



CITY OF
VANCOUVER

Pop-up Plazas

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BACKGROUND

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Vancouver created temporary pop-up plazas in partnership with Business Improvement Associations, local businesses and communities to give residents more outdoor public gathering space and to support local business recovery.

Between 2020 and 2021, 21 spaces were implemented across 14 neighbourhood. New public spaces are tested through a tactical urbanism approach, where a half-street block is transformed into a neighbourhood gathering space. The low-cost temporary pop-up plazas allow us to test and observe how a space works and is used by people.

The following is a summary of the past year, including feedback we received, along with observations of these spaces, and how this information will inform our next steps.

OVERVIEW

In 2021, we tested six new pop-up plaza locations. City staff collected feedback, monitored the plazas, and worked with steward partners to make sure spaces were properly maintained, comfortable and welcoming.

Our plaza evaluation process, along with public feedback, informs whether or not new public spaces will remain or be removed, and helps us to identify short-term improvements.

This year, four plazas will be extended through the winter. We will continue to make small improvements to the remaining plazas.

We will continue to foster partnerships, and enable more placemaking and programming opportunities to encourage residents to connect with their communities and get involved in shaping and caring for these spaces.

Overview: *Engagement & Monitoring* (in 2021)

Notification letters:

Sent to local residents and businesses within 2-block radius at key project milestones

On-site signage:

Installed sandwich boards and decals at all plazas

Pop-up plazas survey:

Received 907 responses from residents and businesses

Social media promotion:

City of Vancouver Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Direct emails from public: Received 213 emails

311 cases: Received 32 inquiries

On-site monitoring: At all 6 locations at different times of day and days of week, in 30 minute intervals



What we saw:

MONITORING SUMMARY

Collected between July – August 2021

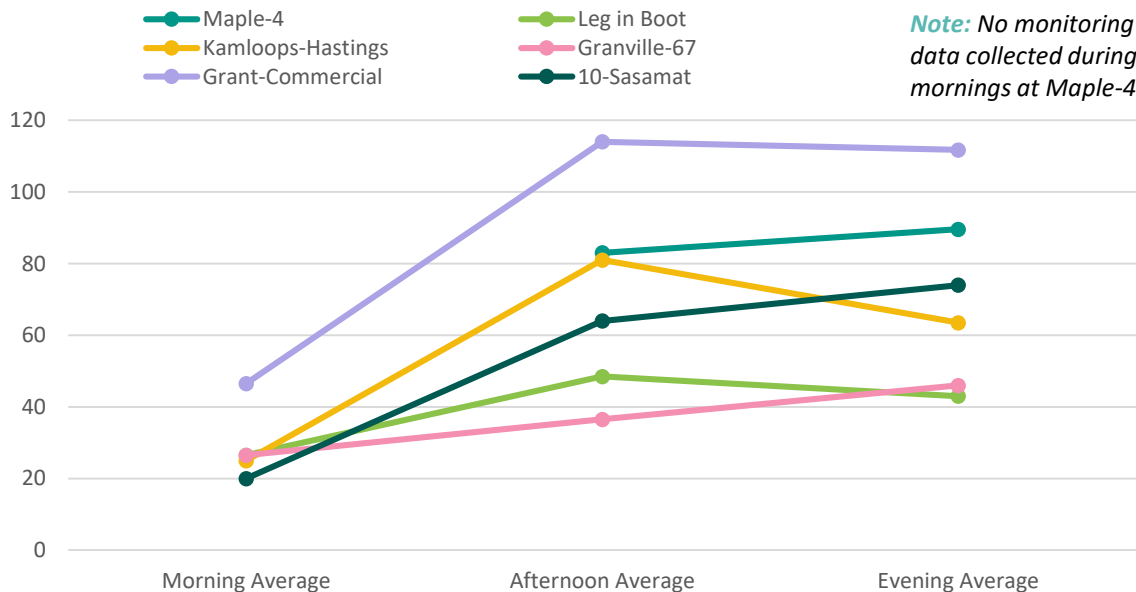
City staff conducted on-site observational monitoring of the pop-up plazas to understand how the spaces were being used. Plazas were monitored in 30 minute increments on weekday and weekend mornings, afternoons and evenings.

