



# GASTOWN

## WATER STREET PEDESTRIAN ZONE PILOT SUMMER 2025

Council Presentation | February 25, 2025



# Purpose

To present two options for Summer 2025 for Council consideration

# Content

1. **Context & Background** | *Work to date*
2. **Summer 2025 Options** | *Two approaches*
  - **Option A:** *Implement 2025 Summer Pilot*
  - **Option B:** *Focus resources on design and improvements*
3. **Summary & Conclusion**








# Context & Background

Work to date

# Gastown Program of Work 2023-26 Capital Plan



- 1 Deliver **near-term investments** (repairs, renewals)
- 2 Guide **major future infrastructure investments**

| Near-term   |   |  | Looking ahead  |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Sidewalk Repairs  | Trounce Alley   | Maple Tree Square Interim Repairs  | Summer Pilots (2024, 2025+)  | Gastown Public Spaces Plan   |
|  |  |  |  |  |

# October 2024 Council Meeting

- **Staff presented learnings** from 2024 Water St Pedestrian Zone Pilot
- **Council direction to proceed with/report back on:**
  - **Interim two-way Cordova** from Richards St to Gore Ave to improve access for visitors, residents and service providers (*confirm ability to deliver*)
  - **Options for a multi-modal, local Water St** for better walking and cycling connections;
  - **Weekend-only Summer Pedestrian Zone** (Saturdays, Sundays and for special events) including key enhancements
  - Commitment to **continued investment in the Gastown neighbourhood**, including consultant-led Gastown Public Spaces Plan that includes a **flexible design** for Water Street and Maple Tree Square



# Work to date – since October

- Technical scoping for **two-way traffic on Cordova**
- **Collaboration with GBIS** to understand priorities for Summer 2025
- **Resourcing** and **timeline** development

## What staff heard from GBIS\*:

- **Infrastructure investment** and service delivery remain **#1 priority**
- **Pedestrian zone weekends will be challenging** for businesses and resource-intensive to program.
- Interest in testing **enhanced public realm experience with through-vehicle traffic** on Water St
- Interest in **two-way Cordova St in 2025** if "done well"

*\*Recognizing diverse perspectives within the GBIS*



# Council Direction – Two Options

**A**

## Implement 2025 Pilot from June to September, including:

1. Targeted public realm **improvements on Water St**
  2. **Pedestrian Zones**  
➔ **Council to direct number of days/weekends**, and staff to work with GBIS on scheduling
  3. **Two-way Cordova St** from Richards St to Gore Ave
- + Advance **PSP** and continue **near-term investments**

**B**

## Focus resources to:

- Accelerate **flexible public realm design for Water St & MTSQ** as part of Gastown Public Spaces Plan
  - Trial **full two-way Cordova St** from Powell St Overpass to Richards St in 2026
- + Support **public realm improvements** through existing programs  
+ Continue **near-term investments**



**Option A:**  
**Implement 2025 Summer Pilot**



# Option A: Implement 2025 Summer Pilot

**Implement Water St Pedestrian Zone Pilot in 2025, including 3 key moves:**

- **Water St Experience**
  - **Pedestrian Zones** *\*Number of days or weekends to be directed by Council*
  - **Two-way Cordova St – Richards to Gore**
- + Advance Gastown Public Spaces Plan (PSP) and continue near-term investments

