

From: "Singh, Sandra" <[Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca](mailto:Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca)>

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

Date: 8/21/2025 2:38:03 PM

Subject: Memo - 2025 Gastown Pilot – Early Findings & Next Steps

Attachments: Memo - 2025 Gastown Pilot – Early Findings & Next Steps.pdf

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Hello Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Jimmy Zammar, Deputy General Manager of Engineering Services regarding early findings from the 2025 Gastown Pilot. Staff plan to update Council with further information on the pilot, including Pedestrian Zone Sundays, later this fall. Highlights from this memo include:

- Preliminary data and survey results suggest that two-way Cordova St, and the Water St public realm enhancements and cycling connection have benefits.
- With support of the Gastown Business Improvement Society (GBIS), staff plan to extend the two-way Cordova St pilot, as well as some of the public space enhancements and the cycling connection on Water St, through the winter in order to better understand how these operate year-round.
- Staff will continue collaborating with the GBIS to make modifications to the pilot based on early feedback and learnings, and to address winter conditions.
- With additional data and public feedback that will become available in the fall and over the winter, staff will make adjustments for next spring and summer.
- The last Pedestrian Zone Sunday will be August 31, 2025

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jimmy Zammar at 604-871-6880 or [jimmy.zammar@vancouver.ca](mailto:jimmy.zammar@vancouver.ca) and he will ensure a response through the weekly Q&A.

Thank you,  
Sandra

Sandra Singh | Deputy City Manager  
City of Vancouver  
E-mail: [sandra.singh@vancouver.ca](mailto:sandra.singh@vancouver.ca)  
Pronouns: she/her

Assistant: Laura Holvor  
Phone: 604.829.9602  
E-mail: [laura.holvor@vancouver.ca](mailto:laura.holvor@vancouver.ca)  
Pronouns: she/her

*The City of Vancouver acknowledges the unceded homelands of the x̱m̱əkw̱əy̱m̱ (Musqueam), S w̱ḻu817  
\_w̱ú7mesh (Squamish), and Seḻiḻw̱iṯuḻh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.*

## MEMORANDUM

August 21, 2025

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Karen Levitt, Acting City Manager  
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager  
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager  
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk  
Maria Pontikis, Chief of External Relations  
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office  
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

FROM: Jimmy Zammar  
Deputy General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: 2025 Gastown Pilot – Early Findings & Next Steps

RTS #: 17660

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This memo provides an update on the 2025 Gastown Pilot including early learnings from the implementation of two-way Cordova St and the public space enhancements on Water St. Staff will update Council on the pilot, including Pedestrian Zone Sundays, later this fall.

Based on early findings and the support of the Gastown Business Improvement Society (GBIS), staff plan to extend components of the pilot to learn how they perform through the winter months. These include continued testing and monitoring of two-way Cordova St from Richards St to Gore Ave and associated changes on Water St and Powell St, as well as the cycling connection on Water St. The last Pedestrian Zone Sunday is planned for August 31, 2025.

**How we are learning:** Staff have developed a comprehensive monitoring and data collection plan to learn about the impacts of the summer 2025 traffic changes and public space enhancements on the neighbourhood. Starting in April, staff have been collecting data and feedback on traffic patterns and monitoring changes in the neighbourhood. This includes business and public feedback, traffic volume and travel time data, economic data, intercept surveys and public life observations. (See Appendix A for more information.) Data collection will continue until September. Findings will be available later in the fall.

**What we've learned and heard so far:** Early findings suggest that two-way Cordova St, the Water St public realm enhancements, and cycling connection have benefits; it would be helpful to learn how these continue to perform in the winter. Initial public survey results suggest that the majority of respondents have had a positive experience on Water Street this summer, though there are some concerns around loading, safe cycling and clarity of the new traffic changes.

About half of respondents had an overall positive experience with two-way Cordova St, with some concerns about eastbound congestion, curbside regulations (reduction in parking/loading), and a more circuitous routing when leaving the EasyPark parkade.

Staff have also heard from the GBIS that many businesses on Cordova St benefit from the two-way street because of the enhanced visibility of their business and that businesses are generally positive about the public realm changes on Water St. Both the public and business surveys will continue to be open until early September.

Early traffic counts and observations suggest that the new westbound lane of Cordova St is well-used, with a similar volume per lane of motor vehicle traffic as other downtown streets. The temporary lane reduction near the Salvation Army construction site was a key concern. While opening the lane has helped, staff have heard feedback from residents that congestion at the midblock crossing near 200 E Cordova St remains a pinch point. Staff are also closely monitoring impacts to transit in partnership with TransLink.

On Water St, vehicle traffic volumes have decreased, suggesting that drivers are using Cordova St as an alternate westbound route. Initial observations suggest vehicle speeds are also lower. In addition, people are using the improved cycling connection; eastbound cycling volumes on Water St have increased.

**Next steps and further testing:** In light of these early findings and with support from the GBIS, staff plan to extend the two-way Cordova St pilot and some of the public space enhancements and the cycling connection on Water St, through the winter to better understand how these operate year-round. This will help determine the long-term viability of the changes.