Monitoring: *What we saw*

Average number of people observed during 30 minute monitoring shifts



Average Number of People Using Pop-Up Plazas at Different Times of Day

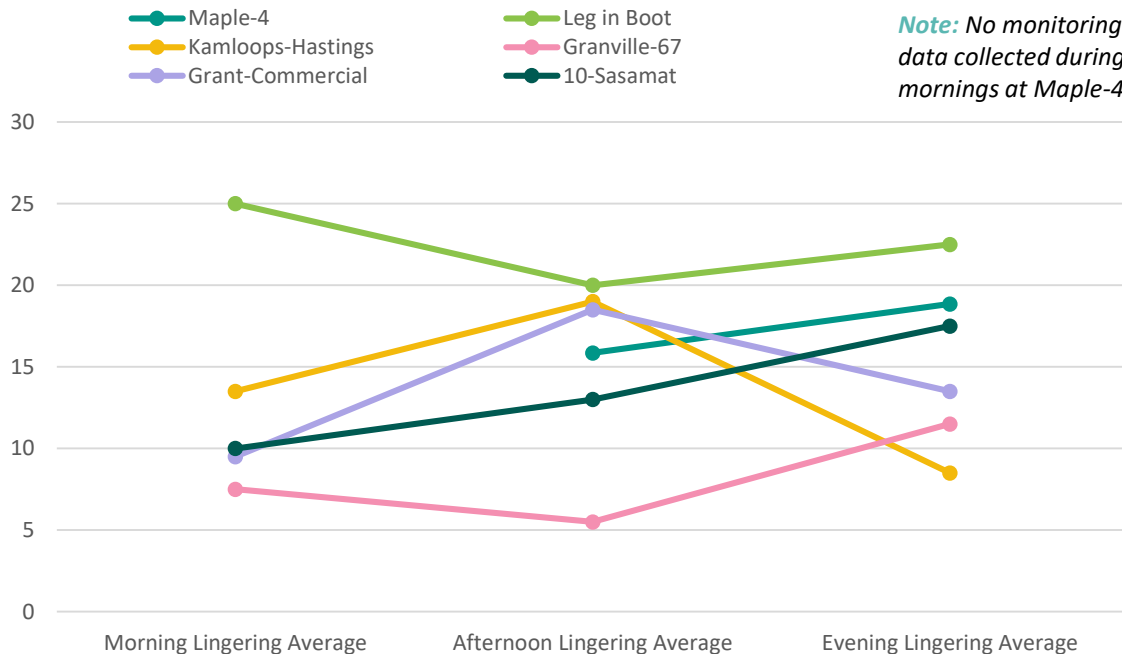


Monitoring: *What we saw*

Average number of
people lingering
during 30 minute
monitoring shifts

17

Average People Lingering by Location



What we heard:

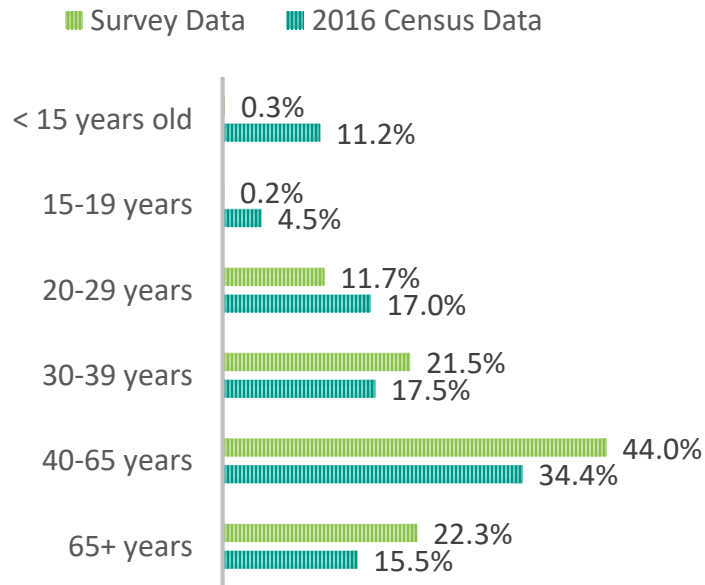
SURVEY SUMMARY

Open for feedback between June – September 2021

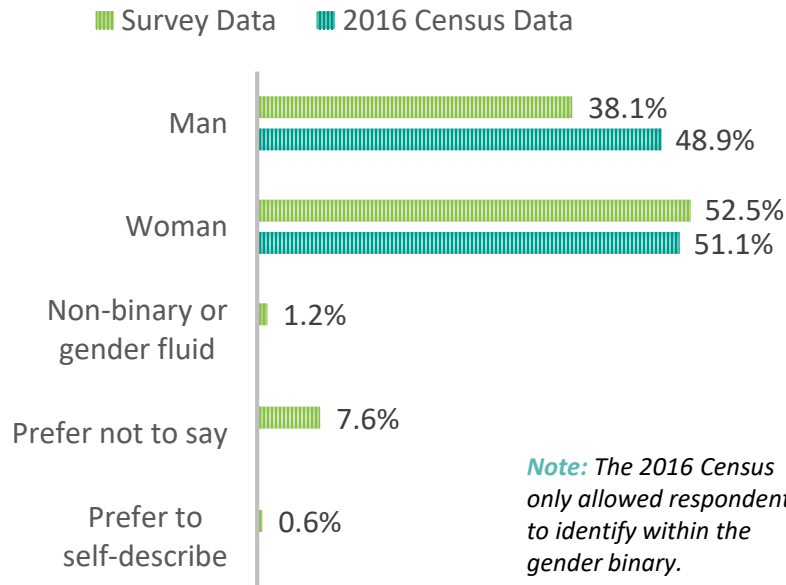
We collected feedback from the public and nearby businesses on new pop-up plazas through an online survey. The feedback helped us understand how these pop-up plazas impact communities, how they are used and what improvements are needed. The feedback also helped inform which spaces would remain beyond the trial period.

