

# 18th - Cambie Pavement-to-Plaza Engagement Summary

June 2020

## 1. Project Overview

Public plazas have a vital role in public life - they enable:

- celebrations and community events
- social and neighbourly interaction
- civic expression

As vibrant spaces, public plazas can also support local businesses while encouraging sustainable modes of transportation like walking, cycling, and transit.

Guided by the Transportation 2040 Plan (T2040), the City has led a Pavement-to-Plaza Program at several locations over the past few years with the support of community partners. The program aims to provide high-impact, low-barrier public spaces through action while planning.

Inspired by New York and San Francisco, the City of Vancouver converts road space into people places — usually in neighbourhoods with:

- high pedestrian traffic
- vibrant commercial activities
- public bike share
- a need for more public space

In 2019, the City proposed a potential new public space at W 18th Avenue and Cambie Street. The design would transform a half-street block into a neighbourhood public space with opportunities for social interaction and community building within the heart of Cambie Village.

This project is supported by T2040, Healthy City Strategy, and Cambie Corridor Plan, all of which encourage the creation of public plazas and gathering spaces in Vancouver. Pavement-to-plaza conversions like the one proposed can:

- Deliver low-barrier, high-impact places for people by repurposing road space
- Provide an attractive public realm and pedestrian-friendly streetscape
- Support local businesses and active transportation
- Help create a sense of identity and place in the community

The City has successfully implemented pavement-to-plazas at several locations over the past few years, including the Jim Deva Plaza, Bute-Robson Plaza, and E 14th Ave and Main St Plaza.

## 2. What We Did

The 18th-Cambie Plaza project team has done a preliminary assessment to determine 2 potential locations for the new public space at W 18th Avenue and Cambie Street.

**Option A:** half-street block of W 18th west of Cambie St

**Option B:** half-street block of W 18th east of Cambie St



Figure 1. Image: Proposed locations of new public space at W 18th Avenue and Cambie Street

### Preliminary assessment

A half street block will be transformed for the creation of the new pavement-to-plaza. It will require approximately 6-8 parking spots to be removed. With a total of 137 metered parking spaces available in the Cambie St area between W 16th Ave and W 19th Ave, the conversion would therefore be taking 5-6% of the available metered parking.

Traffic data indicates that existing volumes at W 18th Avenue and Cambie Street are typical of local streets. It suggests that there should not be significant traffic impacts to the other streets as a result of the plaza. The project team will continue to collect data and monitor traffic impacts after the plaza installation.

The following potential benefits and tradeoffs of both options were identified on the site assessment

#### Option A: West side of Cambie Street

##### Potential Benefits:

- Food serving businesses face the proposed space
- Good sightlines for safety/comfort
- Existing wall mural and tree boulevard on each side

##### Potential Tradeoffs:

- Less space
- Loss of approx. 6-8 parking spaces
- Restricted vehicle access

#### Option B: East side of Cambie Street

##### Potential Benefits:

- More space available than west side
- Existing rain garden and tree boulevard on both sides
- Quieter from vehicle traffic noise

##### Potential Tradeoffs:

- Adjacent businesses do not look out onto the proposed space
- Loss of approx. 6-8 parking spaces
- Restricted vehicle access

Throughout 2019, the project team launched an extensive public engagement process to better understand any specific ideas or concerns. A total of approximately **1000** interactions from people who either live, work or visit the Cambie Village were recorded.

## Pop-up events

The first round of engagement consisted of two one-day pop-up events. A half-street block was transformed into a neighbourhood public space to test out the potential tradeoffs and benefits of both locations. Participants had the opportunity to experience and envision a public space at each location and share their thoughts. Majority of the participants expressed their support for the project with a preference for west side location.

