



GASTOWN PUBLIC SPACES PLAN

vancouver.ca/gastown



Gastown Public Spaces Plan

In response to the May 2023 [Council Motion](#), “A People-Focused Gastown: A Bold, Forward-Looking Vision for a Vibrant and Prosperous Neighbourhood”, staff are initiating a planning and design process for Gastown streets and public spaces.

Gastown is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x̱w̱məθḵw̱əy̱əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh). It is an important heritage district and popular destination in Vancouver.

Overview

Many of the streets and spaces in Gastown are in need of repair and rehabilitation. We are exploring how to pedestrianize Water Street and improve other streets, laneways and spaces to support a vibrant, people-focused Gastown.

The City of Vancouver is developing a **Public Spaces Plan** for Gastown to make it a more people-focused place.

The plan will guide how to:

- **Establish a vibrant, people-focused Gastown** with enhanced gathering places, streets, and laneways to support a range of activities.
- **Pedestrianize Water Street**, seasonally or year-round, starting with a pilot in **summer 2024**.
- **Improve the street network**, including walking, cycling, transit and vehicle connections and consideration of Cordova as a two-way street.
- **Advance Reconciliation with the local Nations** and support their visibility on their lands.
- **Evolve and deepen the unique heritage feel** of the area, including improved street materials and amenities.
- Identify **phased project timing and funding**.

Gastown Public Spaces Plan Scope



Gastown Public Spaces Plan scope encompasses streets, laneways, squares, and plazas within the boundary. Parks, private properties and spaces, buildings and land uses are not included in the scope.



Project Timeline

A multi-phased engagement process is taking place. Community feedback will inform:

- An approach to the summer pedestrian pilots on Water Street in 2024 and 2025.
- A Council report in early 2024 on what we heard so far, and in Fall 2025 on the final Gastown Public Spaces Plan.

How can I get involved?

- Attend a pop-up event.
- Take the survey by Sunday, November 19.
- Sign-up for the newsletter.

Visit vancouver.ca/gastown for more information.



SPRING 2023

Council motion: A People-Focused Gastown

Staff directed to develop a **bold vision for Gastown's streets and public spaces**, including pedestrianizing Water Street, seasonally or year-round.

SUMMER 2023

Prepared for community conversations

Worked with local Nations to establish a project relationship and met with local organizations and businesses on issues.

FALL 2023 - WINTER 2024

Phase 1: Gather feedback from businesses, residents and community on Gastown's streets and public spaces

- Discuss plan goal and draft objectives.
- Learn how people use Gastown's streets and public spaces today.
- Gather specific ideas and concerns related to pedestrianizing Water Street and surrounding network of streets and public spaces.

SPRING 2024 - FALL 2024

Phase 2: Assess how we can enhance and connect Gastown's streets and public spaces

Explore and assess a range of options for public spaces in the neighbourhood, including pedestrianizing Water Street seasonally or year-round, starting with a pilot in summer 2024.

SUMMER 2024

Water Street pedestrianized in summer season

Implement a pedestrian pilot in collaboration with local community organizations, businesses and residents.

FALL 2024 - SUMMER 2025

Phase 3: Draft and refine the emerging plan for Gastown's streets and public spaces

- Gather community input on draft directions and designs for pedestrianizing Water Street.
- Discuss improvements to surrounding streets, laneways and public spaces.

SUMMER 2025

Water Street pedestrianized for second summer season

Refine approach based on lessons learned from 2024.

FALL 2025

Finalize and share the Gastown Public Spaces Plan

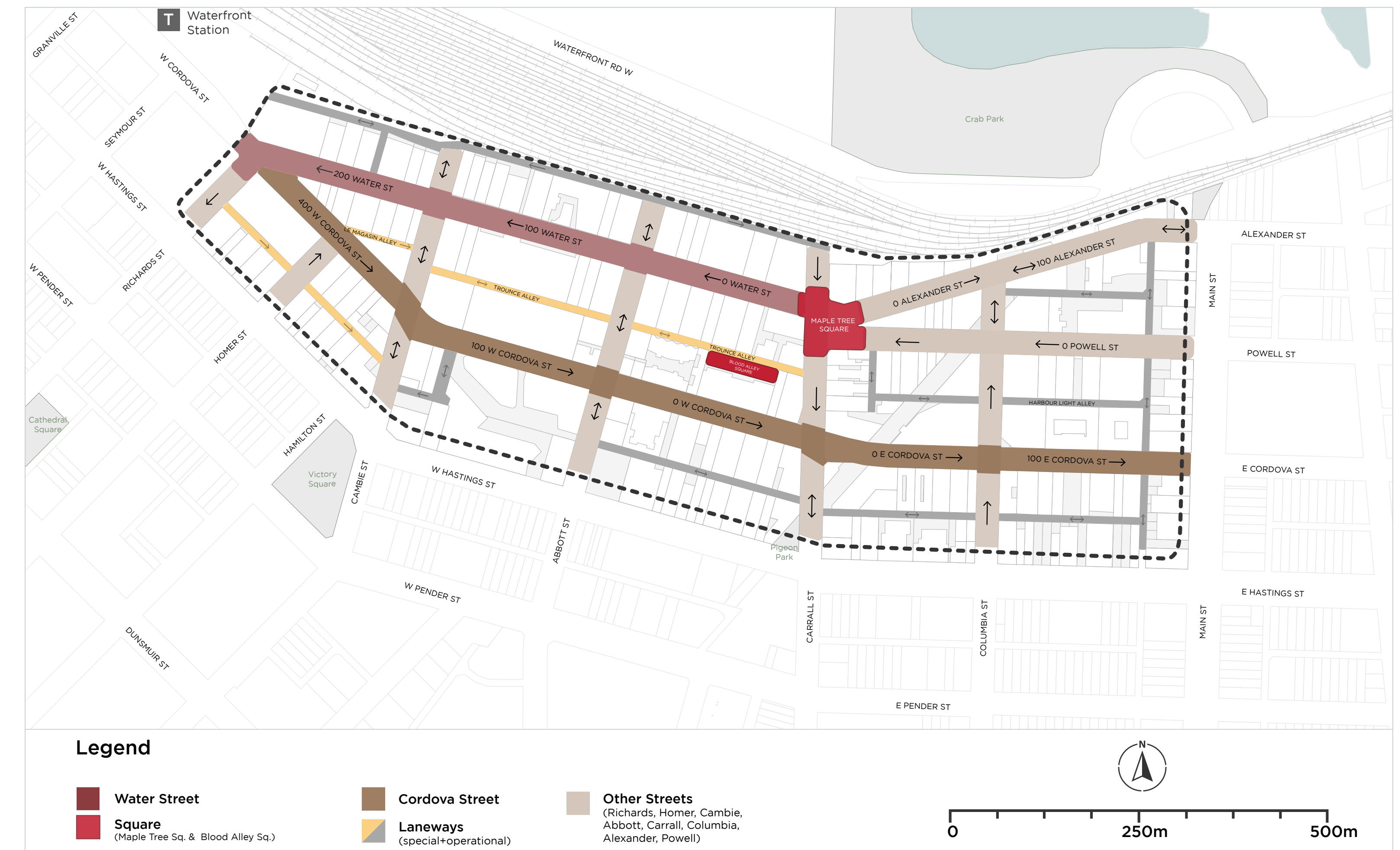
Final Plan presented to Council and shared with community. Pending Council approval, begin **phased implementation** of the Gastown Public Spaces Plan

What do we mean when we talk about Gastown's **Public Spaces**?

Gastown's **public spaces includes all the streets, laneways, squares and plazas** from Richards Street to west of Main Street and from the laneways south of the rail tracks to north of Hastings Street.

Gastown has a mix of people living, working and visiting the area. It's home to over 5,000 people and businesses including tech companies, design studios, thriving fashion boutiques, unique art galleries, speakeasy-style bars, live music venues, and some of the best culinary fare in the city. They share the public spaces and depend on the local street network to travel to work, meet friends and access services.

Public spaces include streets, laneways, squares and plazas



Water Street's historic look and feel, as well as diversity of shops, draws locals and visitors to explore the area. It is home to the steam clock and has been the backdrop to many movies and shows filmed in Vancouver.