Engagement: *Who We Heard From*

Age

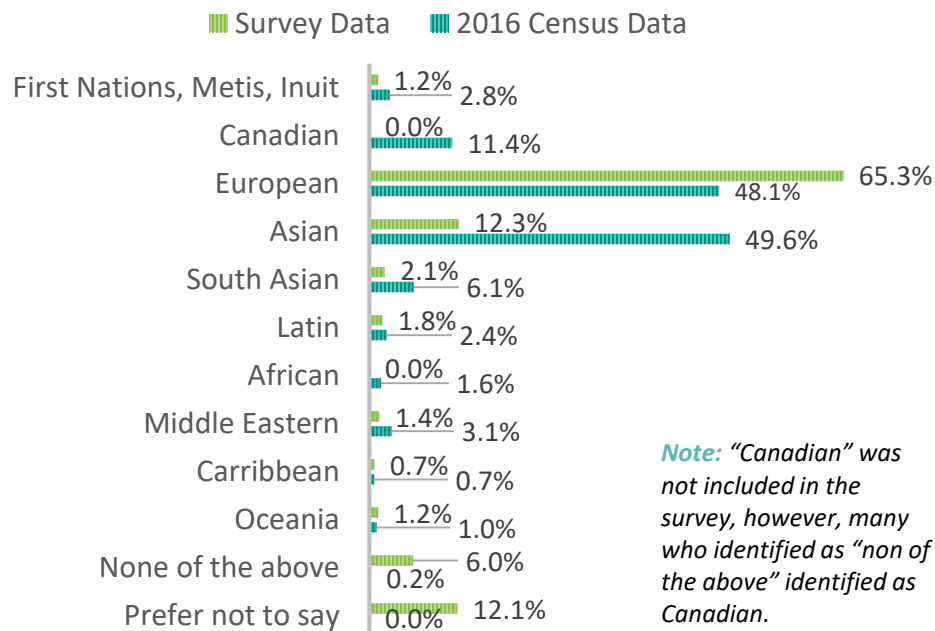


Gender

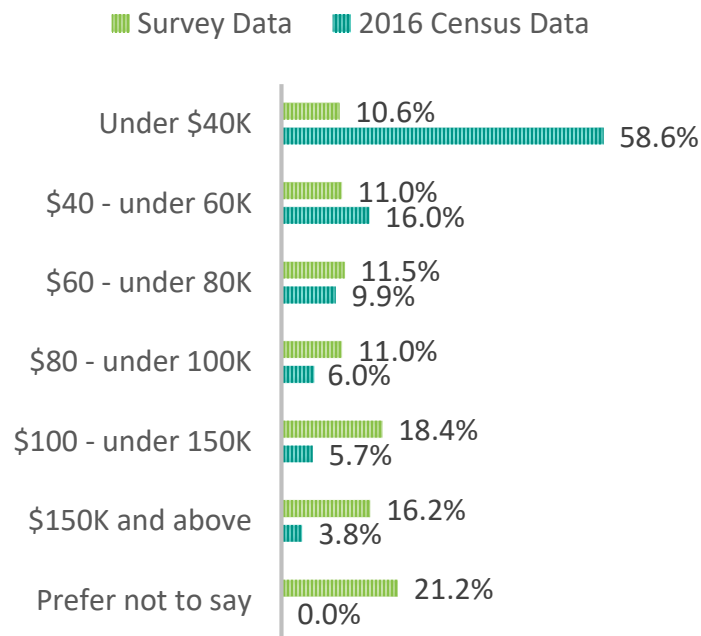


Engagement: *Who We Heard From*

Ethnic Origin



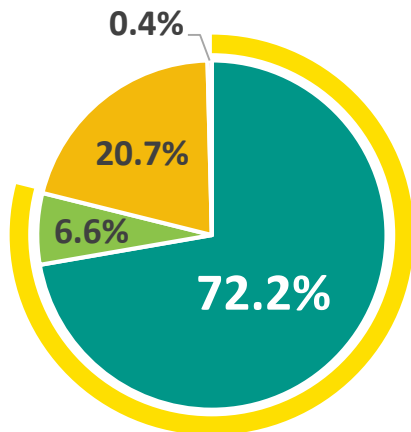
Total Household Income



Engagement: *What We Heard*

Support for plaza becoming permanent:

■ Yes ■ Somewhat ■ No ■ No opinion / Don't know

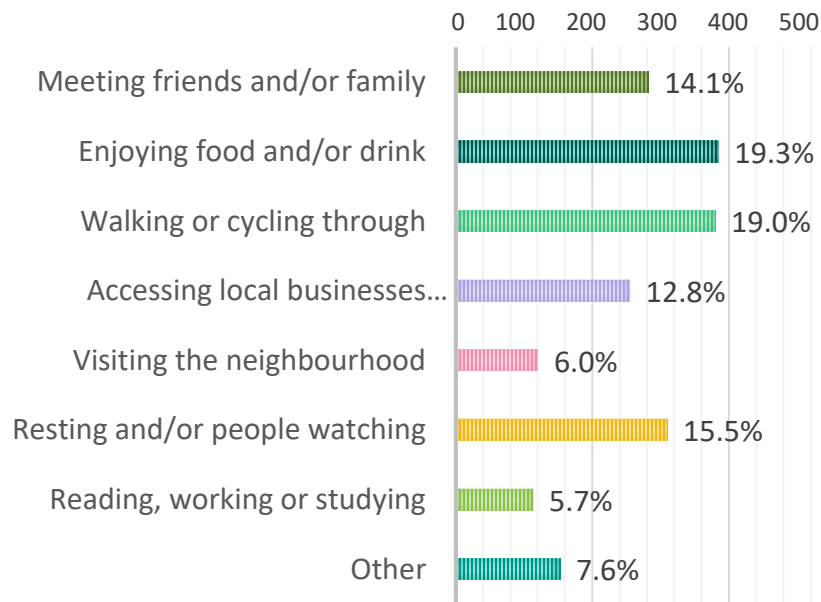


■ **79% support or somewhat support the plazas becoming permanent (out of 907 responses)**

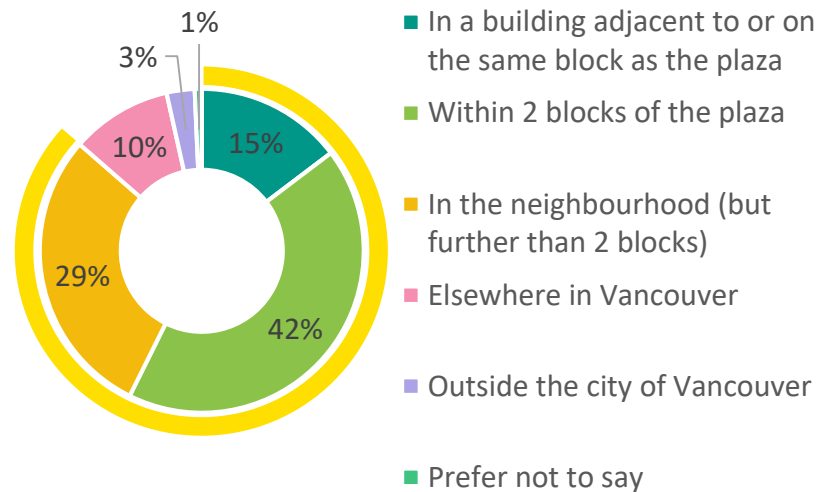


Engagement: *What We Heard*

How are you using the plaza?



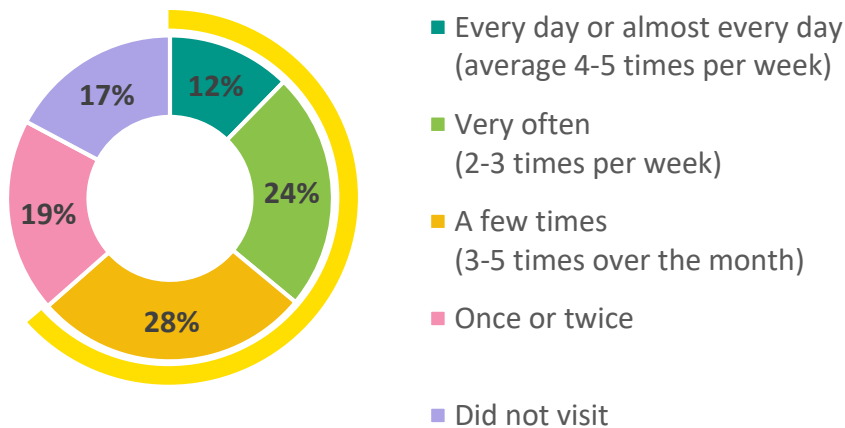
Do you live near the plaza?



86% live in the neighbourhood

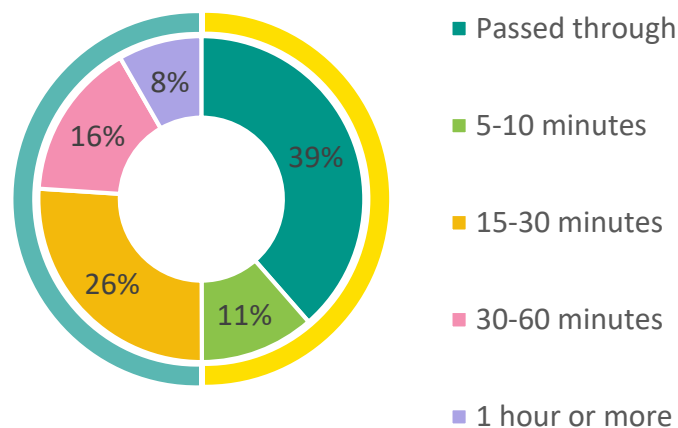
Engagement: *What We Heard*

In the last month, how often did you visit the plaza?