- July 20, 12pm-6pm: east side of W 18th Ave and Cambie St, approximately **355** persons attended
- July 27, 12pm-6pm: west side of W 18th Ave and Cambie St, approximately **400** persons attended

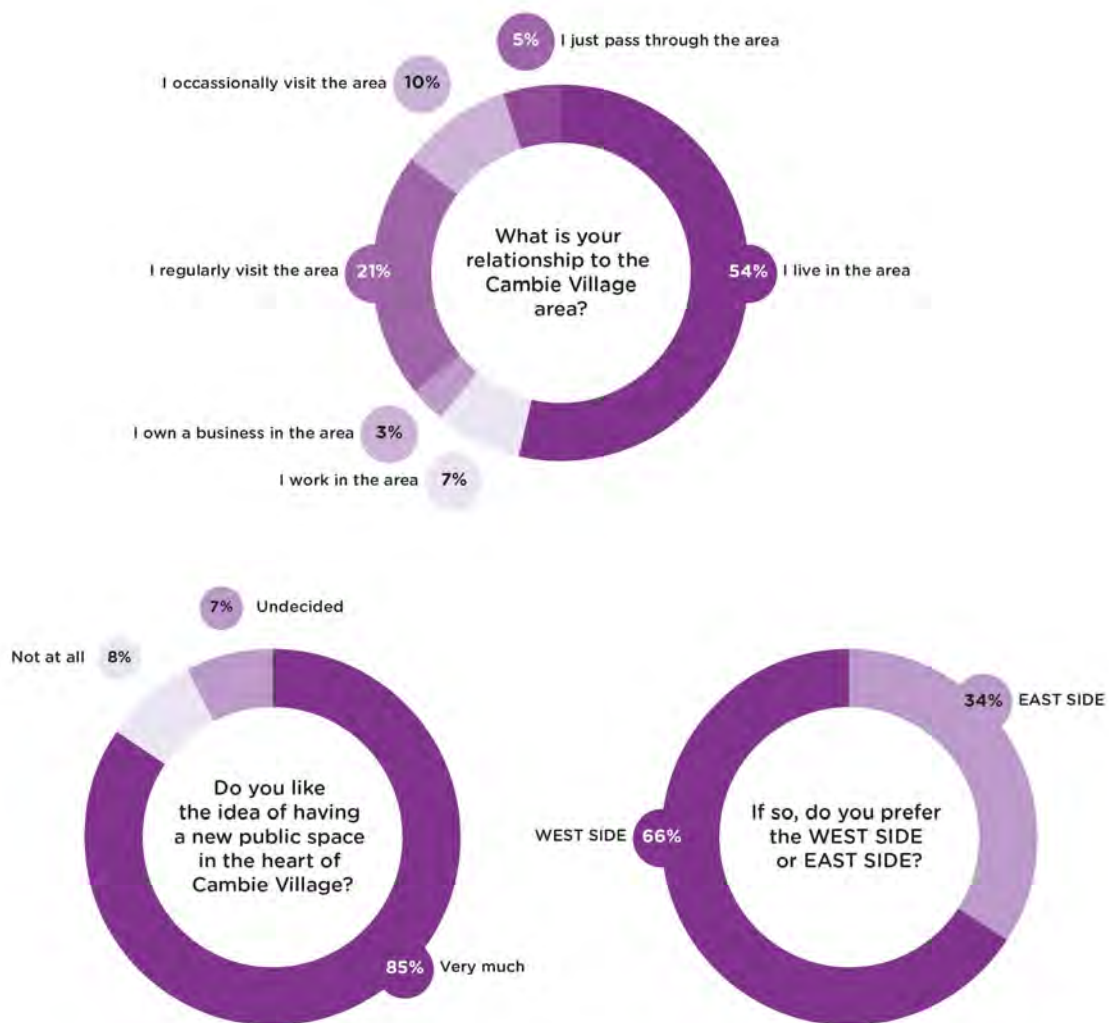


Figure 2. Diagrams: Data collected from July 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> pop-up events

## Pop-up plaza: July 20: east side of W 18th Ave and Cambie St



Figure 3. Photo from July 20<sup>th</sup> pop-up events

## Pop-up plaza: July 27: west side of W 18th Ave and Cambie St



Figure 4. Photos from July 27<sup>th</sup> pop-up event

## Survey

The second round of engagement consisted of an online survey where participants shared further feedback and ideas on the potential public space. Notification letters highlighting key findings at the July pop-up events were sent out to residents and business owners within a 4-block radius of the proposed locations. Public feedback suggested strong support for a public space in Cambie Village with a preference for the west side location.