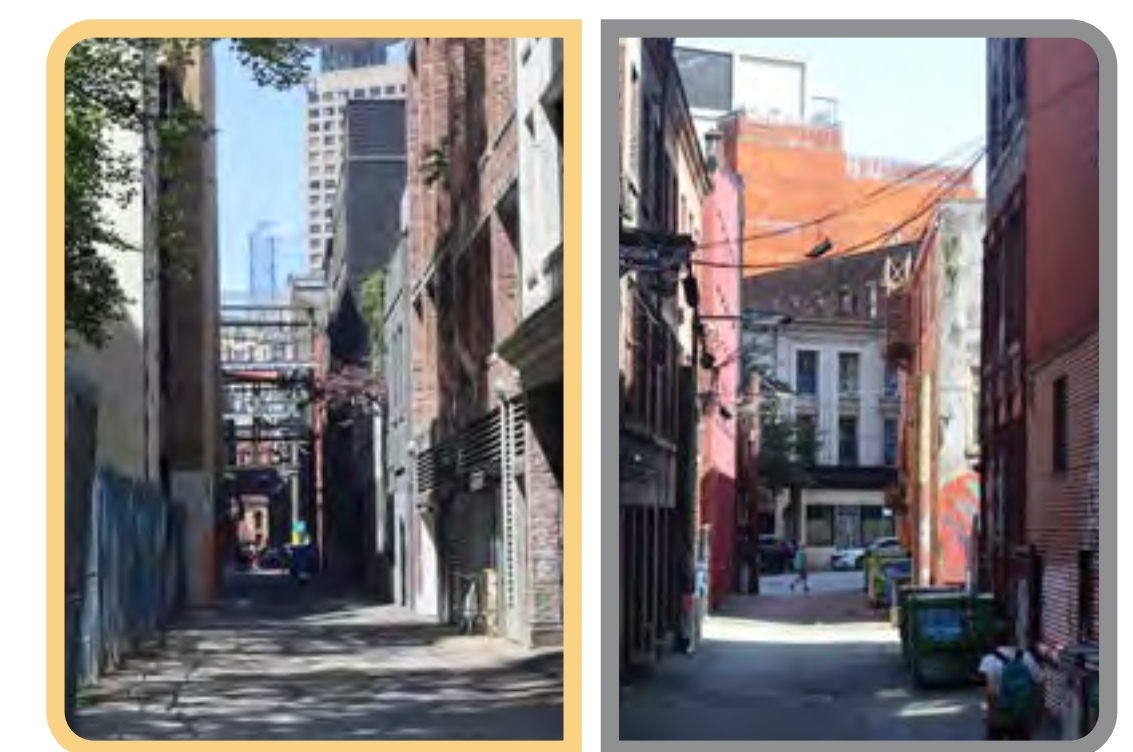
Maple Tree Square is a place for events that celebrate the neighbourhood's history, arts, culture and culinary scene. Squares and plazas like this provide public places for people to gather, rest, socialize, and celebrate.



Cordova Street is lined by shops, services and apartment buildings. It's a one way, multi-lane street that runs west to east through downtown Vancouver. A number of buses connect to Waterfront station and run along Cordova Street.



Other **streets** include Powell, Alexander, Richards, Homer, Cambie, Abbott, Carrall and Columbia. These streets support the public life in Gastown with additional retail. People use these streets to access their homes, workplaces, restaurants, patios, and for resting and socializing.



People use **laneways/alleys** to service businesses and residences (waste removal, pick-up and drop-off of goods) and provide access to homes. Some laneways also act as public spaces for gathering and traveling through the area for e.g. Trounce Alley, Le Magasin Alley.

How did we get here?

Why create a Public Spaces Plan?



Maple Tree Square and Water St are in particularly in poor condition

Gastown's streets are in need of repair

- The brick paver section of **Maple Tree Square will be repaired in Spring 2024.**
- Asphalt patches, loose bricks, and broken pavers make it difficult to navigate the sidewalks and streets.
- The Plan is an opportunity to identify new street design including materials that will **last a long time** and make it **easier and comfortable for people** to walk, bike and use mobility devices while still capturing the qualities that make it special.



Meet Me in Gastown - Water Street

There's been an interest in a pedestrianized Water Street for some time

- In 2012, Water Street was identified in Transportation 2040 as a potential **pedestrian-priority area**. Through the City's Complete Streets initiative in 2017, staff further explored this with the community.
- Pedestrianizing helps make space people friendly for walking or gathering, while maintaining local access needs.
- The **previous work will help guide** the implementation of Council's motion to pedestrianize Water Street.



2017 Complete Streets pop-up event



A temporary plaza at Maple Tree Square Plaza in partnership with GBIS

We've learnt about creating and expanding public spaces

During the **COVID-19 pandemic**, the City:

- Significantly expanded its patio program city-wide.
- Implemented **22 neighbourhood plazas** with the support of community partners.
- Created **10 publicly accessible parklets** with social service organizations in the Downtown Eastside.
- Introduced a **temporary plaza at Maple Tree Square** in partnership with the Gastown Business Improvement Society, and **closed Carrall Street to vehicles**. It now offers more outdoor seating, supports business patios and provides space for walking, and cycling.

Deepening the heritage

How did we get here? Why create a Public Spaces Plan?

Gastown is a National Historic site, however it's heritage feel does not reflect the Indigenous history of the area.

Gastown's historical character is one that is cherished by many. Street materials like pavers, bollards, street lights and the steam clock were added in the 1970s to reinforce the historical character of the area. The story that this design tells is very much focused on one of European settler heritage.

Gastown is a National historic site, but there is **no recognition** of **xʷməθkʷəy̓əm** (Musqueam), **Skwxwú7mesh** (Squamish), and **səlilwətał** (Tseil-Waututh), **nor any visibility** of their continuous presence, history and ongoing relationship to these lands.

In 2022, City Council endorsed the **City of Vancouver's UNDRIP Strategy** (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples). The Gastown Public Spaces Plan is an opportunity to advance this reconciliation work.



Gathering of Canoes - 2017 Pulling Together Canada

Examples of local Nations' design in the public realm



Street material and furnishing elements added in 1970s



Sculpture by Squamish artist Wade Baker - Salish North Star in Maple Leaf



Paving patters in Ieləḿ Village by Musqueam Indian Band



Chief Dan George Welcome Pole by Tseil-Waututh carver, Zac George

We are building on previous work

Related plans and policies



[Transportation 2040 \(2012\) and 5-year Cycling Network](#)

Vibrant public spaces encourage a culture of walking and cycling. Plan identifies:

- **Water Street as a possible pedestrian-priority area.**
- Cycling connection between Portside Greenway via Alexander Street bike route and Carrall Street Greenway.



[Downtown Eastside Plan \(2014\)](#)

- Suggests enhancing Gastown's vibrant street life while preserving its existing character;
- Undertaking improvements to Water Street and Maple Tree Square, covering public spaces, safety and traffic management, along with amenities for community events;
- Exploring the **feasibility of a continuous pedestrian system from Maple Tree Square to Waterfront Station.**



[Gastown Complete Streets \(2017\)](#)

- The City engaged people who live in, work in, and who visit Gastown, to **improve the street network**;
- Explored **Water Street as car-light**, the gap in the bike network and how to improve transit service; and
- Learned how people get around and what they would like to see in the future. This feedback will carry into the work we are doing today.



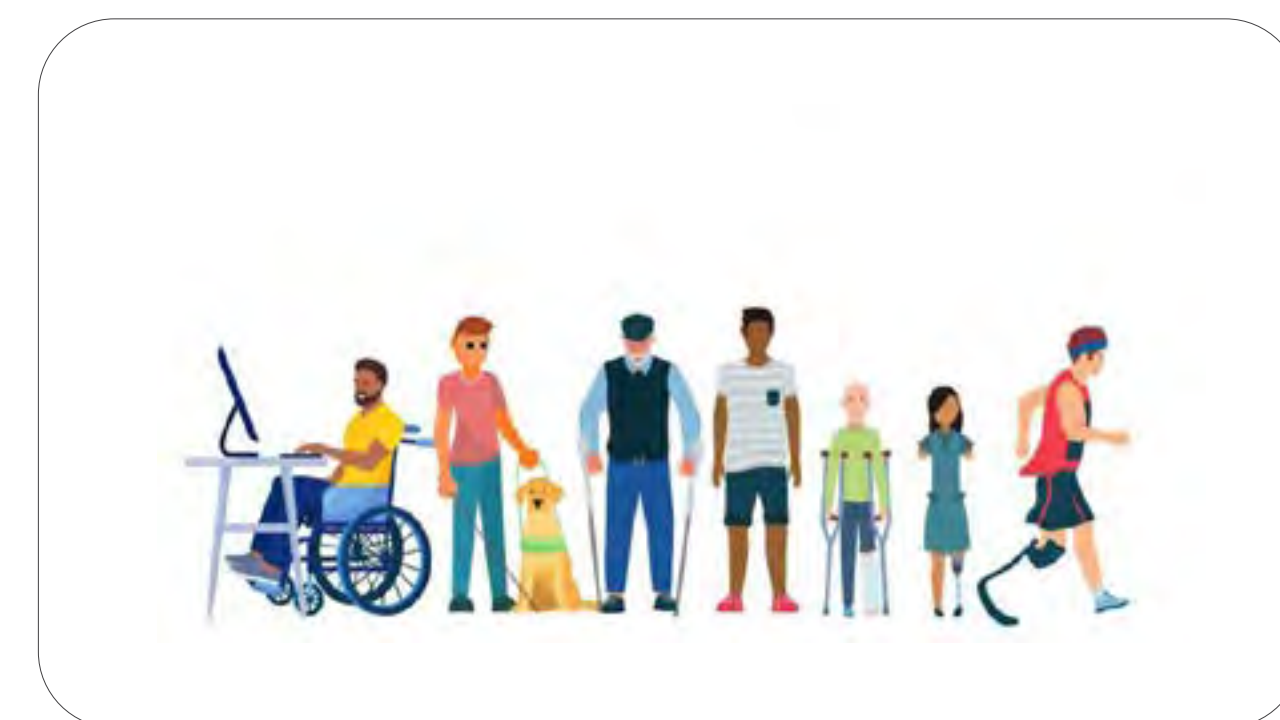
[Vancouver Rain City Strategy \(2019\)](#)

- Suggests **public realm** is a critical area of opportunity in our **response to climate change.**
- Prioritizes integrating ecological functions, habitat protection, rainwater management and heat island mitigation into public space planning and design to ensure a healthy and resilient urban environment.



