



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: September 24, 2024
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Meeting Date: October 23, 2024
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities
FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services
SUBJECT: Gastown Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot Update

Recommendations

Option A

THAT staff proceed with a summer 2025 Water Street Pedestrian Zone, including key enhancements as outlined in this report.

OR

Option B

THAT staff do not proceed with a summer 2025 Water Street Pedestrian Zone and, while continuing to invest in and support the Gastown neighbourhood, update the scope of the Gastown Public Spaces Plan to focus on a concept design for Water Street and Maple Tree Square to allow for flexibility into the future, as outlined in this report.

Purpose and Executive Summary

Following [Council direction in May 2023](#), the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot ran from July to August 2024. This report provides an overview of the summer 2024 pilot and summarizes the key findings from the data and feedback that was collected. Based on these findings, staff recommend proceeding with a summer 2025 Water Street Pedestrian Zone, with improvements from the 2024 pilot in the following areas:

A. *Business participation and community awareness:*

- extend the length of the pedestrian zone to 3 months to incentivize more business participation;
- in collaboration with community partners, develop a marketing and promotion strategy for regional visitors;
- continue 2024 fee waiving and flexible business uses; and
- refine and streamline available permitting tools to improve business experience.

B. *Pedestrian experience and neighbourhood access:*

- pilot interim two-way Cordova St to improve access and circulation;
- move tour bus stops to Cordova St to improve the pedestrian experience on car-light blocks; and
- maintain the two car-free zones (Richards-Cambie block and Maple Tree Square) and explore how to improve the pedestrian experience on the two car-light blocks in collaboration with local businesses, community organizations, the Gastown Business Improvement Society (GBIS) and local Nations staff.

C. *Community safety and cleanliness:*

- continue 2024 street cleaning service levels;
- explore a permanent public washroom on Water St as part of a broader initiative to add more washrooms in the Downtown Eastside; and,
- continue to deliver a coordinated community safety approach.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

- [Report, Street Vending By-Law Amendments to Temporarily Waive Small Patio and Display Unit Fees to Support the Water Street Pilot, May 7, 2024](#)
- [Report, Gastown Summer 2024 Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot, February 7, 2024](#) provides direction to proceed with a two-month pilot over July and August 2024.
- [Council Motion, “A People-Focused Gastown: A Bold, Forward-Looking Vision for a Vibrant and Prosperous Neighbourhood”, May 10, 2023](#)
- [2023 – 2026 Capital Plan](#) allocates \$17.7M for Gastown Streets.
- [City of Vancouver’s United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP\) \(2022\)](#)

City Manager’s Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

In February 2024, Council directed staff to test a two-month pedestrian zone on Water St, following the completion of interim paver repairs in Maple Tree Square. The pilot was a key learning opportunity to help inform: the approach to a pedestrian-first Water St being explored in the Gastown Public Spaces Plan, city-wide street use programs, and any future pedestrian zones in Vancouver.

The layout of the pedestrian zone aimed to create an enhanced pedestrian experience with two car-free zones at each end of Water St, while maintaining motor vehicle access to the middle two blocks of Water St for residents, businesses, and visitors, including tour buses (see map in

Appendix A). The timing of the construction and pilot enabled a coordinated traffic-management plan, which was in place between March 2 and September 6, 2024. The most significant change to traffic patterns was the redirection of all westbound traffic from Powell St at Main St. An overview of changed traffic patterns can be found in Appendix A.

During Spring 2024, staff engaged businesses and adapted existing street use programs to help storefront businesses more easily use additional street space during the pilot period.

Opportunities included: i) new or expanded patio footprints; ii) more flexible design options for patios and merchandise displays; iii) vending at shared market stalls; iv) live music adjacent to patios; and v) stewardship of public seating as an alternative to installing a small patio.

In addition, staff streamlined processes and relaxed program guidelines to further encourage businesses' participation, including: i) waived application and permit fees; ii) expedited licensing by the LCRB; iii) temporary increased occupant loads for patios (e.g. added seats); iv) staff support in design and permitting processes; and v) a new, low-barrier Open Streets permit process. Twenty-three businesses in Gastown participated in these pilot opportunities.

Building on programming led by the Gastown Business Improvement Society (GBIS), the new Open Streets permit provided a free and easy process – as well as some limited funding – to support community-led activations in the Pedestrian Zone. Over the pilot, more than 80 family-friendly events were scheduled, ranging from small-scale recurring activities to larger one-off events like the fully car-free Open Streets Day on August 31. The City also supported two annual partner-led events the *Gastown Grand Prix* and *Meet Me in Gastown*, as well as the GBIS's new placemaking feature in Maple Tree Square, the Gastown sign. To promote day-to-day activity, designated busking zones were also created along Water St.

In partnership with Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, staff supported the creation of storytelling boards and planter art-wraps as an initial step towards supporting the visibility of local Nations on their traditional lands.

Street cleaning services were increased in the neighbourhood during the pilot, including additional litter collection, sidewalk cleaning and supplemental micro-cleaning. In addition, staff worked with the GBIS and community partners to coordinate an enhanced community-safety approach, including: a neighbourhood peer ambassador program with Mission Possible; a gender-based safety program with Good Night Out; and additional support for event days with a peer group from Embers.

To raise awareness of the Pedestrian Zone, and supplement ongoing engagement and outreach within the neighbourhood, the City promoted the pilot through (90+) social media posts, news releases, digital newsletters, community postering, signage and paid advertising, reaching over 1.8M impressions across all platforms.

Discussion

The Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot was an important learning opportunity. Throughout the pilot, staff were in frequent communication with stakeholders, businesses and residents in Gastown, and, where possible, responded immediately to feedback and concerns. This included working with the Port of Vancouver to minimize impacts of vehicles short-cutting on Waterfront Rd; making changes to improve circulation on Powell St between Columbia St and Main St; better managing curbside use on Carrall St; and increasing wayfinding signage and regional promotion of the pilot.

Staff also developed a comprehensive monitoring and data collection plan to learn about the public and business experience of the pilot. This included:

- Public engagement (see Appendix B);
- Business-specific engagement (see Appendix C);
- Economic study (see Appendix D);
- Public life observations and intercept surveys (see Appendix E); and,
- Pedestrian, cycling, and traffic counts at key locations (see Appendix F).

Key findings from the Summer 2024 Pedestrian Zone Pilot are summarized below.

Public Experience

Survey results showed that 84% of people had a positive experience visiting the Water Street Pedestrian Zone and are interested in the Pedestrian Zone returning in future summers. The response from Gastown residents was slightly lower with 79% wanting to see the Pedestrian Zone return. Participants shared that they liked the vibrancy of the street and that it was a comfortable place to visit, shop and spend time. When asked how the Pedestrian Zone could be improved, the top responses were: a desire to make the Pedestrian Zone more car-free, improve the pedestrian experience in the car-light areas, and continue activating the street to increase vibrancy and sense of safety. (See Appendix B)

Overall, there was a 35% increase in visitors walking along Water St, with a 56% increase on weekdays, compared to pre-pilot counts. Additionally, daily bike and micromobility volumes on Water St increased by 75%. (See Appendix F) About 60% of visitors were locals (within Metro Vancouver) and 37% were tourists from elsewhere in BC or beyond. (See Appendix E)

Business Experience

Of the businesses who responded to the business survey, 59% support the Pedestrian Zone to return and 35% do not support future summer Pedestrian Zones. Those who supported the pilot appreciated the vibrancy of the Pedestrian Zone and felt that the pilot increased the sense of safety in the neighbourhood. Some, though not all, also reported an increase in revenue. Those who did not support the pilot felt that Pedestrian Zone decreased the sense of safety in the neighbourhood, discouraged local and regional customers due to more limited vehicle access, and led to a decrease in business revenue. Those who did not support the pilot often noted that investment should instead focus on basic services and infrastructure.

Common themes from both supporters and non-supporters of the pilot were appreciation for: the vibrancy of the Richards to Cambie block near the Steam Clock, the new and expanded patios and additional furniture, and the enhanced cleaning services. Suggested improvements included: improving local access and circulation, the need for a public washroom, and a strategy to draw visitors past the Steam Clock toward Maple Tree Square. In general, however, businesses expressed divergent views about whether the pilot was an overall success.

Of the 23 businesses who participated in new opportunities for business uses in the street, 74% found these opportunities to be valuable. Some businesses shared that the short duration of the pilot and late confirmation of available tools was a barrier to their participation. Businesses' participation was also impacted by the Gastown Grand Prix on July 10th, with some businesses needing to remove and install patios shortly after the pilot launch, and others choosing to not install until after the event, leading to a slower overall start-up for the pilot.

Overall, 41 of 89 business respondents expressed interest in participating in a future pedestrian pilot, with many saying that they would participate if they had more time to plan and a longer period to benefit from their investment in patios, vending and programming opportunities. (See Appendix C). In addition, the GBIS also conducted its own survey of its members on their experience of the pilot in late July 2024. (See Appendix G)

Economic Trends

Broader national and global economic trends in the retail and food sectors provide an important context for the business experience of the pilot. In 2023, the post-pandemic economic recovery began to slow and 2024 has seen a further economic downturn. In line with these broader macro-economic trends, Gastown businesses have seen a decline in sales in 2024.

It is difficult to assess the impact of the pilot on business sales in Gastown, however the data suggests that the pilot had a positive impact, despite sales being down in comparison to 2023. Business sales in Gastown underperformed the downtown peninsula prior-to and during construction in Maple Tree Square whereas during the Pedestrian Zone (July to mid-August) Gastown sales outperformed the downtown peninsula. Business sales in Gastown also improved during the Pedestrian Zone by approximately 5% compared to earlier in the year. For a summary of the economic impact assessment, see Appendix D.

Transportation Network, Access and Circulation

As a result of the detour at Main St and Powell St, vehicle traffic redistributed across the wider transportation network with the most tangible increase occurring on westbound Hastings St and Keefer St as well as southbound on Main St. Traffic volumes also initially increased significantly on Waterfront Rd after the closure was implemented, but quickly dropped below pre-closure levels after the Port of Vancouver operated a checkpoint on Waterfront Rd, which restricted access to certain authorized vehicles. Corresponding to these increases in traffic volumes, delays in transit were observed on Hastings St and for buses travelling along the Powell St/Main St/Pender St route. Staff installed transit priority measures in response and the impact to buses travelling along Powell St/Main St/Pender St route was reduced.

Staff also heard concerns from businesses and tour bus operators about challenges with access to the neighbourhood. In particular, the need to travel on Hastings St and inconvenient pick-up and drop-off locations that some businesses noted discouraged their customers, including those traveling by taxi, ride-share or tour bus.

Overall, the transportation network impacts resulting from the pilot were manageable, but there are opportunities for improvement to support neighbourhood access and circulation, as well as reduce ongoing traffic management efforts. (See Appendix F)

Safety and Cleanliness

There was an overall positive response to enhanced cleaning services during the pilot. A common request, however, was for public washrooms – both to provide a free and convenient facility and to help keep the streets and laneways clean.

Sense of safety is an ongoing concern in the neighbourhood, which includes concerns related to homelessness, open drug use, vandalism and theft. Some businesses felt that the pilot contributed to an increase in issues in the neighbourhood, whereas others felt it made the neighbourhood feel safer. Public survey results had low mentions of safety concerns (5.5%), and more respondents mentioned an increase in perceived sense of safety in the area (20%).

On-site peer providers did not observe significant changes in terms of community safety concerns during the pilot. (See Appendix H)

Staff Recommendation

Following previous [Council direction](#) to move toward a bold vision to pedestrianize Water St, and based on key findings from the 2024 Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot outlined above, staff recommend to continue learning by proceeding with a summer pedestrian zone in 2025, with enhancements in the areas outlined below. In addition, investments can continue in the neighbourhood for sidewalk repairs and Trounce Alley rehabilitation.

A. Business participation and community awareness:

- Extend the timing of the pedestrian zone to approximately 3 months to incentivize businesses to participate and invest in expanded uses on the street;
 - Exact dates to be determined in Fall 2024 in discussion with businesses and partners, with consideration for the timing of Grand Prix and cruise ship season;
 - Provide early support to businesses on ideas and strategies for how to benefit most from a pedestrian street;
- Continue to offer tools and streamlined permitting processes to encourage business uses and community activations, including: waiving fees for street uses within the pilot area, relaxed program guidelines, enhanced vending and programming opportunities, extending the boundary of the pilot zone to better include adjacent areas within Gastown, collaboration with partners to support potential increased occupant load (i.e. added seats), and temporary licensing for pilot patios;
 - Further refine the above tools from the 2024 pilot based on business feedback, and confirm and communicate these opportunities earlier; and,
- In collaboration with partners, develop a regional marketing and promotion strategy.

B. Pedestrian experience and neighbourhood access:

- Pilot an interim 2-way street design on Cordova St from Richards St to Gore Av to improve access for visitors, residents, and service providers, and test the implications for motor vehicles and transit on surrounding streets. This will inform the approach to longer-term improvements, and will involve ongoing collaboration with TransLink and EasyPark. It will also include exploring design and circulation improvements on Powell St between Main St and Maple Tree Square to better connect the neighbourhood;
- Move pick-up and drop-off locations for tour buses to Cordova St to improve pedestrian experience on car-light blocks and create more space for seating and placemaking features. This will encourage visitors to walk through more of the neighbourhood and can be paired with an updated wayfinding strategy;
- Maintain two car-free zones (Richards St to Cambie St and Maple Tree Sq) and explore how to improve the pedestrian experience along the car-light blocks (from Cambie St to Carrall St) to better connect all blocks of Water St and draw visitors to Maple Tree Square, in collaboration with local businesses, community organizations, the GBIS, and Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh staff;
 - Potential improvements could include: more seating and placemaking features, supporting additional community-led programming and activations, and/or further limiting motor vehicle access on these two blocks based on partner feedback;
- Develop an updated, comprehensive access strategy including: improved pick-up and drop-off locations for taxi and rideshare; loading and delivery; wayfinding and access signage strategy; and promotion of access options in collaboration with the GBIS; and,

- Work with community partners on the car-light blocks and access strategy over the coming months and update Council on approach in early 2025.

C. *Community safety and cleanliness:*

- Continue with enhanced cleaning approach during pilot;
- Explore a new, standalone, permanent public washroom on Water St to provide a facility in the core of Gastown. This would be a part of a broader initiative to add more permanent public washroom facilities in the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood; and,
- Continue to deliver a coordinated community safety approach.

Alternative (Option B)

If Council does not wish to proceed with a Summer 2025 Water Street Pedestrian Zone, staff can continue to support the Gastown neighbourhood by enabling community-led activations and programming, and business-led stewardship of moveable public furniture. Businesses will also be permitted to install patios and help activate the public realm through existing street use programs, within current guidelines and fee structures. In addition, immediate investments can continue as planned for sidewalk repairs and reconstruction of Trounce Alley adjacent Blood Alley Square, as well as a potential new permanent public washroom on Water St.

With this alternative Council direction, staff recommend updating the scope of the Gastown Public Spaces Plan to focus on a concept design for Water St and Maple Tree Square for initial implementation in the 2027-2030 capital plan. This design would accommodate motor vehicles and have the flexibility to adapt over time and more easily support car-free events and weekend or seasonal pedestrian zones in the future. This approach would help focus planning efforts on immediate areas of needed repair and allow for streets and spaces to evolve over time.

Financial Implications

2024 Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot:

The 2024 Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot cost approximately \$1,100,000 in public realm investments and another \$1,000,000 in transportation and traffic changes. Assets put in place for 2024 will be reused in 2025 with a value of \$350,000 for construction/ traffic management and \$250,000 for furniture/ amenities, totaling \$600,000.

Potential 2025 Water Street Pedestrian Zone:

Staff expect the following costs for the three-month Water Street Pedestrian Zone in 2025:

- Public space improvements (recurring annually as needed): up to \$1,400,000, including: i) reuse of 2024 pilot furniture and additional furniture and placemaking features, including those identified in collaboration with Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh; ii) enhanced cleaning and peer support services for 3 months; iii) implementation; iv) traffic management including support for Port of Vancouver for Waterfront Rd; and v) promotion and marketing.
- Transportation improvements (one-time costs): up to \$1,150,000 as follows: i) interim traffic signal changes and street design for a two-way Cordova St from Richards St to Gore Av at \$1,000,000, and if successful, further investment will be needed over time on Cordova St to improve the signal infrastructure and the street design; and ii) additional monitoring and data collection is anticipated to cost \$150,000.

- Washroom (one-time costs): A standalone, permanent public washroom facility on Water St is estimated at \$300,000.

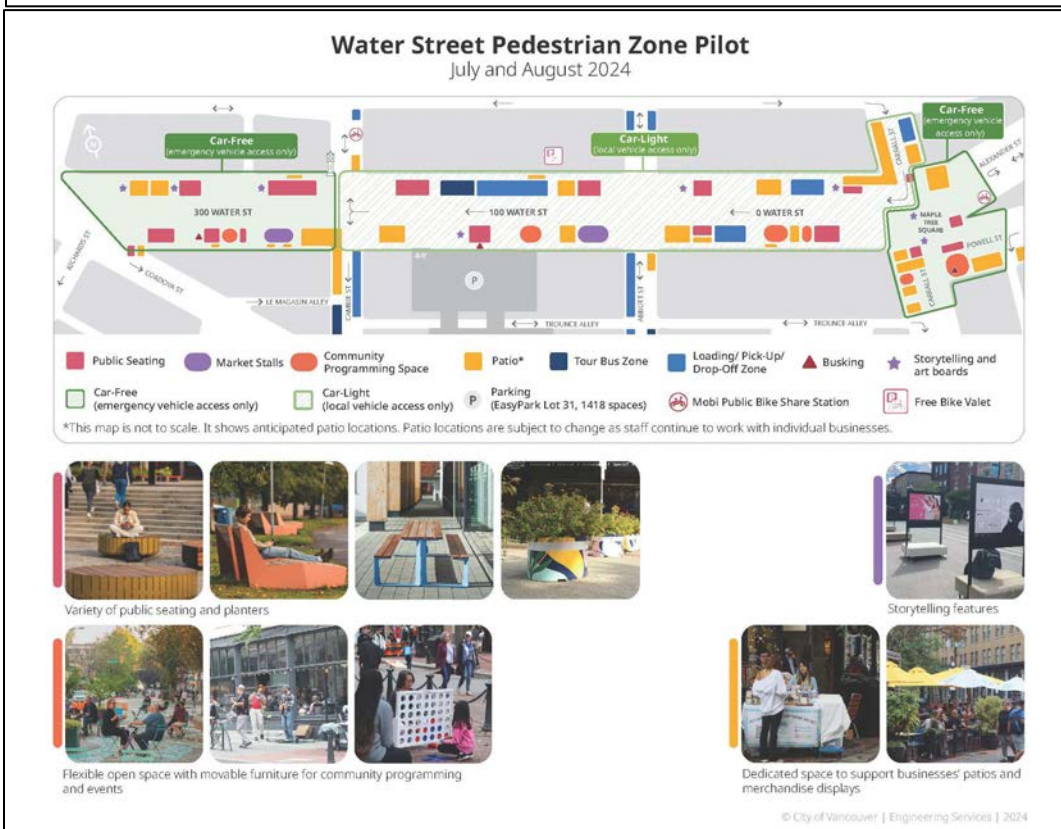
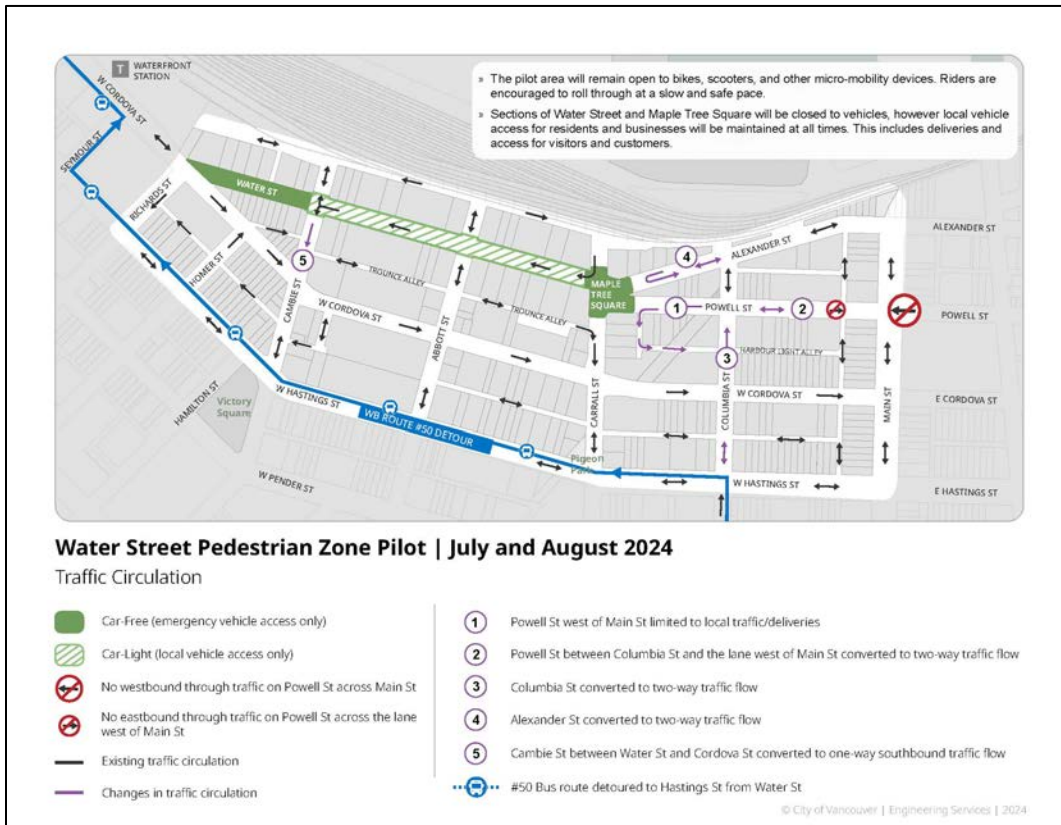
All of the above would be funded from the existing Gastown Capital budget for 2023-26, with the exception of ongoing operational costs for the standalone washroom.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report’s recommendations.

