council approval.

### 5. DEFINITIONS

In this Policy, the following terms have the following meanings:

**City** means the City of Vancouver.

**Public Plazas** are community public spaces under the jurisdiction of the City of Vancouver and managed by Engineering Services.

**Sites** are public plazas under consideration or approved by Council for legal consumption of alcohol.

**Steward Partners** are groups including non-profit organizations and community groups, local businesses, and resident groups that hold agreements with the City regarding the management of a specific plaza, and have designated responsibilities to help ensure the plaza is maintained, inclusive, and comfortable.

## 6. POLICY STATEMENTS

The City of Vancouver's public plazas are created to be welcoming, inclusive spaces that foster social connections, provide space for diverse uses, and support a vibrant public life. These plazas are co-stewarded by the City and place-based community partners, including non-profit organizations and community groups, local businesses, and resident groups. The City recognizes that permitting responsible alcohol consumption in select plazas can contribute to social connection and a more vibrant public life, while supporting local businesses.

### 6.1 Principles

This Policy is guided by the following principles, which are applicable to all City of Vancouver public plazas. Permitting alcohol consumption in select plazas is intended to operate in such a way that it contributes toward, and does not conflict with, these foundational principles:

- *A Focus on Public Life* – Plazas play a vital role in enabling neighbourly interactions by providing space for community events, celebrations, protests, and other activities. To fulfill these roles, plazas should be clean, safe and well-lit, and feel secure at any time of the day and night.
- *Inclusive of all People* – Plazas should be spaces where every person feels safe, welcome, and a sense of belonging. Plazas should be inclusive and inviting destinations for all residents and visitors, and maintain a balance of uses and user groups.
- *Fostering Partnerships* – Plazas should be managed in collaboration with place-based partners, with input from members of the public. A partner-based approach to stewardship is essential to fostering community involvement and a sense of community ownership.
- *Range of Uses and Experiences* – Plazas should encourage dynamic and adaptable uses all year round and throughout the day. Plazas provide a rich range of experiences, from people watching, gathering, eating, playing, recreation, learning, and respite. In keeping with neighbourhood context, a balance should be achieved between passive quieter uses and active programming or events.
- *Reflective of Community Character* – Plazas should reflect local community character. The community should feel a sense of pride for the space and have opportunities for involvement through everyday use, programming and place-making, and direct participation in stewardship.
- *Open to New Ideas* – Plaza design and management are constantly evolving. The approach to the stewardship of these spaces must also be innovative, flexible, and adaptable.

### 6.2 Site Criteria and Requirements

6.2.1 Eligible sites include permanent, semi-permanent, and pop-up plazas within Vancouver.

6.2.2 Sites will be considered using the following process:

- The City will release a Request for Expression of Interest (RFEOI) outlining program requirements to all eligible plaza steward partners.

- Interested steward partners must respond with required information by the published deadline.
- 6.2.3 City staff will consider the following partner criteria and requirements before bringing any site forward to Council for a by-law amendment to permit public alcohol consumption:
- Plaza must have a stable and active steward partner or partners.
  - Steward partners must have an existing, up-to-date letter agreement with the City of Vancouver, including a plaza agreement/stewardship plan.
- 6.2.4 City staff will consider the following location criteria before bringing any site forward to Council for a by-law amendment to permit public alcohol consumption:
- Site characteristics (e.g. size, accessibility)
  - Compatibility of adjacent land uses including, but not limited to:
    - Proximity to child- and family-oriented facilities including playgrounds, schools, childcare centres, and community centres
    - Proximity to facilities involved in legal and criminal processes including courthouses and police stations
    - Proximity to liquor stores, cannabis stores, and adult entertainment
  - Public washroom access
  - Capacity and locations of garbage and recycling receptacles
  - Walking distance to public transit network

### *6.3 Implementation Process*

- 6.3.1 Recommended sites will be brought forward to Council for a by-law amendment once per year, typically in the spring.
- 6.3.2 Recommended by-law amendments will include a context map and/or site plan, dates that permitted public alcohol consumption will begin and end, and daily hours when public alcohol consumption will be permitted.
- 6.3.3 The City reserves the right to suspend permitted alcohol consumption in a plaza and/or rescind the by-law authority for legal alcohol consumption in that site. Reasons to suspend this use or rescind the by-law include, but are not limited to:
- Permitted alcohol consumption is becoming problematic, as identified by partner(s), VPD, or City staff.
  - The plaza is being physically removed.