[Downtown Public Space Strategy \(2020\)](#)

- Identifies the need for day-long and year-round public spaces that are well connected and accessible for people walking, rolling and cycling.
- Prioritizes **partnering with local businesses, non-profit organizations and community groups** to support the stewardship and programming of public spaces.



[Vancouver Accessibility Strategy \(2022\)](#)

More than one in five people in Vancouver have an ongoing disability. Plan commits to:

- Improve accessibility within the City and the community.
- Prioritize design for **barrier-free accessible spaces.**



[Vancouver Plan \(2022\)](#)

- Aims to **create people-first streets** by changing road space to improve walking, biking and transit while **creating more public space** for people to enjoy.
- Prioritizes **equity-denied groups** and engage them to understand their needs and preferences for public spaces, while supporting Indigenous visibility and cultural practices.



[City of Vancouver's UNDRIP Strategy \(2022\)](#)

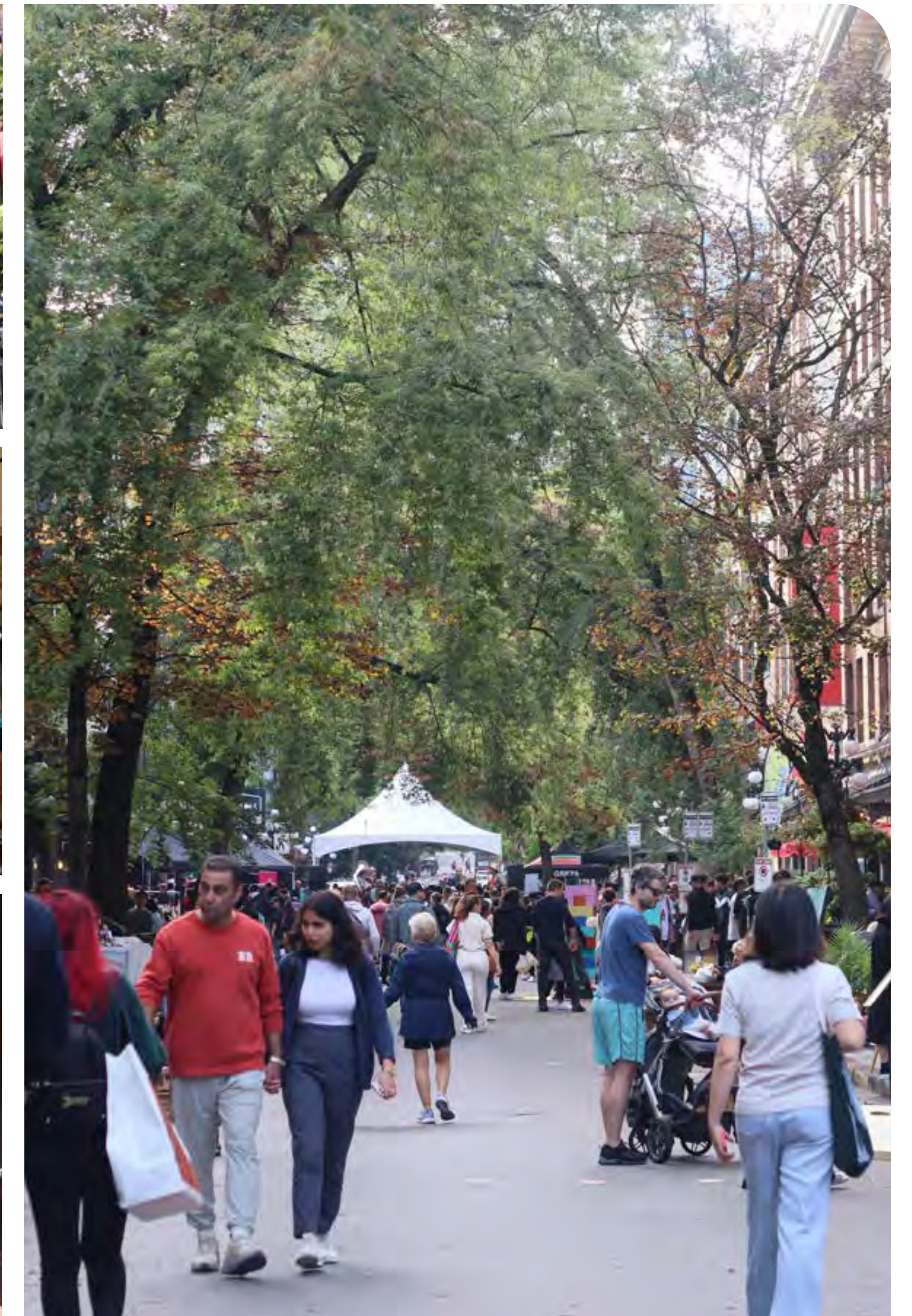
- Helps to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- **Prioritizes projects related to Indigenous development**, with budget for capacity funding to **engage with local Nations and urban Indigenous communities** living in the city; and to bring local Nations into strategies, plans and projects early on.

DRAFT Project Goal & Objectives

Goal: Enhance the look and feel of Gastown’s public spaces and create a bold plan to pedestrianize Water Street seasonally or year-round.

The following **draft objectives** will guide the development of the Public Space Plan:

- 1** Make the **local Nations**, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh and səliłwətał visible on their lands
- 2** Support a **vibrant public life** for residents, visitors and businesses
- 3** Support many **different communities to use and enjoy public space**, including urban Indigenous communities and low income residents in the Downtown Eastside
- 4** Provide **convenient access to homes, businesses and destinations**
- 5** Improve **accessibility and durability** of the street materials
- 6** **Evolve and deepen the unique heritage feel** of the area



Pedestrian Priority Streets

Project goal: Pedestrianize Water Street

A key project goal is to pedestrianize Water Street.

“**Pedestrianize**” means limiting vehicle access, making a street car-free or car-light, so it is a more people friendly space for walking or gathering, while maintaining local access needs.

Pedestrian streets can take many forms. They also need to be **tailored to the specific needs of the place and communities** it serves. For example, they should support the uses and needs of what residents, businesses and visitors want to do in public space. They also benefit from **strong partnerships with community organizations** who can help with their daily care and programming.

We will explore how to best pedestrianize Water Street with the community throughout the development of the Plan. In particular, lessons learned from the pedestrianization pilots in summer 2024 and 2025 will help inform a preferred approach.

Benefits of pedestrianizing a street



Welcoming and safe spaces to gather, shop, play, people watch or visit the area.



Increased opportunities for businesses such as patios and displays.



Easier and cheaper for people to put on events, celebrations, and other programming.



Flexible zones with increased safety (e.g. bollards, street pattern and material changes to suggest zones).



Opportunities for more art and story-telling elements.



Amenities for travelers, including restroom facilities, drinking water fountains.



Prioritize sustainable transportation (walk, bike, roll, transit).

Inspirations: Pedestrian priority streets can take many forms

There are many examples of pedestrianized streets around the world ranging from car-light to car-free.

Car-light or traffic-calmed

Streets designed to slow or reduce vehicle traffic while allowing limited or local vehicle access.

All examples accommodate loading, delivery, operational and service needs.

Car-free

Dedicated spaces designed for people walking, cycling, and rolling, with no access allowed for motor vehicles.



Mariahilfer Strasse, Vienna

- Car-light blocks connect two car-free plazas while allowing buses, taxis, loading.
- Pavement patterns create delineation between uses.
- Offers large area for street furniture, events and other uses (e.g. patios).



Insa-Dong Gil, Seoul

- Car-light street connects to car-free blocks and plazas accommodating high pedestrian volumes.
- Offers unique cultural and storytelling elements, integrated fixed seating, space for merchandise displays and vending.