To support further testing of two-way Cordova St during the winter, staff will continue to make modifications to the pilot, including signal and parking changes. On Water St, to address winter conditions – including the removal of summer patios and reduced pedestrian demand – staff are working with the GBIS to explore modifications to the layout, including improvements to the cycling connections at the western end of Water St.

The gateway features at the ends of Water St and Powell St and public space features in Maple Tree Square will be retained. In collaboration with the GBIS, special consideration is being given to business needs and public realm priorities over the winter, including the maintenance strategies needed to keep spaces clean and welcoming.

With additional data and feedback that will become available in the fall, as well as learning and data from the winter experience, staff will make adjustments for next spring and summer, with key considerations including: supporting business uses (including patios and curbside uses), creating a welcoming and inviting public realm, creating safer cycling connections, and addressing potential impacts to transit and the broader transportation network. Staff will report back to Council in early 2026 on the overall plans for next year's summer experience.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly.



Jimmy Zammar M.A.Sc., M.Sc., PMP  
Deputy General Manager, Engineering Services  
604.873.6880 | [jimmy.zammar@vancouver.ca](mailto:jimmy.zammar@vancouver.ca)

## Appendix A. Early findings

Staff are using the following tools to collect data on the impacts of the summer 2025 traffic changes and public space enhancements:

- Traffic volume data—including pedestrian and bicycle counts—for Water St, Cordova St, and nearby corridors;
- Vehicular and transit travel time, point of origin data, and parking and bike share usage data;
- Public life observations; and
- Point-of-sale data to conduct an economic impact assessment.

Feedback from businesses, residents and the public is also being collected through:

- Ongoing collaboration with the GBIS;
- An online survey for members of the public;
- A business-specific survey through direct outreach and individual interviews with Gastown businesses; and
- On-site intercept surveys to better understand the public's experience in the public realm throughout the week and on Pedestrian Zone Sundays.

Data collection and surveying are currently underway. Early findings from the available data sources are listed below.

### *Early public survey findings*

- Early survey findings (313 surveys from July 15 to August 18) show that 75% of respondents had a positive or somewhat positive experience on Water St throughout the summer, and 83% had a positive or somewhat positive experience on Pedestrian Zone Sundays specifically. 60% of respondents had a positive or somewhat positive experience with the way cycling and micromobility devices were accommodated on Water St this summer. 54% of respondents noted they had a positive or somewhat positive experience of two-way Cordova St (compared to 26% negative or somewhat negative experience).

### *Early transportation data*

- Early transportation data shows that vehicle volumes are down approximately 50% on Water St (westbound, during the morning peak) compared to pre-pilot volumes. Data also shows that eastbound traffic volumes on Cordova St are down between 33-45% during the afternoon peak.
- Early traffic counts and observations suggest that the new westbound lane of Cordova St is well-used, supporting 500 vehicles per hour during the morning peak period, which is a similar per lane volume of motor vehicle traffic as other downtown streets.
- Early cycling data shows that the addition of the eastbound cycling lane on Water St has increased daily eastbound cycling numbers by 125 to 250%.
- Preliminary travel time data for eastbound buses on Cordova St indicates increased run times ranging from approximately 25 seconds to over 2 minutes during weekdays between 3:00 PM and 7:00 PM. Additional data has been requested to assess travel

times outside this window, as operator reports suggest impacts may also be occurring during other periods—such as weekday midday and Saturdays.

Table 1. Summary of Early Transportation Data

Corridor	Mode	Direction - Time	Change during Pilot*
Water Street	Vehicles	Westbound - AM Peak	-50%
Cordova Street	Vehicles	Eastbound - PM Peak	-33% to -45%
Water Street	Cyclists	Eastbound - All Day	+125% to +250%
Cordova Street	Transit	Eastbound - Weekdays from 3 to 7 pm	Approx. +25 seconds to + 130 seconds

\* Unless otherwise noted, all traffic data compares baseline data from spring 2025 to summer pilot 2025.

#### *GBIS feedback*

- The GBIS has shared early feedback on the summer pilot, with a preference to retain most of the pilot elements after August, including: two-way Cordova St and associated traffic diversions, the eastbound cycling lane on Water St, the seating installation in Maple Tree Square, as well as the public realm enhancements at the western and eastern gateways, including retaining the location of the Gastown sign. The GBIS has requested some changes to the configuration of the design along Water St to address parking, loading and access needs, which will be refined over the coming weeks.

#### **Further Data Collection**

It is important to note that staff are still in the process of collecting and analyzing data and do not yet have a complete picture of the impacts. Additional data and findings will be available in the fall, from the following sources:

- Intercept Surveys;
- Public Life Observations;
- Public Survey;
- Business Survey;
- Economic Data;
- 24 Hour Traffic Counts on Water St;
- Traffic Counts across broader Transportation Network;
- Tour Bus Counts;
- Travel Time Data (transit/general purpose traffic);
- Mobi Bike Share Usage
- Bike Valet Usage; and
- Easy Park Usage.

Further data collection will be planned beyond September to support a more comprehensive analysis of results from the winter months.