### *6.4 Site Management and Monitoring*

Public plazas with permitted alcohol consumption will be co-managed by the City and steward partners according to existing plaza agreements and stewardship plans, with the following additional components:

- 6.4.1 Public washroom access

- Proximity to available public washrooms is critical to mitigating potential issues related to litter and public urination, in addition to making spaces more welcoming and responsive to general public needs.
- If public washroom access is to be provided within a nearby business or community facility, the steward partner is responsible to ensure the access is maintained and/or to alert the City if there any changes necessitating an alternative washroom solution.
- If public washroom access cannot be provided within a nearby business or community facility, the City will provide a portable washroom through a contractor for the duration that the by-law amendment permitting alcohol is in effect. Steward partners are responsible for daily locking and unlocking and for alerting City staff or contractor to servicing needs.

#### 6.4.2 Signage

- City-provided signage to be installed at all sites, to clearly communicate the extent of the location and hours that alcohol consumption is permitted.
- All sites required to clearly communicate public washroom access, either on-site or directions to a nearby publicly accessible facility.

#### 6.4.3 Monitoring

- City staff will monitor sites in the following ways:
  - Regular check-ins with steward partners
  - Feedback from key stakeholders including Vancouver Police Department and Vancouver Coastal Health
  - Feedback from residents, businesses, and community organizations

### *6.5 Summary of City and Partner Roles*

#### 6.5.1 The role of the City in administering the Alcohol in Public Plazas program includes:

- Issuing an annual RFEOI to eligible plaza steward partners with up-to-date program information and requirements;
- Reviewing and recommending partner-submitted sites according to established criteria;
- Submitting sites and by-law amendments for Council approval, to permit alcohol consumption during specified dates and hours;
- Maintaining current program information on City website and communications materials;
- Funding and managing the contract for portable washrooms for sites where access to an existing public washroom cannot be provided by an adjacent business or organization;
- Creating and installing signage on sites to communicate key program information and public washroom access;
- Documenting feedback on program and addressing issues as necessary; and
- Carrying out general plaza management responsibilities as outlined in existing plaza agreement / stewardship plan.

6.5.2 The role of partners in the Alcohol in Public Plazas program includes:

- Responding to RFEOI with required information by the published deadline;
- Ensuring program signage remains in place for duration of program;
- Promoting responsible alcohol consumption on site through their own communication materials, if desired;
- If portable washroom is installed, responsible for daily management and requesting servicing as needed;
- Alerting City staff to any alcohol-related issues, questions, concerns, or feedback in a timely manner; and
- Carrying out general plaza management responsibilities as outlined in existing plaza agreement / stewardship plan.

## Appendix B: 2020 and 2021 Pilot Findings

Summary of monitoring and feedback methods:

<b>Method</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Online public survey (respondents could select general and/or site-specific feedback)	590 responses (including 517 general and 73 site-specific)  Most respondents live near pilot plazas: 30% of respondents who offered site-specific feedback live within two blocks of the plaza, and another 43% live in the neighbourhood, but further than two blocks away	659 responses (including 567 general and 297 site-specific)  Most respondents live near pilot plazas: 69% of respondents who offered site-specific feedback live within two blocks of the plaza, and another 22% live in the neighbourhood, but further than two blocks away
On-site public life monitoring (30 min shifts at varied times and days of the week)	143 total shifts, 44 with observed drinking activity	113 total shifts, 26 with observed drinking activity
311 feedback	3 contacts	6 contacts
Email feedback	2 emails	16 emails
VPD	Analysis of calls for services at all 4 sites	Analysis of calls for service at all 6 sites
VCH	Analysis of alcohol-related emergency department visits	Analysis of alcohol-related emergency department visits

Detailed pilot findings:

- High levels of public and partner support for allowing drinking in public plazas
  - 2020 public survey: Agree/disagree question not asked, over three-quarters of written comments were supportive
  - 2021 public survey: 84% of respondents strongly agree and 8% somewhat agree with allowing drinking in plazas; top selected concern regarding pilot in public survey: *'I don't think there are concerns'* (253)
  - 2021 email and 311 feedback: over half of contacts expressed support for pilot
  - Positive feedback from plaza steward partners and high interest in a continued program
  