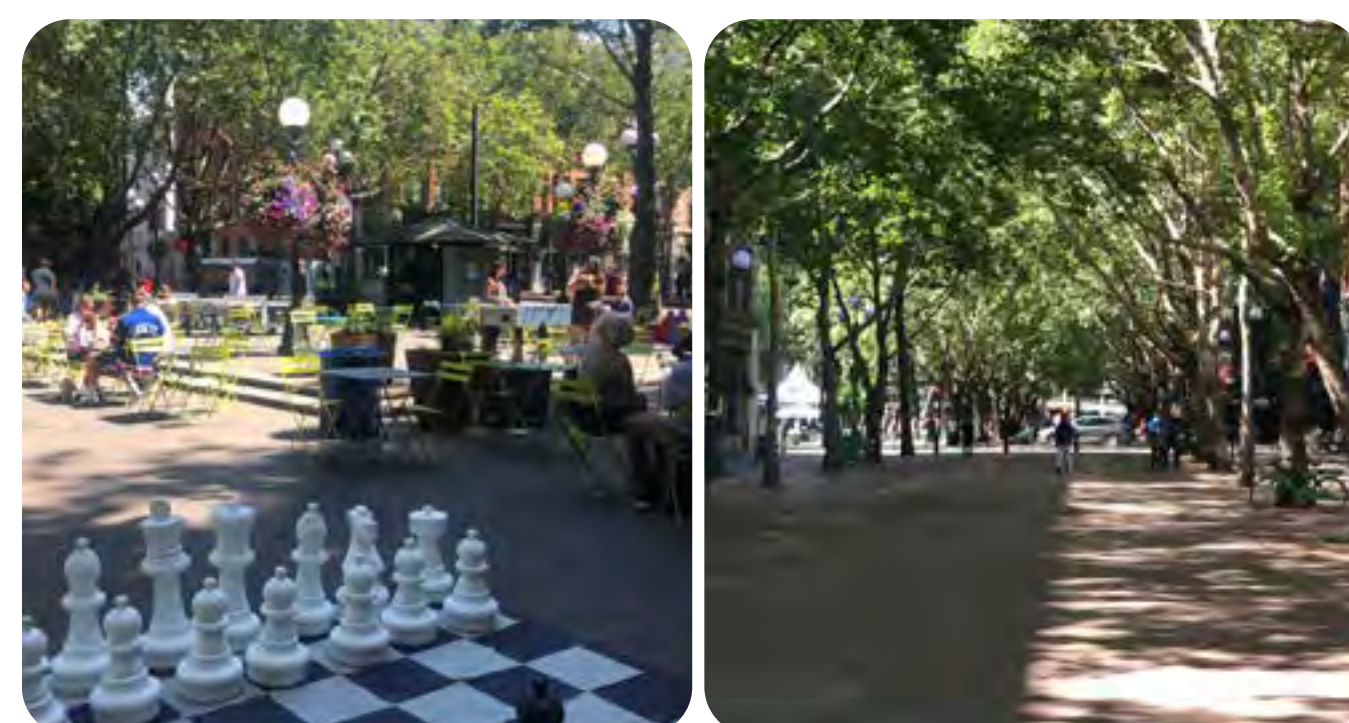
Getaria Kalea, San Sebastian

- Car-free street connects to a plaza.
- Changes in pavement material create delineation of spaces along a car-free street.
- Supports nearby businesses and restaurants by accommodating outdoor seating and patios.



New Road, Brighton

- A car-light street with subtle pattern changes and curb-less environment.
- The tactile pavers integrated with gutters provide a pedestrian safe zone and seating.



Occidental Avenue, Seattle

- Car-free street connects two squares in Seattle's historic district.
- Offers playful features and respite spaces with large canopy.



Stroget, Copenhagen

- Car-free and curb-less shopping street in the city centre.
- The curb-less design encourages a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere and allows for easy access to shops and businesses.

Ways to implement

There is “no one size fits all” when designing a pedestrian street. The design for car-free spaces should be tailored to specific needs of the community.

Seasonal



Government St, Victoria

- Car-free, noon to night.
- During spring, summer and during events.
- Loading and deliveries usually take place in the morning; side streets are used to accommodate service needs.



Mont-Royal Ave, Montreal

Year-round



Stephen Ave, Calgary

- Certain blocks are car-free year-round, 11am to 6pm.
- Vehicle with permits are allowed; loading and deliveries usually take place in the morning.

Objective 1: Make local Nations xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh and səliłwətał visible on their lands

The City is working with the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and the səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) on the Gastown Public Spaces Plan.

Local Nations have stewarded these lands since time immemorial.

However, the histories, cultures, languages and presence of the local Nations has for most of the city's history, been erased and made invisible. In Gastown, for example, although the neighbourhood is designated as a National Historic Site and thousands of locals and tourists visit every year, there is no mention or visibility of the local Nations and none of their history or culture is celebrated or showcased in the public realm.

The Plan is an opportunity to work with the local Nations to support their goals.

This may include:

- Building awareness that the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam Indian Band), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish Nation), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) are rights and title holders of these lands.
- Establishing visibility of the local Nations histories, cultures, languages, and presence on these lands. For example, this could be through the **design of the streets and public spaces, public art or special features, naming, and cultural programming.**
- Supporting participation of the local Nations' members in all aspects of the Public Spaces Plan work, including future projects and improvements identified in the Plan.



As part of our ongoing partnership, the City is working closely with Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish Nation) to develop a culturally and artistically inspired information kiosk. The kiosk will be situated at the former site of the statue of Gassy Jack. The statue came down in a community protest in February 2022 and will not be returned to the site.

Objective 2: Support a vibrant public life for residents, visitors and businesses

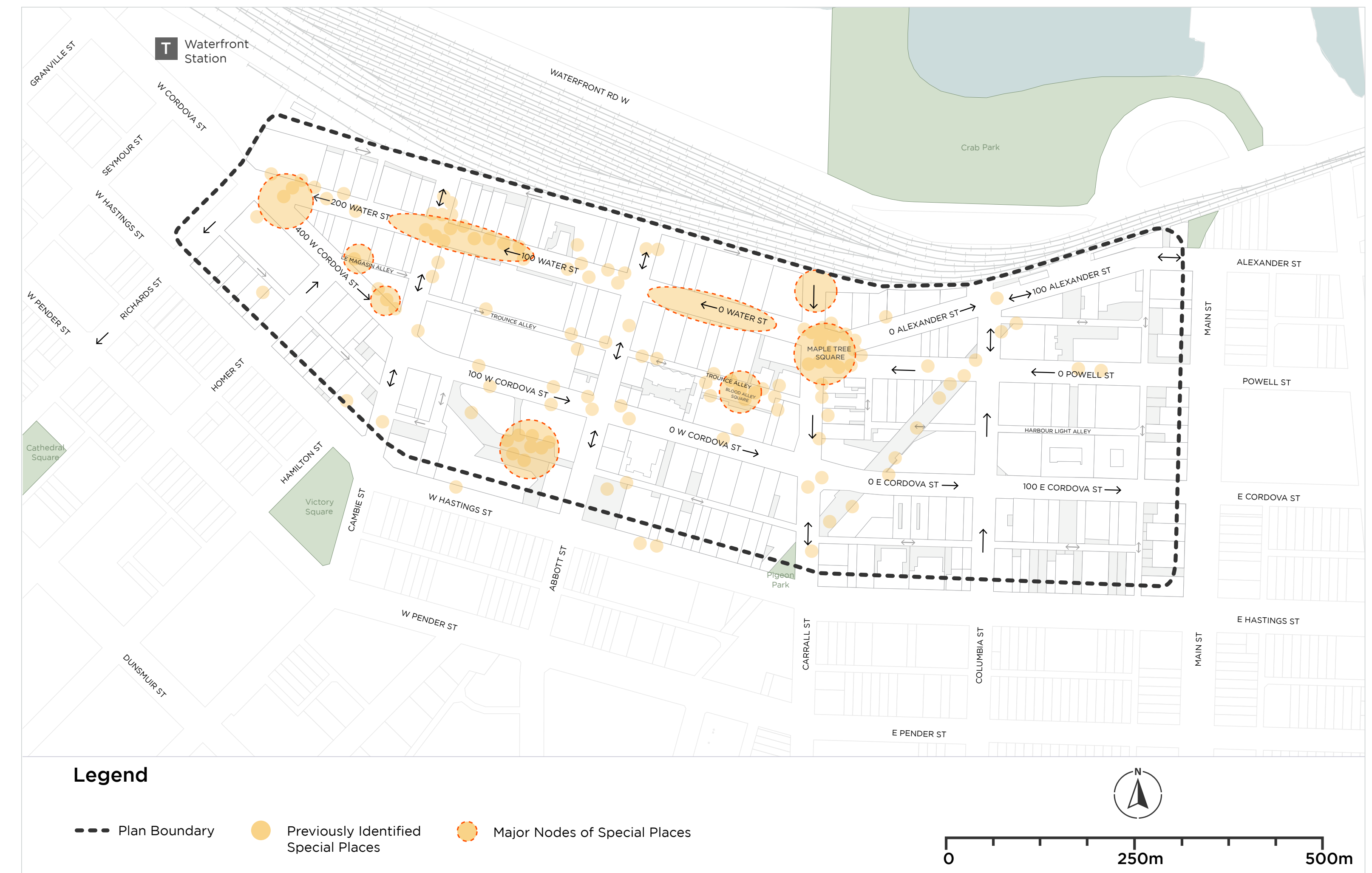
To support a vibrant and inclusive public life for residents, visitors and businesses, we will work closely with communities to understand people's experiences and needs.

