

From: **"Mochrie, Paul"**

To: **"Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"**

Date: 2024-06-28 10:09:10 AM

Subject: Upcoming news release: Water Street Pedestrian Zone (June 28, 2024)

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to inform you that the City will be issuing the below news release this morning (Friday June 28, 2024) to mark the soft launch of the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot. Please keep this news release embargoed until it goes live from the City media email account.

Angela will reply to this email with the relevant Vancouver.ca link and social media links, once these are live.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x m k y m (Musqueam), S wxwú7mesh (Squamish), and s lilw ta (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

City of Vancouver
News release
June 28, 2024

Water Street Pedestrian Zone opens ahead of busy long weekend

Just in time for the long weekend, the City is thrilled to announce the early soft launch of the **Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot**, starting today, Friday, June 28.

“The Water Street Pedestrian Zone is now open, and Gastown is ready to shine as a patio, community and business hot spot,” says Mayor Ken Sim. “I’d like to personally invite everyone to walk, bike or roll down to Gastown to shop, eat and take in everything this iconic and pedestrian-friendly neighbourhood has to offer.”

The pedestrian zone ([see map here](#)) includes car-free and car-light blocks along Water Street and Maple Tree Square, offering visitors a safe and comfortable place to enjoy summer festivities in the heart of Gastown.

With colourful furniture, planters, expanded patios, merchandise displays and storytelling and art installations courtesy of the S wx\u817 _wú7mesh (Squamish) and s lilw ta (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations speckled throughout, the pedestrian zone is a vibrant and welcoming space for everyone.

“To help the pedestrian zone come to life, we’re inviting local creatives, residents, businesses and community organizations to host free small-scale events and community oriented activities through our Open Streets Permit,” says Lisa Parker, City of Vancouver Director of Public Space and Street Use. “This permit is available at no cost and is part of our initiative to support a vibrant community experience and reimagine our streets as lively spaces for everyone.”

Examples of events supported through the Open Streets Permit include:

- Community games (for example board games, chess, mah-jong, and more)
- Educational activities and events
- Storytelling or cultural sharing
- Live music or arts performances
- Community pop-up events

Click [here](#) to learn more and apply for an Open Streets Permit.

To ensure Gastown is safe, vibrant and welcoming for everyone throughout the Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot, an enhanced sanitation and stewardship plan is now in place, with additional daytime litter pick up, sidewalk and micro-cleaning. We’ve also developed a holistic approach to community safety, including daily peer ambassador support and nighttime and gender safety initiatives to help people feel secure at any time of day or evening.

Throughout the pilot, staff will closely observe the pedestrian zone, gathering feedback from residents, businesses, visitors and tourists to inform future planning and adjustments. An online survey and in-person pop-up events will launch in mid-July.

Getting to Gastown and the Water Street Pedestrian Zone

Locals, visitors and cruise-ship passengers are encouraged to pop by the Destination Vancouver kiosk at the corner of Water Street and Cordova Street to discover everything Gastown has to offer.

- **Transportation:** Walk, bike, roll, Mobi or take transit whenever possible. Check out our [transit and cycling map](#) to find the best routes and visit translink.ca/alerts for more information.
- **Public Bike Share:** Additional Mobi by Rogers public bike share stations are being added to the area, see all locations [here](#).
- **Free Bike Valet:** Safely park your bikes, skates, scooters or strollers for free at the [Bike Valet](#), located at 131 Water Street.
- **Free Transit Pass:** [Courtesy of the Gastown Business Improvement Society](#)
- **Parking:** If you’re driving to Gastown, there is plenty of parking available including 280 on-street parking spots and 2,800 off-street parkade options. Check out our [parking map](#) to learn where to park.
 - [Take advantage of free parking \(3 hours, once per week\) at the EasyPark 151 Cordova St Parkade courtesy of the Gastown Business Improvement Society.](#)
 - Plan ahead, [follow all detours](#) and obey no parking signs in the area.

Background

In spring 2023, Council directed staff to develop a Public Spaces Plan to guide investments and planning for the future of public spaces in Gastown, including exploring pedestrianizing Water Street, seasonally or year-round.

Earlier this month, the City completed interim repairs to Maple Tree Square, where damaged brick pavers and asphalt patches in the roadway were removed and replaced with new brick pavers to make the street safer and easier to use.

The City has budgeted \$1.2 million for the 2024 Water Street Pedestrian Zone Pilot, which includes traffic management and transportation changes, furniture and planters, community programming supports, sanitation and stewardship support and observations and data collection.

For more information on all Gastown related projects, visit vancouver.ca/gastown.

Media availability and note to editors

- Lisa Parker, Director of Public Space and Street Use, will be available for interviews from 11 am to 12 pm. To book an interview, please contact media@vancouver.ca.
- A media event to mark the official launch of the Water Street Pedestrian Zone will be held on Thursday, July 4, 2024. Further details to be provided next week.

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Media contact:

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