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APPENDIX A Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot – 2024 Design



APPENDIX B

Public Feedback and Survey Results

Overview

Staff gathered feedback from the public about the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot through:

- 140 emails and 311 cases,
- 4 community pop-up events with over 250 conversations, and
- targeted conversations with resident groups and community organizations serving equity-denied groups.

Staff also conducted a **public survey** and received **1,824 responses** about people's experience of the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot. The public survey was live on Shape Your City from July 18 to September 2 and was promoted through:

- City's social media channels and website,
- community notification letters,
- signage throughout the Water Street Pedestrian Zone, and
- 4 community pop-up events.

In addition, staff did business-specific engagement, including with tour bus operators and tourism organizations, see Appendix C.

General Public Feedback

- Overall, staff heard positive feedback from the general public, including Gastown residents, about the pilot. A common theme was that the area felt more vibrant, lively and welcoming. Many noted that there was less noise and pollution from motor vehicles.
- Staff also heard some concerns about challenges related to access and circulation in the neighbourhood.
- Some Gastown residents were concerned about noise from unpermitted buskers, music and people, as well as the extent of expanded patios in public space.
- Community organizations serving equity-denied groups noted that they had received positive feedback that having less cars and the vibrancy of the area made it feel safer and more welcoming.

Public Survey Results

Who Staff Heard From

- 79% of survey respondents live in the City of Vancouver with 15% living in Gastown
- 53% of survey respondents identify as a man and 36% identify as a woman
- 63% of survey respondents are between 25 to 44 years old. Younger adults between 18 to 24 years old and seniors over 65 years old were less represented at 6% respectively
- 7% of survey respondents identified as a person with a disability, medical condition, or other mobility constraint

Key Findings

1) Most people had a positive experience of the Water Street Pedestrian Zone

- 84% of survey respondents who had visited the Water Street Pedestrian Zone had a positive or somewhat positive experience while 15% had a negative or somewhat negative experience (Figure 1).

2) Most people want the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot to return in future summers and want more pedestrian zones elsewhere in Vancouver

- 84% of survey respondents want the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot to return in future summers while 14% do not want it to return (Figure 2). 85% of survey respondents want more pedestrian zones elsewhere in Vancouver while 8% do not (Figure 3).

3) Top 5 things people liked about the pilot:

- a. Livelier, more vibrant/European atmosphere (1 in 3 respondents)
- b. Car free areas/pedestrian-only zones (1 in 5 respondents)
- c. Places to rest/eat (1 in 6 respondents)
- d. Safer/more comfortable to walk, cycle, use a mobility device (1 in 6 respondents)
- e. Less cars (1 in 7 respondents)

4) Top 5 things people disliked about the pilot:

- a. Car-light areas felt confusing, unsafe and disruptive (1 in 7 respondents)
- b. Concerns over traffic and circulation (1 in 10 respondents)
- c. Challenges for businesses (1 in 17 respondents)
- d. Discomfort and safety concerns over presence of homelessness (1 in 18 respondents)
- e. Discomfort and safety concerns over open drug use (1 in 21 respondents)

5) Top 5 things the City should do more of or improve on:

- a. Make it permanent (1 in 4 respondents)
- b. Make the entire street car-free, extend the Pedestrian Zone (1 in 7 respondents)
- c. More pedestrian spaces like the Water Street Pedestrian Zone in Vancouver (1 in 10 respondents)
- d. More/better street furniture (1 in 19 respondents)
- e. More street performers, artists, vendors (1 in 19 respondents)

6) Many Gastown residents had a positive or somewhat positive experience and want the pilot to return in future summers.

- 273 Gastown residents took our community survey
- 78% of Gastown residents had a positive or somewhat positive experience compared to the overall at 84%.
- 79% of Gastown residents want the pilot to return in future summers compared to the overall at 84%.

- Many Gastown residents liked the expanded patios, but some residents were concerned that expanded pilot patios were too big and took away too much public space in Maple Tree Square.
 - Increase in noise pollution from unpermitted busking and speakers was a key concern for Gastown residents.
- Improvements to the safety and cleanliness of the area, as well as increasing police and security presence, was important to some Gastown residents.

Figure 1. "How do you feel about your overall experience of the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot?" (n=1723)

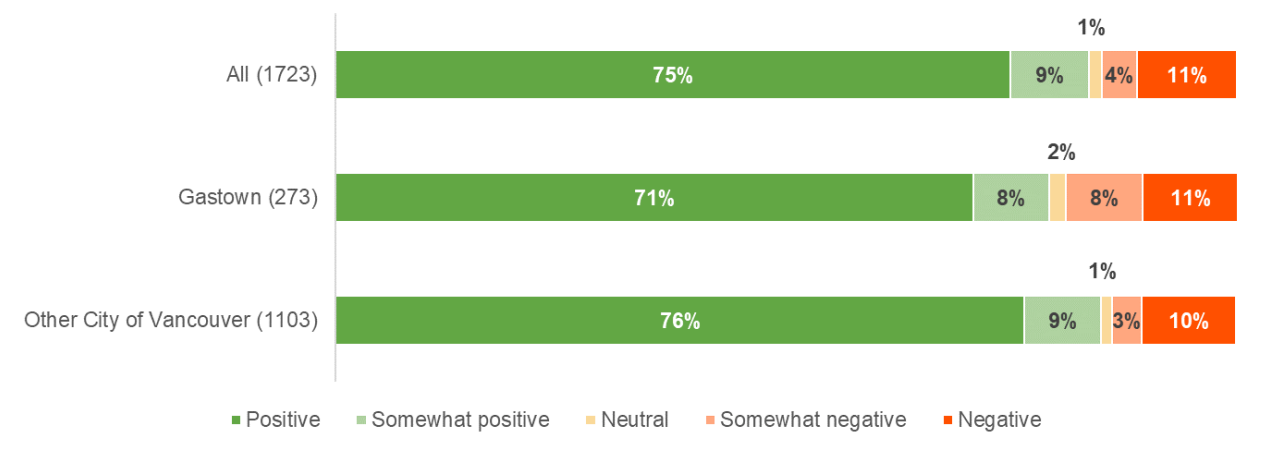


Figure 2. "Are you interested in the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot returning in future summers?" (n=1824)

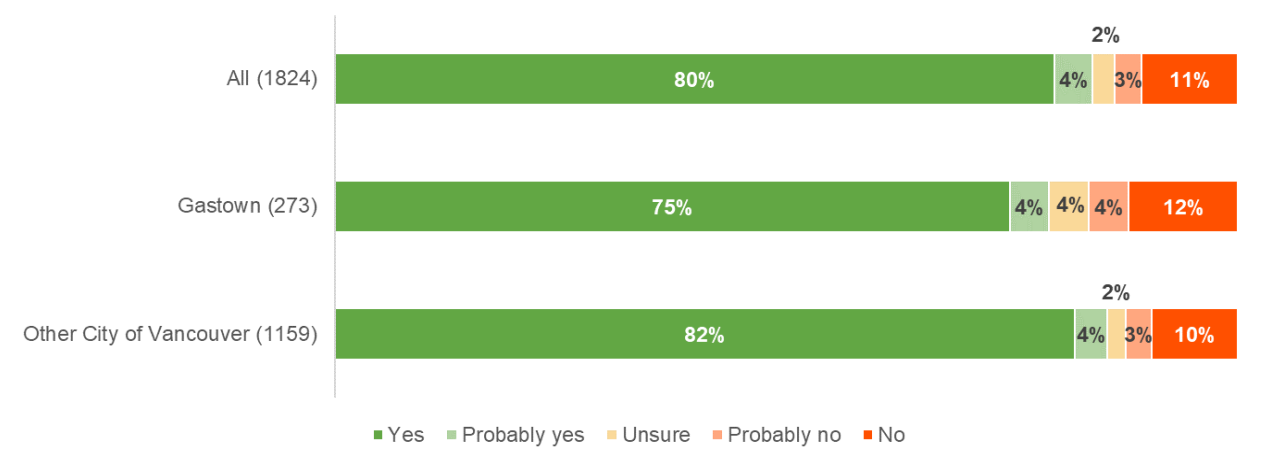


Figure 3. "Would you like to see more pedestrian zones elsewhere in Vancouver?" (n=1824)

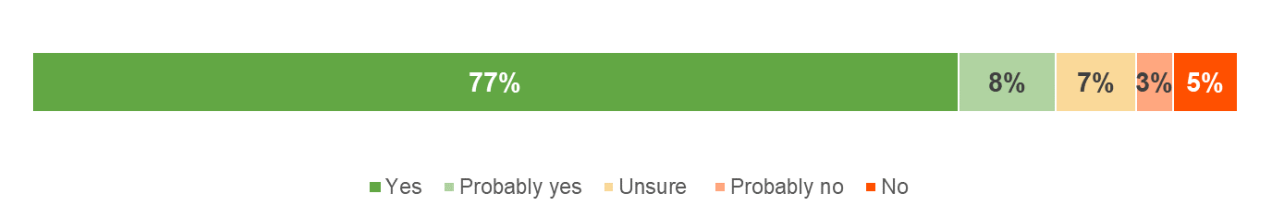


Table 1. What did you like about the Water Street Pedestrian Zone? (n=1824)

Theme	Mentions
Livelier, more vibrant/European atmosphere	561
Car free areas/pedestrian only zones	381
Places to rest/eat (e.g. seating, benches, tables, street furniture)	332
Safer/more comfortable to walk, cycle, use a mobility device	315
Less cars (less traffic, less noise, less pollution)	264
Increased space to walk/move around	248
Increased sense of safety in the area	226
Makes Gastown more attractive and inviting	181
Places to hangout, gather and linger in the area	160
Street performers, artists, and vendors	159
Patios (larger, more options, activates space)	154
More people in the area	114
More comfortable atmosphere to shop and eat	113
Increased sense of community	108
Creates a draw to Gastown (first-time visits, would visit again/more often)	96
Events, programming, and activities	79
Supports Gastown businesses (more foot traffic, easier access)	64
Cleaner and upgraded streets/street materials	50
Easier to navigate the area and increased accessibility	48
Historic look and feel of the area	32
More opportunities to learn about the history of the area	29
Increased public art in the area	23
Landscaping and increased amount of plants/greenery	22
Option for secure bike parking at the Bike Valet	20
Range of businesses/restaurants	16

Table 2. What did you dislike about the Water Street Pedestrian Zone? (n=1824)

Theme	Mentions
Car-light areas felt confusing, unsafe and disruptive	268
Concerns over traffic and circulation (harder to access Gastown, park, make deliveries)	187
Challenges for businesses (less foot traffic, loss of revenue, etc.)	107
Discomfort and safety concerns over presence of homelessness	100
Discomfort and safety concerns over open drug use	87
Lack of and difficulty parking	69
Difficult to move around for people walking, biking, rolling (shared streets, conflicts, speed, volumes, street furniture)	85
Quiet uninviting atmosphere (empty streets, unengaging, no community feeling, etc.)	53
Signage (unclear, too much, etc.)	51
Feeling of being unsafe in area	51
Increased noise (street performers, crowds, tour buses, street cleaning)	37
Street furniture (amount of furniture, placement, design)	35
Increased busyness of the area	34
Lack of transportation options (re-routing of #50 bus line)	34
Discomfort and safety concerns over crime and theft	32
Tour busses (idling, noisy, polluting, drop off zones, blocking road)	31
Amount and smell of smoking in the area	29
Lack of marketing and awareness for events/activities	26
Drop off/loading areas for vehicles	21
Too many patios	20
Patios taking up too much space	19
People loitering in the area	15
Limited access to washroom facilities	14
Car free areas	14
Closures and circulation on Powell St	13
Project cost	12
Street performers, artists and vendors	10
Conflicts between active transit users and vehicles	10

Table 3. What should the City do more of or improve on (n=1824)

Theme	Mentions
Make it permanent (a permanent feature of Gastown, year-round, brought back)	408
Make the entire street car free, extend the Pedestrian Zone	245
More pedestrian spaces like the Water Street Pedestrian Zone in Vancouver	188
More/better street furniture (seating, tables)	97
More street performers, artists, vendors	96
Make it cleaner	84
Have more events, activations, and programming in Gastown	70
Improve street/sidewalk condition/surface (cracks, uneven surfaces, etc.)	60
Better/clearer signage (clearer delineation of space)	56
Add bike lane and more bike infrastructure	54
Police/security presence (bylaw/traffic enforcement)	48
Increase amount and size of patios	45
More landscaping and greenery	44
More shops/restaurant options in the area	41
Improve pedestrian safety (retractable bollards, barriers, traffic calming, lighting)	36
Add more parking, loading zones, and pick-up/drop-off locations	35
Add more weather protection infrastructure	34
Support those experiencing homelessness in the area	28
Make pilot a shorter day/week/weekend approach	25
Improve marketing and awareness for Gastown businesses, events, and initiatives (i.e. Bike Valet)	22
Create more secure bike and micromobility parking	19
Increase transit options and frequency	19
Help address open drug use/drug addiction	19
Let cars move through the space freely again	19
Increase and improve access to public washroom facilities	19
Improve traffic and circulation to the area	15
Create a more accessible environment for all	12

Table 4. Feedback from Gastown residents

Total Survey Results (n=1824)		
Rank	Theme	Mentions
Likes		
1	Livelier, more vibrant/European atmosphere	561
2	Car free areas/pedestrian only zones	381
3	Places to rest/eat	332
4	Safer/more comfortable to walk, cycle, use a mobility device	315
5	Less cars	264
Dislikes		
1	Car light areas felt confusing, unsafe and disruptive	267
2	Concerns over traffic and circulation	189
3	Challenges for businesses	109
4	Discomfort and safety concerns over presence of homelessness	95
5	Discomfort and safety concerns over open drug use	87
Improvements		
1	Make it permanent	408
2	Make the entire street car free, extend the Pedestrian Zone	245
3	More pedestrian spaces like the Water Street Pedestrian Zone in Vancouver	188
4	More/better street furniture	97
5	More street performers, artists, vendors	96

Gastown Residents Survey Results (n=273)		
Rank	Theme	Mentions
Likes		
1	Livelier, more vibrant/European atmosphere	111
2	Car free areas/pedestrian only zones	53
3	Places to rest/eat	51
4	Less cars	45
5	Patios	41
Dislikes		
1	Concerns over traffic and circulation	43
2	Discomfort and safety concerns over presence of homelessness	31
3	Discomfort and safety concerns over open drug use	30
4	Car light areas felt confusing, unsafe and disruptive	22
5	Increased noise	21
Improvements		
1	Make it permanent	66
2	Make it cleaner	22
3	Make the entire street car free, extend the Pedestrian Zone	22
4	Police/security presence	20
5	Have more events, activations, and programming in Gastown	16

Figure 4. Where do you live?

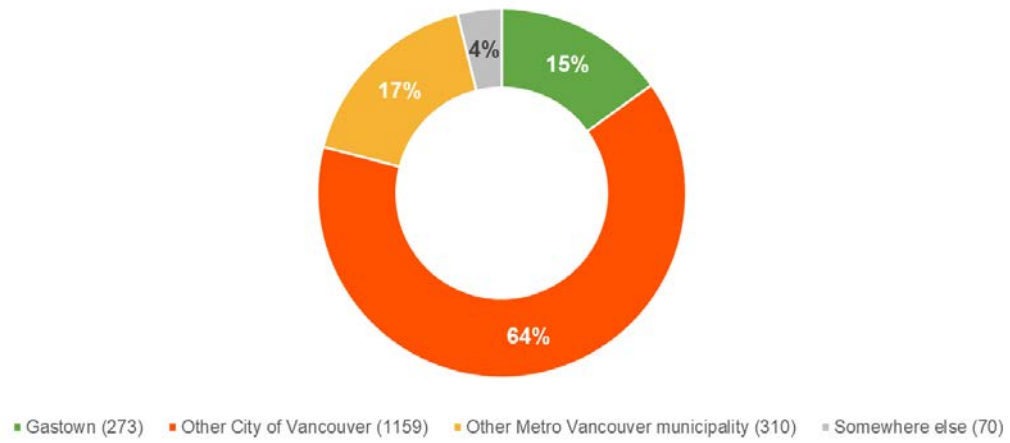


Figure 5. How would you describe your gender identity?

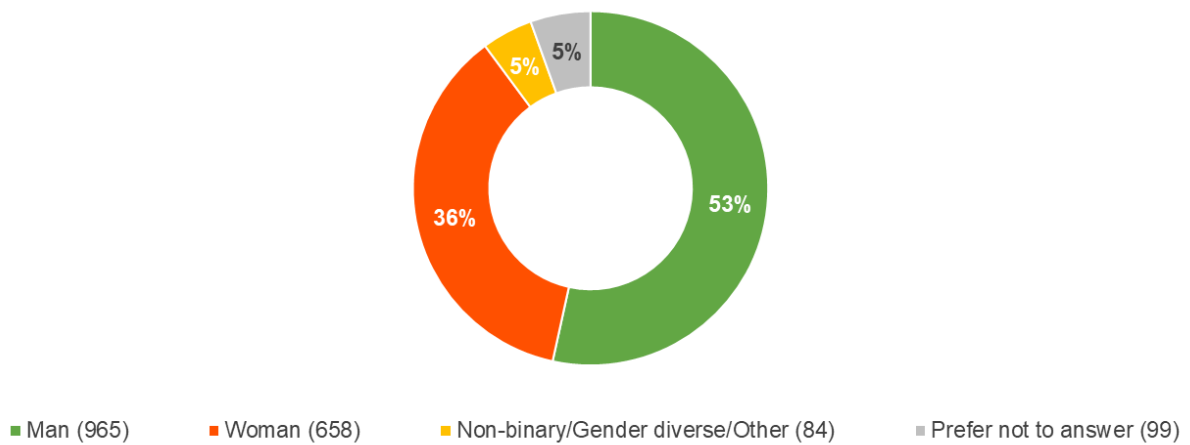
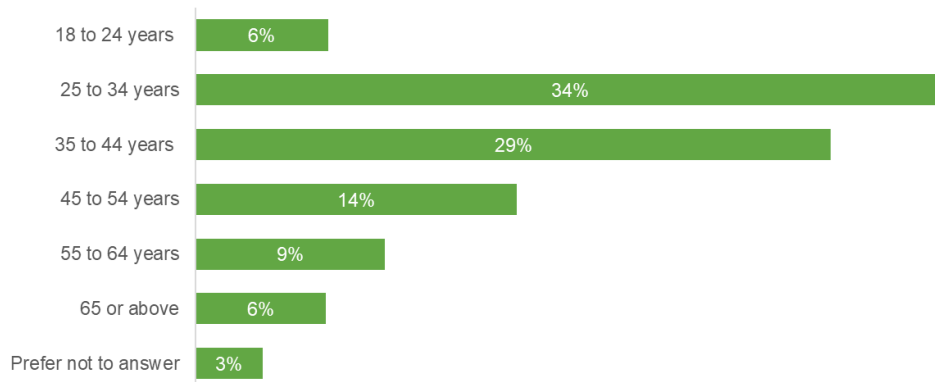


Figure 6. What age group do you belong to?



* * * * *

APPENDIX C

Business Feedback and Survey Results

Overview

Staff gathered feedback from businesses about the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot through:

- visiting over **100 storefront businesses** within and adjacent to the Water Street Pedestrian Zone on a weekly basis to troubleshoot issues and gather feedback;
- weekly meetings with the **Gastown Business Improvement Society (GBIS)** to coordinate various initiatives and problem-solve emerging issues;
- organizing over **25 1-on-1 interviews** with interested business and property owners to discuss and learn directly about their experience of the pilot; and,
- surveying and meeting with **tour bus operators and tourism organizations** to learn about their experience of the pilot.

Staff also conducted a **business-specific survey** and received **89 responses** from Gastown businesses on their experience and impact of the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot. The business survey was live from August 18 to September 2, and was promoted through:

- community notification letters,
- emails to businesses, and
- Gastown Business Improvement Society (GBIS).

