



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: February 11, 2025
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: February 25, 2025
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services
SUBJECT: Amendments to Street Vending By-law to Support Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot and Granville Public Realm Improvements

Recommendations

- A. THAT Council approve, in principle, amendments to the Street Vending By-Law to allow the temporary waiving of permit and application fees for summer patios and small sidewalk patios between April 1 and October 31, 2025, in the 2025 Water Pedestrian Zone Pilot (Option A as described in the 'Report Back: Gastown Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot Update' report), as described in this report and generally in accordance with Appendix A;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to bring forward for enactment the necessary amendments to the Street Vending By-law, generally in accordance with Appendix A.

- B. THAT Council approve, in principle, amendments to the Street Vending By-Law to allow the temporary waiving of the permit and application fees for summer patios and small sidewalk patios between April 1 and October 31, 2025, in the 2025 Granville Street Public Realm Improvements project area, as described in this report and generally in accordance with Appendix A;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to bring forward for enactment the necessary amendments to the Street Vending By-law, generally in accordance with Appendix A.

Purpose and Executive Summary

This report recommends that Council amend the Street Vending By-law to waive application and permit fees for summer patios and small sidewalk patios in the two project areas indicated on the maps (see Schedule A of Appendices A and B) during the period of April 1 to October 31, 2025, in support of the 2025 Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot ("Water St Pilot") and the 2025 Granville Street Public Realm Improvement project.

The purpose of waiving these fees is:

- to mitigate impacts on local businesses of tactical public space improvements, and enable them to help activate the public realm in the two project areas in summer 2025;
- to test and inform learnings for long-term public realm infrastructure investments, to be delivered through long term plans in the two project areas; and
- to test potential, future updates to city-wide street use programs, including the Patio Program.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

[“Gastown Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot Update”](#) (October 23, 2024) directed staff to proceed with a 2025 Water Street Pedestrian Zone [on weekends and for special events](#) via a Council update to recommended action.

[“Gastown Summer 2024 Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot”](#) (February 7, 2024) directed staff to proceed with a summer 2024 pedestrian-first pilot on Water Street, simplify permit process and create more flexibility for local businesses and organizations.

Council Motion, [“A People-Focused Gastown: A Bold, Forward-Looking Vision for a Vibrant and Prosperous Neighbourhood”](#) (May 10, 2023) provides direction to staff to initiate the process to develop the Gastown Public Spaces Plan.

[“Granville Street Planning Program – Terms of Reference and Interim Rezoning Policies”](#) (January 31, 2023) directed staff to initiate the Granville Street Planning Program, with the objective of developing a new vision to re-establish Granville as an exciting, welcoming, safe and inclusive downtown destination.

Council Motion, [“Flexible, Innovative and Expedited Patio Permitting”](#) (May 13, 2020) and the subsequent expansion of existing patio programs and implementation of the temporary curbside patio program shows waiving fees can encourage business participation in public life.

City Manager’s Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

In summer 2025, temporary and near-term public realm improvements and transportation network changes will be implemented in two project areas, Gastown and Downtown Granville Street. First, a Water Street Pilot in summer 2025 is being considered to test targeted public realm enhancements along Water Street while maintaining through traffic through the project area (Option A, Option A as described in the ‘Report Back: Gastown Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot Update’ report).

Second, immediate works in the 900-1200 blocks of Downtown Granville Street will include sidewalk decluttering and updating street furniture assets, temporary transportation network changes, and supporting expanded business uses in the curb lane.

In both project areas, temporary and near-term works are intended to test and inform long-term public realm investments, to be delivered through the Gastown Public Realm Plan and the

Granville Street Planning Program, respectively.

Business participation is a critical to the success of tactical and temporary public space testing, as business uses help to activate the public realm, and help guide decision-making for the public realm infrastructure investments for the long-term. To encourage businesses to participate, and mitigate impacts caused by City-led temporary changes, staff have developed a range of tools to enable business uses in the street right-of-way, including a recommendation to waive fees for patios.