- Distributed 3640 notification letters to residents and business owners within the boundary between W 14th Ave and W 22nd Ave, Laurel St and Ontario St.
- Received **278** responses - 257 complete and 21 partially complete
- Online survey open from Sept. 23rd to Oct. 31st, 2019

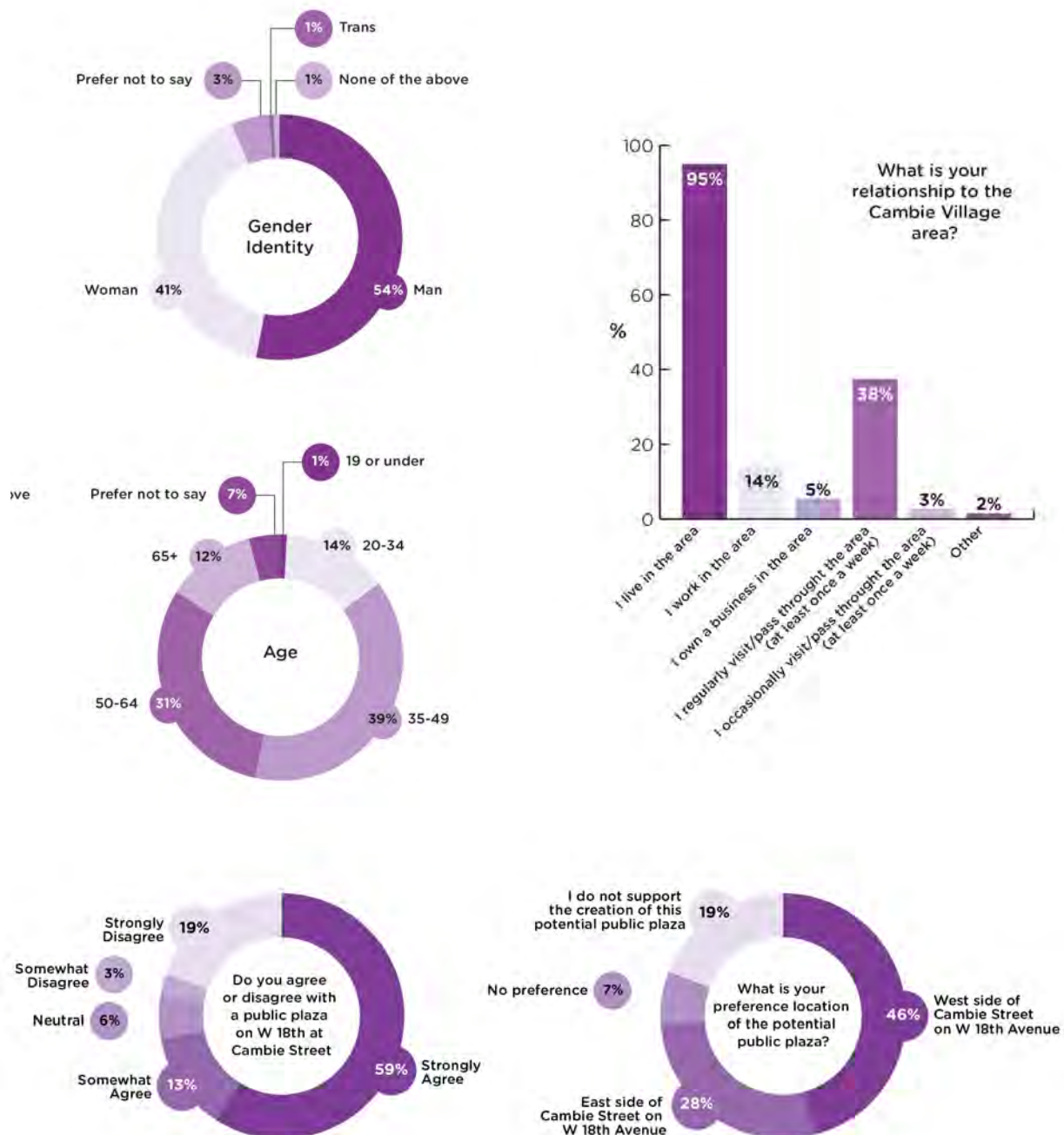


Figure 5. Diagrams: Data collected from survey - Question #1, 3, 5, 10 and 11

### 3. What we heard

There was **strong support for a new public space** in Cambie Village from both pop-up and survey participants. Overall, there was an interest in the **west side** plaza over the east side because of...