Staff also conducted virtual interviews with businesses and went door-knocking within and adjacent to the Water Street Pedestrian Zone to administer the survey. Overall, 62% of storefront businesses within the Water Street Pedestrian Zone completed the survey.

In late July, the GBIS also conducted their own survey of their members (see Appendix G).

General Business and Property Owner Feedback

- Most of the businesses staff engaged through door-knocking or 1-1 interviews completed the business survey, and their feedback is best captured through the survey results below.
- Overall, there were divergent perspectives about the pilot shared with staff from all business types (e.g. retail, restaurants, services, etc.) and from property owners.
- Staff heard from property owners that positive perception of the neighbourhood is vital and the key contributor to property values and ability to lease spaces. Most felt like neighbourhood needed investment in infrastructure and basic services, and they were concerned about the poor image of Gastown today. Some felt like the pilot contributed to this poor image by increasing the visibility of homelessness and drug use and making it seem harder to get to Gastown by car. A few felt like the pilot was promising because it created a more positive image of the neighbourhood and so would benefit property values and businesses over time.
- Tour bus operators noted significant issues with access and circulation, particularly needing to travel along Hastings St to access the neighbourhood. Some said they would be ok with stopping on Cordova St, others preferred Water St.

homelessness and crime, increased noise, challenges with loading and delivery, and confusion or discomfort in car-light areas.

- Suggestions for improvements include improving access and circulation, establishing a better draw to Maple Tree Square, providing public washrooms, increasing marketing and awareness and better wayfinding and visual cues.

2. Overall, food and beverage businesses were more supportive of the pilot returning than retail businesses and reported higher increases in foot traffic to their business and revenue

- Food and beverage businesses are more supportive of the pilot returning at 63% than retail businesses at 54%.
- Food and beverage businesses reported a higher increase in foot traffic to their businesses at 49% than retail businesses at 42%.
- Food and beverage businesses reported higher increases in revenue at 45% compared to retail at 39%.

3. Businesses reported a range of impacts of the pilot, including for promotion, foot traffic, and revenue

- 49% of businesses thought the **promotion** of the neighbourhood had a positive impact on their business while 33% said it did not have a positive impact.
- 41% of businesses reported an increase in **foot traffic to their business** this summer while 35% of businesses reported a decrease.
- 37% of businesses reported an increase in **revenue** this summer while 40% of businesses reported a decrease.

4. Businesses on 300 block and 100 block of Water Street were more supportive of the pilot returning, reporting higher increases in foot traffic to their business and revenue, while those in Maple Tree Square were less supportive, citing decreases in both foot traffic and revenue

- Businesses located on Water Street were more supportive of the pilot returning with 100 block of Water Street at 80% and 300 block of Water Street at 74% compared to 47% in Maple Tree Square.
- The highest increase in foot traffic to businesses was reported on 100 block of Water Street at 60% and 300 block of Water Street at 57% with the highest decrease reported in Maple Tree Square at 59%.
- The highest increase in revenue was on 100 block of Water Street and 000 block of Water Street at 50% each with the highest decrease in revenue reported in Maple Tree Square at 59%.

5. Destination businesses were less likely to support the pilot and were more impacted by the traffic circulation changes

- Some destination businesses (e.g., high-end retailers, fine dining, specific services) that rely on customers who seek out their unique product offerings or experiences did not feel they benefitted from increased pedestrian volumes during the pilot. These businesses also serve clientele that rely more on vehicle access and, as a result, these businesses were more impacted by the loss of on-street parking and traffic circulation changes.

6. Support for the pilot returning was not always correlated to an increase in reported revenue

- Businesses that support the pilot returning reported both increases and decreases in sales. Many acknowledged a net benefit to their business beyond immediate sales, and/or believed that sales may have been lower without the pilot (wider economic downturn).
- Businesses that do not support the pilot returning reported a decrease or no change in sales this summer while some were unsure. Many attributed the decrease in sales to the pilot.

7. 23 businesses participated in new permitting opportunities for the 2024 Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot including 15 new and expanded patios, 2 live music for patios, 5 stewarded public seating areas, 1 merchandise display and 2 shared market stalls

- New or expanded pilot patios provided additional patio seating above their approved maximum occupant load. 14 of 15 participating businesses reported no noticeable or significant impacts (e.g. longer lineups, additional cleaning etc.) to their washrooms that could not be adequately met with their existing washroom capacity. One business reported there were longer line ups.
- Key reasons why businesses did not participate included:
 - Safety concerns (homelessness, open drug use, theft)
 - Lack of awareness of the available opportunities (e.g., waiving of fees, possible uses, permitting process)
 - Resource constraints (additional spaces would require dedicated staff and budget)
 - Physical constraints (public space clearances)
 - Pilot was too short for investment/ROI in participation
 - Did not suit their product line (e.g., furniture or controlled substances), business style or clientele (high-end)

8. 74% of the 23 participating businesses reported that the new permitting opportunities were valuable

- What participating businesses found valuable:
 - Increased visibility and helped draw customers
 - Increased seating capacity and revenue potential

- Level of support from City staff (permitting/licensing, facilitated design)
- Suggestions for improvements:
 - Some businesses want to extend pilot duration to maximize on investment and good weather
 - Businesses want more certainty on pilot timing and available opportunities to better prepare for staffing and operational needs
 - Continue to streamline permitting processes and reduce touchpoints
 - Minimize impacts on neighbouring storefronts (visibility and access)
 - Relax patio design guidelines to enable weatherproofing features

9. Out of the 89 business respondents, 41 businesses have expressed interest in participating in a future pilot for the following permitting opportunities

- 21 interested in installing new patios
- 11 interested in reoccurring live music for patios
- 10 interested to stewarding bistro tables & chairs
- 15 interested in adding merchandise displays
- 13 interested in using a shared market stalls
- Of the 41 businesses that have expressed interest in future participation:
 - 14 business participated in the 2024 Pilot
 - 33 businesses are located within and 8 adjacent to the Water Street Pedestrian Zone

Figure 2. "Are you interested in the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot returning in future summers?" (n=89)

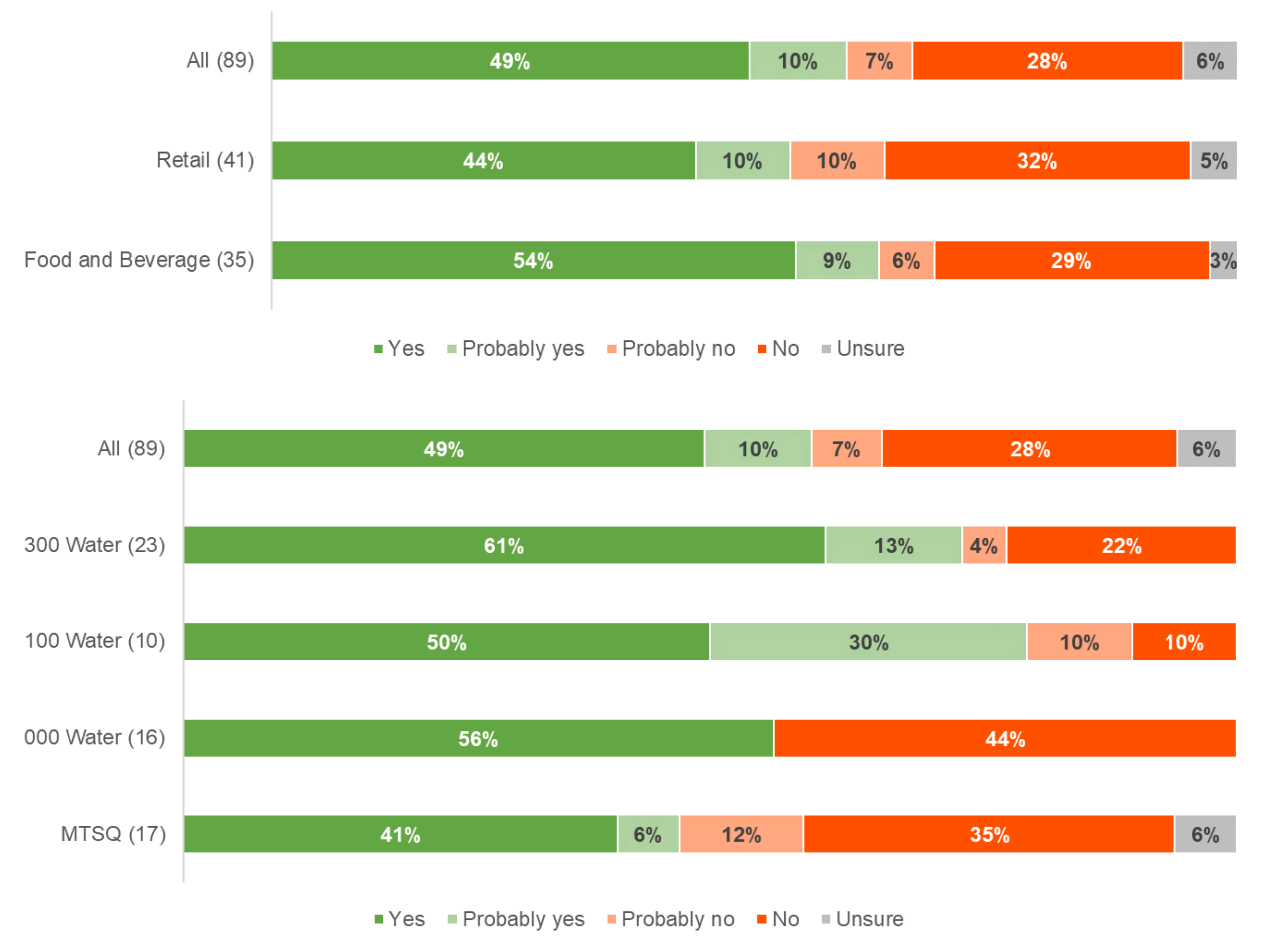


Figure 3. Do you think the promotion of the neighbourhood through various channels (e.g., social media, Destination Vancouver, news media etc.) had a positive impact on your business this July and August?

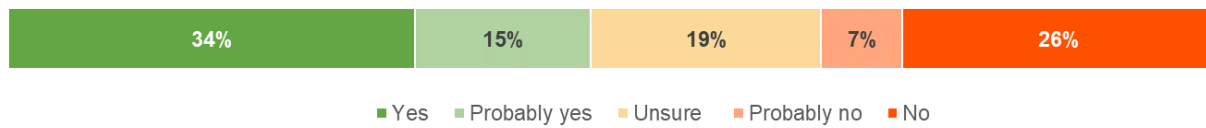


Figure 4. How did the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot impact foot traffic to your business this July and August? (n=89)

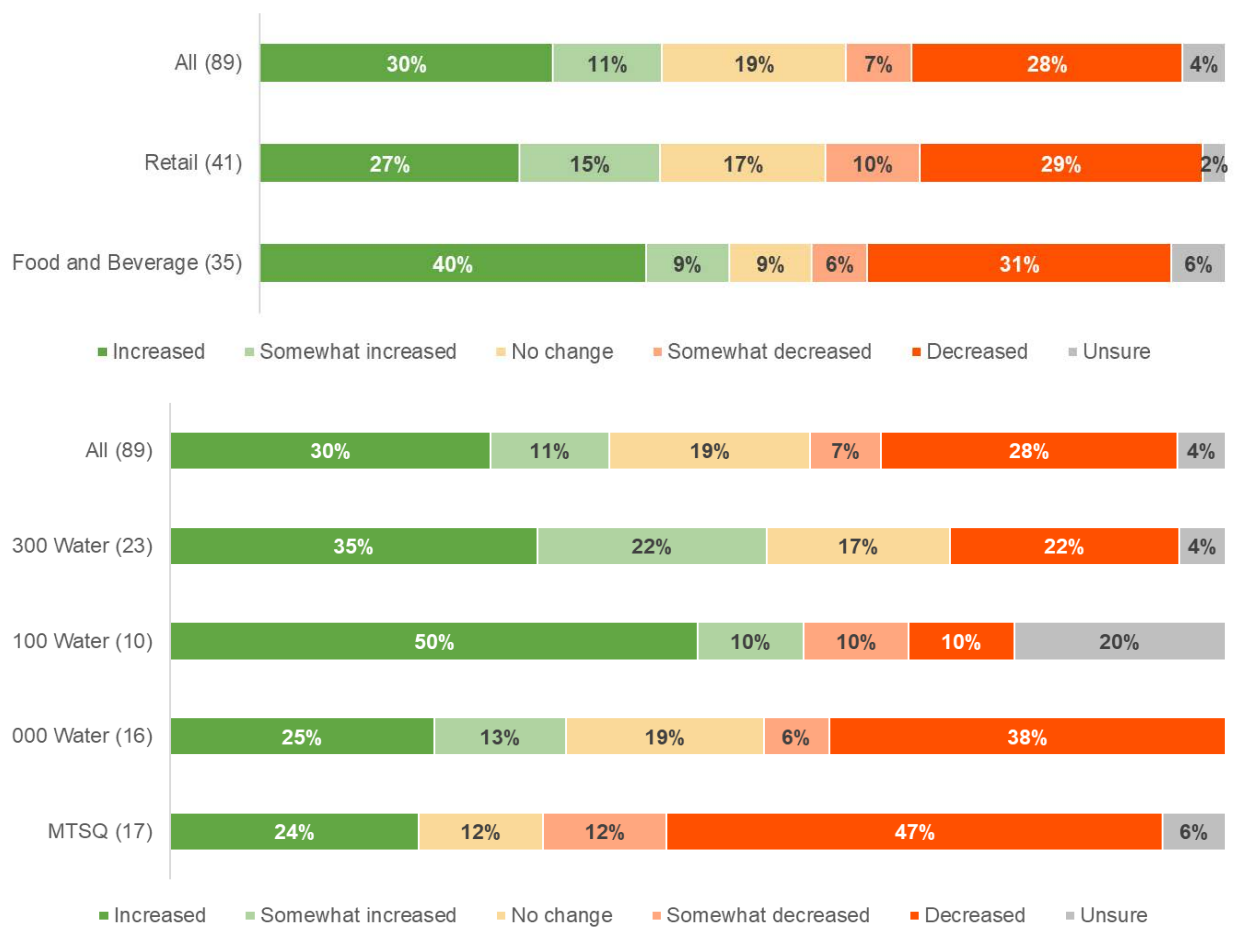
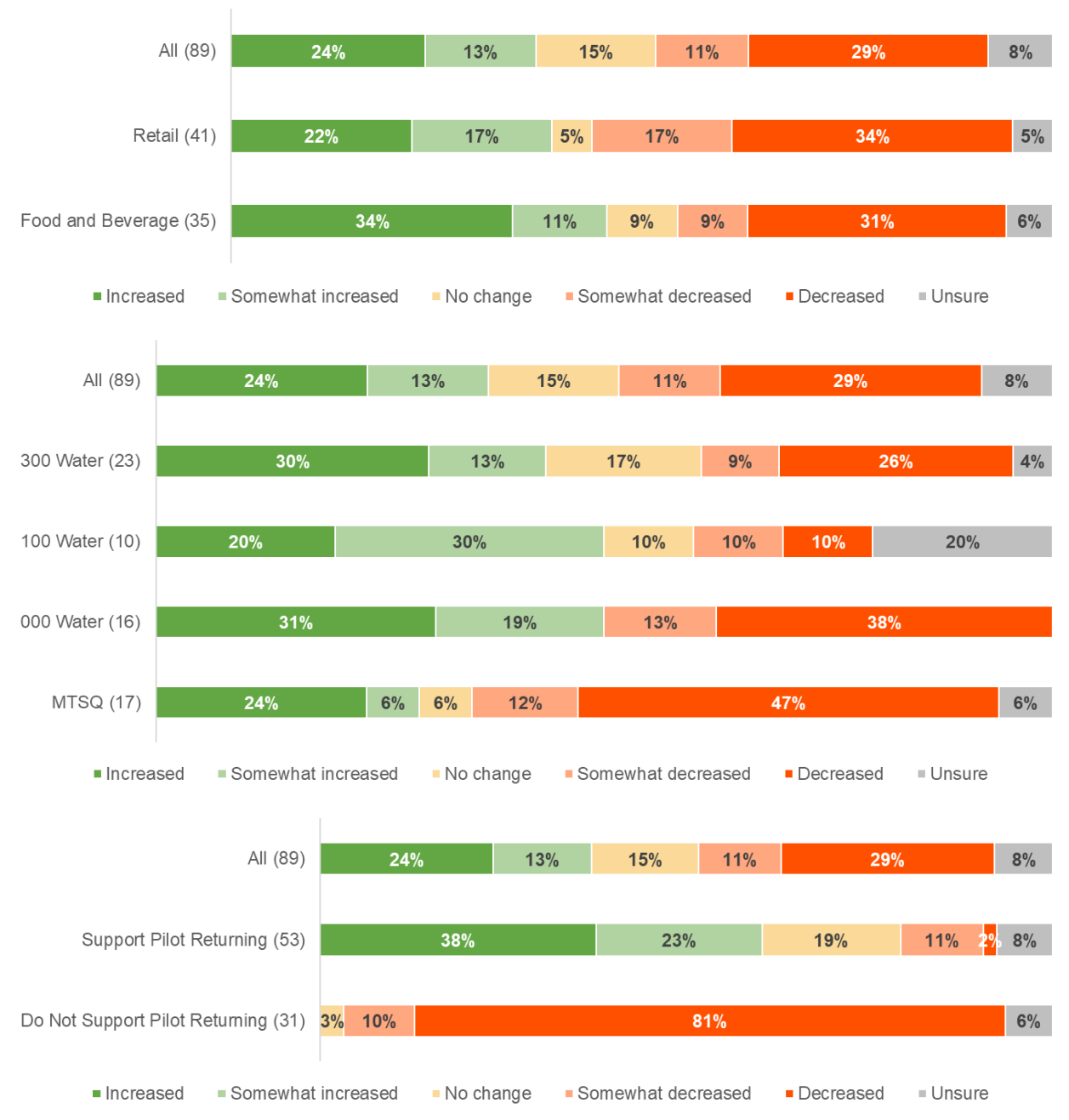


Figure 5. How did the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot impact your business' revenue this July and August? (n=89)



What businesses liked (number of mentions):

- A livelier, more vibrant atmosphere (27). Businesses also noted that the Water Street Pedestrian Zone brought more people to the area (9), more space to walk (6), encouraged lingering (14), and created a strong sense of community (6).
- Increase in revenue (9).
- Less cars with reduced vehicle noise and pollution (8).
- Balanced approach to access and circulation where the car-light blocks worked well (3), supported loading (3), and access to EasyPark was maintained.
- Increase in visibility and attracted new/more customers (4).
- Increase in safety (17) and cleanliness (11) in the area.
- Places to rest with a variety of public street furniture (22) and new pilot patios (6).
- Variety of street entertainment and vendors (18).

What businesses disliked (number of mentions):

- Traffic and circulation changes (25) made it challenging for people to access Gastown (6). Powell Street (5), Carrall Street (1), and Main Street (1) were identified as specific areas with traffic and circulation issues.
- Decrease in revenue (19) including rerouting of tour buses and bus stops resulting in a loss of customers for some businesses (4).
- Discomfort and concern for safety in the area (5). Businesses mentioned the presence of homelessness (13), open drug use (7) and theft/crime (3) in the area.
- Increased noise from tour buses (2), street performers (6), street cleaning (2) and people lingering in the area (1).
- Challenges with loading and delivery (12).
- Car-light areas felt confusing (3), unsafe and disruptive (4).

What businesses think could be improved (number of mentions):

- More public amenities including public washrooms (16) and garbage bins (2) to alleviate pressure on storefronts to fill this gap.
- Establish a better draw to Maple Tree Square/past the Steam Clock (11).
- Increase marketing and awareness (8) to promote businesses in the area, events and initiatives (i.e., free bike valet, free parking).
- Better wayfinding and visual cues (8).
- Increase safety (6) and cleanliness (4) through more Gastown Patrol (8) or increased police presence (3).
- Adjust the length of the summer pilot duration with some wanting an extension of the pilot from June to September (8) while others preferred a day/week/weekend approach (3) or permanent year-long (3).
- Extend the pedestrian zone to make Water Street entirely car-free (4) or include more of the surrounding streets (2).
- Refine the look and feel of the pedestrian zone including the design of the planters, patios and street furniture (3) and more street furniture (2).
- Improve access and circulation with more accessible parking (6), conversion of Cordova to a two-way street (4), more loading zones (2), and more pick up and drop off locations (2). Deactivate/cover parking meters that have been converted to other uses for the pilot (2).