# 1. Water St Experience

# Water St Experience

## Objectives

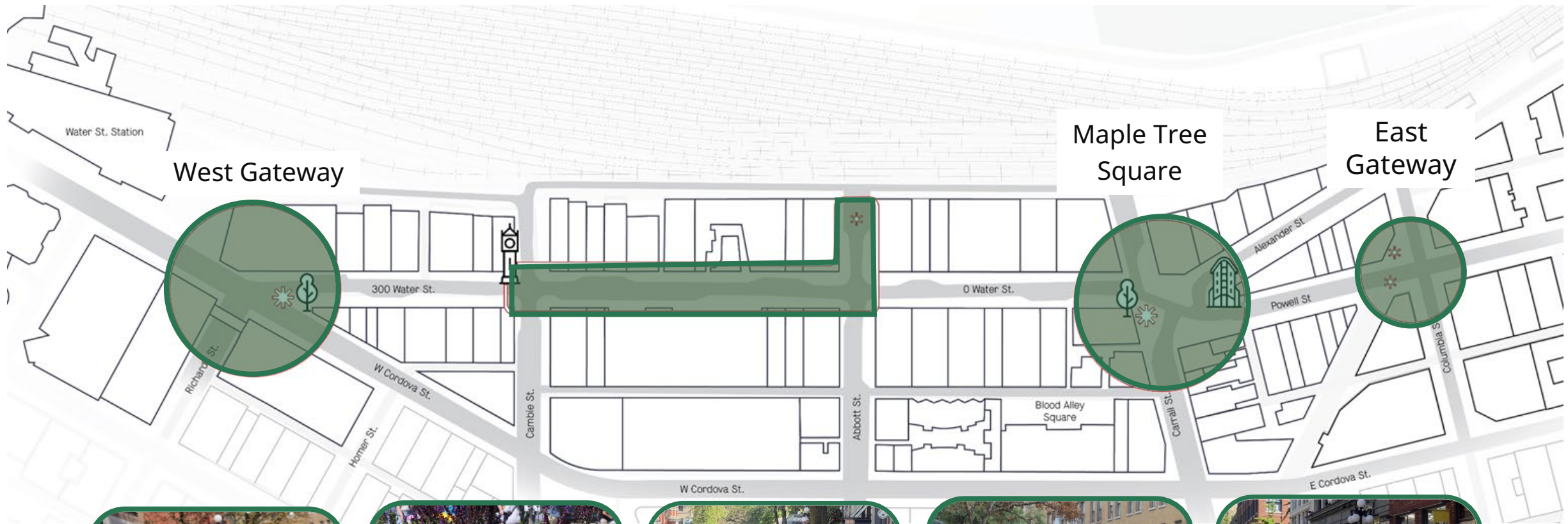
- ✓ Test targeted public realm improvements while maintaining through-vehicle traffic
- ✓ Support businesses (more space for patios, permitting tools, loading/pick-up/drop-off)
- ✓ Create draw past Steam Clock
- ✓ Extend pilot to Columbia St

## Considerations

- **100 Block:** less activated + construction at 131 Water St
- Limitations of tactical interventions
- Public life experience with through-vehicle traffic
- Cycling connection



# Water St Experience – Public Realm Design



# Water St Experience – Business Tools

## New and expanded summer patios:

- ✓ Waive patio fees for all summer patios (expanded pilot area)\*
- ✓ Added seats
- ✓ Expedited temporary licensing (with LCRB)
- ✓ Process:
  - Direct outreach to businesses
  - Streamlined permitting
  - COV-provided drawings

## Open Streets Permit:

- ✓ Merchandise displays:
  - Point of sale trial (new)
  - More flexibility
  - No fees
- ✓ Live music for patios
- ✓ Shared market stalls
- ✓ Programming



\* Recommendations for amendments to Street Vending By-law in separate report

## 2. Pedestrian Zones

# Pedestrian Zones

## Objectives

- ✓ Test levels of activation to make Water St a vibrant pedestrian zone
- ✓ Test intermittent Pedestrian Zones
- ✓ Test ease of set-up/take-down (traffic management)

## Considerations

- Business concerns
- GBIS capacity to program
- Programming costs
- Marketing and communication for residents and visitors
- Number of days or weekends