■ 64% visited a few times per month or more

On your last visit, how long did you stay in the plaza?



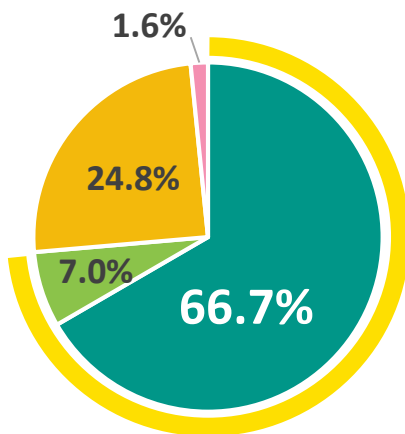
■ 50% stayed 15 minutes or longer

■ 50% stayed less than 15 minutes

Business Survey: *Summary*

Support for plaza becoming permanent:

■ Yes ■ Somewhat ■ No ■ No opinion / Don't know



■ **74% support or somewhat support the plazas becoming permanent (out of 129 responses)**

"I love it! Great exposure and energy."

"I think it definitely brings more business and new people to the neighbourhood."

"Provides a pleasant location to meet a client for coffee."

"Hasn't affected us but I'm interested in it."

"Not enough people used the plaza for all the headache it caused."

LOCATION SUMMARIES

The following are summaries of the six pop-up plaza locations, along with what we heard through the survey and the current plaza statuses.

Kamloops St & Hastings St: *Overview*

Installation date:

Late April 2021

Steward Partners:

- Kiwassa Neighbourhood House
- East Village Business Improvement Association
- Ward Memorial Baptist Church

Plaza status:

Plaza extended

Site characteristics:

- Side street plaza
- Medium density
- Good tree canopy

Design elements:

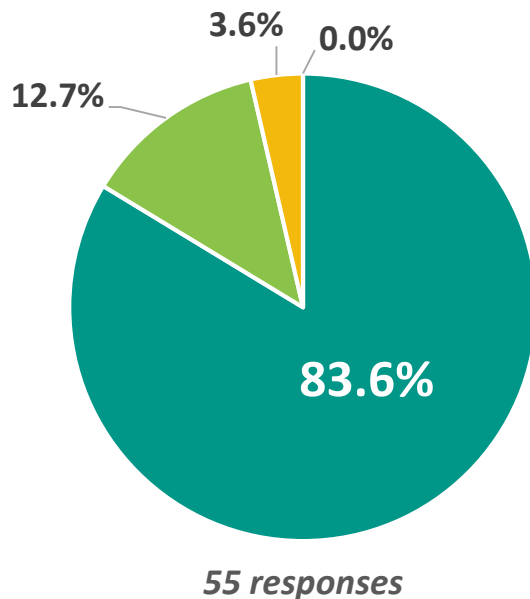
- Low concrete barriers
- Picnic tables & umbrellas
- Bench
- Planters
- Bike racks



Kamloops St & Hastings St: *What we heard*

Support for plaza becoming permanent:

■ Yes ■ Somewhat ■ No ■ No opinion / don't know



"It is a peaceful refuge in the middle of a busy area. So needed and welcomed."

"Make it a place to enjoy in the winter months..."

"More maintenance to upkeep the place."

Common themes:

- Additional weather protection
- Better water connection (water fountain on-site does not have a hose connection)
- More support for community events

W 67th Ave & Granville St: *Overview*

Installation date:

May 2021

Steward Partners:

- Marpole Business Improvement Association
- Marpole Community Policing Centre
- Marpole Oakridge Family Place
- Marpole Neighbourhood House
- Historic Joy Kogawa House
- Marpole Seniors Network
- Community volunteers

Site characteristics:

- Side street plaza
- Low-medium density
- Small trees with little shade
- Connected to Arbutus Greenway
- Existing boulevard benches

Design elements:

- Concrete barriers & planters
- Picnic tables & umbrellas

Plaza status:

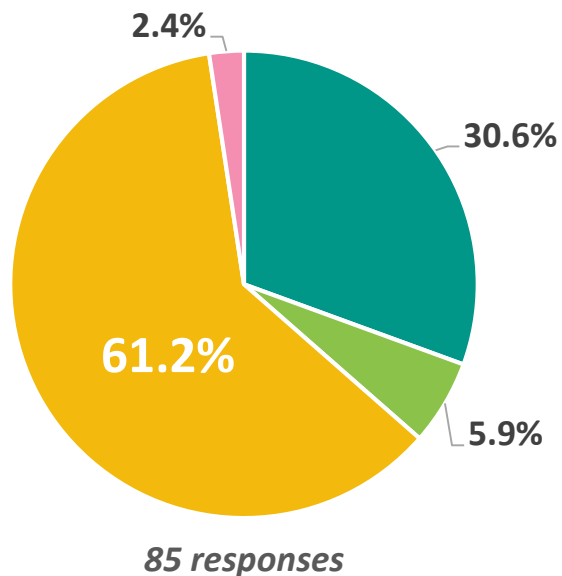
Plaza removed September 2021



W 67th Ave & Granville St: *What we heard*

Support for plaza becoming permanent:

■ Yes ■ Somewhat ■ No ■ No opinion / don't know



"Ensure space is clean and safe and being used as intended... Communicate/reinforce respectful use of the space and people who may be sharing the space."

