

From: ["Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)

To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)

Date: 6/3/2021 7:19:57 AM

Subject: [Memo - Commercial Drive Piazza Progress Update - RTS 13319](#)

Attachments: [Memo - Commercial Drive Piazza Progress Update.pdf](#)

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- Update on the June 26, 2019 Council Motion which asks staff to explore the creation of an age-friendly [Piazza](#) (RTS 13319).
- Staff are working with the Commercial Drive BIA, Italian Festival Day Society and local business Sopra Sotto Pizzeria on a seasonal pop-up piazza on Grant St at Commercial Drive.
 - Commercial Drive BIA and Sopra Sotto will support with management and stewardship.
 - Italian Festival Day Society will provide programming later in the summer as public health orders on gathering and events are lifted.
- Staff are working with partners and stakeholders to create a piazza that honors the people and heritage of the area, including Little Italy.
- The seasonal piazza will be implemented mid-to-late June and will be open until early fall.
- Over the summer, staff will monitor the pop-up piazza, engage with the partners, the public and local businesses to gather feedback. If the seasonal piazza is a success, it could transition to a long-term year-round community gathering space.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lon LaClaire at 604-873-7336 or lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

June 2, 2021

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Director, Civic Engagement and Communications
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office

FROM: Lon LaClaire
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Commercial Drive Piazza Progress Update

RTS #: 13319

This memo provides an overview of the proposed approach to the creation of a 'piazza' in the Commercial Drive/'Little Italy' area, in response to the June 26, 2019 Motion which asks staff to explore the creation of an age-friendly "Piazza".

Background

The Grandview-Woodland Community Plan (2015) identified opportunities for new gathering spaces in the neighbourhood in the Commercial Drive neighbourhood. In 2016, eight blocks of Commercial Drive were recognized as "Little Italy", and in 2019 decorative crosswalks were added to reflect the Italian community and businesses of the area. Commercial Drive is located within the Grandview-Woodland neighbourhood, an "eclectic, vibrant, and diverse neighbourhood" according to its Community Profile¹ (2014).

The June 2019 Council Motion asked staff to work closely with Italian community, urban Indigenous communities, the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-waututh Nations, and other stakeholders to create a 'piazza' that honours the people and heritage of the area. Scoping for this project began in late 2019. These efforts were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the focus of the Commercial Drive Business Improvement Association (BIA) was on supporting the installation of temporary patios within the neighbourhood. During 2020, staff

¹ <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/grandview-woodland-community-profile-2014.pdf>

continued discussions with the varying stakeholders to learn more about the vision and opportunities to pilot a space, and based on the stakeholder feedback on their focus during the first summer of the pandemic, that effort shifted to 2021.

Since March 2021, staff have been working with Sopra Sotto Pizzeria, the Commercial Drive BIA, the Italian Cultural Centre and Italian Day Festival Society to explore whether a seasonal space could be a pilot for a “piazza” on Grant St at Commercial Dr. All parties agreed it was a great opportunity, and staff have been working with these partners to advance this work.

Next steps

Building on the success of the pop-up plazas delivered in 2020, staff are now working in partnership with Commercial Drive BIA, Italian Day Festival Society and Sopra Sotto to advance the “Pop up Piazza” on Grant St at Commercial Drive.

The pop-up piazza will be implemented mid-to-late June 2021.

The Commercial Drive BIA will be the primary partner with support from adjacent business Sopra Sotto. The Italian Day Festival Society will provide programming later in the summer as public health orders on gatherings and events are lifted.

The initial design options will be for a temporary, seasonal piazza; staff and partners are committed to creating a piazza in the Commercial Drive neighbourhood that is well cared-for, inclusive and comfortable, and reflects the cultures and histories of this place. If the piazza is a success this summer, over time staff will continue to work with partners and the broader community, to improve and enhance the design features and cultural expression within the piazza.

Over the summer, staff will monitor the pop-up piazza, connect regularly with partners, and engage with the public and local businesses to gather feedback, with the understanding that if the temporary seasonal piazza is a success it could transition to a long-term community gathering place, a true piazza. Engagement will include urban Indigenous communities, the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-waututh Nations as we work together to develop the long-term opportunities for this space and overall alignment with the recent motion, Prioritizing Commercial Drive as a Pedestrian-First High Street (May 27, 2021).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly.



Lon LaClaire, M.Eng., P.Eng.
General Manager, Engineering Services

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