# Pedestrian Zone programming levels

Level of Programming



*Walking street*

*Event-based*

## A busy weekend 2024 Pilot



**Cost:** N/A  
No additional programming

## Community activations 2024 Pilot



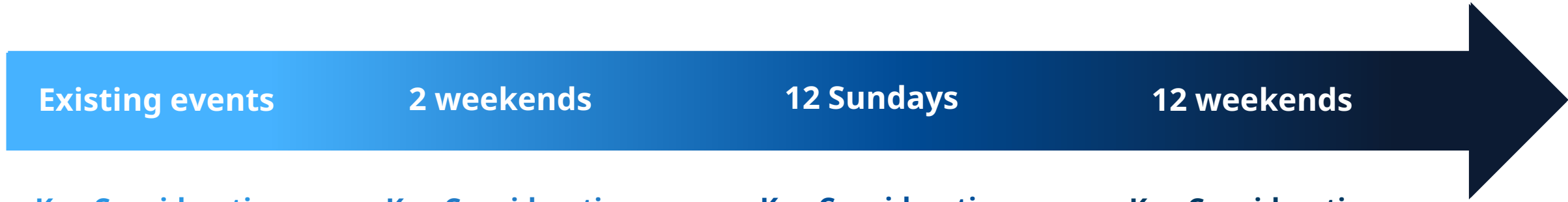
**Cost :** \$10K per day  
Open Streets permit and City-led support of community organizers

## Meet Me in Gastown 2024 Pilot



**Cost :** >\$100K+  
Full-scale event, led by GBIS/ other partners

# Number of Pedestrian Zone Days or Weekends



## Key Considerations

### No COV cost

- Focus on existing annual events (Meet Me in Gastown & Grand Prix)
- No new learning opportunities

## Key Considerations

### Cost: \$160,000

- 2 Pedestrian Zone weekends
- Test light to medium City-led programming
- Poor marketability
- Limited learning opportunities

## Key Considerations

### Cost: \$400,000

- 12 consecutive Sunday Pedestrian Zone days, June - September
- Test light to medium City-led programming
- Good learning opportunities

## Key Considerations

### Cost: \$1,000,000

- 12 consecutive Pedestrian Zone weekends, June - September
- Test light to medium City-led programming
- Maximizes learning opportunities

Amounts above do not include GBIS costs

# 3. Two-way Cordova

# Two-way Cordova



## Opportunities

### Short-term

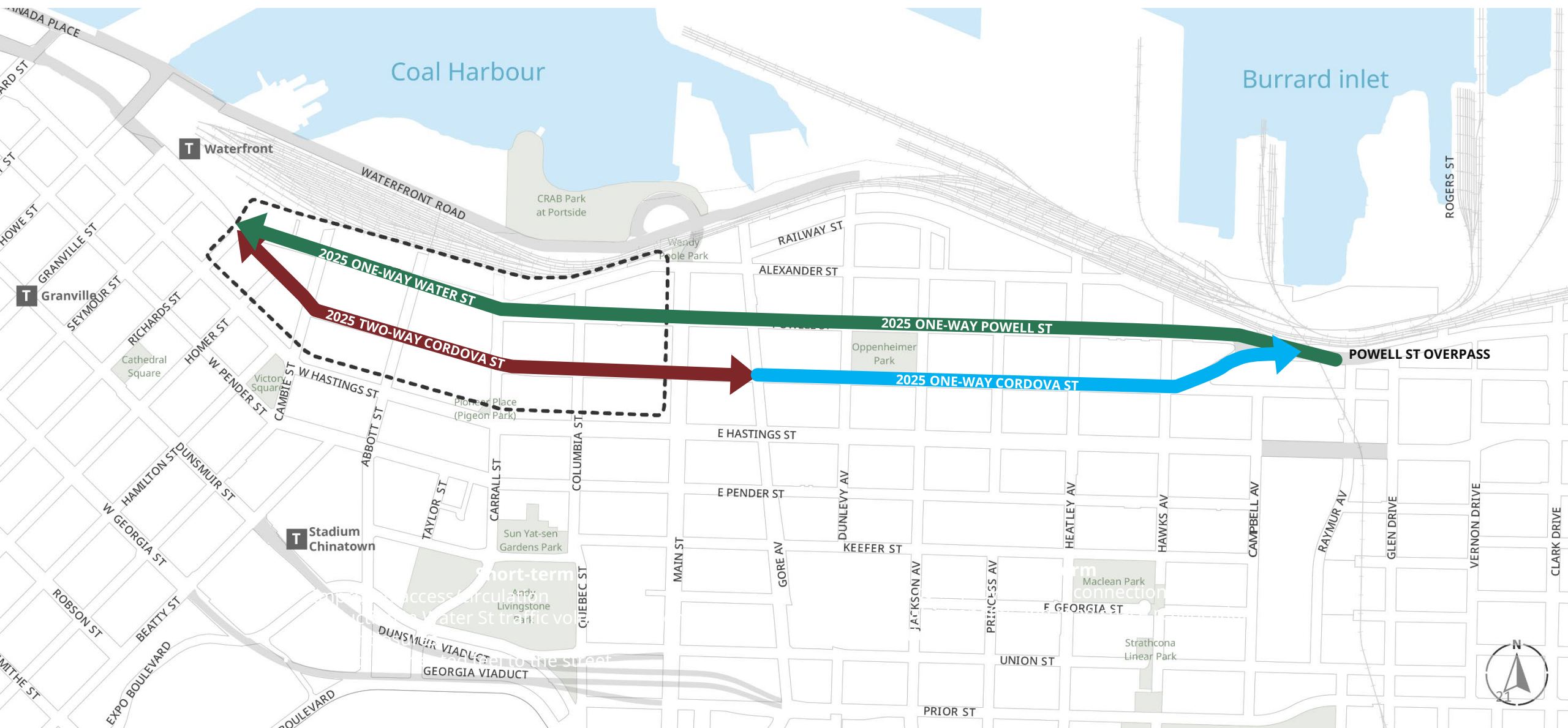
- Improved access/circulation
- Network redundancy
- Reduction in Water St traffic & simpler Water St closures
- Calmer traffic on Cordova St
- Potential to relocate tour buses and/or #50 off Water St