		Permitting Opportunities for 2024 Water Street Pedestrian Zone				
		New or expanded pilot patios	Bistro sets	Live music for patios	Merchandise displays	Shared market stalls
Count of Businesses	Eligible	22	-	-	11	-
	Permitted	18	5	2	4	4
	Participated (Installed)	15	5	2	1	2
Reported Value of Permitting Tools	“Valuable”	12	4	1	-	1
	“Neutral”	2	-	-	-	-
	“Not Valuable”	1	1	1	1	-
	Unknown	1	-	-	-	1
Business Feedback for Future Pilots	Suggested Improvements from Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce encroachment from neighboring businesses’ pilot patio and involve impacted businesses early in the design/permitting stages - Continue to waive patio permit fees to reduce barriers to participation - Consider weatherproofing elements (relax bylaw restrictions and design guidelines) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider semi-permanent bistro tables and chairs - Consider weatherproofing elements and bigger bistro table sizes - Install more garbage/recycling near bistro tables - Label bistro table chairs to help business keep track - Allow business branding (e.g., public seating brought to you by business x CoV), 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase enforcement of busking and live music (clashing or overlapping sets, too loud or late, quality) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider overhead protection to prevent damaged merchandise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve design and aesthetics of shared market stalls to better suit the heritage context
	Future Participation Interest	21	10	11	15	13

Table 1. 2024 Water Street Pedestrian Zone Business Participation

APPENDIX D

Summary of Economic Impact Assessment

Overview

This document provides a summary of the key findings from a draft Economic Impact Assessment prepared by *JS&A Economic Development Consulting*. The intent of the Economic Impact Assessment is to examine economic trends in Gastown, assess the impact of the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot and consider the potential impact of a more pedestrian-first Water St on local businesses longer term, whether seasonal or permanent. It is important to note that at the time of writing this report, sales data for the last two weeks of the pilot period in August were not yet available, but the final Economic Impact Assessment will be updated with this data as soon as it becomes available.

Key Findings

- In 2024, business sales in Gastown reflect broader economic trends in Canada and Downtown Vancouver, as many retail categories, including restaurants, have experienced stagnant or declining sales.
- Overall business sales were down year-over-year in Gastown in early 2024 and during the construction period.
- Although business sales were down overall in Gastown, during the Water Street Pedestrian Zone:
 - Gastown business sales improved in most sectors relative to earlier in 2024
 - Gastown business sales also outperformed Downtown business sales, whereas earlier in the year they had underperformed Downtown business sales.

Macro-economic trends

Canada:

Consumer confidence is down and Canadians are spending less in response to rising costs and elevated interest rates. Post-pandemic economic recovery began to slow in 2023 and has continued to decline in 2024.

National Ipsos surveys show that in 2023,

- 47% of Canadians cut back on non-essential purchases; and,
- 57% of Canadians cut back on dining out.

In 2024, Canadian retail and restaurant spending is down from 2023.

Downtown Vancouver:

Vancouver economic trends reflect the Canada-wide experience. Sales and visitation are still below pre-pandemic levels. Overall, business sales in Downtown are down in 2024 (-1.2%) from 2023. Downtown spending in the retail (-8.8%) and restaurant (-5%) categories is also down in 2024 from 2023.

Gastown economic trends

General:

Gastown is a premiere dining and shopping destination with many benefits such as:

- a strong cultural heritage that draws visitors and locals;
- a nightlife, entertainment, and tourism-orientation;
- a central and accessible location; and
- a pedestrian scale and business mix that generates street-level vibrancy.

However, Gastown, and Downtown Vancouver generally, is experiencing a range of challenges pertaining to commercial vacancy, business vitality, visitation levels, and public perception.

In 2024, similar to Downtown Vancouver, Gastown's economic trends reflect the Canada-wide experience. Overall in 2024, Apparel is down -17.5%, Restaurants are down -7.8%, and Specialty Retail is down -1.2%, compared to 2023.

Gastown retail sales, in particular, are highly seasonal, peaking in July. Summer months generate more sales than during the October to March off-season and visitation more than doubles during the summer.

In January and February 2024, overall sales in Gastown were down -6.3% in comparison to 2023. During Maple Tree Square construction from March to June 2024, overall sales in Gastown were down -6.7%.

Pilot:

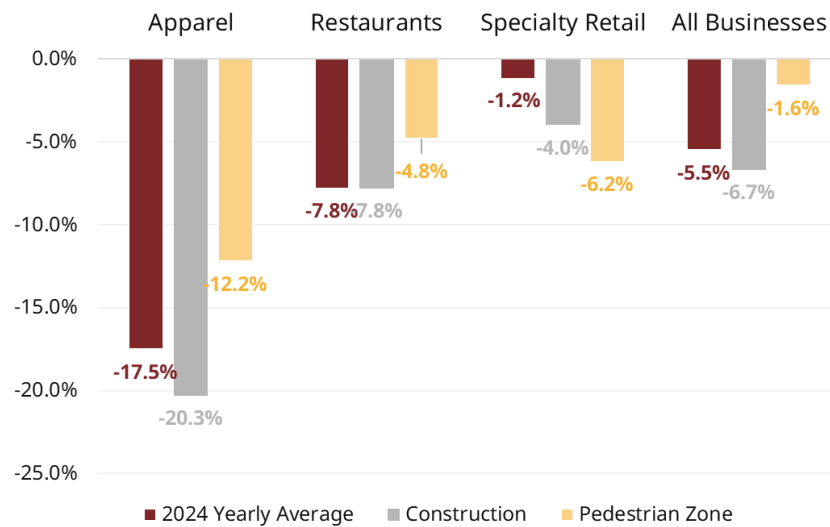
It is difficult to distinguish localized economic impacts of events such as a pedestrian pilot, however data suggests that during the pilot in July and August¹ many sectors of Gastown businesses did markedly better on a year-over-year basis compared to the rest of 2024 (Figure 1):

- Apparel revenue improved by 5.3% during the pilot activations
- Restaurant revenue improved by 3.0%

Specialty Retail, however, was lower by -5% during the pilot in comparison to earlier in 2024.

¹ Current sales data is only for July 1 – August 18th. We expect to receive the remaining data soon for August.

Figure 1: Sales Volume in Gastown by Business Type
(2024 Year-Over-Year Sales by Time Period)

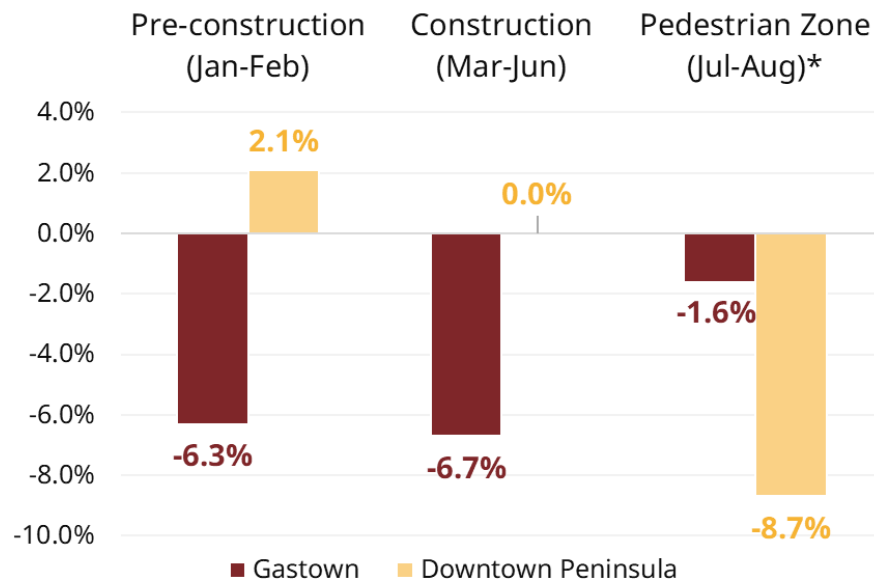


Source: Moneris Data Collection 2024 *Includes data up to August 18, 2024

During the pilot, although sales were still down overall, Gastown businesses outperformed businesses in the rest of Downtown (Figure 2):

- Total sales in Gastown were down -1.6% in comparison to 2023
- Total sales in Downtown were down -8.7% in comparison to 2023

Figure 2: Year-Over-Year Sales Volume in 2024



Source: Moneris Data Collection 2024 *Includes data up to August 18, 2024

Findings from case studies on impact of pedestrianization on businesses:

- Strategic investment in an improved public realm experience can elevate the identity of a neighbourhood to create a destination that serves locals, regional visitors and international tourists;
- Based on precedents from comparable jurisdictions across Canada and the United States, it is expected that the pedestrianization of a retail street would lead to an increase in visitation and sales activity for the area over time;
- While not all businesses will benefit equally from pedestrianization, there are measures that can be explored to support the local business community and preserve key aspects of Gastown's business mix, aesthetics, and identity;
- Public perception matters and deliberate branding and messaging is essential. Poor public perception of the neighbourhood can impact visitation and sales; and,
- Businesses that take advantage of pedestrianization tend to benefit more from it.

* * * * *

APPENDIX E

Public Life Analysis: Intercept Survey and Public Life Observations

Overview

During the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot, an intercept survey of independent randomly selected visitors and public life observations were completed. A total of **845 intercept survey responses** were randomly completed by visitors over two weeks. Throughout the summer, **10 public life observation shifts** were conducted to assess how people were moving through and interacting with the public seating and other programming elements over time.

Combined Key Findings from Intercept Surveys and Public Life Observations

- Visitors expressed high levels of satisfaction with their experience of the Water Street Pedestrian Zone and most intend to return in the future.
- Visitors value the comfort of the car-free environment, as well as the appealing food, beverage, and retail options, with approximately 80% planning to visit or already having visited a business during their trip.
- Overall ratings are slightly lower among those arriving by vehicle, as well as commuters, and those living or working in Gastown.
- Apart from the steam clock, Maple Tree Square was the "stickiest" public space with approximately 30% of visitors stopping to linger once arriving there.
- The block of Water between Cambie and Abbott was the least appealing for lingering and there is opportunity for improvements around vibrancy and placemaking.
- An increase in the presence of families and children was observed during the pedestrian zone.

Intercept Survey

Mustel Group was retained to conduct an intercept survey of random visitors to the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot during July and August. The intent was to help better understand the needs and experiences of visitors to the area, as well as their satisfaction with the initiative.

The specific objectives were to:

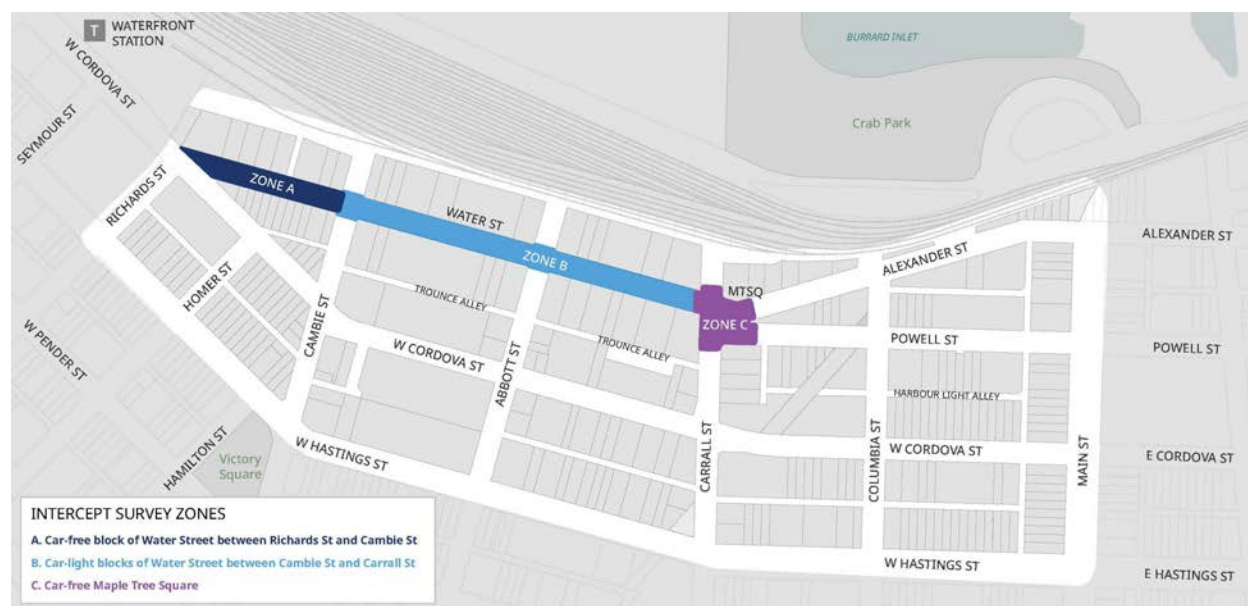
- understand the diverse needs of visitors, commuters, residents, and workers, including their experiences within the Water Street Pedestrian Zone;
- determine how and when these groups access businesses, services, amenities, spaces, and the various activities that take place; and
- ascertain overall satisfaction with the initiative.

Who We Heard From

The survey employed a random selection, onsite intercept methodology where pedestrians were intercepted between three zones:

- Zone A: Car-free block of Water Street between Richards St and Cambie St
- Zone B: Car-light blocks of Water between Cambie St and Carrall St
- Zone C: Car-free Maple Tree Square

Figure 1: Intercept Survey Zone Map



Survey respondents included residents of Gastown, the Downtown peninsula, other areas within the City of Vancouver, other Metro Vancouver municipalities and visitors from outside the region. Respondents included those spending time in Gastown and those traveling through to another destination.

An intercept survey of this nature is carried out as randomly as possible. Respondents were intercepted during morning, afternoon and evening hours. In total, 65% of the surveys were

completed on weekdays and 35% on the weekend. As a guide, the margin of error for a simple random sample of n=845 is +/- 3.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Key Findings - About the Trip

1) Who is visiting?

Approximately one-half of surveyed visitors to the Gastown Pedestrian Zone resided in the City of Vancouver (47%), about half of whom lived in either the Downtown peninsula (10%) or Gastown (18%). A further 15% resided in another municipality within Metro Vancouver. About 4% lived elsewhere in B.C., and 33% were from outside the province (37% tourists). A balanced gender response was received.

2) Frequency of travel

About one-quarter visit Gastown on a daily basis (27%), including those who live there. A further one-in-ten visit at least once a week (11%), and roughly the same number visit at least once a month (11%). Daily visitors are predominantly local (86% City of Vancouver residents), with about half living in Gastown (54%).

3) Mode of travel

Walking is the most common travel mode to Gastown, with approximately four-in-ten arriving on foot (43%), followed by Skytrain (21%), private vehicle (13%), bus (13%), and bicycle/e-bike (5%). Residents of Gastown and the Downtown peninsula, as well as those visiting from out of province, are the most likely to travel there on foot (84% and 46% respectively).

4) Purpose of the travel

The most common reason for visiting Gastown is for social or recreational purposes (62%), followed by visiting businesses or shopping (23%), and going to work or school (14%).

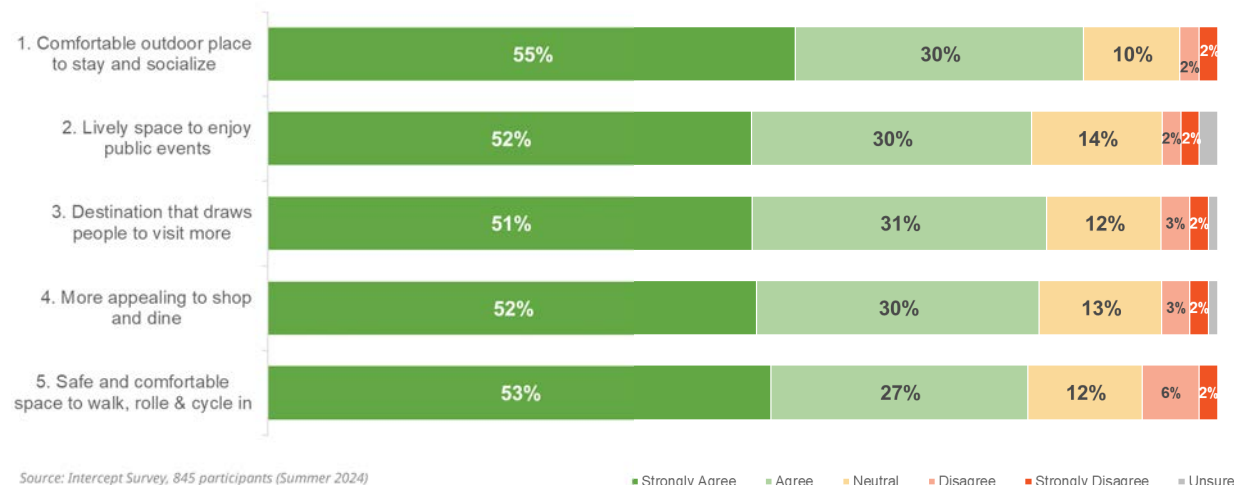
Eight-in-ten (80%) plan to visit or already had visited a business during their trip. The incidence is slightly higher among women and those 35 to 54 years of age. Restaurant (44%) or a café/coffee shop (37%) were the most visited, followed by souvenir shop and other retail.

Key Findings – Visitor Experience

1) Positive experience along Water Street Pedestrian Zone

Visitors were asked to rate a series of statements regarding their experience at the Water Street Pedestrian Zone using a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being 'strongly agree' (Figure 2). Overall, visitors provided ratings of 4.2 to 4.4 out of 5 on all attributes of their experience, indicating a high level of satisfaction with respect to comfort, safety and creating a lively and appealing area to visit.

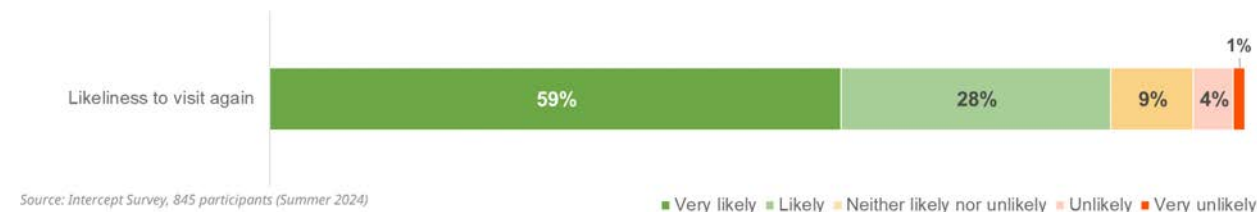
Figure 2: Intercept Survey Results - Visitor Experience of the Pedestrian Zone



2) Likeliness to visit the Water Street Pedestrian Zone again

The majority – 85% in all – are likely to visit the Water Street Pedestrian Zone again in the future, including 59% who are “very” likely to (Figure 3). Likelihood to visit again is consistent across age, gender, and area of residence.

Figure 3: Intercept Survey Results - Likeliness to Visit Again



The top reason cited is that it is “car free, pedestrian friendly, and safe”.

Other common reasons include that it has a “relaxed and friendly atmosphere”, “attractive area/clean and lots of greenery”, it has a “variety of cafes/restaurants/patios”, and “local stores and services”. Among the few who provided reasons for not visiting again, most were related to safety/comfort (noted approximately 2% or 17 times), challenges of driving, the location, and the fact that they are visitors.

While Gastown residents, workers, and commuters expressed agreement across all experience measures, their average ratings tend to be slightly lower than other visitors, with those working in Gastown providing the lowest overall agreement ratings (66% - 78% agree and an average agreement rating of 3.9 to 4.2). The lowest rating provided by workers is for the statement, “The pedestrian zone is safe and comfortable for me to walk, roll, and cycle in.” (66% with an average score of 3.9 out of 5).

Public Life Observation Study

As part of the Water Street Pedestrian Zone, public life observations were used to assess how visitors interacted with public space and programming elements introduced throughout the summer. By simultaneously counting the number of people moving within an area and those stopping and lingering, insights can be made into how the public space is performing. High numbers of people moving reflect the success of a well-connected, safe public realm, while people lingering indicates a sense of comfort, safety and interest that encourages more socializing, and interaction.

Through July and August, 10 public life observation shifts were conducted to assess the Water Street Pedestrian Zone. Five additional shifts in June and September were completed serving as a baseline data comparison. Data was captured during morning, afternoon and evening hours on both weekdays and weekends. Each block of Water Street was observed for 15 minutes during each observation session, providing a systematic overview of how the spaces were used at different times throughout the week. The results below reflect high-level findings from early analysis while additional pre- and post-pilot data is analysed.

Who Is Visiting

Data observed included the perceived gender, and age of visitors and the size of each group. Perceived gender observed was balanced (Figure 4), while approximately three quarters of people were perceived as being in an adult age range (Figure 5). Approximately half of people observed were travelling in small groups of 2-3 people (Figure 6).

