West End commercial streets

Davie, Robson and Denman

Robson Village: what we heard

spring 2023



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Robson Village

We heard that transportation and public space improvements could focus on...



Demand for space to stroll

- Improve the walking experience for people shopping, visiting or passing through.

Explore a people-first street*

- Explore how street space could be re-allocated for people to enjoy.

Prioritize transit

- Improve the transit experience and its reliability (comfort and journey times).

Active transportation

- Integrate safe active transportation routes on Robson Street.
- Connect these to the existing network.

Green Infrastructure

- Include new trees and planting.
- Introduce rainwater management features.

More dining space

- More space for accessible dining patios.
- Explore potential for Robson Street to offer visitors more than just retail.

Strengthen the sense of place

- Consider how to strengthen Robson Street's destination appeal, to attract more people.

Support businesses

- Many concerned that businesses are closing.
- Consult with businesses on how the street can work better for their customers.

**streets that are redesigned to improve walking, biking, and transit; create more space to manage water; create ecological corridors; and for people to gather and enjoy the outdoors.*

Robson Village – public life overview

More space given to people than to cars; More seating



Focus on quality public space and seating, reduce space for vehicles

- Many responses requested a street with lower traffic volumes.
- A people-first street^ should be explored.

Robson's mix of retail and dining experiences is highly valued

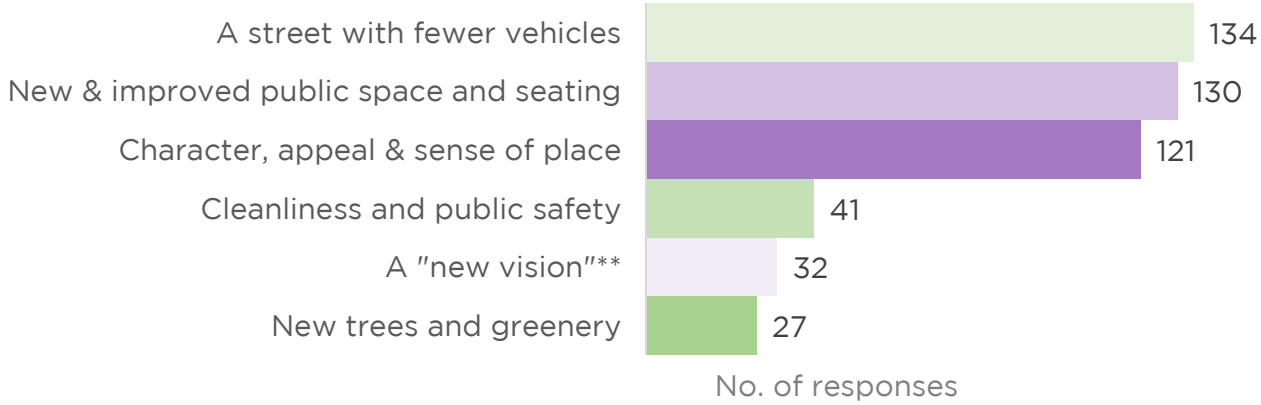
– The combination of retail and dining options contribute to Robson Street's character, appeal and sense of place.
– Festive and decorative elements add to this appeal.

Cleanliness and public safety are important and there was interest in a new vision for the street:

– Cleanliness and public safety is a concern, but less so on Robson Street than on Davie Street.
– Many felt Robson's appeal is dwindling and that a new vision** could help transform it.

^streets that are redesigned to improve walking, biking, and transit; create more space to manage water; create ecological corridors; and for people to gather and enjoy the outdoors.

Improving the Robson Village experience – key themes*



**A review of 643 responses to 4 open-ended questions reveals that a street with fewer vehicles was the most commonly raised theme about public life.*

***Included sentiments on Robson Street being less appealing than it once was, concern for its retail future, and the sentiment that there wasn't much for visitors to experience beyond visiting specific stores.*

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Robson Village – transportation overview

Walking improvements are most important to people



Walking improvements were most popular (43% of responses about transportation)**

Nuanced feedback included:

- Car-free or car-lite^ options should be explored.
- Wider sidewalks are still overly crowded.