"I am not sure I feel 100% safe bringing my young family there."

Common themes:

- Move it to another location
- Make it feel safer/I don't feel safe with undesirable people in the plaza
- Additional weather protection

Maple St & W 4th Ave: *Overview*

Installation date:

June 2021

Steward partner:

- Kitsilano 4th Avenue Business Improvement Association
- Museum of Vancouver

Plaza status:

Plaza extended

Site characteristics:

- Side street plaza
- Low-medium density
- Good tree canopy
- Existing boulevard benches
- Connected to Arbutus Greenway

Design elements:

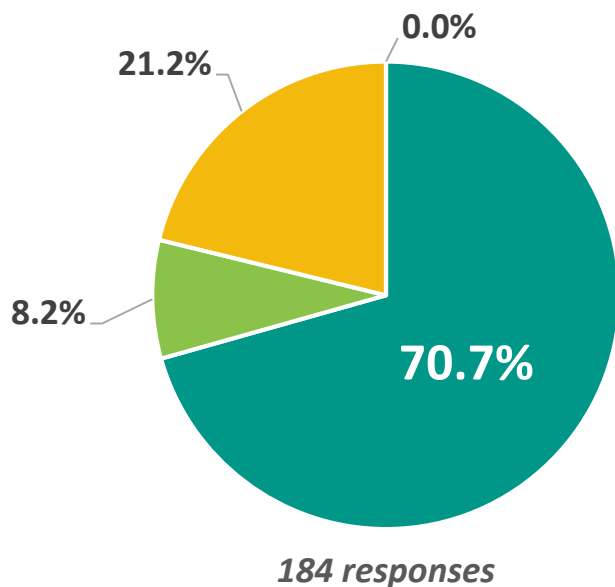
- Concrete barriers & planters
- Picnic tables & umbrellas
- Murals by BIA
- Porta potty (for alcohol pilot)
- Kids furniture



Maple St & W 4th Ave: *What we heard*

Support for plaza becoming permanent:

■ Yes ■ Somewhat ■ No ■ No opinion / don't know



"While I support such plazas in general, and find the current one pleasing, well-used, and clean; by preventing traffic access through this intersection, it adds to the congestion at 4th Ave and Arbutus..."

"If this plaza were to become a permanent fixture... there need to be improvements made to the traffic flow of this area."

Common themes:

- Additional weather protection
- Additional seating
- Add a second garbage bin (seasonally)

Grant St & Commercial St: *Overview*

Installation date:

Late June 2021

Steward partner:

Commercial Drive Business Society

Plaza status:

Plaza removed September 2021

Site characteristics:

- Side street plaza
- Low density area
- Curbside patio in plaza

Design elements:

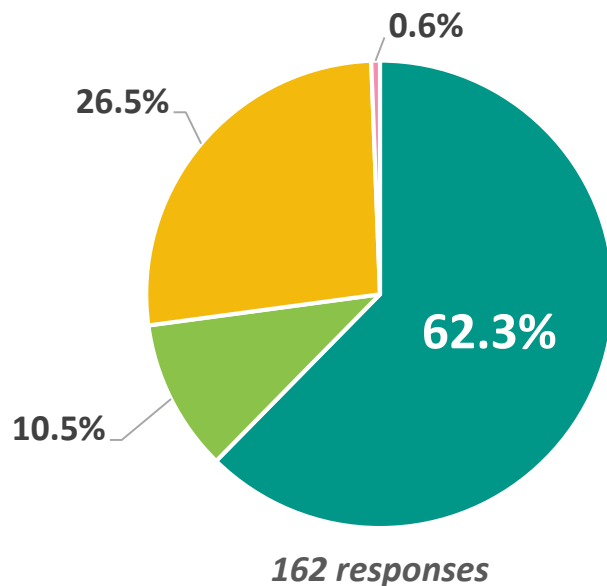
- Concrete barriers & planters
- Picnic tables & umbrellas
- Moveable furniture
- Mural and decals by BIA



Grant St & Commercial St: *What we heard*

Support for plaza becoming permanent:

■ Yes ■ Somewhat ■ No ■ No opinion / don't know



"I do love the idea of public spaces for communities. Using Grant St... is not the right location."

"Move it to a street where delivery trucks can continue to deliver to the commercial shops on Commercial between Charles and Gravelly."