Discussion

2025 Water Street Pilot

Among the successes of last summer's 2024 Water Street Pilot was the range of tools offered for businesses with patios, including: streamlined permitting process; expedited licensing with the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) coordinated between the City and Province; an Open Streets Permit to enable live music for patio spaces; and waiving of application and permit fees for new and expanded pilot patios. These supports and tools are proposed to be carried forward to the 2025 Water Street Pilot, with some refinements.

While supports for businesses with patios were enthusiastically received overall, post-pilot engagement indicated some areas for improvement, including concerns about inequity for businesses with regular summer patios, and businesses located immediately outside of the project area, whose fees were not waived. Based on these learnings, this report recommends expanding the eligibility for waived fees for patios in the 2025 pilot, as follows:

- waived fees for new and expanded pilot patios installed for the summer 2025 pilot;
- waived fees for the renewing summer patios permitted through the regular summer patio program for the full summer patio term (April 1 to October 31);
- extend the project boundaries along Cambie, Abbott, and Carrall Street up to Cordova Street, and Powell and Alexander Street up to Columbia Street, to extend eligibility for waived fees to the summer patios within this larger area.

It should be noted that a related report, 'Report Back: Gastown Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot Update', to be presented to Council on February 25, 2025, recommends two options: to either implement a 2025 Water Street Pilot (Option A) or to focus resources to accelerate a flexible design for Water Street and Maple Tree Square (Option B). Recommendation A in this report, to waive patio fees in the Water Street Pilot area, applies to the 2025 Water Street Pilot described in Option A. Should Council provide direction for Option B, staff recommend that Recommendation A in this report would not apply, and that Gastown businesses continue to be supported through existing street use programs.

2025 Granville St Public Realm Improvements

Starting in Spring 2025, staff will begin immediate public realm improvements to the 900-1200 blocks of Downtown Granville Street (between Smithe Street and Drake Street). These improvements include a decluttering of public realm furniture and assets, as well as changes to curbside regulations to make space for curbside and sidewalk patios, additional loading zones, and pick-up and drop off areas for visitors. In addition, the public realm will be improved with refreshed street furniture. These changes comprise Phase 1 near-term actions for the longer-term Granville Street Planning process.

Similar to the approach for Water Street, participation from local businesses along Granville Street is critical in helping to activate an expanded public realm in summer 2025. Staff are developing a similar suite of tools for local Granville Street businesses as in the Water Street Pilot, including recommending to waive fees for all summer patios (new and existing/renewing) and small sidewalk patios for the full summer permit term (April 1 to October 31).

At the time of Council receiving this report, staff are actively engaging local businesses in the Granville Street project area to scope opportunities for patios, and guide participating businesses through a streamlined permitting process. It is expected that an additional 10 to 15 summer patios will be added to the project area through this work.

Financial Implications

Temporarily waiving fees during the pilot period for both project areas is expected to have some impact on Patio Program revenues, with the majority of potential uncollected revenue generated from large sidewalk and curbside patios. Small sidewalk patios will generate only nominal uncollected revenue, which can be absorbed within the existing operating budget.

Approximately 32 summer patios will have their fees waived under the 2025 Water Street Pilot (about \$82,500), including existing, renewing, and new summer patios. Similarly, the Granville Street project is expected to involve 20-25 summer patios (between \$35,200 to \$44,200 in waived fees). These numbers are subject to final confirmation following the submission of businesses' patio renewals and new patio applications.

The estimated total financial impact for both projects is projected to range between \$117,700 and \$126,700, including waived fees for existing, renewing, and new summer patios (see Appendix B for detailed breakdown).

Legal Implications

If the Recommendations in this report are approved, Legal Services will prepare by-laws amendments to allow for the temporary waiving of fees as outlined in Appendix A.