Active transportation (24%)**

- Protected bike lanes that connect to the existing network and safe bike parking.

Transit (20%)**

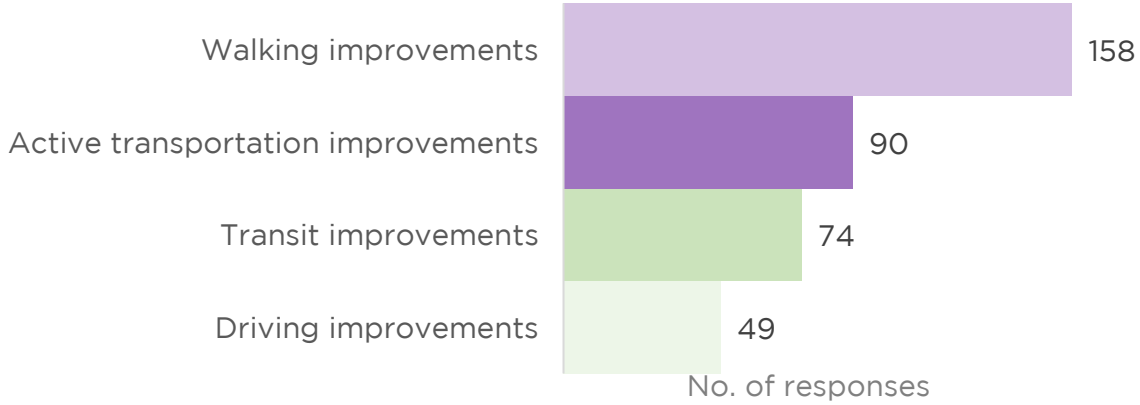
- Faster and more convenient buses.
- Add bus priority measures.
- Rapid or mass transit access (tram or SkyTrain).

Driving (13%)**

- Interest in improving traffic flow.
- Interest in vehicle parking on street.

^Spaces where vehicles are not permitted, are only allowed for a limited time, or only certain vehicles are allowed (e.g. delivery trucks or local residents).

Improving the transportation – key themes*



**A review of 643 responses to 4 open-ended questions reveals that walking improvements was the most commonly raised transportation theme.*

***Percentages are calculated based on the 371 transportation sentiments raised across all 643 responses.*



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Spending time in Robson Village

How could the experience be improved?



Strong support for changes that encourage people to spend more time in Robson Village

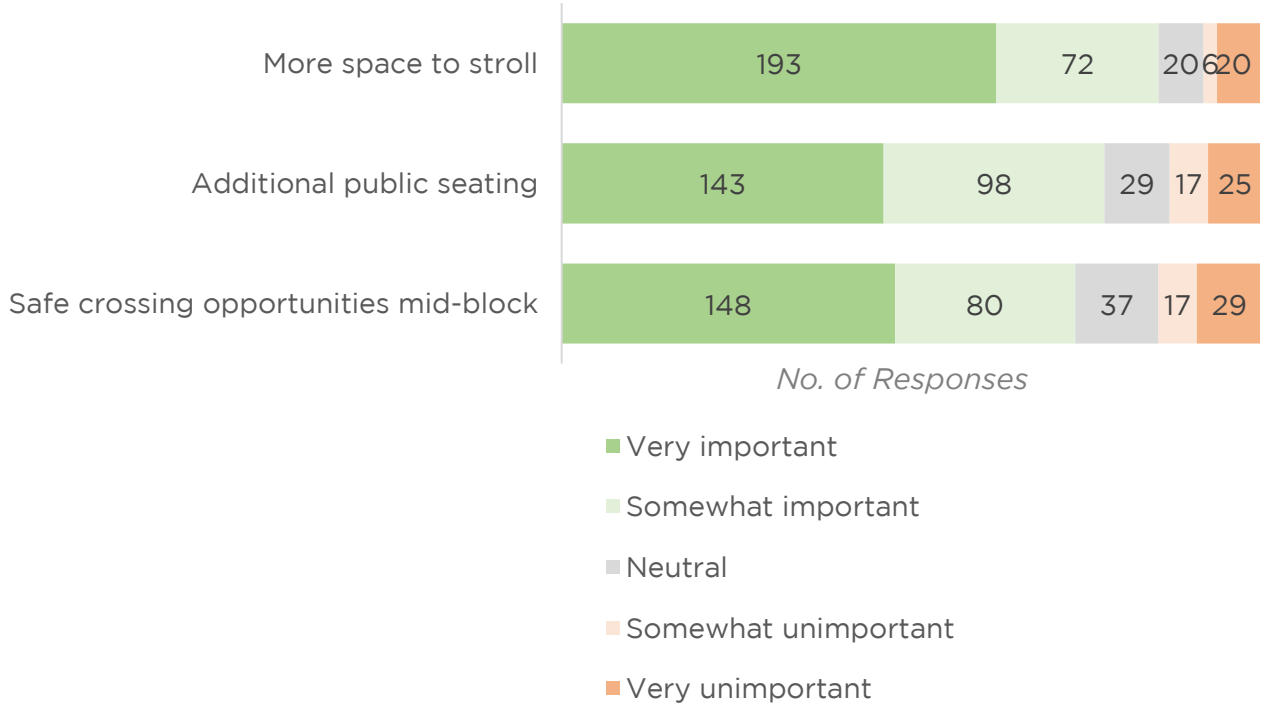
Highlights:

- 85% see ‘more space to stroll’ as important.
- 77% feel ‘additional public seating’ is important.



Sidewalks & parklets for seating are busy, particularly on weekends
Left: July 22 2023 Right: July 19 2023

Importance of opportunities to encourage “spending time”*



*We asked people to select the importance of these opportunities.

Getting to and from Robson Village

How could your experience be improved?



Almost everyone wanted to prioritize transit, walking, biking and rolling (87%)

Only 7% disagreed and 6% were neutral.

We heard:

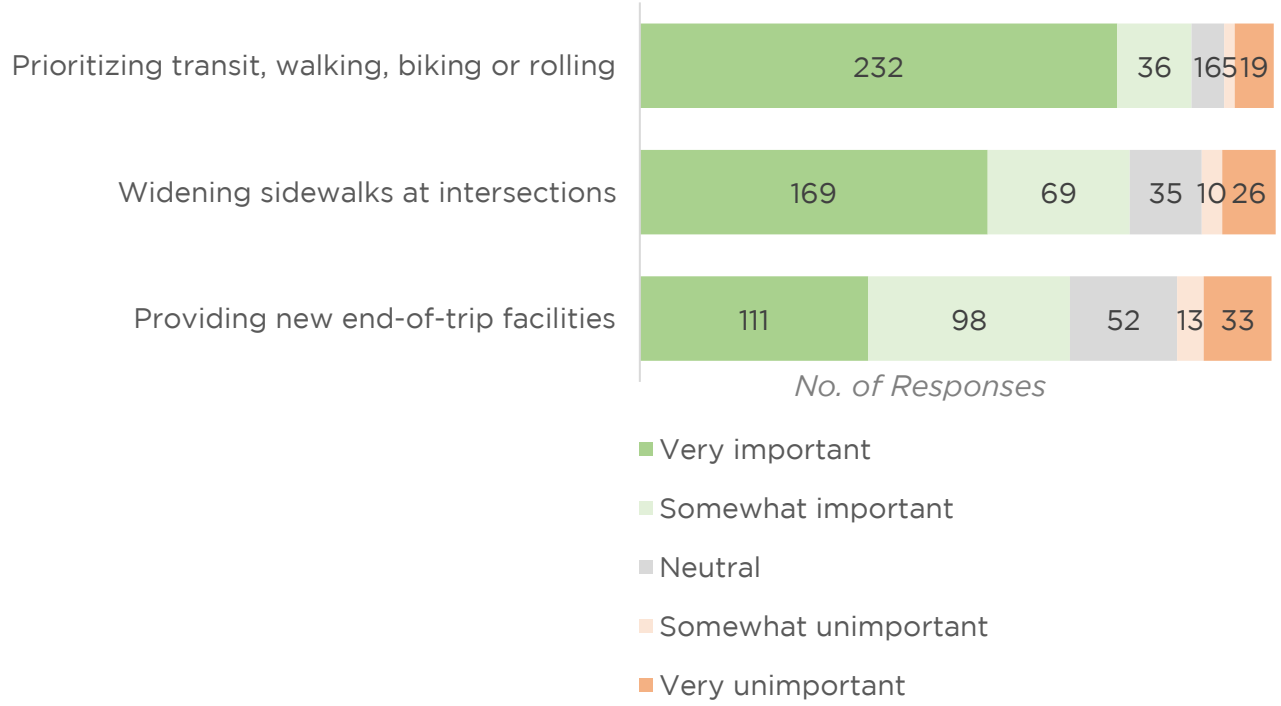
"#5 is really crowded/packed commuting home to the West End"