Common themes:

- Impacts to commercial deliveries and parking
- Find a more suitable location in the neighbourhood
- More planters, greenery, tree canopy
- Additional weather protection

Sasamat St and W 10th Ave: *Overview*

Installation date:

Late June 2021

Steward partner:

West Point Grey Business
Improvement Association

Plaza status:

Plaza extended

Site characteristics:

- Side street plaza
- Low density
- Small trees with little shade

Design elements:

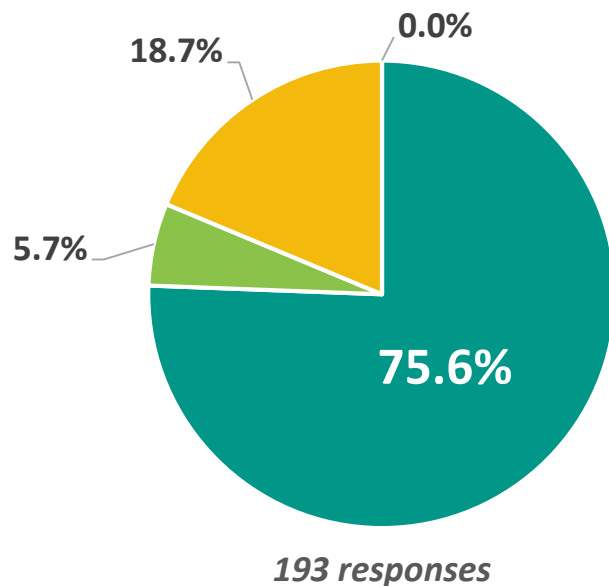
- Low concrete barriers
- Picnic tables & umbrellas
- Bench with planters



Sasamat St and W 10th Ave : *What we heard*

Support for plaza becoming permanent:

■ Yes ■ Somewhat ■ No ■ No opinion / don't know



"I am a senior with mobility issues and for years the intersection... has terrified me. I am so glad that the pop up has closed that intersection to car traffic. It makes the village so much safer for pedestrians."

"It is a real hub in West Point Grey and great for our older population to be able to safely socialize, as well as for our kids to enjoy the beautiful view and for all of us to support local businesses!"

Common themes:

- Improve the design
- More planters, greenery, tree canopy
- Additional weather protection

Leg in Boot Square: *Overview*

Installation date:

July 2021

Steward partner:

- Convivial Café,
- False Creek South Neighbourhood Association
- Local residents

Plaza status:

Plaza extended

Site characteristics:

- Existing underused plaza
- Medium density
- Partial shade from trees & buildings
- Existing water feature, bike racks, benches
- Connected to Seaside Greenway

Design elements:

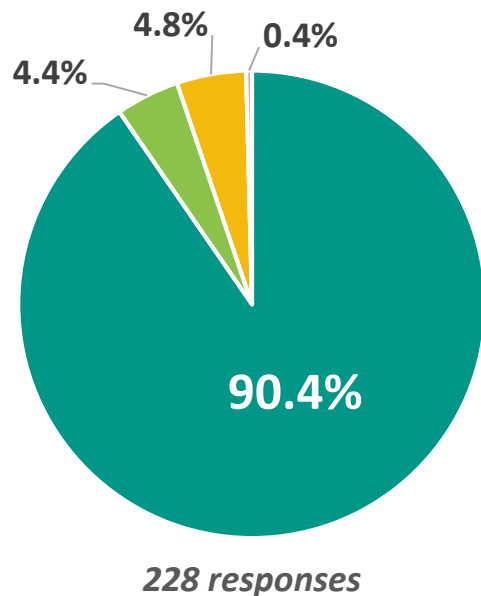
- Picnic tables & umbrellas
- Moveable furniture
- Kids furniture
- Planters



Leg in Boot Square: *What we heard*

Support for plaza becoming permanent:

■ Yes ■ Somewhat ■ No ■ No opinion / don't know



"This pop up plaza is a real joy both to look at and use. Its brought life back to the square which has ben empty for many years. The opportunity to use this square is welcome and has added "living and relaxation space" for all to enjoy."

"Please keep it as a gathering space - it should have been this all along."

Common themes:

- More planters and greenery
- Additional weather protection
- More events, programming and community activities
- Make it a smoke-free space