- Monitoring did not identify any health, safety or nuisance issues as a result of the pilots
  - During both pilots, VPD reported no concerns with safety or nuisance issues in the designated sites, and did not report any safety or nuisance issues outside of the designated sites caused by or related to the pilot
  - VPD calls for service at 2021 pilot sites do not show notable increases over 2019 and 2020 (with the exception of 800 Robson, where calls increased for the Robson Square complex as a whole, with no evidence of connection to the pilot)

- Limitation of findings: does not account for situations where police were not called
  - At one 2021 location (800 Robson), stakeholders raised concerns that alcohol consumption may not be compatible with adjacent uses/tenancies, and related concerns about nearby safety and nuisance issues
  - During both pilots, VCH Emergency Department visit data shows no significant changes in alcohol-related ED visits during the pilot as compared to non-pilot periods
    - Limitations of findings: individuals may visit emergency departments without mentioning alcohol use, cases with mild symptoms may not present at hospital, analysis does not account for the long-term impacts of alcohol consumption
- Drinking was a regular, but not predominant, activity in the pilot plazas
  - 2020 public survey: On their last visit, 28% of respondents visited the plaza primarily to enjoy alcohol outside, 49% visited primarily for another reason but drank alcohol while there, and 24% visited for another reason and did not drink alcohol
  - 2020 on-site monitoring: Drinking activity was observed during 44 on-site monitoring shifts (31% of total), with 200 people observed drinking
  - 2021 public survey: On their last visit, 14% of respondents visited the plaza primarily to enjoy alcohol outside, 40% visited primarily for another reason but drank alcohol while there, and 46% visited for another reason and did not drink alcohol; On their last visit, 73% of respondents reported observing at least one person outside their group drinking in the plaza
  - 2021 on-site monitoring: Drinking activity was observed during 26 on-site monitoring shifts (23% of total), with 80 people observed drinking
  - 2021 partner feedback: Steward partners reported daily drinking at some plazas
- Public drinking took place respectfully and responsibly
  - 2020 public survey: Most respondents agreed (77%) or somewhat agreed (10%) that other people using the plaza on their last visit were being respectful and responsible
  - 2021 public survey: Most respondents agreed (91%) or somewhat agreed (5%) that other people using the plaza on their last visit were being respectful and responsible
  - 2020 and 2021 on-site monitoring: People were drinking quietly and no safety or nuisance issues were observed
- Pilot had a positive or neutral impact on people's experiences of plazas
  - 2020 public survey: 25% of respondents felt their sense of safety and/or welcomeness in the pilot plazas improved and 55% felt it remained the same when visiting during the pilot (13% didn't know or had no opinion); 70% of respondents felt the pilot made their experience at the plaza more enjoyable and 17% felt it was the same as before the pilot (1% didn't know or had no opinion)
  - 2021 public survey: 30% of respondents felt their sense of safety and/or welcomeness in the pilot plazas improved and 61% felt it remained the same

when visiting during the pilot (4% didn't know or had no opinion); 60% of respondents felt the pilot made their experience at the plaza more enjoyable and 30% felt it was the same as before the pilot (2% didn't know or had no opinion)

- Pilot increased the options available to people with less access to private outdoor spaces
  - 2021 public survey: Top three selected benefits of pilot: *'More opportunities to enjoy the outdoors – not everyone has a private yard or patio'* (425), *'more opportunities to enjoy take-out, picnics, and food/beverages'* (246), *'more affordable or accessible than restaurant patios'* (228)
  
- Pilot was seen to have a positive or neutral impact on nearby residents and businesses
  - 2021 public survey: 61% of respondents felt the pilot had a positive impact on nearby residents and 24% felt it had no real impact; 71% of respondents felt the pilot had a positive impact on nearby businesses and 15% felt it had no real impact; Over two-thirds of respondents who drank alcohol at a pilot site purchased drinks at a nearby business (within 2 blocks), and over two-thirds also purchased food from a nearby business (within 2 blocks)
  - 2021 partner feedback: Steward partners reported biggest benefits were bringing people together and community enjoyment
  
- Primary challenges of the pilot were operational
  - Commonly cited challenges from partners were: providing public access to washrooms, daily management of temporary public washrooms (installed at 3 sites), and increased waste
  - Aside from washrooms, management issues were consistent with general plaza stewardship (waste servicing, cleaning, maintenance)
  - Washroom access remains the most consistent barrier and operational challenge