Figure 4 – Public Life Observation Results: Gender Distribution

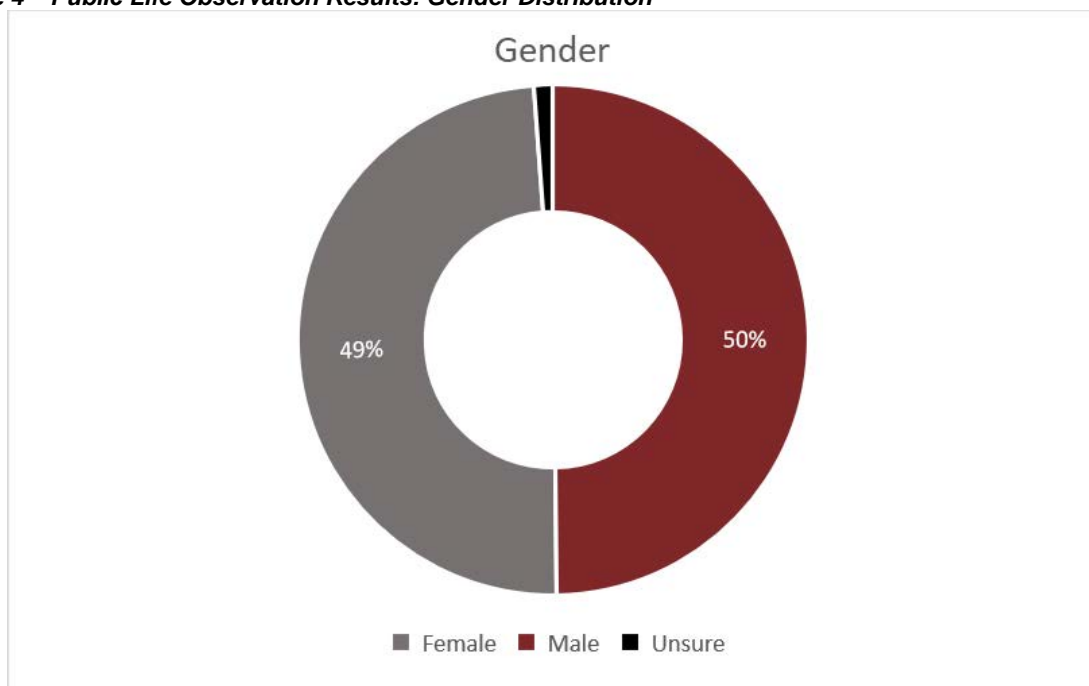


Figure 5 – Public Life Observation Results: Perceived Age Distribution

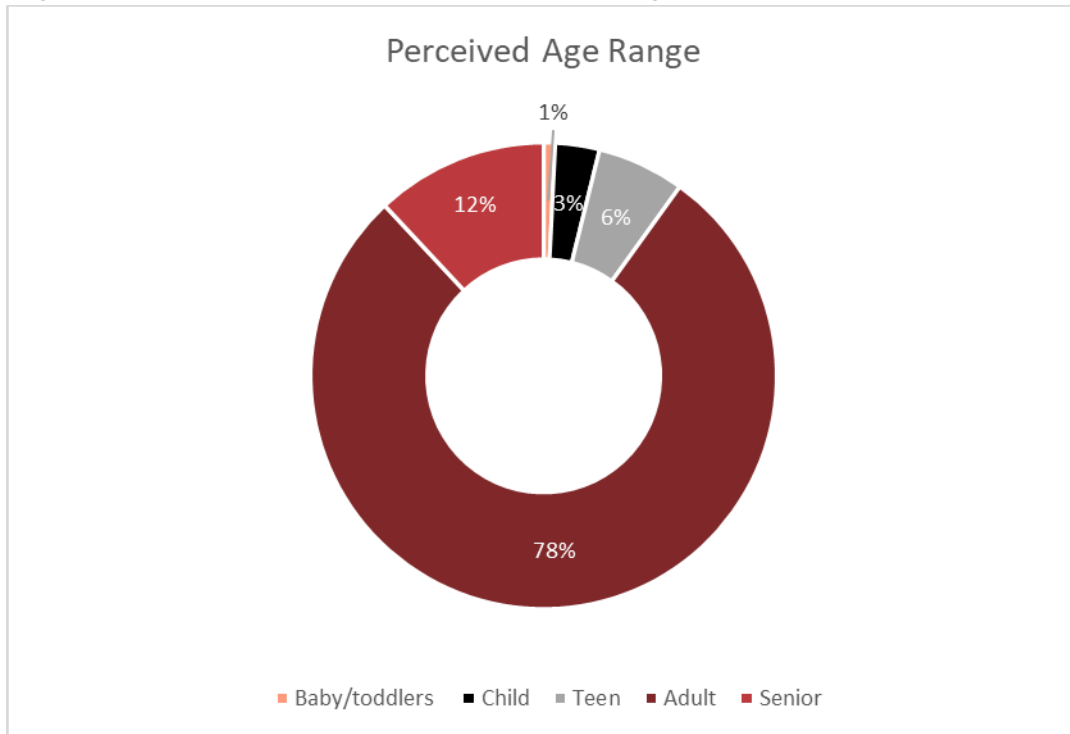
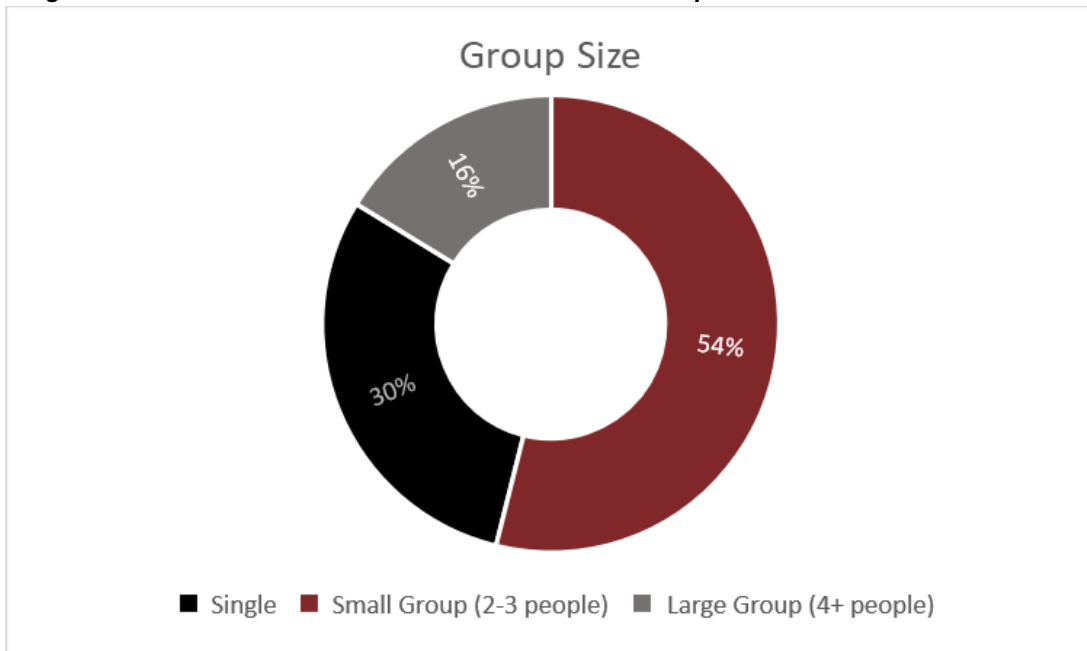


Figure 6 – Public Life Observation Results: Observed Group Size Distribution

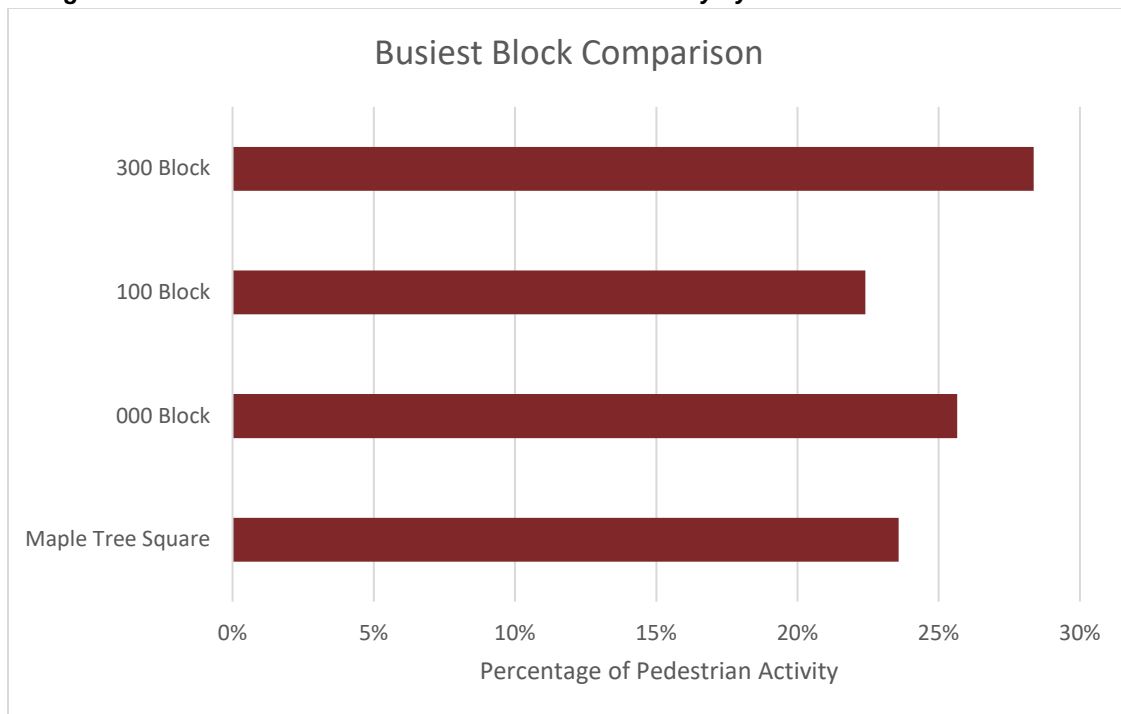


Key Finding – 300 Water St was the busiest block

Figure 7 compares the proportion of observed activity on each block, calculated as a percentage of the total activity observed across all data collection periods. Overall, the busiest block was the western most block (300 Water St) with the Steam Clock showing almost 30% of total activity. While the 000 Block and Maple Tree Square had similar levels of activity at 24-26%. The 100 block had the lowest activity levels during the observation periods.

Overall, there was a steady increase in visitors observed from the morning through to the evening.

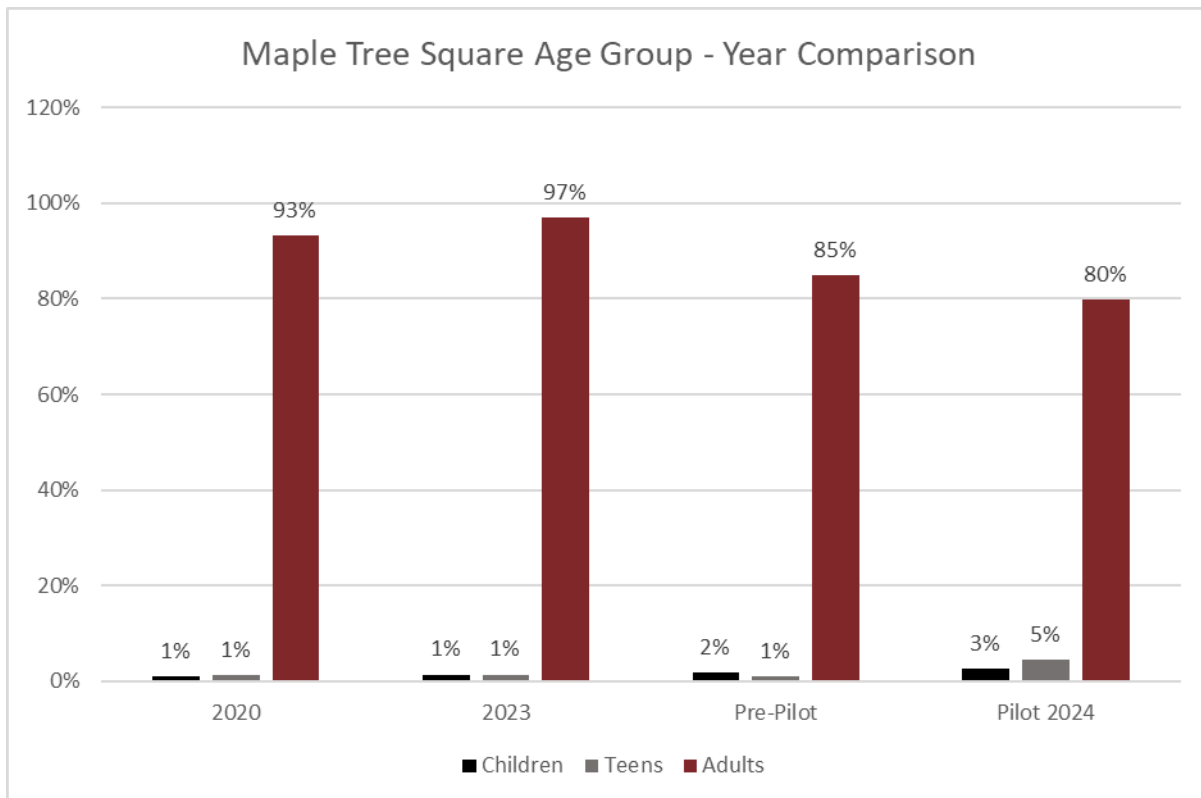
Figure 7 – Public Life Observation Results: Overall Activity by Block



Key Finding – Perceived increase in younger age groups

Early analysis of Maple Tree Square data suggests a slight increase in the presence of families in the area, as reflected by an increase in the proportion of children and teens observed during the pilot compared to pre-pilot data (Figure 8). Analysis of additional blocks and post-pilot data is in progress.

Figure 8 – Public Life Observation Results: Age Groups Over Time in Maple Tree Square



Key Finding – Aside from the steam clock, Maple Tree Square is the “stickiest” block

The steam clock is a key attraction in the Gastown area, gathering large groups of visitors to the space to watch the clock and linger. To determine how other areas in the pedestrian zone were performing in terms of attracting and gathering visitors, staff calculated the “stickiness” of the public seating areas on each block. Stickiness refers to the ratio of people lingering relative to people moving through a space. On the 300 block, these observations were done around the seating areas mid-block, not directly adjacent to the steam clock.

Of the areas surveyed, Maple Tree Square was the "stickiest" public space with approximately 30% of visitors stopping to linger once arriving there (Figure 9). The 300 block was most popular for lingering during morning hours, with Maple Tree Square busier during afternoon and evening (Figure 10). In general, the most popular activities observed while lingering included socializing, eating and/or drinking and being on a device (phone, laptop, etc.), with socializing and eating being observed more often on weekends.

Figure 9 – Public Life Observation Results: Comparison of Lingering and Moving by Block

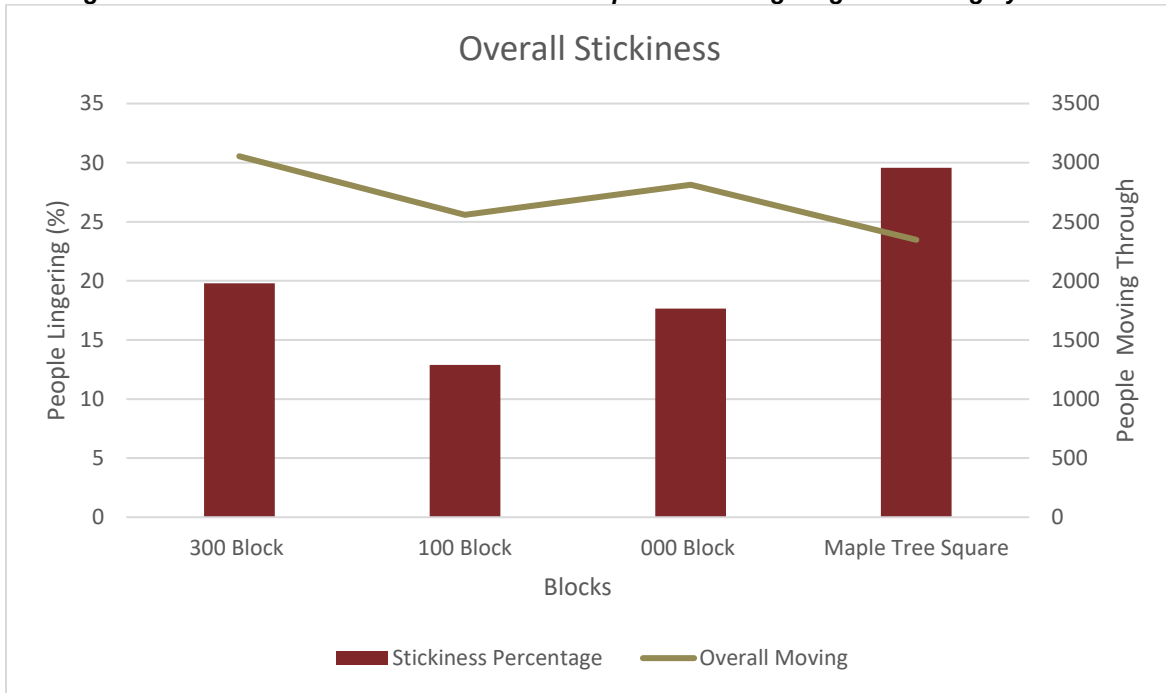
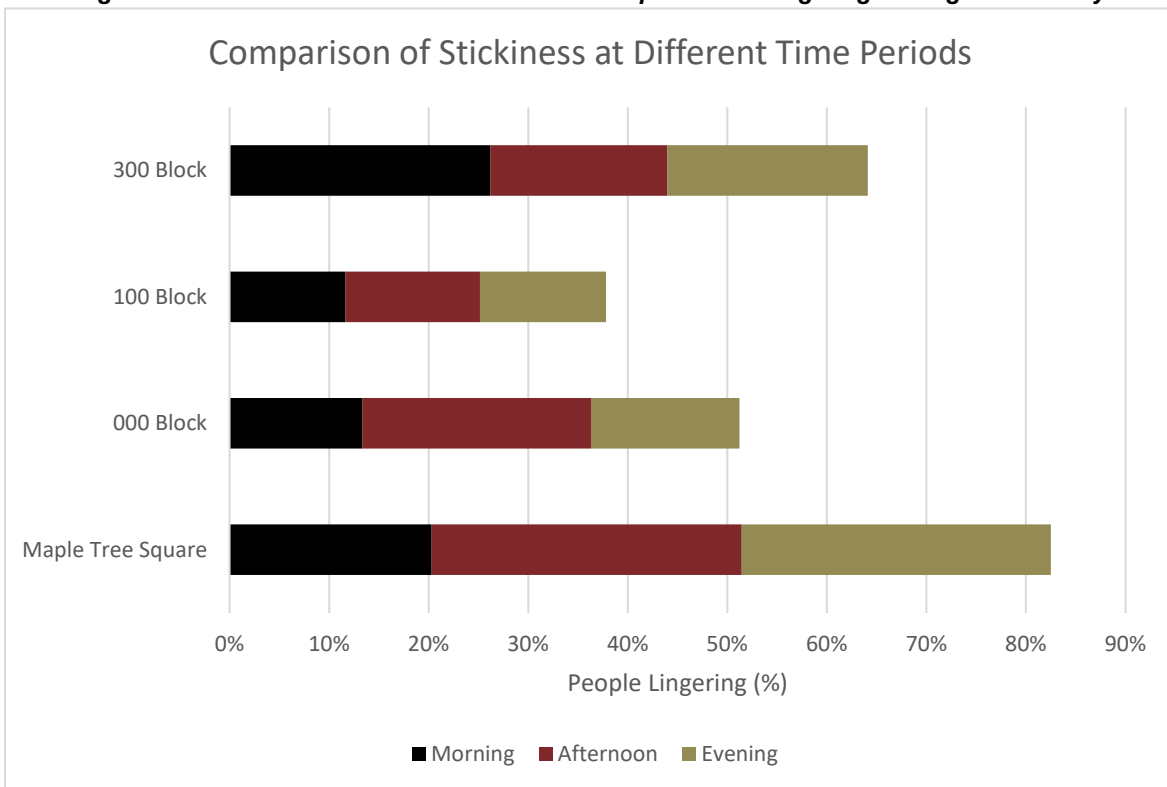


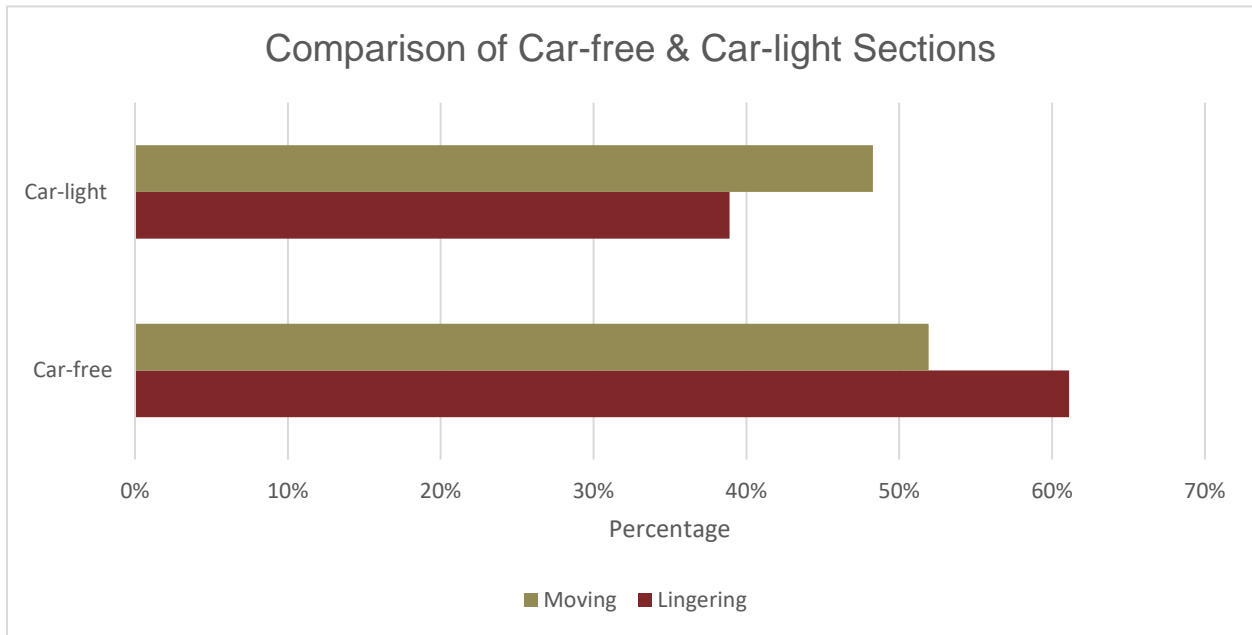
Figure 10 – Public Life Observation Results: Comparison of Lingering Throughout the Day



Key Finding – Car-free sections encouraged moving and lingering more than car-light sections

The block of Water between Cambie and Abbott was the least appealing for lingering, with only 13% stopping. A notable increase in people lingering was observed in the car-free areas compared with the car-light blocks (Figure 11).