### Long-term

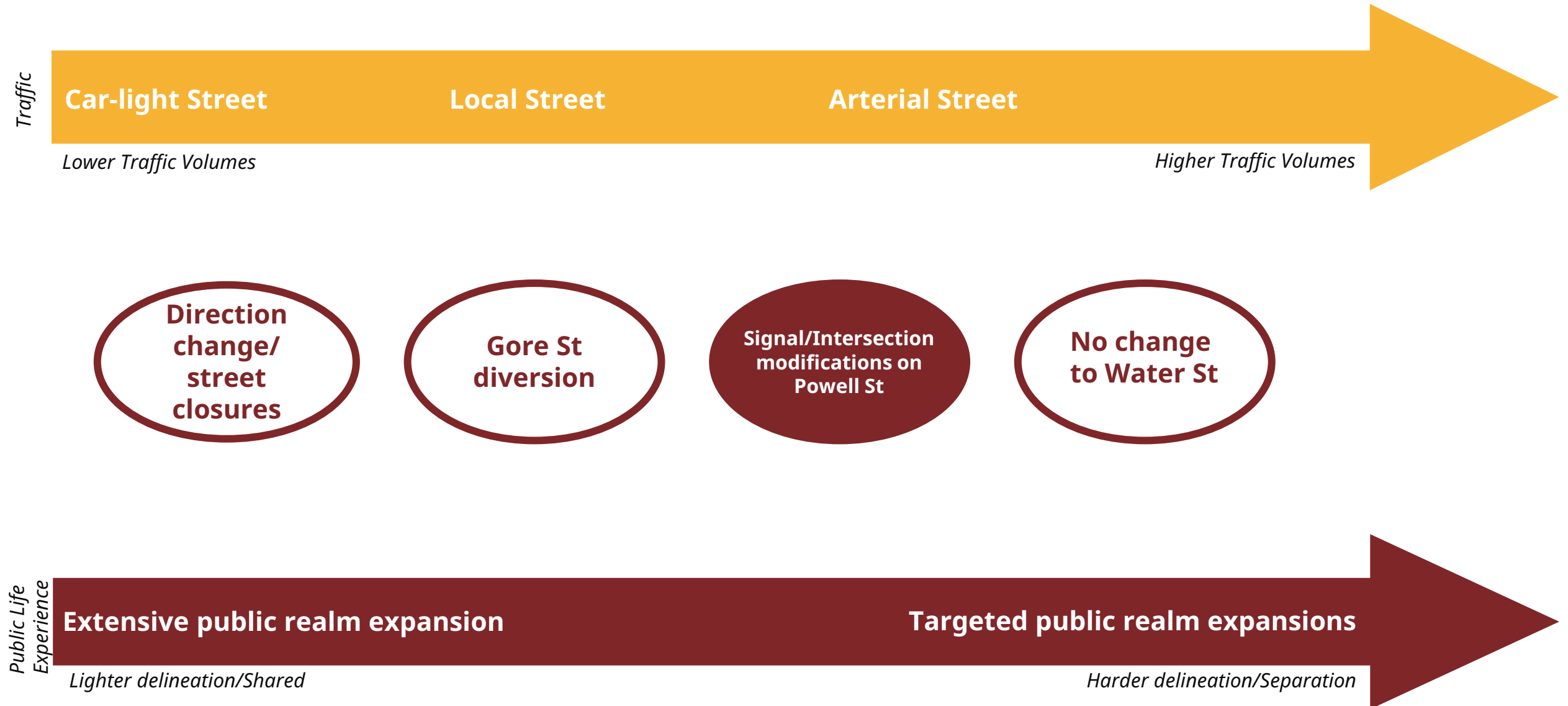
- Potential to improve transit connections (#4, #7)
- Public realm benefits and road space reallocation opportunities
- Reimagine Powell St