- Potential benefits of having complimentary business facing the proposed plaza
- Good sightlines and solar exposure, making it feel more safe, inviting and comfortable
- Less traffic impact as local traffic can be diverted to adjacent streets



Figure 6. Photos from July 27<sup>th</sup> pop-up event and Tupper Street

## Key Themes and Considerations

Based on feedback collected from the pop-up events, survey and the project team's analysis and observations, the following key themes and considerations were identified:

### 3.1 Support and interest

#### Key Themes

- General support in the creation of public spaces and understanding as a way to build community, support local business, create a sense of identity for the neighbourhood and attract people to Cambie Village
- General interest of having the plaza on the west side of W 18th Ave and Cambie St.

#### Key Considerations

- Long-term success of a plaza will be determined by managing safety, cleanliness, noise levels and providing programming for different demographics in partnership with a future stewardship partner



Figure 7. Photo from July 27<sup>th</sup> pop-up event



Figure 8. Photos from July 27<sup>th</sup> pop-up event

### 3.2 Opportunities and challenges

#### Key Themes

- Support the opportunity to repurpose road spaces into pedestrian-priority public spaces and similar projects under the city-led Pavement-to-Plaza program, ie. E 14th Ave and Main St Plaza.
- Challenges due to loss of parking spaces could affect access to adjacent shops and day-to-day business operations
- Challenges due to road closure of half street block could affect motor vehicle access to the neighbourhood



Figure 9. Photo of parking lot behind TD Bank and Liquor Barn

#### Key Considerations

- Continue to collect and monitor traffic and pedestrian data to further help us understand the tradeoffs and benefits of repurposing road spaces into pedestrian spaces
- Ensure that access is maintained to parking lots and buildings



Figure 10. Photos from July 27<sup>th</sup> pop-up event

### 3.3 What do people hope to see and do in the plaza

#### Key Themes

- A mix of programmed and flexible spaces with additional greenery
- An outdoor living room for people and families who are living, working and visting the area of Cambie Village
- A desire to maintain bike access through the plaza
- Many young families visited the pop-up events in July

#### Key Considerations

- An equal distribution of fixed and movable furniture to provide different seating opportunities and spatial configurations
- Opportunities to provide additional greenery with planters and new planting to existing green boulevard
- Maintain clearance for bike access and provide bike parking within the plaza
- Consider incorporating children-friendly design

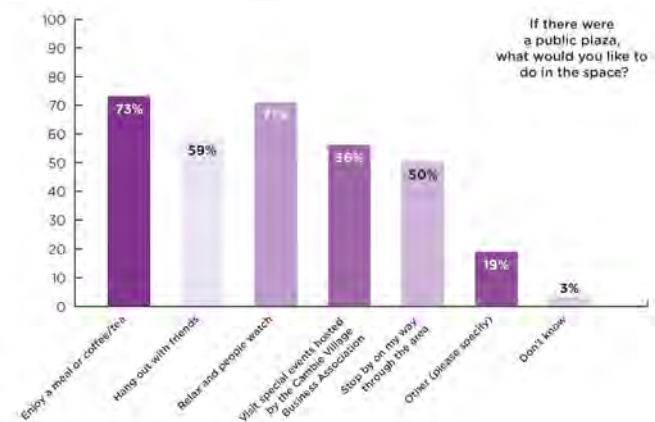
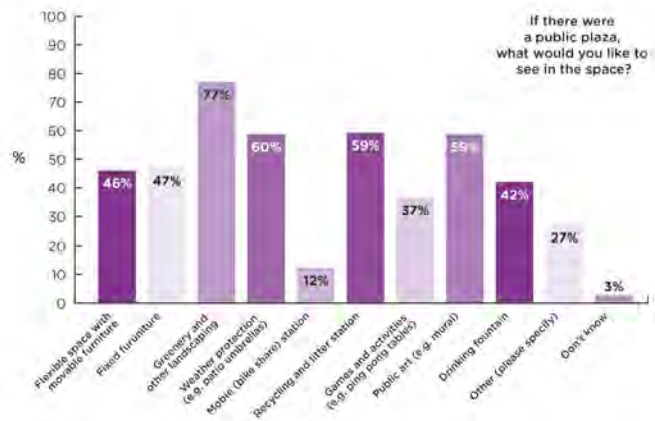


Figure 11. Diagrams: Data collected from survey - Question #7 and 8

## 4. Designing for Difference Workshop

Focusing on three proposed and existing public spaces, including this location, the project team collaborated with VIVA Vancouver and Happy City to assess and identify barriers facing those traditionally underrepresented in public space. Through stakeholder engagement, focus groups, and workshops, the “Designing for Difference” project aims to include more diverse perspectives and experiences that will inform the design, programming and stewardship of these public spaces.