"Buses are often jam packed. Nighttime bus service is abysmal"

"Why do I need to cycle in vehicle traffic. Please create safe places for people choosing clean and healthy transportation options"

"Presence of parked cars means there is not enough room for cyclists"

Importance of opportunities to improve transportation*



**We asked people to select the importance of these opportunities.*

Supporting businesses in Robson Village

How can we use street space to do this?



Accessible patios are very important, but their attractiveness is impacted by vehicle traffic.

"Who wants to sit outside and have cars rev their engines to speed"

"Give us somewhere to sit that isn't next to fast traffic"

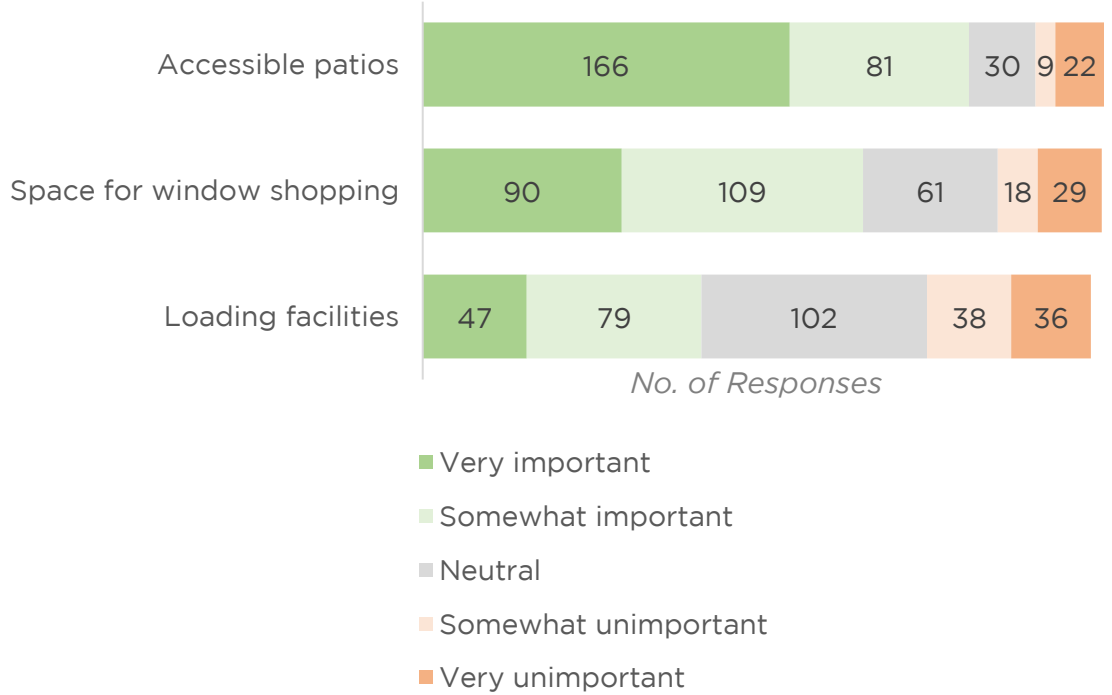
"No point in putting accessible patios on a busy noisy street!"

Space for window shopping is somewhat important.

Mixed feelings towards accommodating deliveries on Robson Street.

"Stop the businesses from receiving deliveries on the street. Deliveries only in the back."

How can street design changes help support businesses in Robson Village?*



*We asked people to select the importance of these opportunities.