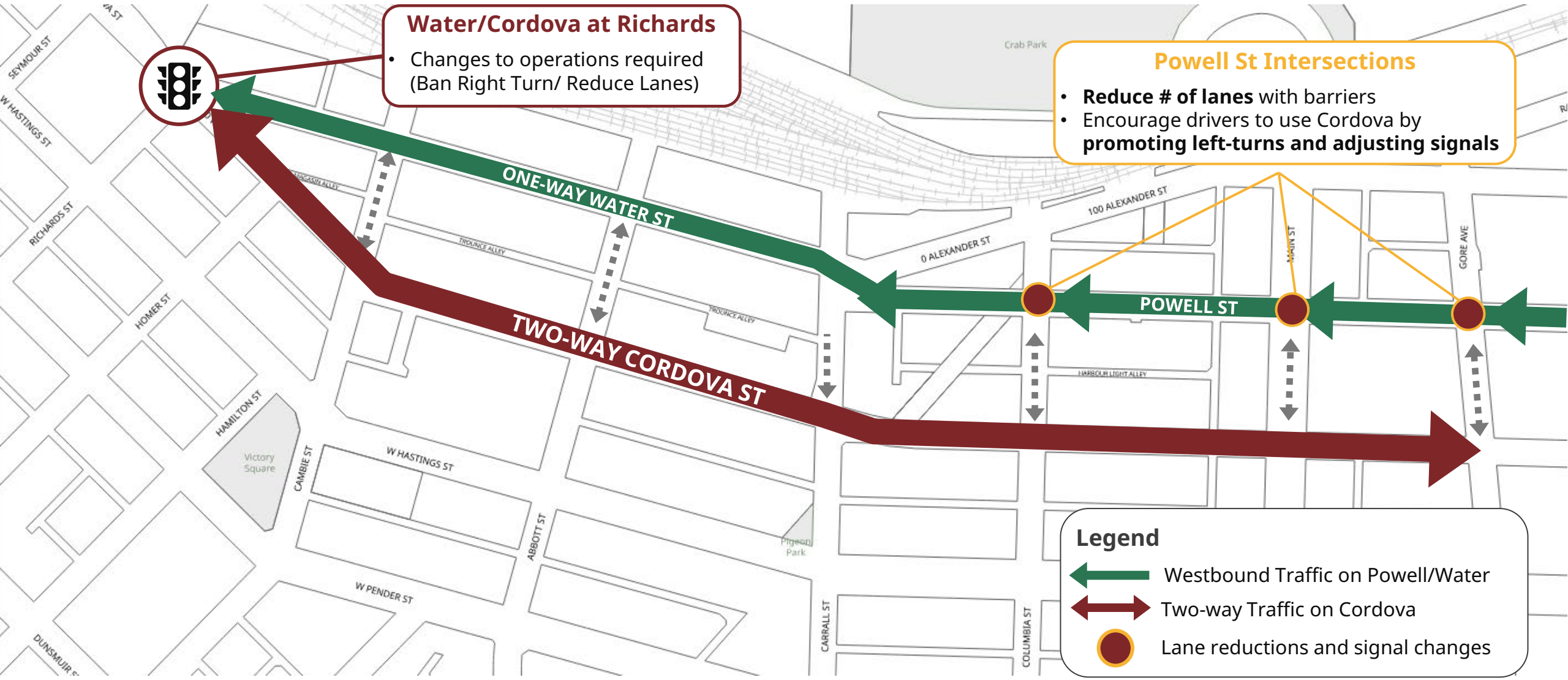
# Two-way Cordova - Potential 2025 Network