### Project Goals:

- Engage directly with groups historically and presently underrepresented in city building processes, as well as those not utilizing the three sites of study
- Include broader, more diverse voices in the preliminary scoping for engagement, design and programming of future public space projects at these sites
- Identify potential stewards for future public spaces at the three sites
- Attract a more diverse group of users to participate in dialogue about public space and public life
- Develop generalizable lessons for future public space projects

### Further project info:

To learn more about the project, visit:

<https://thehappycity.com/project/designing-for-difference/>

### Workshop:

- At this location, the project aimed to include more diverse perspectives and experiences in planning for the use and care of the future plaza.
- Held on March 11, 2020 at CityLab (511 W Broadway)
- Participants included:
  1. Binners' Project
  2. Universal Access Design
  3. Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility
  4. Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion
  5. Hub Cycling
  6. Cambie Village BIA
  7. Residents and businesses owners in Cambie Village neighbourhood
- Activities included presentations followed by small group discussions on the following topics:
  1. Positive experiences in public space
  2. Design opportunities and consideration for the upcoming 18th and Cambie Pavement-to-Plaza
  3. Inclusive and welcoming events and programming in public space



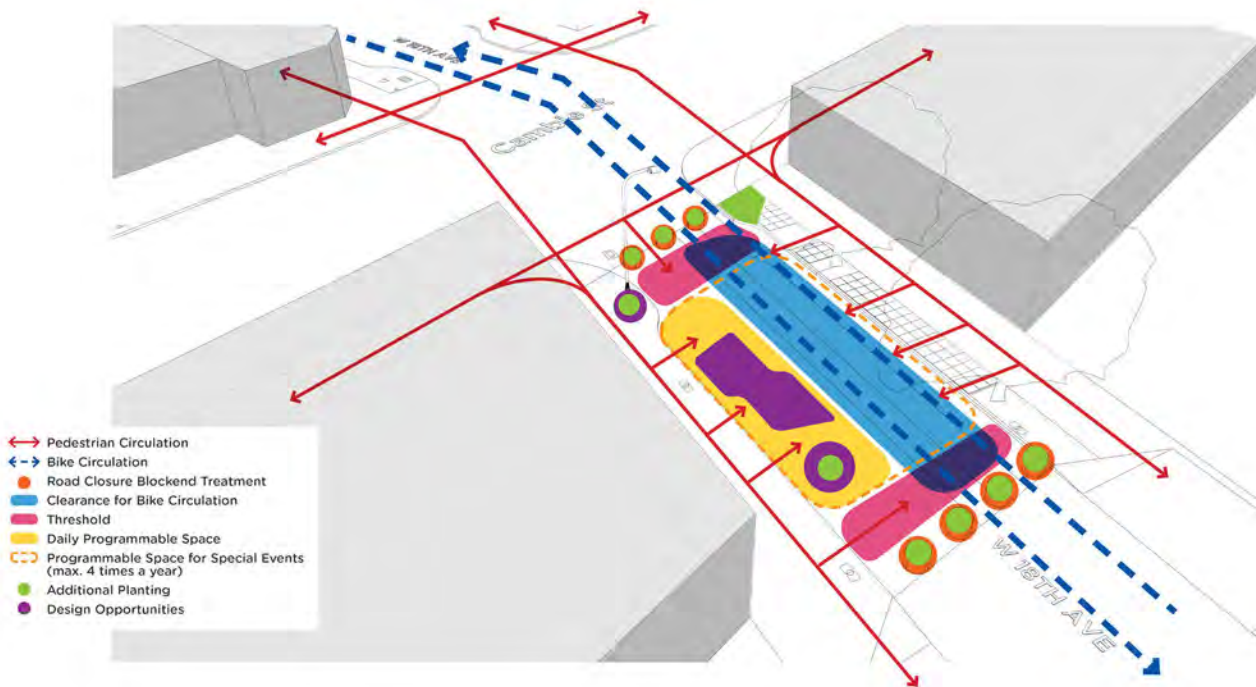


Figure 12. Diagrams: Concept diagram of 18th and Cambie interim plaza presented at Designing for Difference workshop on March 11, 2019