Gastown is already loved by many

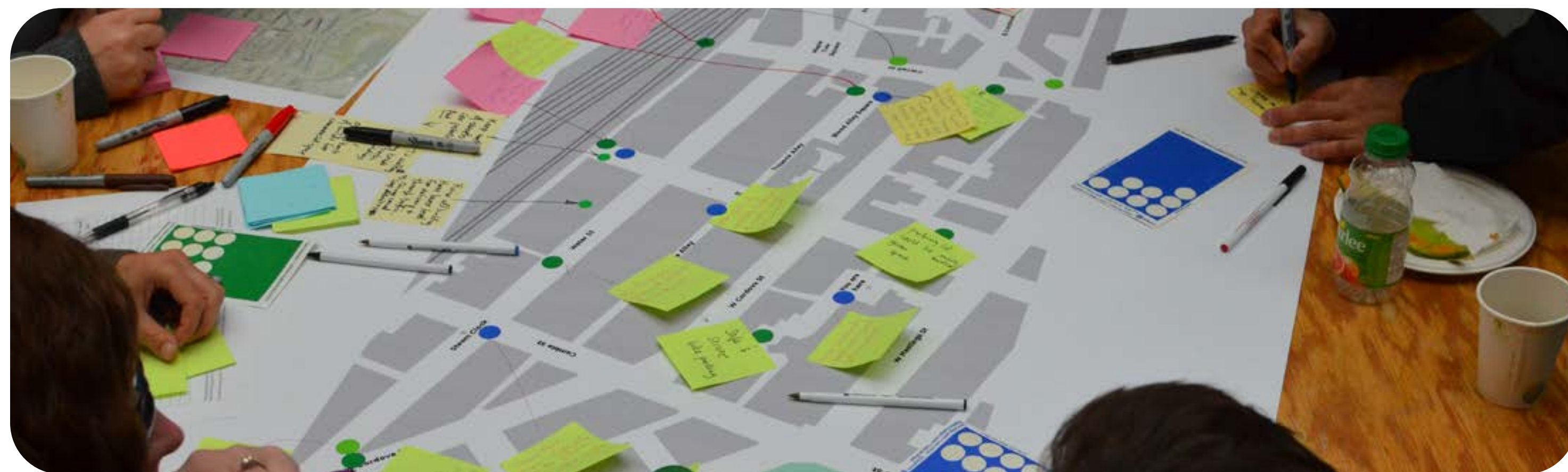
We asked workshop participants in 2017 [Complete Streets](#) workshop to identify which places in Gastown felt special to them.

This plan will explore how we can enhance and support the places people already enjoy today, and improve or address the gaps. We understand that the network of public spaces in Gastown must support public life in all the seasons, and in many different forms.

Places people identified as important in 2017 Complete Streets workshop



Places people identified as important in Complete Streets workshop. Some of the major nodes for special places include Water-Richards Street, Maple Tree Square, Blood Alley Square, Woodward's Atrium and special laneways like Le Magasin Alley (today, known as a popular filming destination).



Quotes from Complete Streets workshop participants

"I'd like to see more flexibility and either street closures or limited traffic to have live entertainment and events like music festivals, markets. It could be like a counterbalance to the steam clock, drawing people to the other side of Gastown. But need to take down the bollards and chains for accessibility and make it easier and clearer for bikes and walking."

"My most special memories of Gastown are in the fall and winter, at night when the cobblestones are wet and reflect the string lights, shops and all the movement and strolling on Water Street"

I think small places like Jim Deva plaza are great, where people can really hang out. I think laneways could be these kind of spaces in Gastown

"I love Woodwards! We need more covered gathering spaces like this. It brings the community together and feels safe."

Objective 2: Support a vibrant public life for residents, visitors and businesses (cont'd)

Support public life with seating and amenities

- Streets and public spaces need amenities like seating, trees, lighting, water fountains, and washrooms to make them welcoming, inviting and comfortable.
- Amenities make spaces function for people and encourage them to linger, stroll, and socialize.

Support business and economic activities

- The businesses in Gastown play a key role in welcoming people to the neighborhood and making it a vital and interesting place.
- Streets and public spaces can support businesses by accommodating patios and merchandise displays, while also serving as venues for street artists, buskers, and vendors.

Support events, celebrations and other programming

- Streets, laneways, and public spaces can be places for a range of small to large scale programming.
- Some programming is passive – like a mural or an art installation, and some programming is more active – like a performance or a celebration.



Respite spaces along Water St

Mature trees in Gastown



Street performances and artists

Lively patio in Gastown



Small scale: Pride event stage, performances and pop-up

Large event: Gastown Grand Prix, cycle race

Gastown's street amenities today:

- Gastown's benches are strategically placed on bustling streets like Water Street, but are lacking on Cordova and north-south Streets. Larger seating areas like Woodward Plaza and Maple Tree Square public plaza serve as popular **respite and recreational** spots.
- People often improvise seating using bollards, tree plinths, and building edges.
- Gastown boasts over 300 mature trees that not only enhance **comfort** but also contribute to the neighborhood's **look and feel** while **supporting urban cooling**.

Gastown's eclectic retail today:

- Gastown's land use blends retail and commercial activities, with **distinctive shops** along Water Street, complemented by a **lively food and entertainment** scene centered around Maple Tree Square.
- Other streets in the neighborhood also have important **cultural and artistic spaces**.
- Gastown's shopping and goods range from upscale boutiques and streetwear stores to consignment, thrift, and locally-made goods.

Gastown's events today:

- Gastown continues to host **large events** like Meet me in Gastown and Grand Prix that promote local businesses, socializing and gathering.
- **Smaller events** and gatherings include pop-up markets, art installations, street performances, and outdoor dining experiences.
- Initiatives like these contribute significantly to the neighborhood's unique character and nurture a sense of community.

Objective 3: Support many different communities to use and enjoy public space, including urban Indigenous communities and low-income residents in the Downtown Eastside

Supporting a range of community needs

Gastown is within the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood, which is home for some of the City’s poorest residents and critical social services. In addition, Vancouver and other cities in the region are struggling with **acute crises**, in particular a **homelessness crisis** and a **toxic drugs crisis**. These crises negatively impact many people and create additional demands on our streets and public spaces.

The Plan will need to consider how to create and maintain a network of public spaces that are **safe and inclusive** for different communities, and for people with a diverse range of needs.

Working directly with different communities can help create, **safe and welcoming spaces**. If a community organization is able to participate in the design, programming and care for a space it helps foster a sense of **belonging**, encourages people to use and care for a space, and can enhance overall **senses of safety**.

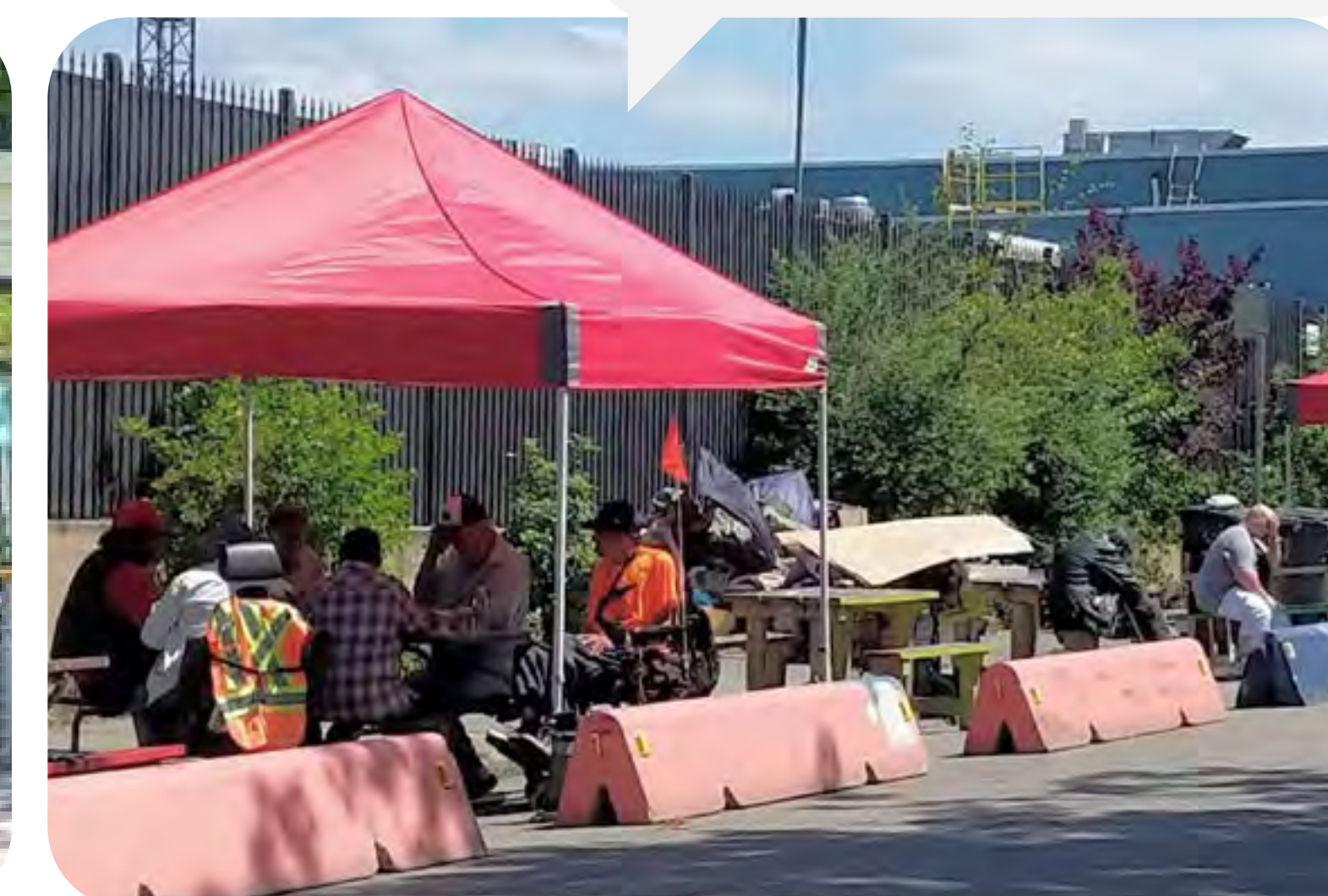
“Umbrellas for shade / rain hose for clean up”

“Access to washrooms 24/7
Thanks - appreciate it!”