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APPENDIX A
DRAFT By-law to Amend the
Street Vending By-law No.10868
Regarding the 2025 Water Street Pilot Area and the
2025 Granville Street Public Realm Improvements Area

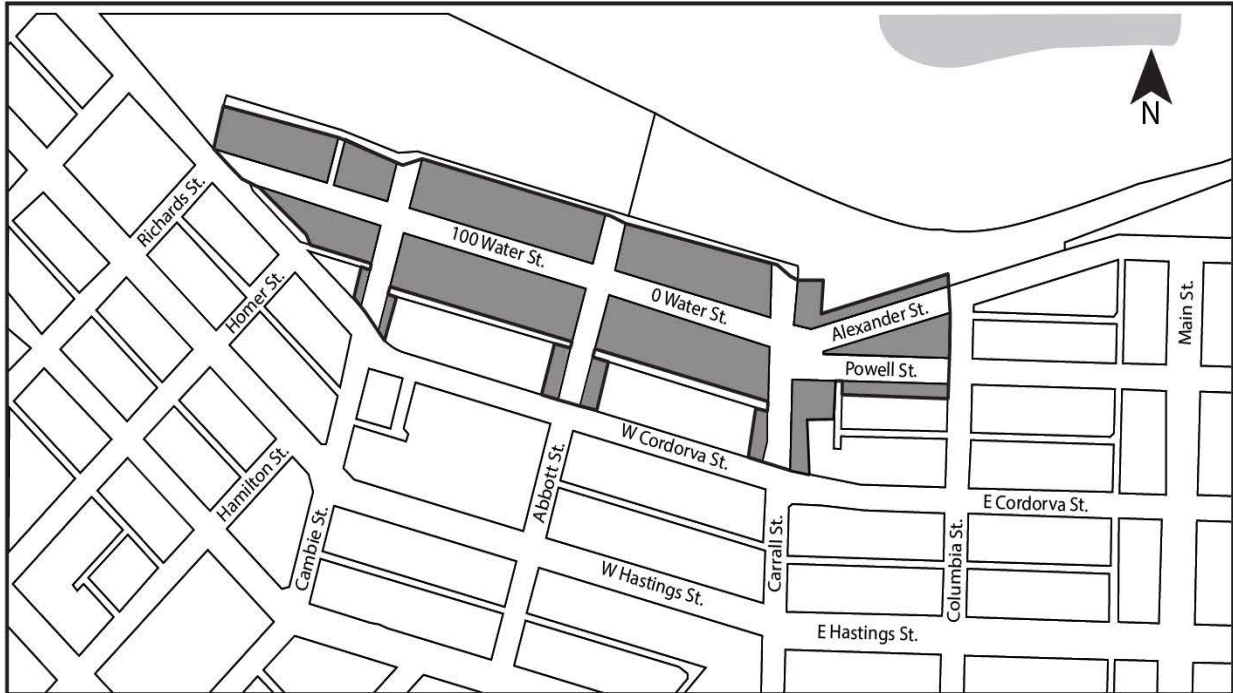
Note: An amending by-law will be prepared generally in accordance with the provisions listed below, subject to change and refinement prior to posting.

1. This by-law amends the indicated provisions of the Street Vending By-law No. 10868.
2. In Schedule A under “Application Fees”, Council strikes out subsection (e) and substitutes the following:
 - “(e) despite subsections (c) and (d) above, no application fees are payable if the applicant is applying for a permit for a new patio or an expansion of an existing patio, if the patio or expansion is located in the 2025 Water Street Pilot Area as shown outlined in black on Schedule C to this by-law or in the 2025 Granville Street Public Realm Improvements Area as shown outlined in black on Schedule D to this by-law, and only exists between April 1, 2025 and October 31, 2025”.
3. In Schedule A under “Permit Fees”, Council strikes out subsections (i) and (j) and substitutes the following:
 - “(i) despite subsection (d) above, no permit fees are payable for small patios between April 1, 2025 and October 31, 2025 if the small patio is located in the 2025 Water Street Pilot Area as shown outlined in black on Schedule C to this by-law or in the 2025 Granville Street Public Realm Improvements Area as shown outlined in black on Schedule D to this by-law, and any applicable annual fee for such small patio will be adjusted accordingly
 - (j) despite subsection (e) above, no Summer Term permit fees are payable for new large patios, new curbside patios, expansions to existing large or curbside patios, or renewals of prior Summer Term large and curbside patios, if the large patio, curbside patio or expansion is located in the 2025 Water Street Pilot Area as shown outlined in black on Schedule C to this by-law or in the 2025 Granville Street Public Realm Improvements Area as shown outlined in black on Schedule D to this by-law, and only exists between April 1, 2025 and October 31, 2025”.
4. Council strikes out Schedule C and substitutes the Schedule C attached to this by-law as Schedule A.
5. Council adds a new Schedule D in the form attached to this by-law as Schedule B.
6. This By-law comes into force and takes effect upon enactment.