Figure 11 – Public Life Observation Results: Movement and Lingering by Section



* * * * *

APPENDIX F Traffic Data, Pedestrian Counts and Circulation Impacts

A monitoring plan (see Figure 1) was implemented to understand the transportation impacts of the construction closure of Maple Tree Square and the following Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot. This plan included traffic counts at key intersections and corridors in and around the Gastown area. This appendix shows the initial results of this monitoring plan; there are still some aspects of the plan yet to be processed.



Figure 4: Gastown Monitoring Plan during the Pilot

Summary of Transportation Network Changes

Starting on March 2nd, 2024, through traffic on Powell St was diverted at Main St to complete reconstruction work in Maple Tree Square. The diversion included concrete barriers in the intersection to prevent through traffic, two left turn lanes from Powell St onto Main St southbound, and one right turn lane from Powell St onto Main St northbound. This diversion stayed in place until September 6th, 2024.

During the construction period from March through June, vehicle traffic was prohibited in Maple Tree Square but was allowed on all blocks of Water St (see Figure 2). During the pilot period in July and August, vehicle traffic was allowed on Water St between Carrall St and Cambie St but was prohibited in Maple Tree Square and on Water St between Richards St and Cambie St (see Figure 3).

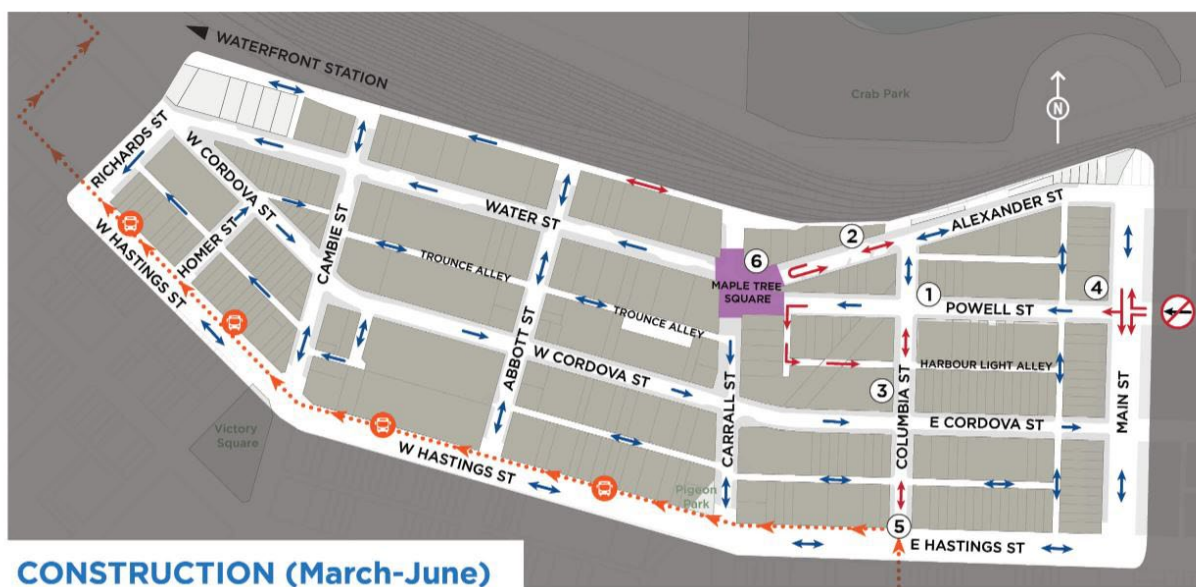


Figure 5: Traffic Circulation During Construction



Figure 6: Traffic Circulation During the Pilot

Other changes to surrounding local streets were made to support vehicle access and circulation:

- TransLink's Route 50 Bus was rerouted to Hastings St from March until September.
- Columbia St was converted to a two-way road between Powell St and Hastings St to support local access in March. This change remains in place after the pilot.
- On April 8th, the Port of Vancouver implemented a checkpoint on Waterfront Rd at the base of the Main St Overpass to divert non-authorized traffic.
- A leading pedestrian interval (LPI) was implemented at the intersection of Main St and Hastings St to reduce conflicts with pedestrians.
- Throughout the closure, staff made numerous changes to the roadway configuration on Powell St to support various stakeholder and public needs:
 - A westbound bus queue jumper was set up on Powell St between Gore Av and Dunlevy Av in mid-March to support bus reliability.
 - The westbound right-turn lane at the intersection of Powell St and Main St was reduced to a shorter turn lane to discourage traffic from accessing the Port via Waterfront Rd.
- Modifications were made at the intersection of Main St and Hastings St in late April to provide a right-turning lane for a half-block to free up the through-lane to improve transit and other general-purpose traffic operations.
- In early May, all curbside stopping was removed from the west side of Main St between Powell St and Hastings St to support transit.
- In June, a southbound curb lane was painted on Main St to provide clarity and improve transit reliability.
- In July, Powell St between Columbia St and Main St was converted to two-way vehicle traffic to facilitate improved access to businesses.

Summary of Transportation Observations

Pedestrian Observations

During the Pilot, cross-section counts were completed on all blocks of Water St. In total, 19 days were analyzed including weekdays, weekends, and holidays to provide a comprehensive view of activity on the street.

Overall, Water St pedestrian volumes increased by 35% compared to pre-pilot data; weekday volumes increased by 56% and weekend volumes increased by 15%.

Water St between Richards St and Cambie St was the busiest block with a daily average of 31,700 pedestrians. In comparison, the highest volume pedestrian block in the city, Robson St between Bute St and Thurlow St, has an estimated daily volume of 34,000 pedestrians. See Figure 4 and Figure 5 which illustrate the observed volumes.

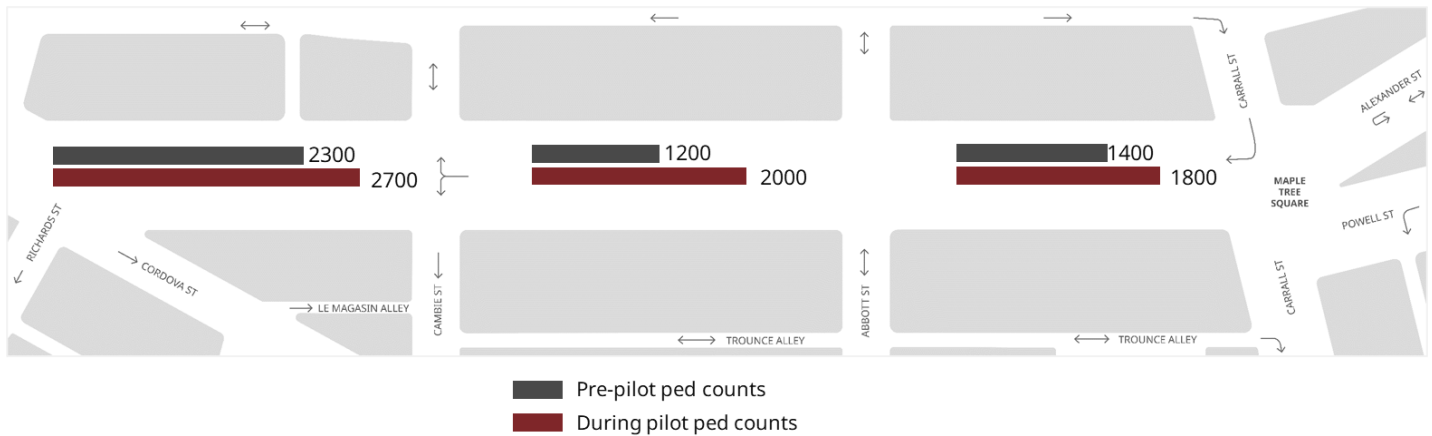


Figure 7: Average Peak Hour (5-6 pm) Pedestrian Volumes along Water St

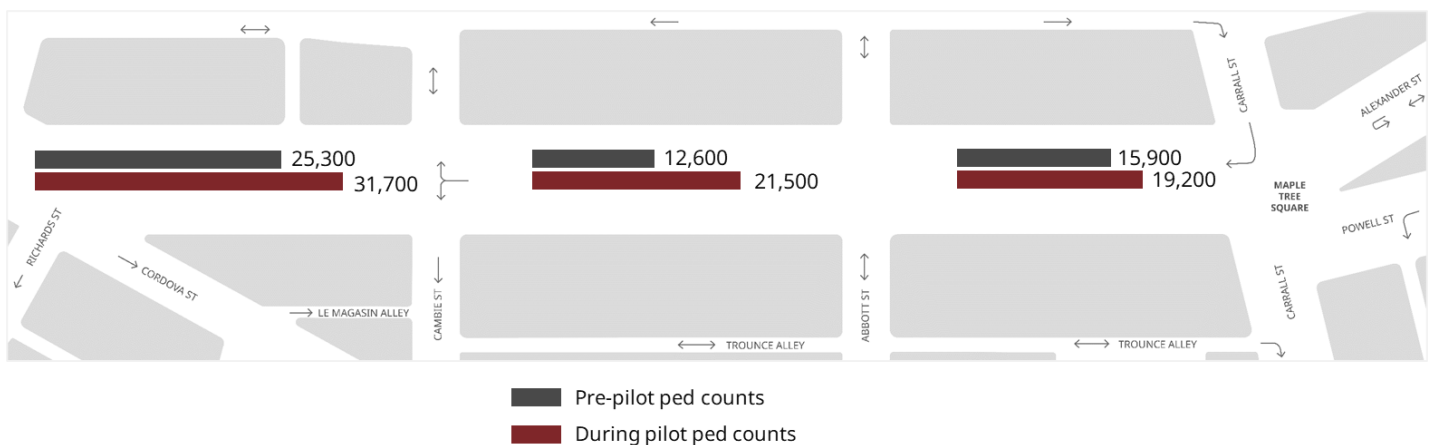


Figure 8: Average Daily (24-hr) Pedestrian Volumes along Water St

During the pilot, pedestrian flows varied by hour and by day (see Figure 6); weekends were slightly busier than weekdays and late afternoon to early evening were the most popular times of day.

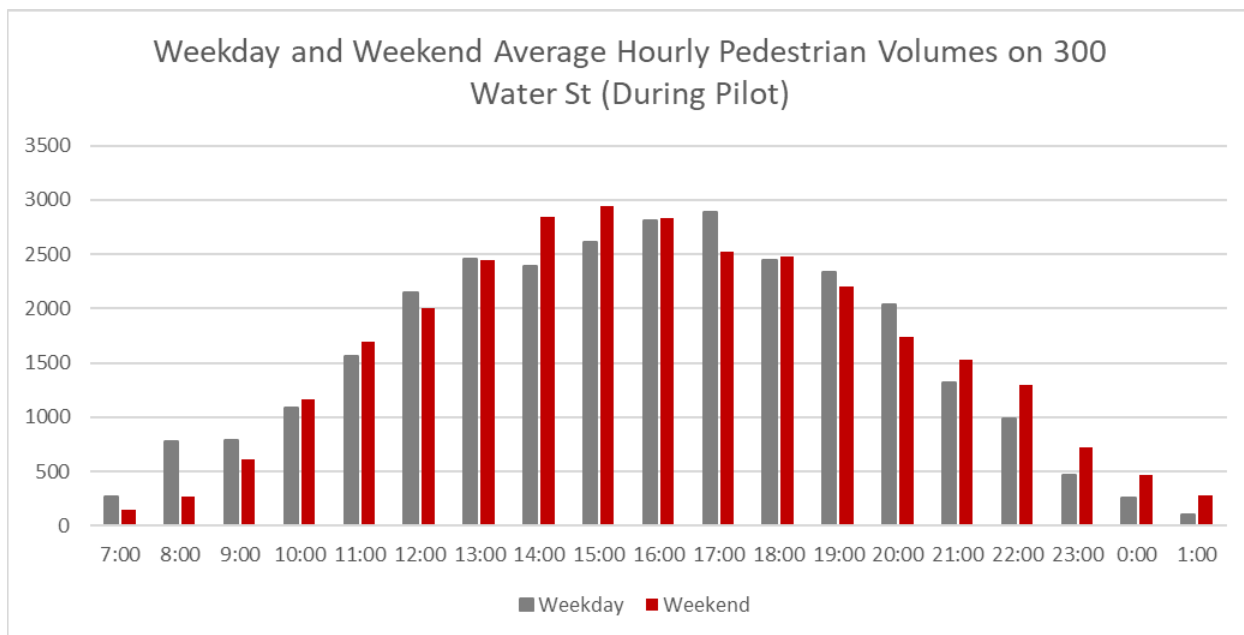


Figure 9: Weekday and Weekend Average Hourly Pilot Pedestrian Volumes on 300 Water St

Following the implementation of the pilot, all blocks of Water St saw pedestrians walking in the middle of the street:

- On the car-free block between Richards St and Cambie St, pilot observations showed 25% of people on the street walked in the roadway instead of on the sidewalks.
- People walked on the street three to five times more on the car-light block between Abbott St and Carrall St (13%) than the block between Cambie St and Abbott St (3%)
- Over the course of the pilot, more people began to walk on the street on the block between Abbott St and Carrall St.

Most pedestrians accessed Water St from Cordova St, the most direct route from Waterfront Station, Downtown, and Canada Place. Abbott St and Cambie St were the second and third most used walking routes to the pedestrian zone, both averaging about 6000 pedestrians per day.

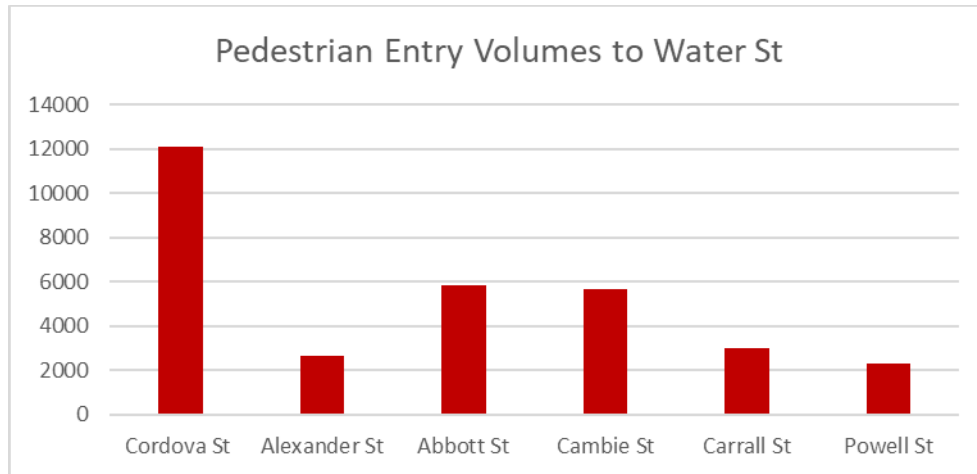


Figure 10: Pedestrian Entry Volumes to Water St (During Pilot)

Cycling and Micromobility Observations

During the pilot, bike and micromobility volumes on Water St increased by 75% on weekdays to a daily average of approximately 1,200 bikes and micromobility devices per day.

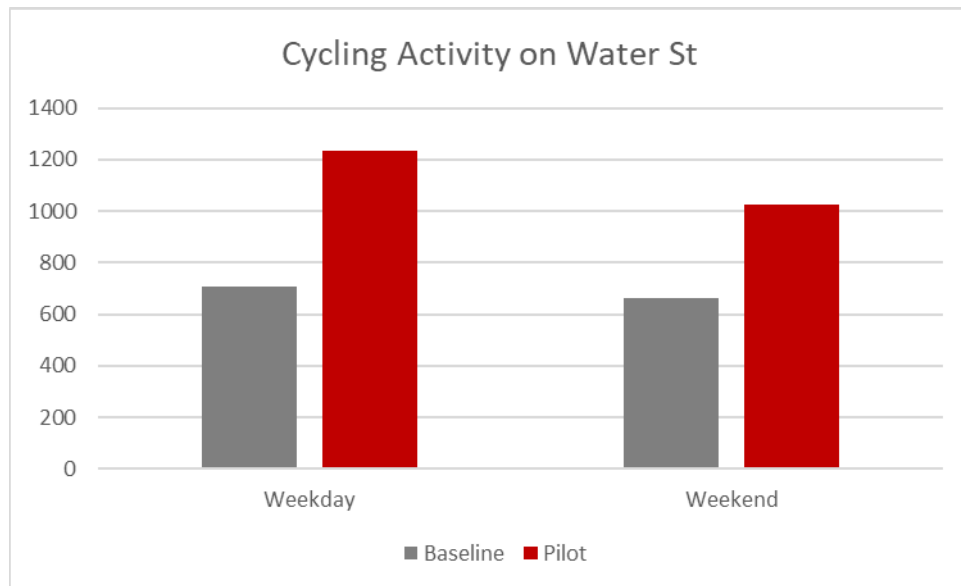


Figure 11: Cycling Activity along Water St Before and During Pilot

In the westbound direction, volumes increased from 550 to 850 per day.

The calming of motor vehicle traffic on Water St also provided a safe and legal eastbound route across Gastown linking the Downtown bicycle network with the Portside Greenway. Eastbound bicycle and micromobility volumes on Water St went from minimal volumes to 375 per day.

Vehicle Access and Circulation Observations

During the pilot, around 1,800 vehicles per day used the block between Cambie St and Abbott St, 20% of typical vehicle volumes. The block between Abbott St and Carrall St had approximately 350 vehicles per day.

The morning saw the largest number of trucks (3 or more axles) on 100 block of Water St for deliveries and servicing, during the afternoon pedestrian peak there were usually no large trucks. Feedback was received from residents and businesses regarding some illegal maneuvers occurring on the network, in particular, accessing Carrall St from Cordova St (wrong way) and making U-turns on Powell west of Columbia St (wrong way). Additionally, significant loading activity in no stopping areas was observed on Carrall St north of Cordova St.

Parking Observations

In January and February 2024, prior to Maple Tree Square construction and the summer pilot, monthly vehicle entries into the Gastown Parkade were lower than the previous year as indicated in Figure 9. As 2024 progressed, these monthly vehicle entries remained lower than the same time period in 2023, until July. In July, the vehicle entries were approximately equivalent.

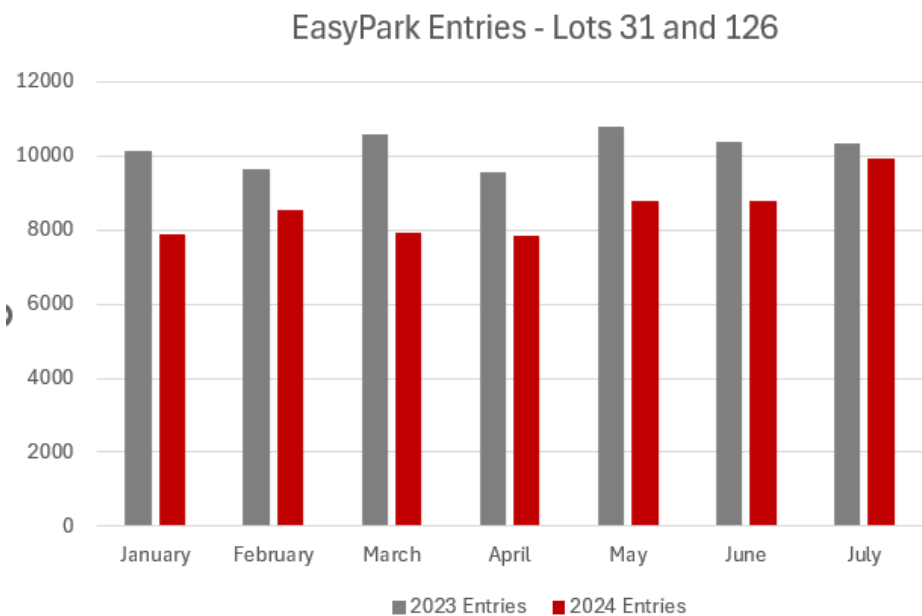


Figure 9: Gastown Parkade (Lot 31 and 126) - Vehicle Entries

Broader Vehicle Network Observations

Vehicle Traffic Redistribution:

As a result of the closure of Powell St at Main to westbound traffic, vehicles rerouted from Powell St and dispersed across the network.