## Key findings from Designing for Difference workshop

### Design considerations:

- Design strategies to address safety concerns related shared space between pedestrians and cyclists with an understanding that integration of both is a challenge
- Allow people with different abilities and modes of movement to feel comfortable moving at their own pace
- Have comfortable, moveable and fixed seating for people and groups of all sizes to enjoy
- Consider weather protection elements and additional lighting for all-day and all-seasons enjoyment
- Reflect the neighbourhood in the feel and character of the space
- Provide sound and noise mitigation by creating a stronger buffer between the plaza and traffic through greenery, noting that it is important for the comfort as well as safety for those with difference accessibility barriers
- Make it clear that the space is public and open for the enjoyment of all users

### Events and programming considerations:

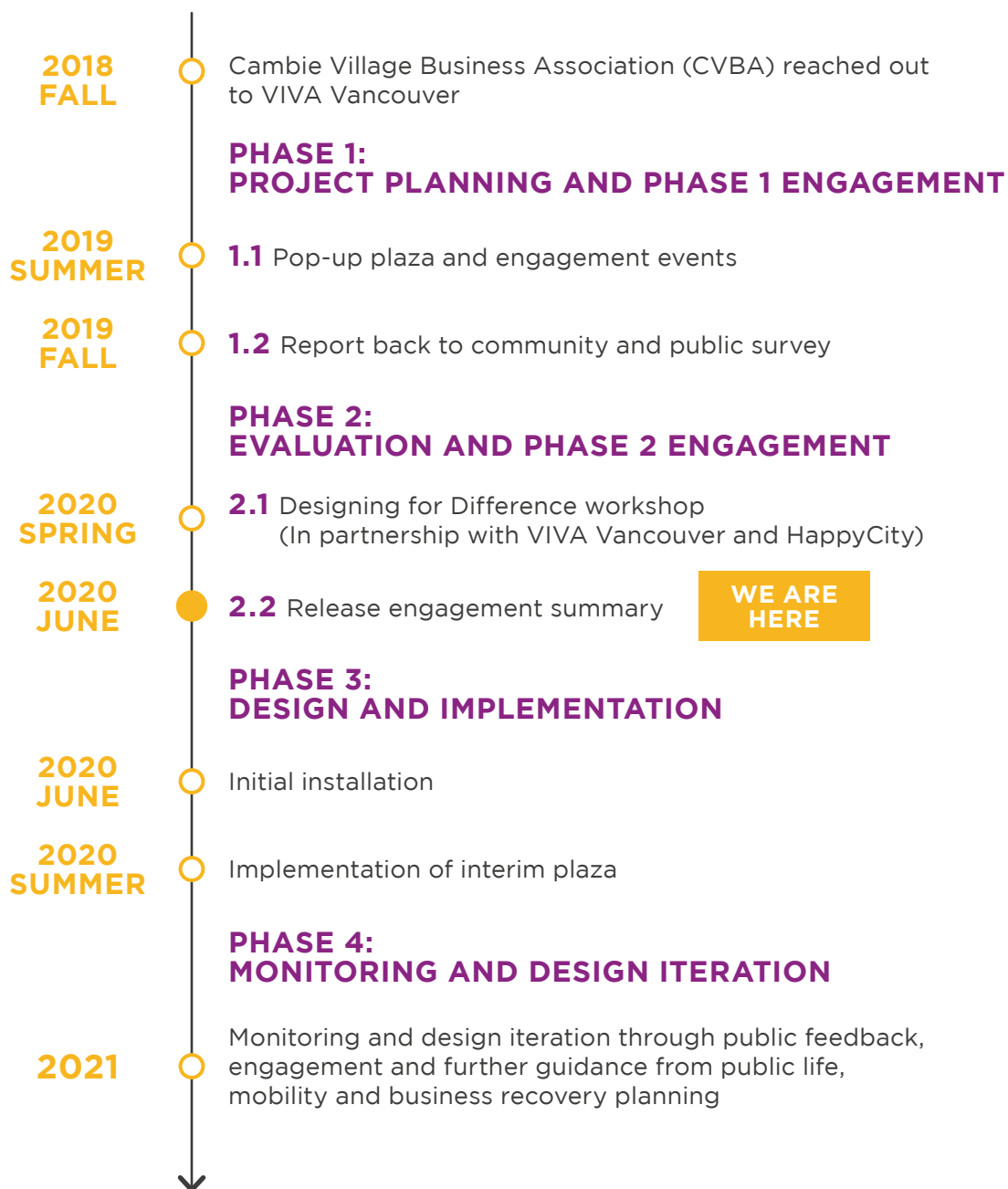
- Focus on community/local events
- Engage the local community in coordinating events, to help build neighbourly connections
- Consider how the event will be promoted and to whom
- Provide clear and detailed information in terms of accessibility features, including: access to washrooms, spaces for people with different abilities, spaces for children/seniors, cost to attend, etc.
- Support low income people with paid work opportunities