NEXT STEPS

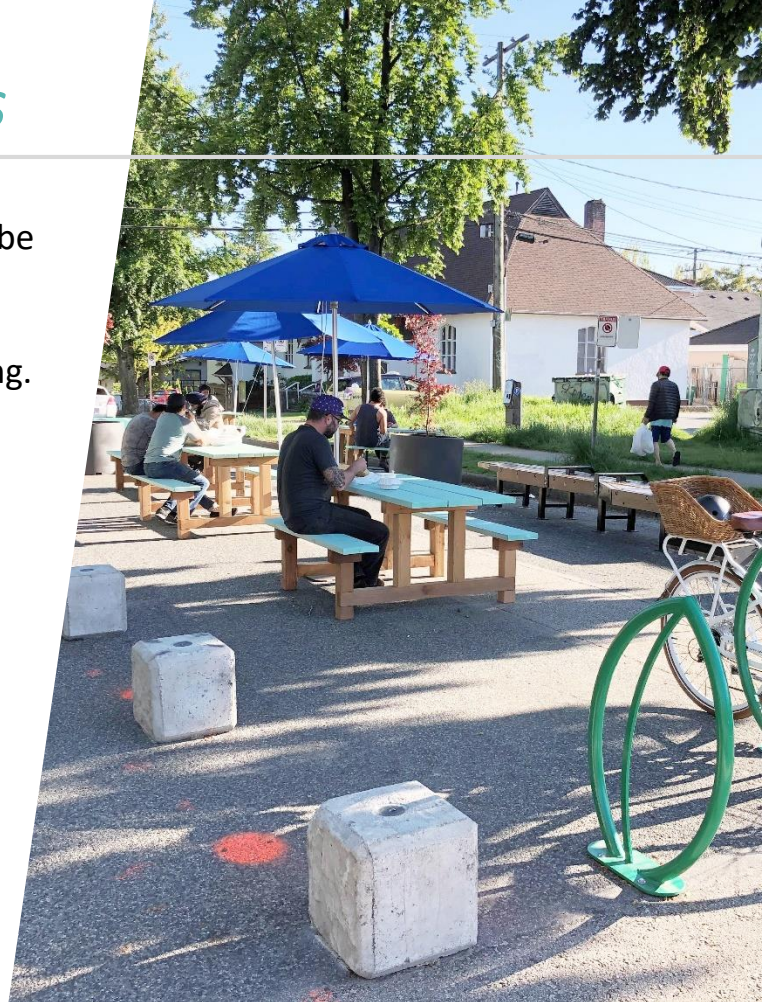
We've developed recommendations for next steps, based on what we've seen and heard through our monitoring and engagement.

Next Steps: *Physical improvements*

As we work towards sustaining the remaining pop-up plazas, we will be making small upgrades to the spaces based on the suggestions received from emails and through the survey. These upgrades are intended to help make these spaces more comfortable and welcoming.

Small physical improvements:

- Adding additional seating
- Adding more planters and greenery
- Testing community message boards
- Making safety improvements



Next Steps: *Engagement*

To increase engagement in who is shaping and taking care of these pop-up plazas, we will provide more opportunities for residents and communities to get involved.

Fostering partnerships

- Supporting existing partners in continued stewardship and encouraging new partner participation

Placemaking and programming

- Expand to more plaza locations and focus outreach to underrepresented groups.
- Support community-based activations and enable more small-scale programming

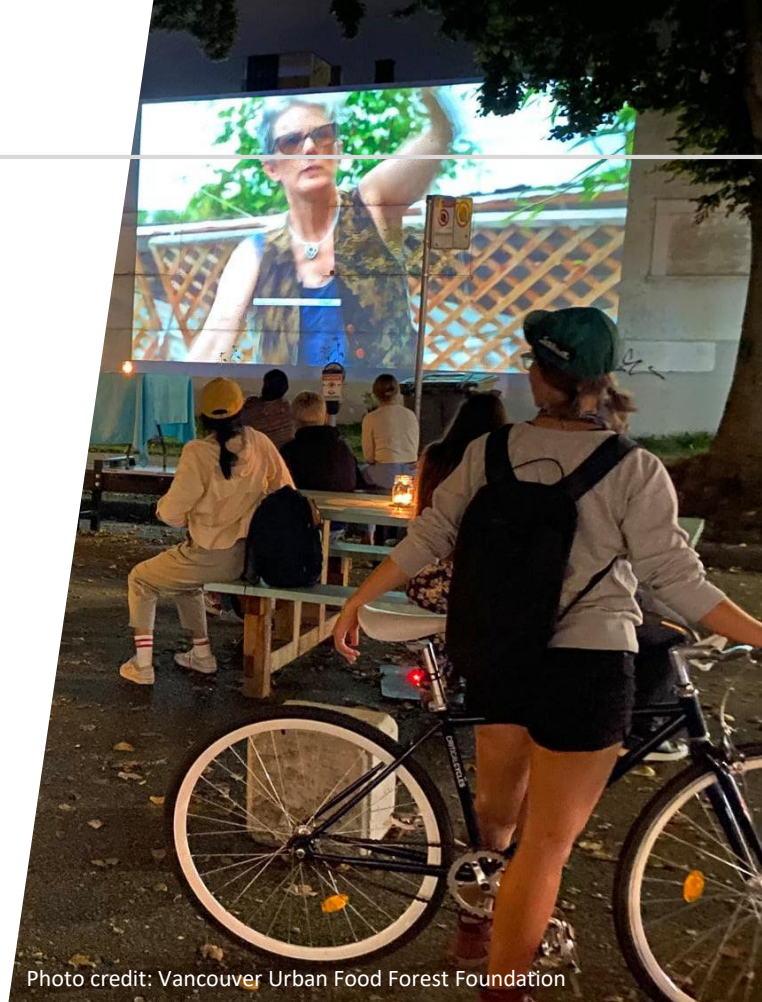


Photo credit: Vancouver Urban Food Forest Foundation



Photo credit: Giuliana Lira

shapeyourcity.ca/pop-up-plazas