# Water St: reducing arterial traffic

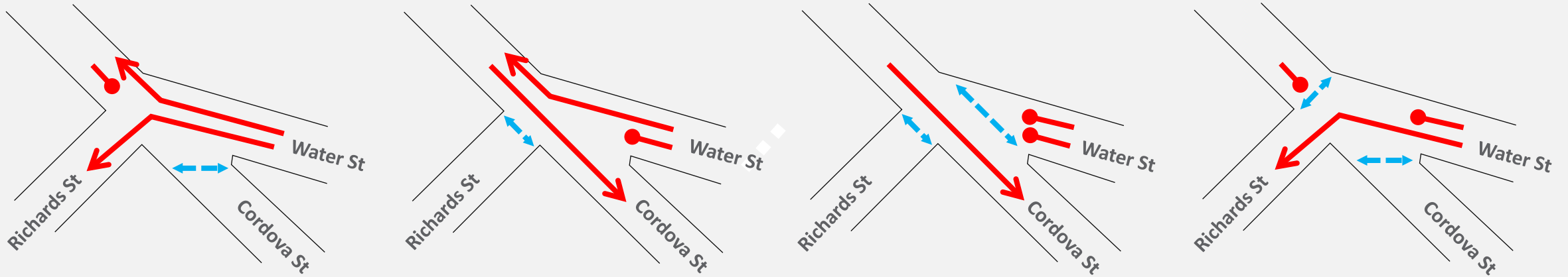


# Two-way Cordova St (2025) - Interim strategy



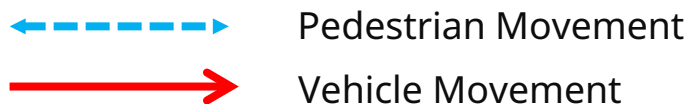
# Two-way Cordova St - Intersection Operations