## 5. Where are we now and what's next...

In Summer 2020, the project team will be moving ahead with the implementation of an interim plaza on the westside of W 18th Ave and Cambie St. Note, this time frame may shift due to changing conditions related to COVID-19.

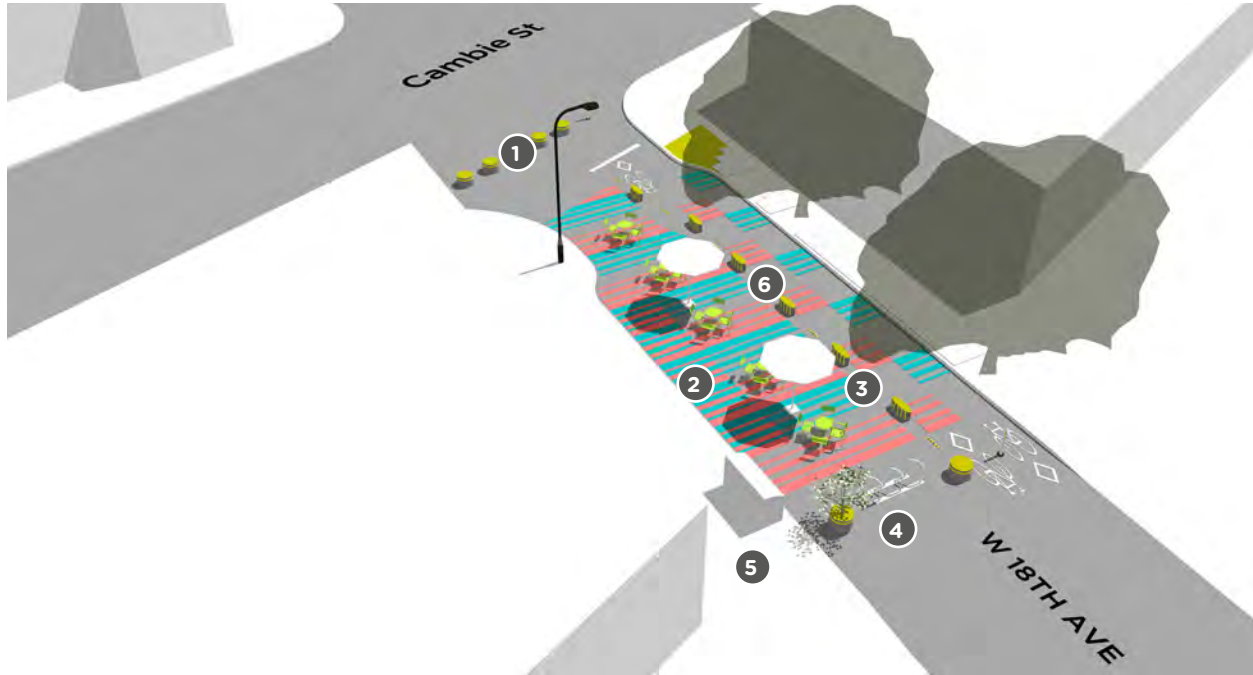
The plaza design will evolve over the years through continued public feedback, engagement and further guidance from public life, mobility and business recovery planning. This will help inform a potential permanent plaza design.

For more updates on the project, please visit: <https://vancouver.ca/streets-transportation/cambie-and-18th-pavement-to-plaza.aspx>



As part of the community and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial installation will be a pop-up plaza that will provide space for physical distancing, walking and cycling, seating and other activities. The implementation of an interim plaza will follow in Summer 2020.

## Concept plan of interim plaza



- (1) Plantings (2) Movable furniture (3) Bike traffic separation (4) Bike parking (5) Trash receptacle  
(6) Specialty ground treatment