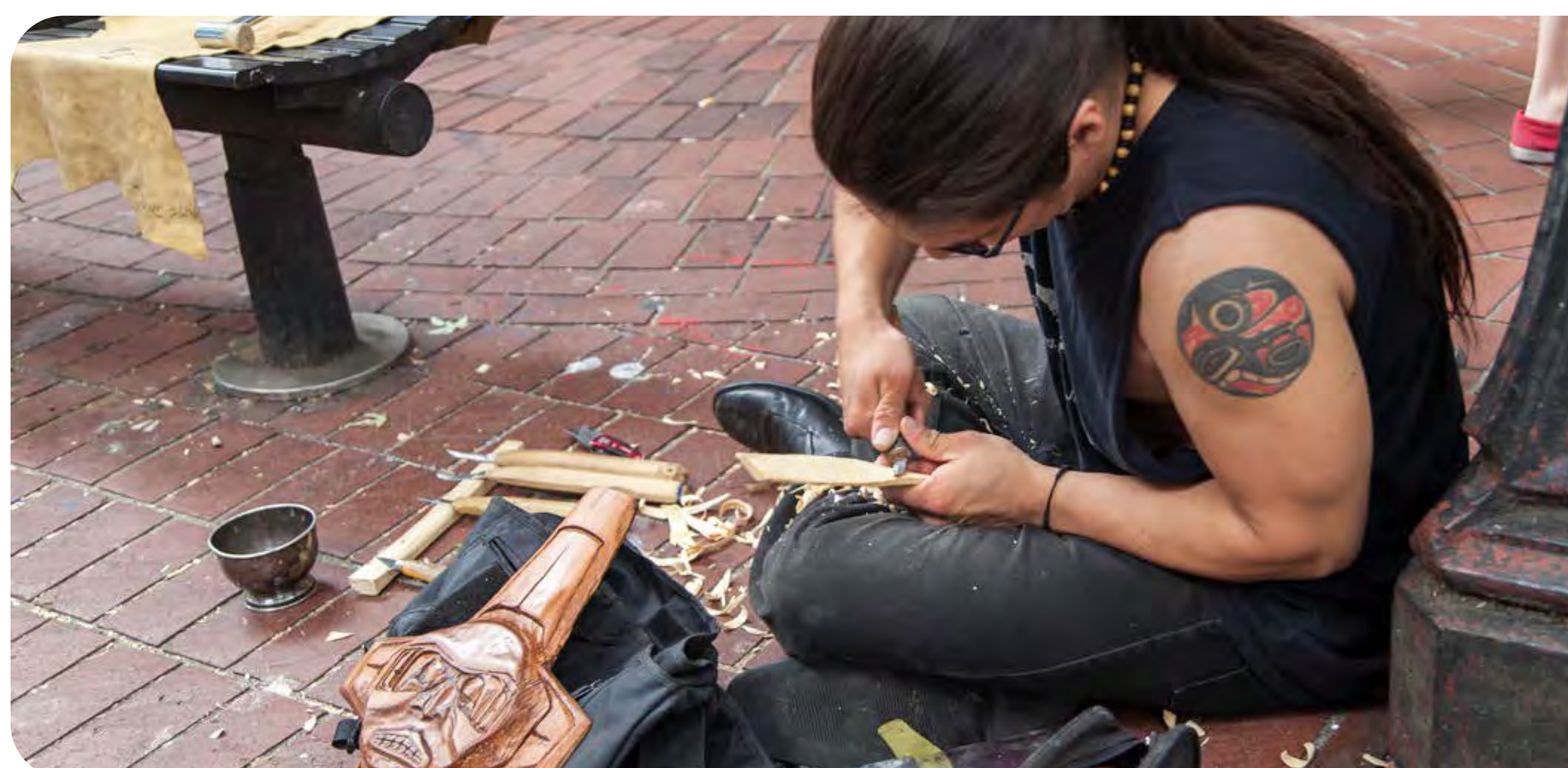
“Bingo at the parklet”

“The parklets are an important space for residents in the area”

“more chairs please”



The City collaborated with social service organizations in the Downtown Eastside to create 10 publicly accessible parklets. These parklets act as public community hubs in the area. The Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre parklet at 302 Columbia Street (left); Evelyne Saller Centre at 320 Alexander Street (right).



Urban Indigenous artist carving on Water Street

Supporting urban Indigenous groups

The Downtown Eastside has also long been a home for many different communities, including a diverse **urban Indigenous community**. As part of the process of Reconciliation, the urban Indigenous community’s **needs and aspirations for public space** require special consideration.

Objective 4: Provide convenient access to homes, businesses and destinations

A major destination, Gastown draws people from all over the city, region and visitors from much further away. People from all over the world arrive by foot, transit, bike, car, and tour buses.

The majority of people walk, bike or take transit to Gastown

Many people use **sustainable transportation** (walking, cycling or taking transit) for traveling to and through Gastown, especially during the summer months. There is a need for vehicle access into Gastown for daily needs, including residents and businesses.

Intercept surveys conducted in summer of 2017 revealed that **83% of people chose a sustainable mode** (walking, biking or taking transit) to get to Gastown in the summer, compared to 14% who travelled by car.

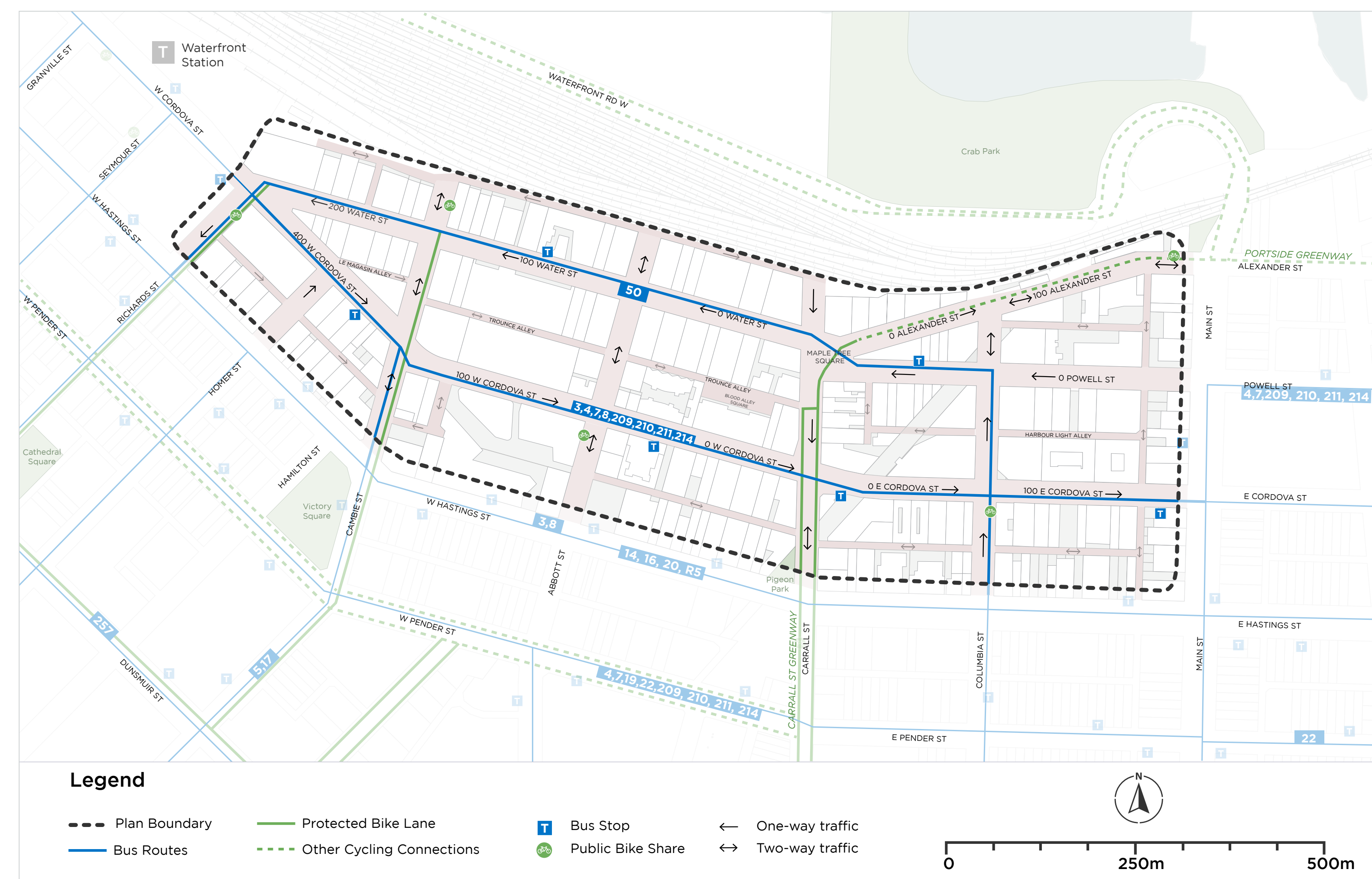
Popular destinations included:



Gastown's streets are important public spaces

- The network of streets and laneways provide ways for people to travel to and through Gastown, and they are also public spaces for people to **enjoy, rest** and **socialize**.
- As we explore how to pedestrianize Water Street and create more vibrant public spaces, we will also consider how to retain loading and delivery needs in the neighbourhood, and **improve walking, rolling, cycling, and transit connections** through the neighbourhood.