## Existing Signal Timing

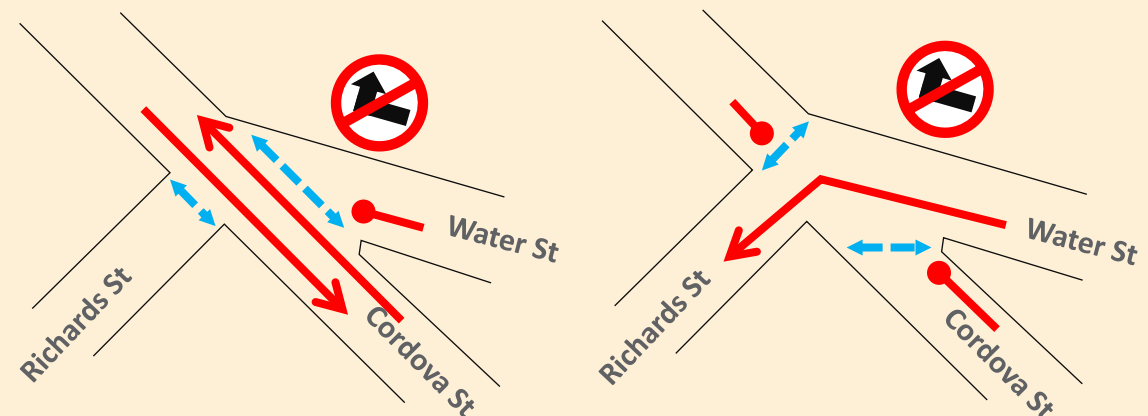


## Prohibit right turn from Water St onto Cordova

- For safe operations, Water St onto Cordova St cannot overlap:
  - East/West Traffic on Cordova St
  - Pedestrians using the western crosswalk
- Provide efficient signal operation



## Signal Timing with Two-Way Cordova St





# Two-way Cordova St Gore to Richards (2025)

## Objectives

- ✓ Improve vehicular access & circulation to Gastown, building on findings from 2024 pilot
- ✓ Trial first phase of 2-way Cordova before potential extension to Powell St Overpass
- ✓ Test reduction in vehicle volumes on Water St
- ✓ Support Pedestrian Zone road closures on Water St

## Considerations

- Potential to accommodate tour buses and #50
- Parking/loading engagement (high demand for curbside uses)
- Reduced eastbound vehicle capacity
- Potential 2026 expansion to Powell St Overpass



# Ongoing work

## Near-term investments

- Trounce Alley rehabilitation
- Brick sidewalk repairs
- New public washroom (Fall 2025)

## Gastown Public Spaces Plan

- 2025 Pilot learnings could inform Plan, including flexible design for Water St/MTSQ and Cordova St



# Option A – Implement a 2025 Summer Pilot

|                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Water St Experience:</b> | <b>\$700,000 to \$900,000</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|

**Includes:** 3-4 placemaking nodes, seating and streetscape improvements

|                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Pedestrian Zones:</b> | <b>Up to \$1,000,000</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|

**\$80,000 per weekend includes:** traffic management costs, budget for City-led programming, enhanced cleaning services and peer support

- **Existing events only:** no additional cost
- **Two weekends:** \$160,000
- **12 Sundays:** \$400,000
- **12 weekends:** \$1,000,000

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Two-way Cordova St:</b><br><i>Richards to Gore</i> | <b>\$1,200,000 to \$1,500,000</b> |
|---|-----------------------------------|

**Includes:** interim traffic signal changes, street design, data collection and analysis

**Total estimate: \$1,900,000 to \$3,400,000**

**Option B:**

**Focus resources on design and  
improvements**



## Option B – Focus resources on design and improvements

### Focus resources to:

- Accelerate **flexible public realm design for Water St and MTSQ** (as part of the Gastown Public Spaces Plan)
  - Trial **full two-way Cordova** in 2026
- + Support **public realm improvements** through existing programs
- + Continue **near-term investments**

# Focus on flexible design for Water St and MTSQ

Accelerate flexible public realm design for Water St and Maple Tree Square that:

- **Accommodates vehicles** and expands the public realm
- Can easily **become car-free** for special events or future Pedestrian Zones
- Integrates **cultural visibility** of x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm, Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh and səliłwətał

## Considerations

- Prioritize design work in 2025
- Informs infrastructure renewal in next Capital Plan
- Fewer learning opportunities



# Full two-way Cordova St – 2026

Trial two-way traffic on Cordova St **from Richards St to the Powell St Overpass** in Summer 2026

In 2025, staff would continue:

- Public/Stakeholder engagement to understand trade-offs and priorities for curb use
- Detailed design
- Construction planning

## Considerations

- Need for more detailed engagement with stakeholders
- More intuitive network with full extent of change
- Cost \$2.5M - \$3.0M



# Public Realm Improvements

Continue to support improvements through existing city-wide programs, including:

- **Placemaking**
- **Support patios and business uses**, and adjust curb uses as needed
- Immediate opportunities for **local Nations visibility** such as special features or programming

## Considerations

- Existing programs offer significant support to neighbourhood
- Regular summer patio program (inc. fees, no added seats)
- Regular LCRB licensing process





# Near-term Investments\*

- Continue near-term improvements identified in 2023-26 Capital Plan:
  - Trounce Alley rehabilitation
  - Brick sidewalk repairs
- Implement a public washroom in Fall 2025



\* This work will continue in 2025 in both Option A and Option B

# Summary & Conclusion

# Overall Gastown Program Budget

**Total program budget:** \$17.7M

**Total spent to end of 2024:** \$5.8M

- Sidewalk repairs
- Maple Tree Sq interim paver repairs
- 2024 Summer Pilot, including Nations visibility projects
- Consultant support for Gastown Public Spaces Plan

**Near-term repairs 2025-26:** ~\$4.1M

- Sidewalk repairs
- Trounce Alley rehabilitation

**Gastown Public Spaces Plan 2025-26:** ~\$3M

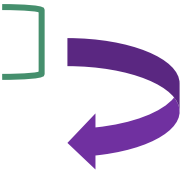
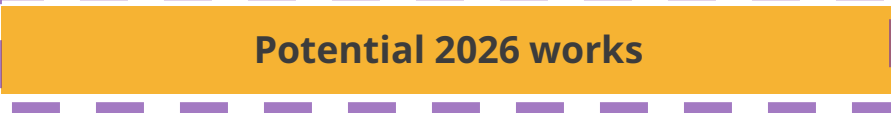
- Consultant support for Gastown Public Spaces Plan
- Support for Nations and visibility projects
- Design work

**2025 pilot budget:** ~\$1.9M - \$3.4M

- Includes two-way Cordova St from Richards St to Gore Ave

**Potential 2026 works:** TBD

- Pedestrian zone(s), two-way Cordova, detailed design work, etc



If not spent in 2025, \$2M to \$3.4M can be **reallocated** toward advancing design work to inform future investments and two-way Cordova St in 2026

# Council Decision

|   |                                | Opportunities  | Risks  | Costs                      |
|---|--------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| <b>Option A:<br/>Implement a<br/>2025 Summer<br/>Pilot</b>                  | <b>Water St<br/>Experience</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test improvements to public life with through-traffic</li> <li>• Support for businesses</li> <li>• Expansion to Columbia St</li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public life experience with vehicle traffic</li> <li>• Limitations of tactical interventions</li> <li>• Resource investment</li> </ul>  | \$700,000 to \$900,000     |
|   | <b>Pedestrian<br/>Zones</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test levels of programming</li> <li>• Test ease of set-up/take-down</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource investment – less benefit with fewer Water St closures</li> <li>• Lack of GBIS support for full weekend closures</li> <li>• Lack of GBIS resources for programming</li> <li>• Public perception &amp; communication</li> </ul> | Up to \$1,000,000          |
|   | <b>Two-way<br/>Cordova</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test functionality, before potentially extending to overpass</li> <li>• Experience on Cordova St</li> <li>• Reduced Water St traffic</li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unintuitive road network</li> <li>• Driver frustration</li> <li>• Resource investment</li> </ul>  | \$1,200,000 to \$1,500,000 |
| <b>Option B:<br/>Focus<br/>resources on<br/>design and<br/>improvements</b> |                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus resources to accelerate flexible design and PSP in 2025</li> <li>• Less budget spent on testing</li> <li>• Less impact on businesses</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Miss out on 'real-world' learning opportunities</li> <li>• Loss of momentum for Pedestrian Zones</li> </ul>   | ---                        |

# Council Direction – Two Options

A

## Implement 2025 Pilot from June to September, including:

1. Targeted public realm **improvements on Water St**
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    - ➔ **Council to direct number of days/weekends**, and staff to work with GBIS on scheduling
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**Thank you**