Traffic counts at Clark Dr and Powell St showed that there was minimal change in the overall volume of vehicles at this intersection. West of Clark Dr, westbound traffic began to divert onto other streets. (see Figure 10).

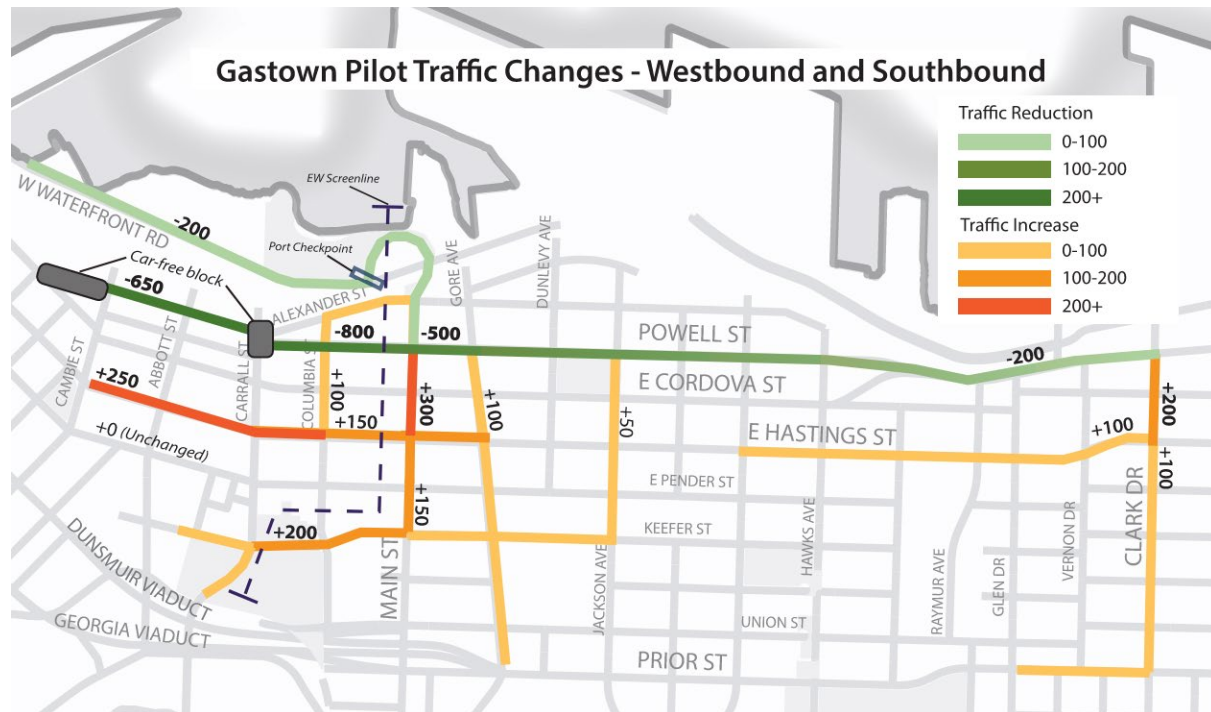


Figure 12: AM Peak Hour Westbound Vehicle Volumes at Screenline to the west of Main St

Note: additional traffic may have redistributed to streets further south, such as onto the Dunsmuir Viaduct which was not counted due to technical issues; however, staff believe these volumes to be relatively low.

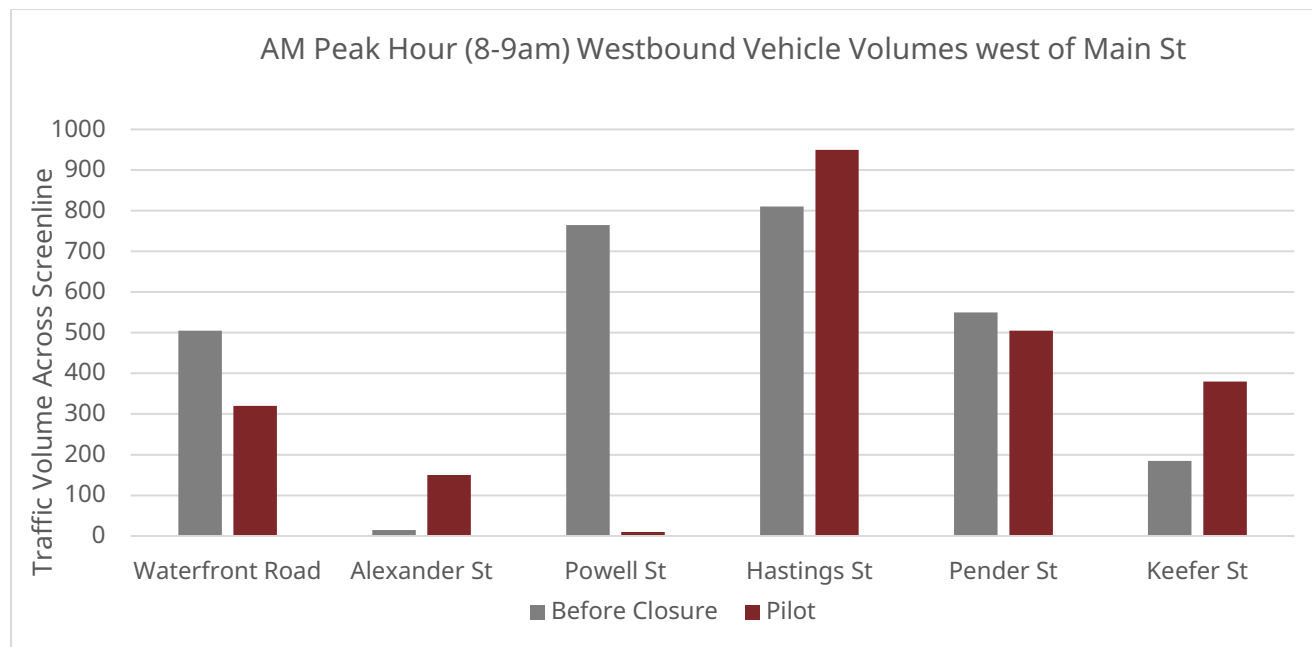


Figure 13: AM Peak Hour (8-9am) Westbound Vehicle Volumes west of Main St

Some shortcutting was observed through neighbourhood streets as people driving cars sought to avoid congestion at major intersections. The most affected streets were Jackson St, Keefer St, Alexander St and Columbia St.

Minimal change to eastbound traffic was observed during the pilot.

Waterfront Road:

Staff worked closely with the Port of Vancouver and other stakeholders that use Waterfront Rd ahead of construction to understand their needs and concerns. Waterfront Rd is the only route used for vehicles that service and resupply cruise ships when they are docked. The Port shared their concern that increased traffic on Waterfront Rd due to the Powell St/Water St closure has the potential to disrupt their cruise ship operations and lead to delayed ships.

Immediately after the traffic diversion was installed at Main St in early March, vehicle volumes on Waterfront Rd increased by 25% (+110 vehicles/hr) during the AM peak hour. In response, the City implemented a traffic management plan (TMP) at Powell St and Gore Av to encourage more vehicles to use the left turn at Main St and disincentivize the right turns onto Main St towards Waterfront Rd. The TMP did not significantly reduce volumes on Waterfront Rd and on April 8th, the Port implemented a checkpoint at the base of the Main St. This checkpoint operated from 6am to 2pm on weekdays/weekends and was staffed by Port Security guards who asked people in vehicles for authorization to use Waterfront Rd. Throughout April, VPD were on-site every day to support the checkpoint. From May to August, they were on-site two to three days a week.

The checkpoint immediately reduced volumes on Waterfront Rd to 40% below the baseline volume (250 vehicles/hr). Throughout the summer, the checkpoint turned away an average of 275 vehicles per day that then had to seek alternate westbound routes.

Transit Observations:

The increase in traffic volumes likely led to some transit delays.

Hastings St had a noticeable travel time increase during the AM peak hour:

- Run time for local buses on Hastings St increased by 15% (+2 minutes) between Nanaimo St and Granville St
- Run time for the R5 Rapid Bus on Hastings St increased by 35% (+4 minutes) between Nanaimo St and Granville St. Given the short headway between R5 buses, delays can compound on this route.

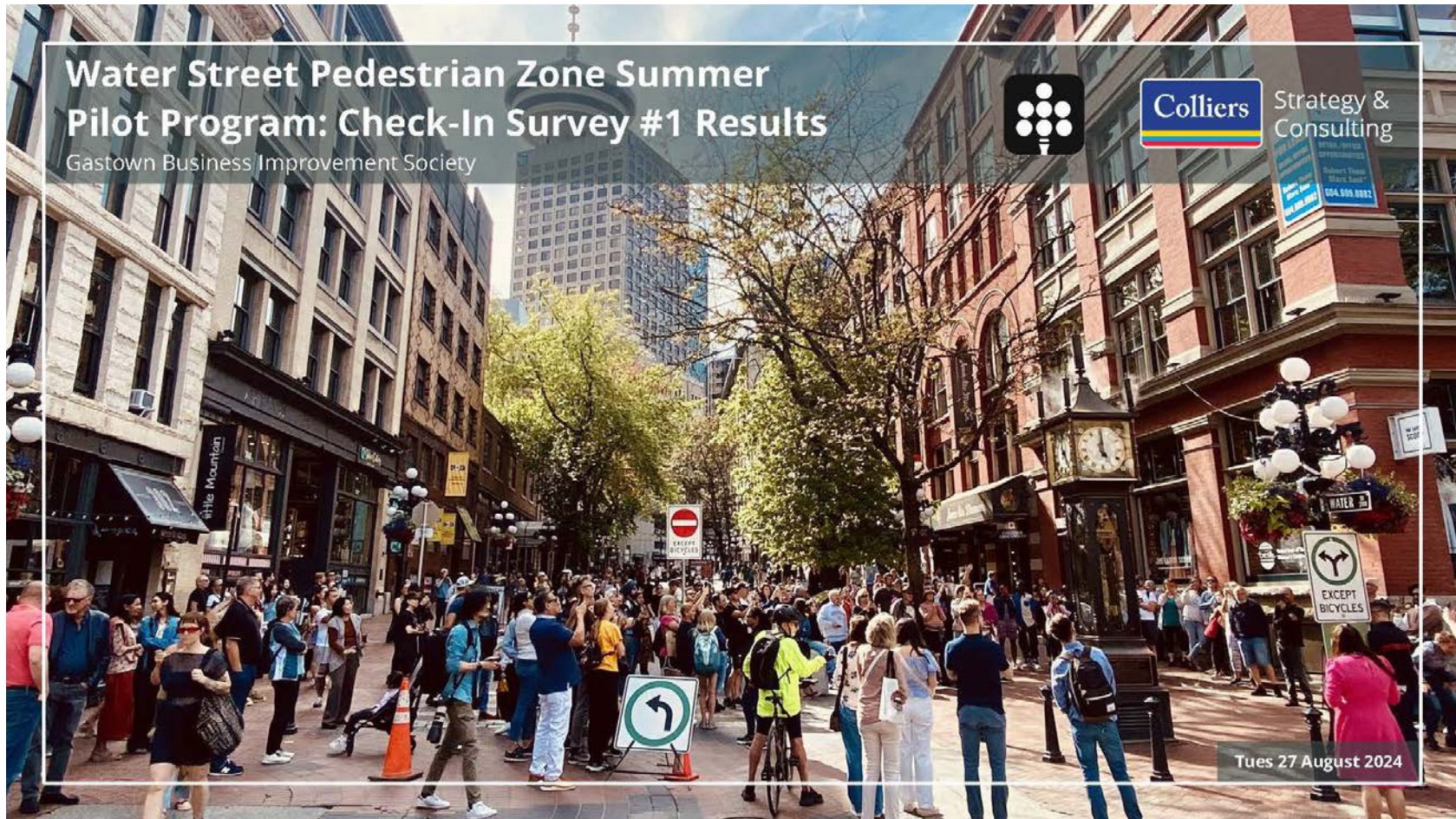
Buses along Powell St experienced run time increases of 8% (+1 minute) between Nanaimo St and Granville St. The section of the routes where the bus turns from Powell St to Pender St via Main St was most affected.

Notably, the bus queue jumpers and dedicated lanes created on Powell St and Main St in May and June resulted in run time benefits to Routes 4 and 7.

In the eastbound direction, run times for buses on Cordova St and Hastings St were unchanged.

* * * * *

APPENDIX G
Gastown Business Improvement Society Member Survey



Gastown Business Improvement Society – Check-In Survey #1 Results

Survey Results - Summary

- In total, 67 survey results were reported, representing a broad assortment of businesses including retail, hospitality, service, and office tenants within Gastown.
- The survey presented a series of rating scale questions, with scores ranging from “1” (representing a significant decrease or the least favourable outcome) to “5” (representing a significant increase or the most favourable outcome). A “3” was therefore considered a neutral score indicating no significant impact.
- Questions focused on impacts to foot traffic, sales, daily business operations, and overall neighbourhood vibrancy as a result of the pedestrian zone.
- Survey results were very mixed, both geographically (see following slide) and in terms of attitudes toward the pilot program. Sentiment fluctuated throughout the BIS area, although generally results skewed slightly negative. One exception was the neighbourhood vibrancy category, which skewed slightly positive overall.
- Along Water Street, this negative trend was particularly pronounced, with many businesses indicating negative impacts and few reporting positive outcomes.
- Beyond Water Street, results were generally much more positive, with some businesses noting increased energy, a positive atmosphere, higher sales, and increased foot traffic throughout Gastown. The maps provided later within this report provide colour coded detail of responses, by Commercial Retail Unit (CRU) type.

On Water Street (Respondents = 40)

	Foot Traffic	Sales	Business	Vibrancy
Retail	2.05	2.11	1.79	2.63
Hospitality	1.67	1.67	1.67	2.67
Service	2.17	2.00	1.67	2.50
Office	2.33	1.50	2.00	2.67
	1.98	1.92	1.75	2.63

Off Water Street (Respondents = 26)

	Foot Traffic	Sales	Business	Vibrancy
Retail	3.00	3.00	2.70	3.90
Hospitality	3.78	3.67	3.25	3.78
Service	1.67	2.33	2.00	2.00
Office	3.00	3.00	2.75	5.00
	3.12	3.15	2.80	3.81

Total (Respondents = 66 + 1 Left Purposely Anonymous= 67 TOTAL)

	Foot Traffic	Sales	Business	Vibrancy
Retail	2.53	2.55	2.24	3.27
Hospitality	2.72	2.67	2.46	3.22
Service	1.92	2.17	1.83	2.25
Office	2.67	2.25	2.38	3.83
TOTAL	2.55	2.54	2.28	3.22

Gastown Business Improvement Society – Check-In Survey #1 Results

Survey Results - Uptake

- After removing duplicate entries (e.g. repeat submissions from the same business / email), there were 67 responses to the GBIS Check-In Survey #1 (distributed in late July via Google Forms). This includes one entry that was purposely left anonymous and therefore was not able to be geographically categorized.
- The response rate represents around 40% of all GBIS member businesses, although survey response distribution was scattered by sub-area, with the highest penetration in the Water Street corridor and the lowest along Cordova.
- Notably, survey uptake in the Gateway sub-area was also low-particularly for hospitality tenants. This area is geographically significant as it represents a crucial point of entry to the Gastown pedestrian zone via Waterfront Station / Downtown.
- Moving forward, additional efforts to encourage survey uptake should be taken across Gastown, particularly in the Gateway, Maple, and Cordova sub-areas to ensure findings accurately reflect the experiences of a diverse assortment and range of businesses.
- Efforts could include door-to-door canvassing, physical paper-mailed surveys (with return envelope + postage), or targeted blasts to retailers / restaurants within a given area.



Initial Business Inventory

	Gateway	Water	Maple Leaf	Cordova	Woodwards	Columbia	Total
Hospitality	13	16	18	9	4	8	68
Retail	28	16	12	10	22	8	96
Office							0
Service							0
	41	32	30	19	26	16	164

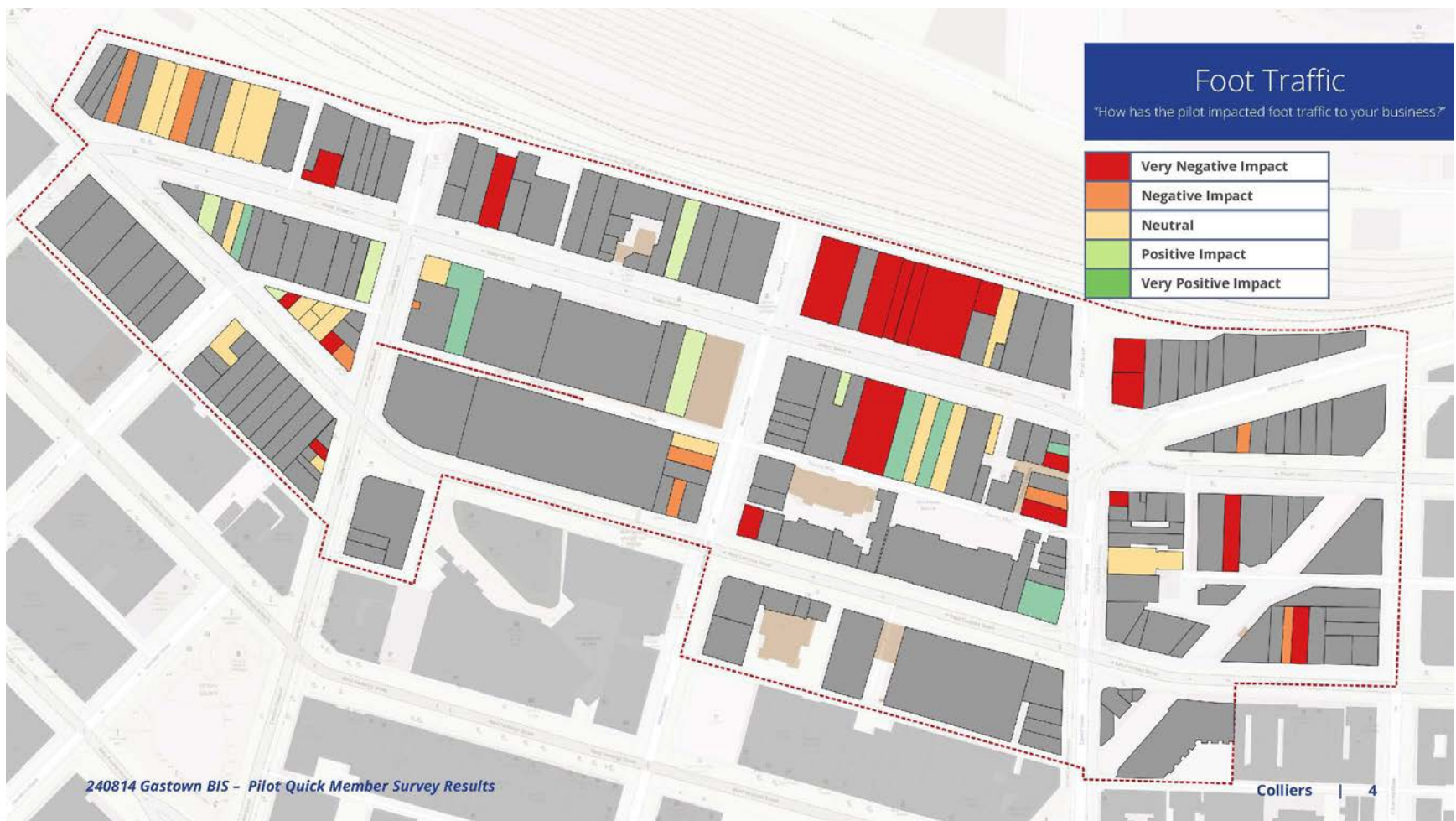
Gastown Summer Pilot Google Survey

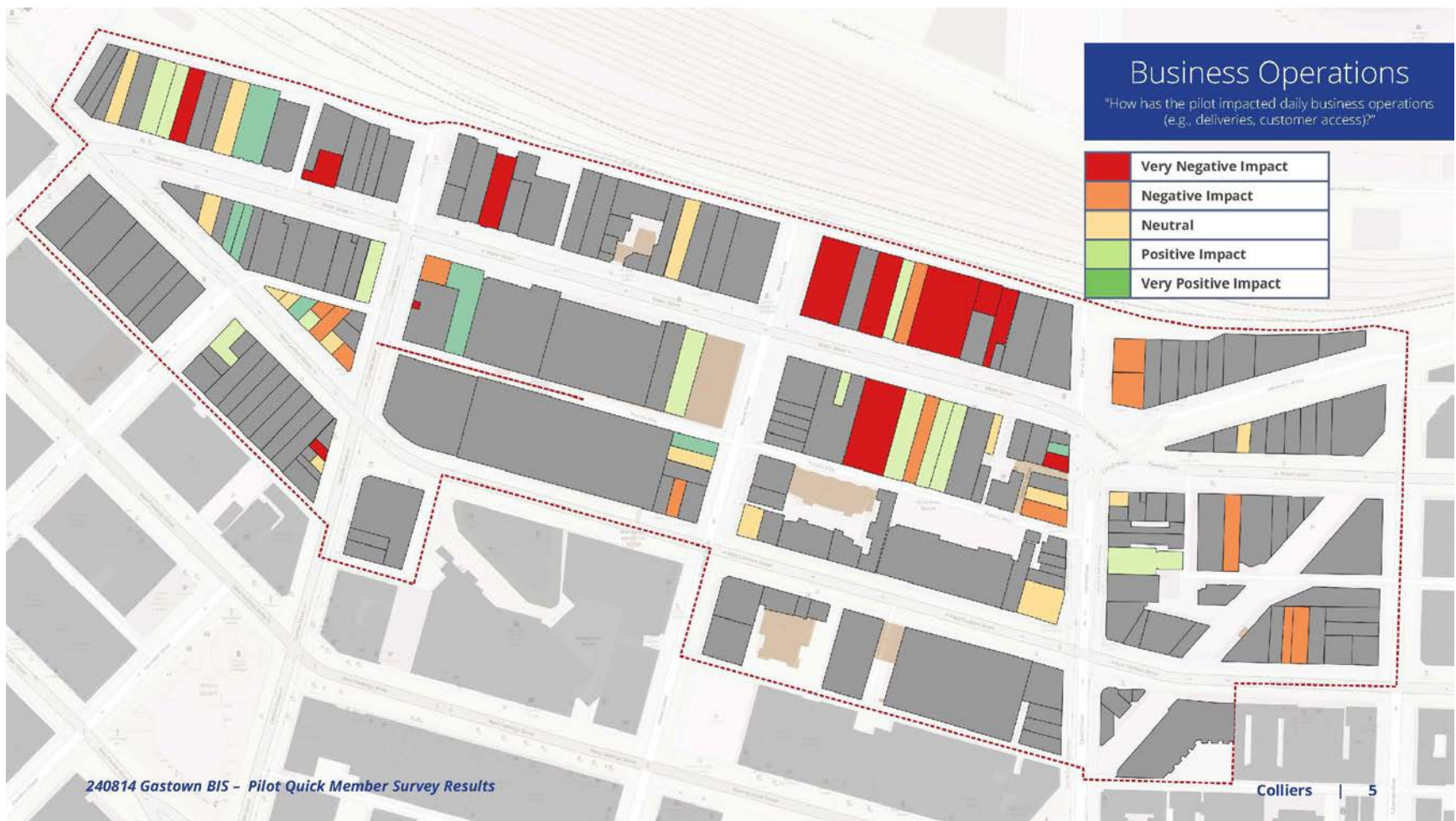
	Gateway	Water	Maple	Cordova	Woodwards	Columbia	Total
Hospitality	2	5	8	2	1	3	21
Retail	8	9	2	1	7	1	28
Office	2	4	0	0	3		9
Service	0	3	0	1	2	2	8
	12	21	10	4	13	6	66