Existing cycling and bus connections



Key themes from 2017 Complete Streets:

- Improve accessibility and walking safety
- Improve cycling Connections
- Accommodate loading needs
- Activate alleys and laneways
- Reduce traffic noise

Read what we heard in 2017 [Complete Streets engagement on the project webpage](#).

Objective 4: Provide convenient access to homes, businesses and destinations (cont'd)



Make it easier to walk and use mobility devices

Curb ramps, smooth surfaces and shorter crossings can improve the pedestrian experience. It is important to ensure paths are accessible for people with a wide range of abilities.

- Gastown is a **compact and walkable** neighbourhood that has a high number of people walking, cycling and rolling.
- Some sidewalks and crosswalks are wide but are in **need of repair**.
- During **peak tourist seasons**, some sidewalks can become crowded, making it **challenging for pedestrians** to navigate comfortably.



Providing convenient access to transit

Ensuring easy transit access can boost ridership, reducing traffic congestion and noise pollution. Features like bus bulbs, dedicated accessible zones, and improved curbs enhance travel efficiency and improve access.

- Many visitors to Gastown **arrive by SkyTrain or bus** and then walk in and around the neighbourhood.
- **Buses primarily use east-west routes** like Cordova, Hastings, and Pender, while sightseeing tour buses currently traverse Columbia Street and Water Street.
- Street space designated for **pick-up and drop-off areas** is essential for people of all ages accessing amenities through taxis and ride-hailing apps.
- **Accommodating tour buses and maintaining easy access to transit is critical.**



Improve cycling connections

To accommodate cycling for people of all ages and abilities (AAA), paths need to be safe, comfortable and provide convenient access to destinations. Design considerations include improving safety and comfort either by reducing vehicle volumes e.g. a car-light or car-free street, or by separating people cycling from vehicle traffic.

- Gastown can be reached by bike routes using Richards, Cambie Street, Carrall or the Portside Greenway. The existing Portside Greenway ends on Alexander Street **creating a major gap in the existing network** that link the Downtown Eastside with the west side of downtown.
- People riding through Gastown share the road with high volumes of vehicles or ride on the sidewalk with pedestrians.



Ensure people are able to easily access their homes and businesses

People who live, work and service the area have various access and circulation needs on the streets and laneways, which vary depending on the time of day.

- Gastown has designated loading zones and delivery hours to minimize traffic congestion and inconvenience to residents and visitors.
- Access for **emergency vehicles** is critical to maintain, as is ensuring that **site servicing** (e.g. waste removal, utility access), commercial deliveries, and access to residential developments are accommodated.

Objective 5: Improve accessibility and durability of streetscape materials



Gastown's streets are in need of repair

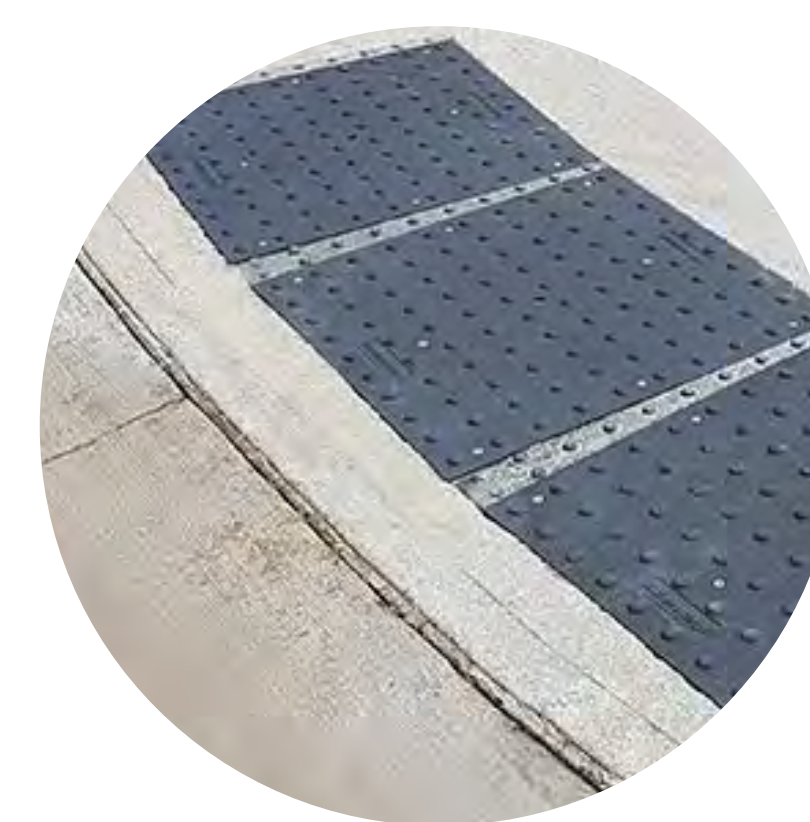
Many of the original concrete pavers and bricks have cracked and were patched with asphalt or replaced with similar materials. The original pavers and bricks are getting old and need to be fixed or replaced. This is particularly true along Water Street and in Maple Tree Square where cars drive over them regularly. **The brick paver section of Maple Tree Square will be repaired in Spring 2024.**

Creating streets for all ages and abilities (AAA)

This is an opportunity to find accessible street materials that will last a long time and make it easier for people to walk, bike and use mobility devices while still capturing the qualities that make it special.

Given that some of the streets and sidewalks in Gastown are in such poor condition, we will continue to repair the streets as needed until further direction from the Public Spaces Plan.

The deteriorated pavers result in safety hazards and accessibility obstacles for pedestrians, especially those using strollers or mobility devices.



Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSI) alert people with visual impairment that they are entering a potential conflict zone such as the bike lane or roadway.

Pavers along the Woodward's building make the path more accessible while retaining a historical look and feel.

Mismatched patching

Sidewalk heaving

Cross-walks in poor condition

Objective 6: Evolve and deepen the unique heritage feel of the area

Gastown is known for its unique heritage feel

It has some of the oldest buildings in the city, some dating back to the earliest days of Vancouver’s colonial history.

Did you know?

In the 1960s, business people, residents and artists led a successful campaign to save Chinatown and Strathcona from being demolished for a freeway into the downtown Vancouver. When the freeway was halted, red-brick paving, special lamp fixtures, the Gassy Jack Statue, and the popular steam clock were introduced by local businesses in the 1970s as a way to beautify the area and help spur economic development.

These elements have created a strong sense of place for Gastown and are valued by both residents and visitors as part of the unique neighborhood. When Gastown was designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 2009, several of these public realm elements were included as “Character Defining Elements”.

There is a diverse range of materials and elements in the area, but there is a notable absence of representation of the local Nations’ history, their connection to the place, and their future aspirations.

We will partner with the local Nations and work with the community to understand what is valued most about the heritage feel and how we can enhance and evolve this.



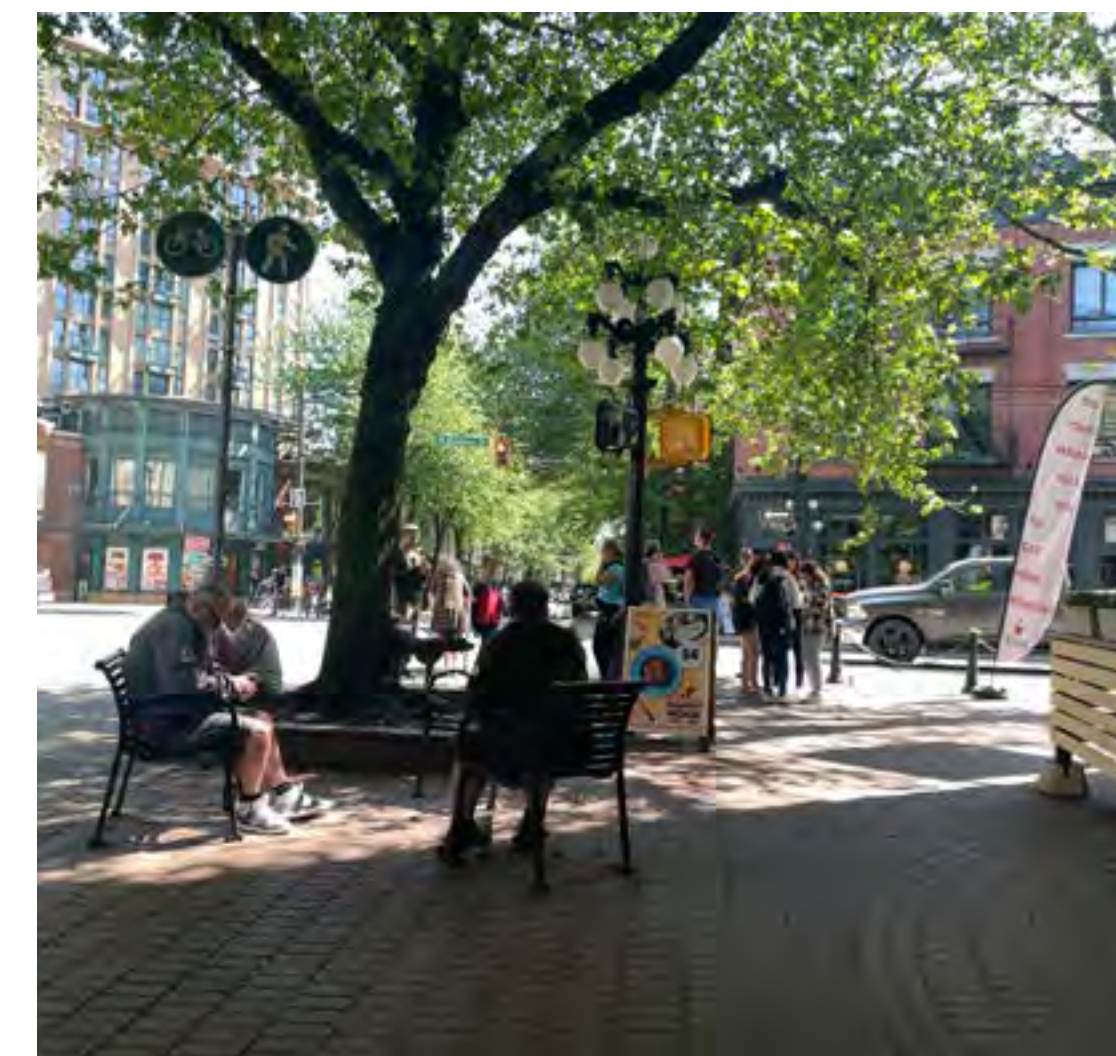
Ornamental black wrought iron cluster-globe lamps