Schedule A

Schedule C

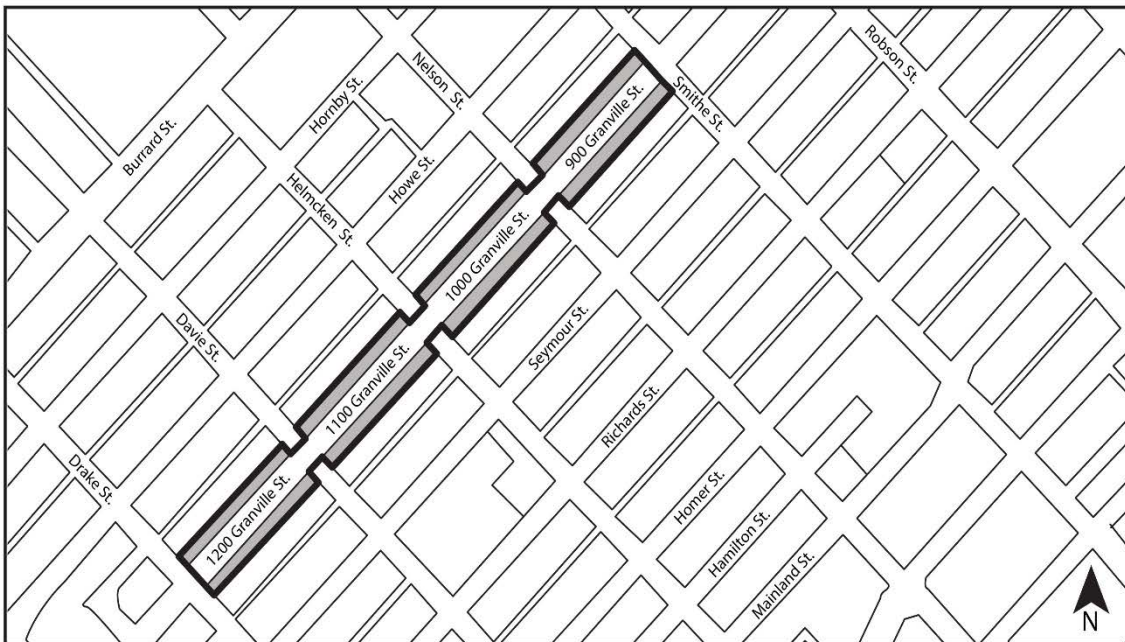
2025 Water Street Pilot Area



Schedule B

Schedule D

2025 Granville Street Public Realm Improvements Area



**APPENDIX B
FEE WAIVING ESTIMATES**

	2025 Granville St project	2025 Water St Pilot	Combined
Existing summer patios for renewal	10 (8 curbside patios and 2 large sidewalk patios)	16 (10 curbside patios and 6 large sidewalk patios)	26
Fees in 2025 from existing renewals (estimate)	\$16,200	\$47,500	\$63,700
New summer patios (estimate)	10 to 15 net new	16 net new	26 to 31 net new
Fees in 2025 from new summer patios (estimate)	\$19,000 to \$28,000	\$35,000 (4 months)	\$54,000 to \$63,000
Total summer patios (renewals and new)	20 to 25	32	52 to 57
Total summer patio fees to waive in 2025 (estimate)	\$35,200 to \$44,200	\$82,500	\$117,700 to \$126,700