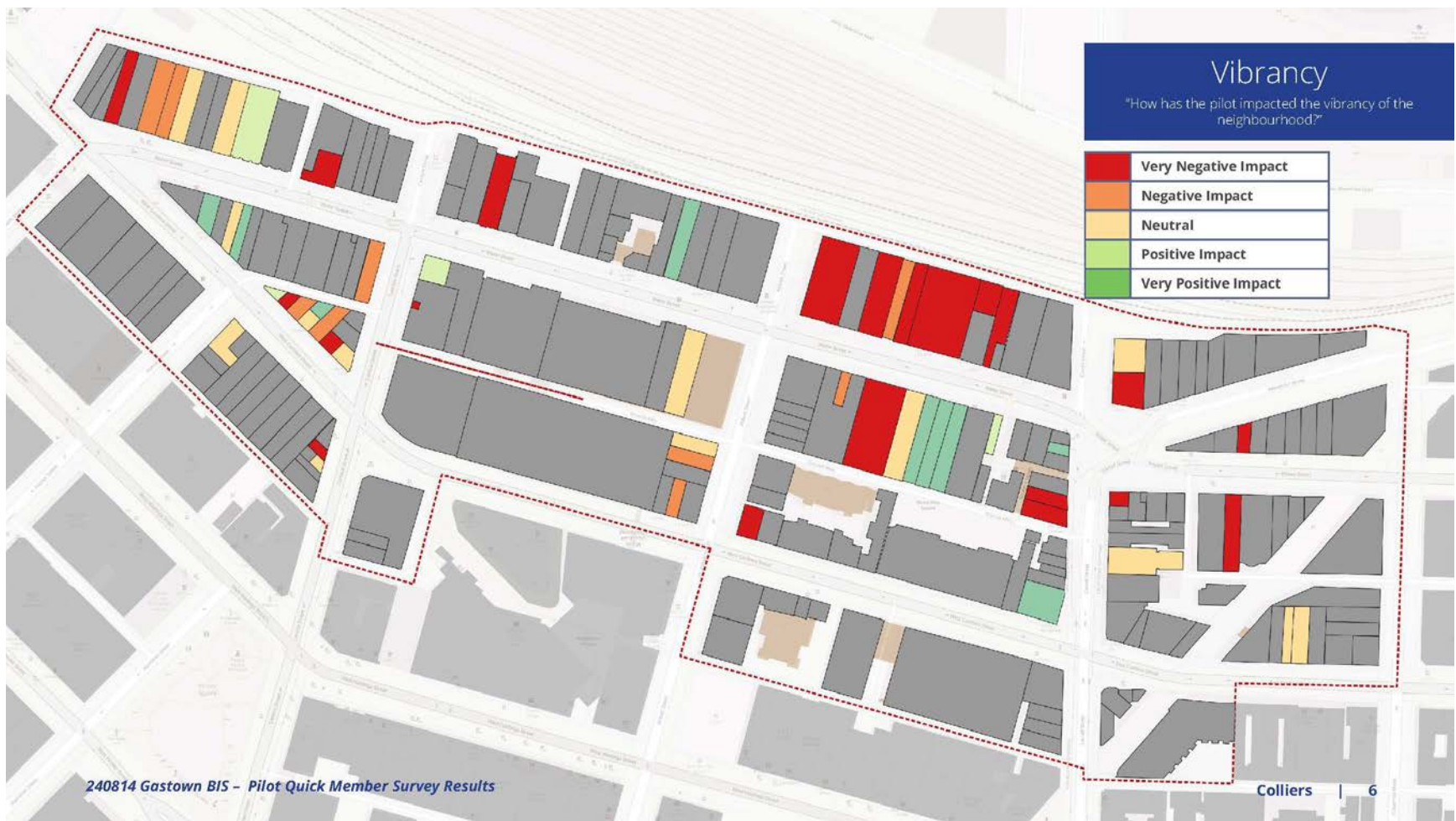
(+ 1 left purposely anonymous = 67 TOTAL)

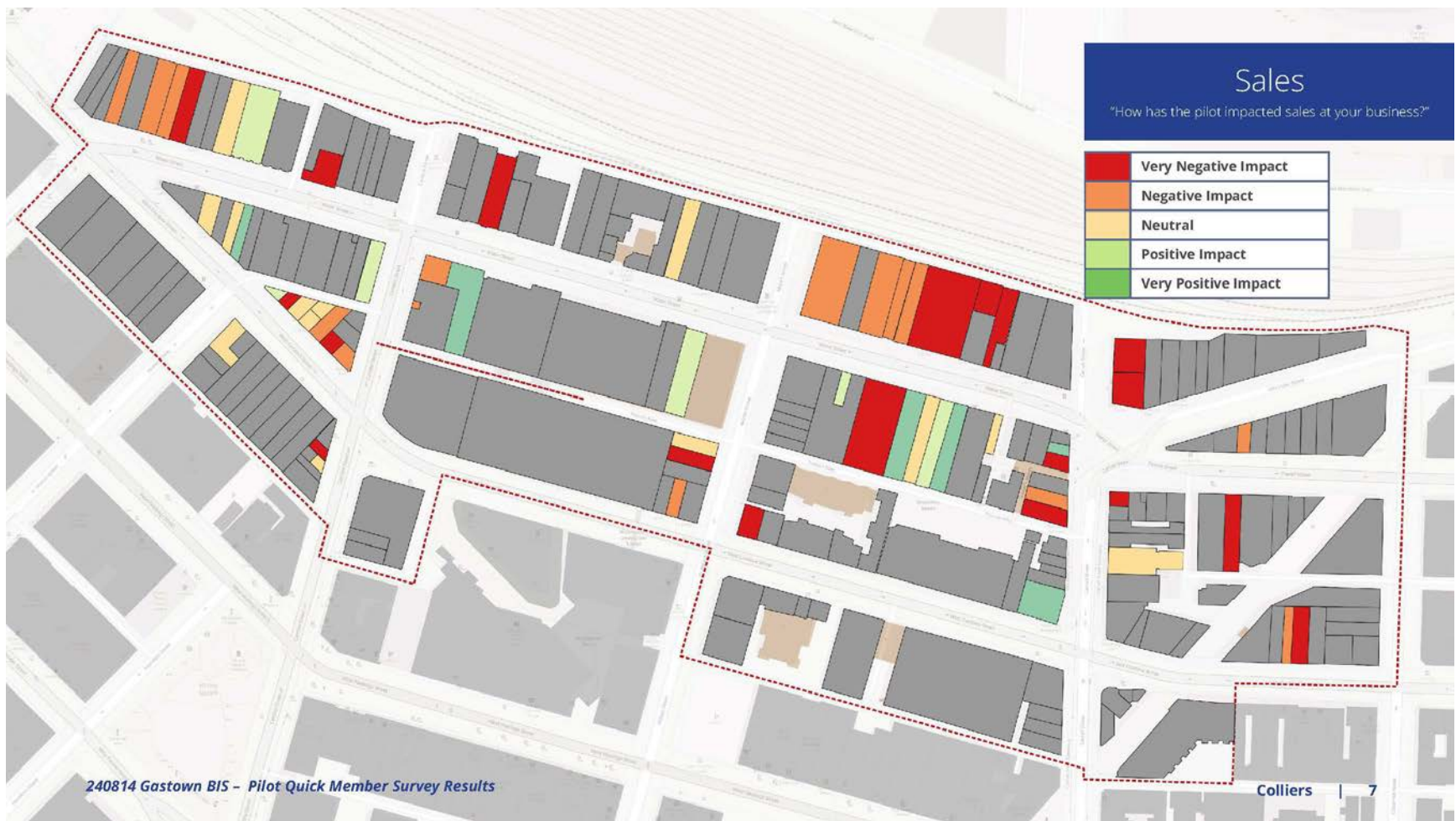
Penetration

	Gateway	Water	Maple	Cordova	Woodwards	Columbia	Total
Hospitality	15%	31%	44%	22%	25%	38%	
Retail	29%	56%	17%	10%	32%	13%	
	29%	66%	33%	21%	50%	38%	0











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APPENDIX H

Cleanliness and Community Outreach Services

Street Cleaning

City services:

City street cleaning services (nightly flushing, sweeping and litter collection) were supplemented with additional enhanced day and night shift litter pick up and daytime sidewalk cleaning.

Social enterprise street cleaning:

Existing microcleaning and feces collection services provided through the Street Cleaning Grant Program were supplemented throughout the pilot by Mission Possible as follows:

- An additional shift of microcleaning, mornings, 7 days per week
- Pressure washing, mornings, twice per week
- Proactive feces collection: an additional three mornings per week

Community Outreach Services

There were 3 different social enterprise groups providing community outreach services during the pilot, including peer-to-peer outreach and washroom attendants. Each group provided some form of public space ambassadors who spent time in and around the Water St area, including the surrounding side streets and laneways. Community Outreach Services provided by each group included:

Organization	Ambassadors	Schedule	Time
Mission Possible	2 community navigators	7 days / week	8am - noon
Embers / DTES Works	2 community stewards	2 car free events	Noon - 8pm
	2 washroom attendants	2 car free events	Noon - 8pm
Good Night Out	2-4 peers (including washroom attendants)	Thurs – Sat (Sun on long weekends)	8pm - midnight

Social Enterprise Metrics Summary

Each group's respective metrics for the supplemental pilot work are summarized in the table below, with more detailed information following.

	Cleaning	Community Outreach
Mission Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 607 of bags of litter • 2,268 of needles • 19 blocks of pressure washing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 108 service referrals • 109 business assistance • 459 conversations with community members^[1] • 46 de-escalations • 3 VPD calls^[2]
Embers / Eastside Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 needles collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 interventions (wellness checks, business assistance) • 100's social interactions (directions, information, washroom access, etc)
Good Night Out	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 259 points of contact • +100 check-ins

^[1] For example, people experiencing homelessness and other community members who may need assistance

^[2] Teams use a non-violent crisis intervention approach to de-escalate any conflicts observed in the project area when possible. In case of severe violence or ongoing threat, teams keep their distance and call Vancouver Police Department.

Detailed Summary & Feedback from Social Enterprise Groups

Mission Possible

About the organization

Mission Possible transforms lives through meaningful work. They empower people typically excluded from the traditional workforce—such as those facing homelessness and housing insecurity, poverty, and other barriers to employment—helping them achieve a renewed sense of dignity and purpose through meaningful work. Through their Employment Readiness Program and two social enterprises (MP Maintenance and MP Neighbours), Mission Possible creates a pathway to long-term jobs and lasting change for those in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Role in the Water St Pilot

Mission Possible provided supplemental services within the Water Street Pilot project area including:

- Supplemental micro-cleaning, pressure washing and other public realm cleaning support through their MP Maintenance program
- Peer to peer support through their Community Navigators program. Community Navigators teams walk through the project area each shift, checking in with people experiencing homelessness and mental health challenges, local businesses and other community members to identify opportunities to provide support. For example, this includes relationship-building, service referrals, de-escalations, emergency response.

Scope of work

- 7 days per week micro-cleaning and 2 days per week pressure washing
- 2 community navigators, 7 days per week, 8am – noon

Community Navigators feedback about the pilot

- Generally, little community safety concerns in the Water St pilot area
- Overnight sleeping on Water was steady in July with a few people per night sleeping on furniture), and increased slightly in August
- On average, encountered 1 tent or structure per day in project area (could include a tent, a makeshift shelter); usually it was removed by the camper by mid-morning.

Embers / Eastside Works

About the organization

Embers Eastside Works is a low barrier income generation hub located at 57 East Hastings St, in the heart of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). The goal of Eastside Works is to collaboratively build an innovative and inclusive employment model that ensures successful outcomes for individuals experiencing challenges to secure and maintain employment including mental health and substance use issues, extreme poverty and homelessness. Most importantly though, as a social innovation project, they work to use this model to inform changes required within traditional employment services in order ensure long term sustainability for inclusive employment services.

Role in the Water St Pilot

Embers provided peer to peer support through their Community Stewardship program.

Scope of work

- 2 peers during car free day events, noon – 8pm
- Also provided washroom attendants during car free day events

Embers peer feedback about the pilot

- Generally, little community safety concerns in the Water st pilot area
- No issues with washroom use

Good Night Out

About the organization

Good Night Out is a BC based non profit society committed to building community capacity to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault in all sectors, with a focus on hospitality, music, arts and nightlife.

The Street Team was created with the hopes that engaged peers who were skilled in bystander intervention could play a role in curbing incidents of gendered and harassing “sub-criminal” acts and support the safety of women and vulnerable populations after midnight in Vancouver’s vibrant nightlife district. The nightlife street team is the first team of its kind in North America.

Role in the Water St Pilot

Good Night Out provided nighttime peer to peer support through their Street Team.

Scope of work

- Weekend evenings (Thursday to Saturday, and also Sundays on long weekends), 8pm – midnight
- Provided washroom attendance support during evening hours during car free day events

Street Team feedback about the pilot

- Generally, little community safety concerns in the Water St pilot area
- Nightlife ends earlier and demographics are more mature than other downtown areas – may contribute to lower need for support / intervention. However, feedback from Gastown patrons suggests visible presence makes some folks feel safer.
- Developed relationships with industry staff, as well as with members of marginalized communities

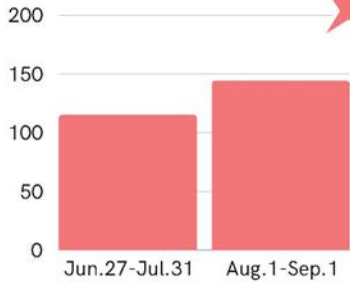
Reporting metrics from Good Night Out

good night out in gastown **Data Report**

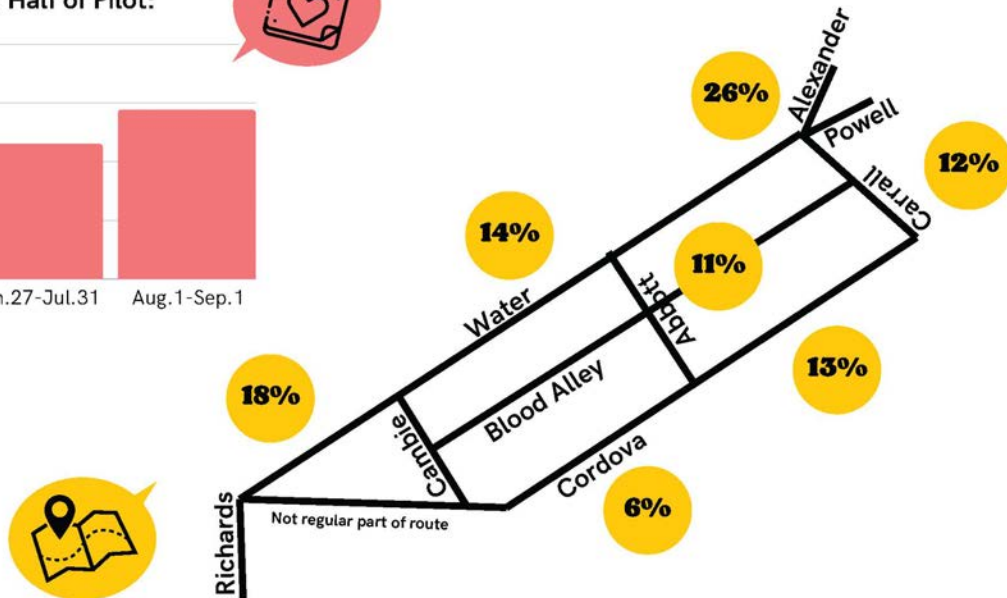
Water Street Pilot 2024 (Jun.27-Sep.1)

good night out.

Contacts in First and Second Half of Pilot:



Location of Contacts:



good night out in gastown **Data Report**

Water Street Pilot 2024 (Jun.27-Sep.1)

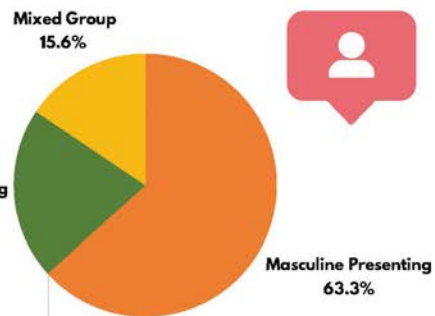
good night out.

259 contacts supporting 386 people

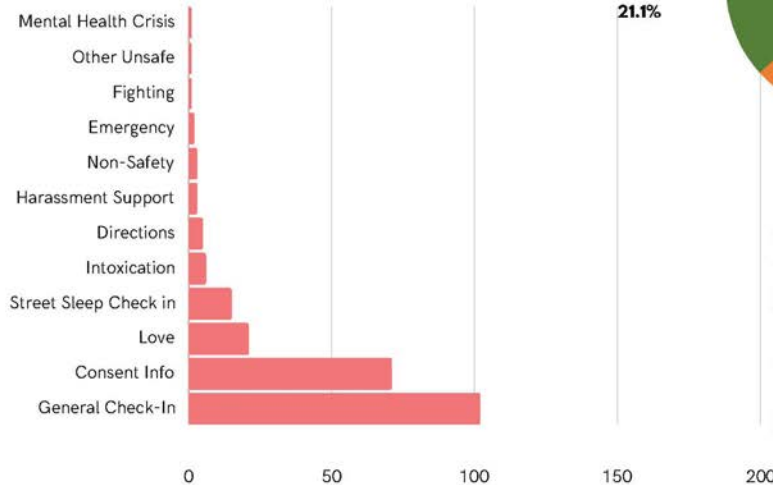
49% of contacts BEFORE 10 pm

Team is out 8pm-12am Thursday, Friday, Saturday, some Sundays

Breakdown of Contacts by Gender Presentation:



Nature of Contact:



No demographic information is asked of the public, but team members do enter observations as part of reporting requirements for funders. We do realize that some of these rely on traditional assumptions within a problematic gender binary. Contacts = any situation the team encounters. Mixed groups = more than one person of differing gendering presentations. Nature of contact = support services provided. Contacts might require more than one service. Upon testing, it has been shown that apx 10-12% of contacts are not recorded during peak times on shift.