Black metal bollard and railings



Black painted bike racks



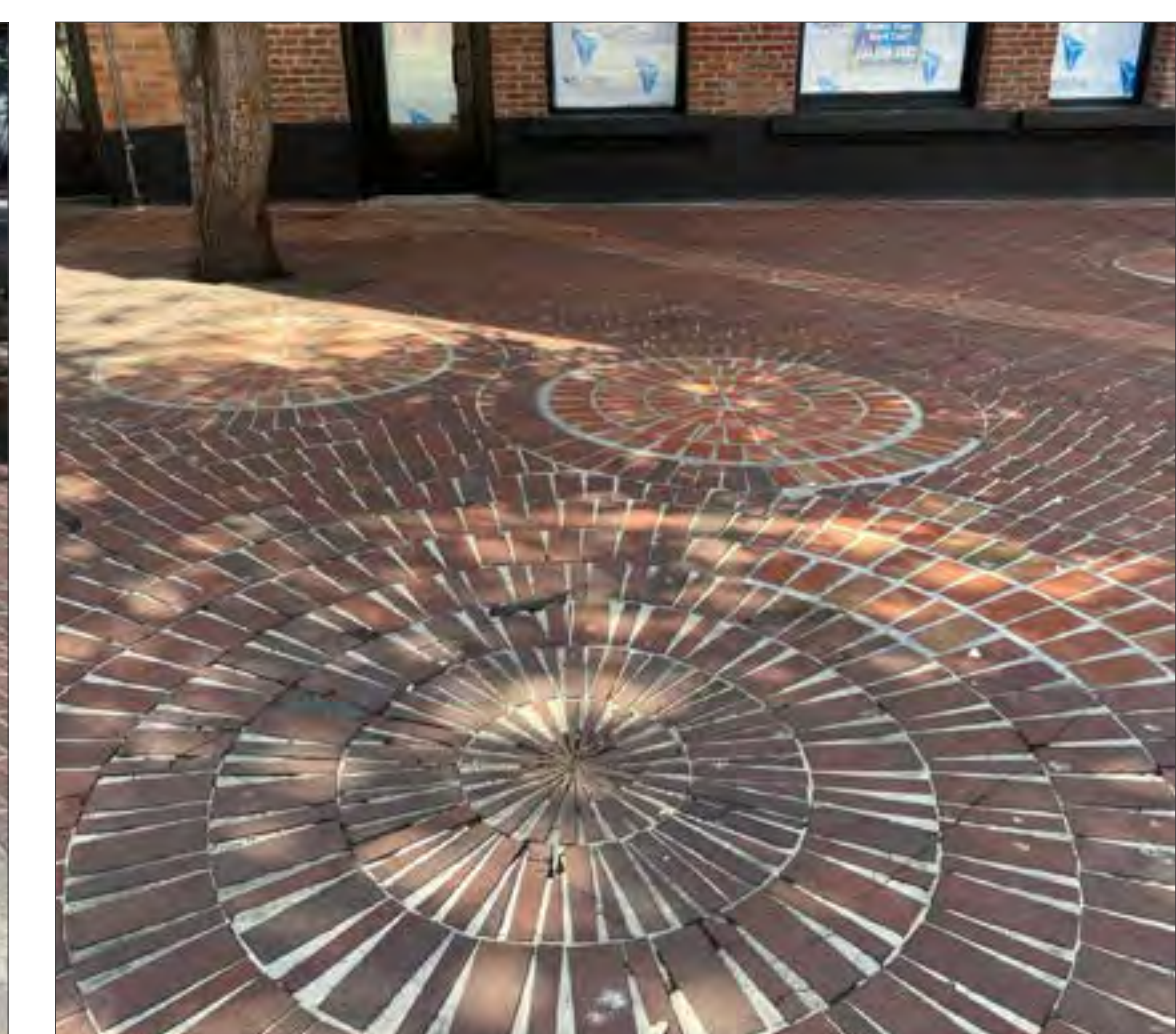
Chair seating at Carrall-Cordova



Bench seating along Water St

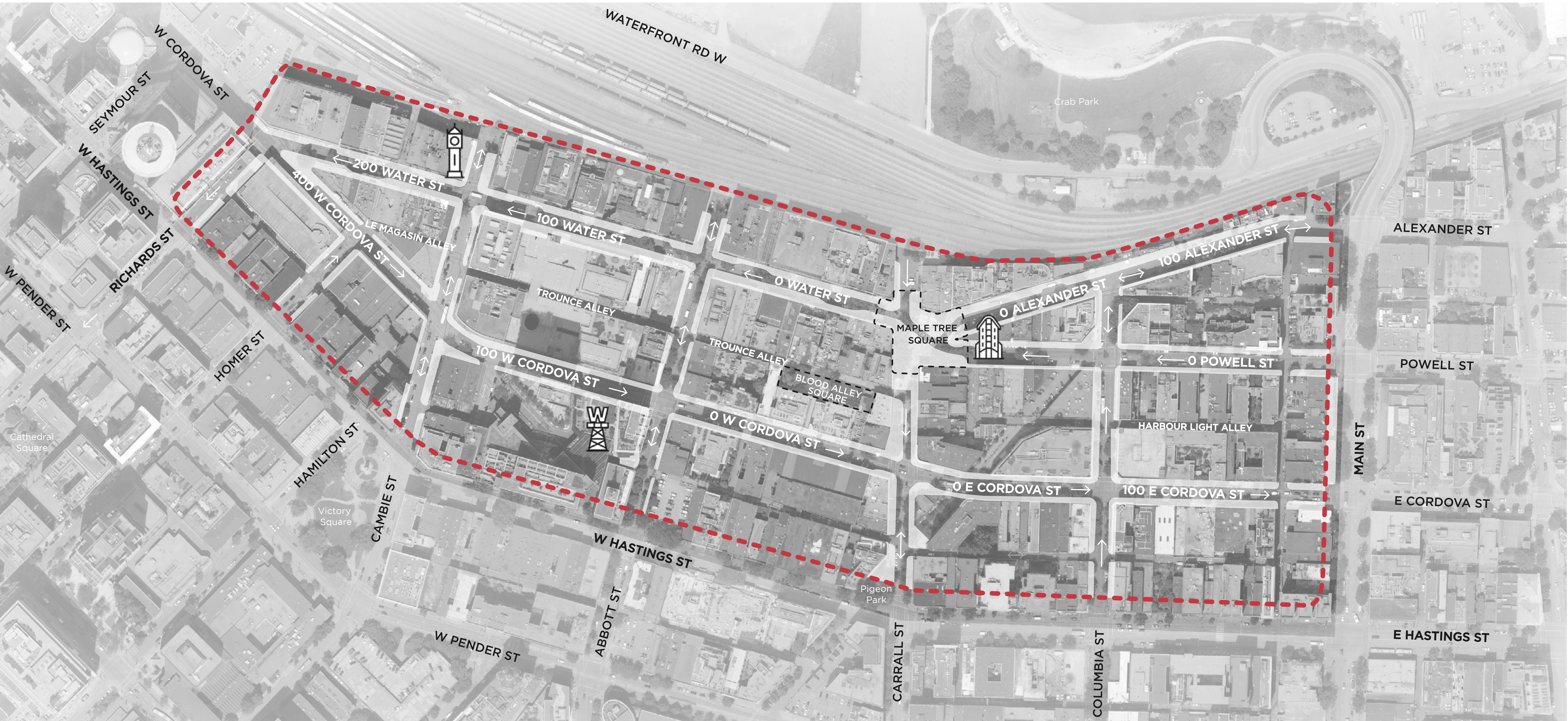


Steam Clock



Various street paving patterns (e.g. red brick pattern, granite cobble) and textures

GASTOWN PUBLIC SPACES PLAN



There are many ways to get involved:

 Sign up for project updates to stay informed

For more information:

 vancouver.ca/gastown

 gastownpublicspaces@vancouver.ca