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Enhancing Robson Village's character

New measures to transform how street space is used may boost Robson Street's appeal



Exploring the creation of a people-first street^ was very popular (85.5%)

Many saw this as a way to revitalize Robson:

"Make it a destination for people to walk, shop, dine and relax with fewer vehicles to ruin the experience"

"Robson now is frankly really generic...bring back Robsonstrasse"

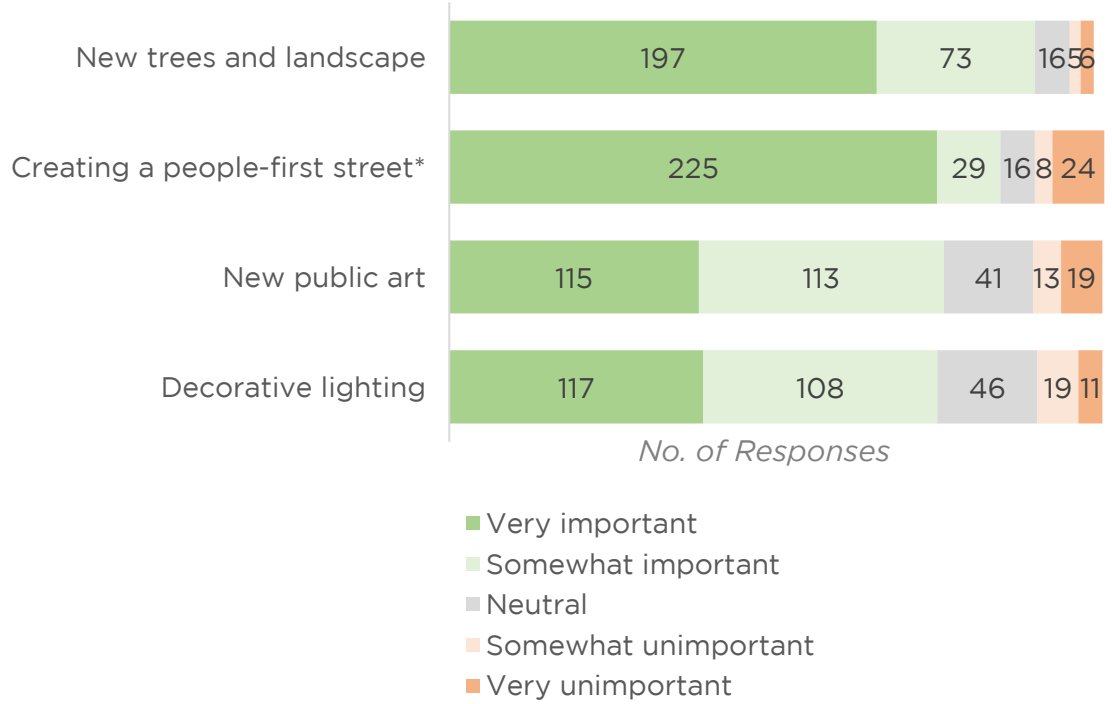
"I hope it can regain some of that sense of place"

Near unanimous support for new trees and landscaping (91%)

"Anything to enhance the concrete/asphalt streetscape. More green!"

^streets that are redesigned to improve walking, biking, and transit; create more space to manage water; create ecological corridors; and for people to gather and enjoy the outdoors.

How might we enhance Robson Village's character?*



*We asked people to select the importance of these opportunities.

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Other feedback



Not all responses related to permanent public space or transportation changes*

Other suggestions included:

- More public washrooms
- More independent businesses and fewer chain stores.
- Banning e-scooters and better enforcement for sidewalk riding.

Other concerns included:

- Commercial vacancies and empty store fronts.
- Financial hardship for independent or small businesses, including compared to chain stores.

**120 sentiments raised in the 643 responses to open-ended questions on Robson Village related to other issues. This means they could not be accurately attributed to a transportation or public life code. This feedback will be considered in the design process for each street.*

Robson Village

Part of West End commercial streets



Thank you for reading what we heard about Robson Village.

For a full breakdown of the findings for the other streets, and details of who we heard from, please review the full report at [shapeyourcity.ca/west-end-streets (external link).](shapeyourcity.ca/west-end-streets)

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