

From: ["Singh, Sandra" <Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca)
To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 8/28/2025 8:45:12 AM
Subject: CONFIDENTIAL & EMBARGOED: Final Report on Joint Review of Outdoor Special Event Planning and Safety
Attachments: COV-VPD - Report - Joint Review of Events Planning - Final Report (2025-08-27).pdf

CONFIDENTIAL & EMBARGOED THROUGH SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

Dear Mayor and Council,

In follow up to my message from Tuesday, August 26, please find attached under embargo the *Final Report on Joint Review of Outdoor Special Event Planning and Safety*.

As well, staff have prepared key messages you may consider using until the report is publicly released on September 4, 2025 via the aforementioned technical briefing and press conference. We appreciate your cooperation to keep this report embargoed until its public release via City news release.

Proposed Key Messages

- The tragic incident following the Lapu-Lapu Day Block Party deeply affected our community. This joint review by the City and Vancouver Police reflects our commitment to learn and act.
- The Final Report confirms Vancouver's event permitting and safety planning process is strong and consistent with best practices.
 - The review found this was applied fully and appropriately for the Lapu-Lapu event and has been recognized positively by the provincial Commission of Inquiry.
- Since April, the City and VPD introduced enhanced safety measures at events this summer, including increased use of vehicle barriers and higher police presence, to strengthen public confidence.
- International experience confirms that while hostile vehicle risks cannot be eliminated, they can be reduced through smart planning, thoughtful design of public spaces, and coordinated action.
- The report offers balanced recommendations to further strengthen public safety while keeping events inclusive, vibrant, and sustainable.
 - A key challenge is finding the right balance: keeping events reasonably safe, while ensuring they remain vibrant, welcoming, and financially viable for organizers and communities.
- The report makes 8 recommendations to strengthen event safety and public space design, which will be elaborated upon as part of the report's release following Labour Day.
- Vancouver is a city of festivals, gatherings, and cultural celebrations. Protecting the safety of residents and visitors is central to supporting this vibrancy and ensuring events continue to thrive.

As always, we welcome you to refer media inquiries to media@vancouver.ca.

If you have any questions in advance of the public release of the report, please contact me directly.

Thank you,
Sandra

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

Assistant: Laura Holvor
Phone: 604.829.9602

E-mail: laura.holvor@vancouver.ca

Pronouns: she/her

The City of Vancouver acknowledges the unceded homelands of the x̄m̄ k̄ȳm̄ (Musqueam), S̄w̄x̄w̄l̄h̄ (Squamish), and S̄əl̄il̄w̄t̄ul̄h̄ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

From: Singh, Sandra Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca

Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2025 8:40 AM

To: Direct to Mayor and Council - DL

Cc: City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL

LaClaire, Lon lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca

Pontikis, Maria Maria.Pontikis@vancouver.ca

Subject: Confidential Update: Upcoming Release of the Joint Review of Outdoor Special Event Planning and Safety Final Report

CONFIDENTIAL

Hello Mayor and Council,

As you may recall, the final report regarding the Joint Review of Outdoor Special Event Planning and Safety is due to be completed by August 27, 2025. This follows the release of the [preliminary report](#) on May 16, 2025. I am providing an update on forthcoming timelines as it relates to the report's release.

The report will be finalized on August 27 and circulated confidentially and under embargo to Mayor and Council and the Vancouver Police Board on August 28. To ensure full participation and accommodate the Labour Day long weekend, the report will be released publicly on September 4. A closed technical briefing by staff to media (11 am) and a press conference (1 pm) are scheduled for September 4 to coincide with the public release. You will receive a calendar hold for both events shortly.

Proposed Key Messages

In the interim, you may find the following key messages helpful in conversations with interest holders and members of the public:

- Following the tragic events after the Lapu Lapu Day Block Party on April 26, 2025, a joint review was initiated to review planning and safety protocols for outdoor special events in Vancouver, with a particular focus on gatherings that involve street uses.
- The process has been collaborative, drawing on the expertise and experience of multiple City departments, partner agencies and community groups.
- The Preliminary Report was released on May 16, 2025. The Final Report will provide a more comprehensive analysis and discussion on the following themes:
 - Expanded findings on Vancouver's outdoor special event planning, including updated risk assessments and regulatory insights following the April 26 incident.
 - Safety enhancements implemented by the City and VPD since the incident, with a focus on hostile vehicle mitigation strategies.
 - Global context and local implications of hostile vehicle incursions, drawing on international best practices and public realm design considerations.
 - Balanced recommendations for event safety that respect community expectations and address financial sustainability for organizers and the City.
- The City remains committed to prioritizing public safety in outdoor events, ensuring they are inclusive and well-supported, and applying lessons learned to strengthen future planning.

When staff share with you the embargoed report on August 28, they will also share some suggested holding messages you can consider using until the report is publicly released on September 4.

Please reach out should you have any questions ahead of your receipt of the report on August 28.

Thank you,
Sandra

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

Assistant: Laura Holvor
Phone: 604.829.9602
E-mail: laura.holvor@vancouver.ca
Pronouns: she/her

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JOINT REVIEW OF OUTDOOR SPECIAL EVENT PLANNING AND SAFETY – FINAL REPORT

Prepared for:

VANCOUVER CITY COUNCIL
VANCOUVER POLICE BOARD

Prepared by:

CITY OF VANCOUVER AND
THE VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

August 27, 2025
Version: FINAL

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STATEMENT OF CONDOLENCES

The City of Vancouver and Vancouver Police Department extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims and to all those impacted by the tragic incident following the Lapu-Lapu Day Block Party on Saturday, April 26, 2025. Our thoughts are with everyone affected during this difficult time and as we move forward together.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a result of the tragic incident (Incident) following the Lapu-Lapu Day Block Party (LLDBP) on April 26, 2025, the City of Vancouver (COV) and the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) launched a joint review of the COV-permitted outdoor special event planning process and safety protocol. The focus of the review is on vehicle incursions and does not speak to the universe of threats that could impact an event (e.g., planted explosive devices, active shooter). The objectives of the joint review are:

- To describe Vancouver's current integrated special event planning and risk assessment processes for outdoor events held in the public realm;
- To establish an account of the 2025 LLDBP and the Incident;
- To review existing outdoor special event-related policies and business practices, including those for risk mitigation and public safety;
- To identify immediate short- and long-term actions to enhance safety and mitigate the threat of intentional and unintentional vehicle incursions; and
- To provide both Preliminary and Final Reports to Vancouver City Council, the Vancouver Police Board, and the public.

The [Preliminary Report](#) was released on May 16, 2025. This Final Report provides a more comprehensive analysis and discussion on the following themes:

- An update on any relevant findings that were not in the Preliminary Report specific to the outdoor special event planning process in Vancouver (including any applicable regulations, policies, or procedures), the special event planning leading up to the Incident, and the risk assessment of the 2025 LLDBP;
- A description of the actions taken by the COV and the VPD to enhance the sense of safety at special events since the Incident;
- A discussion on the recent global history of hostile vehicle incursions (HVI) and what hostile vehicle mitigation (HVM) strategies other jurisdictions have implemented;
- Considerations for broader public realm design and management in Vancouver to enhance public safety specific to HVM;
- A review of the recommendations from the Province of British Columbia's (Province) [Report of the Study Commission of Inquiry Into Community Events Safety](#) (Commission);
- A discussion on finding an appropriate balance between safeguarding a special event (while respecting the community's perspective on what is a tolerable level of security) and also taking into consideration the resource implications that the costs of security may have on the financial sustainability of events for both organizers and the COV; and
- Recommendations for special event safety and the design of public realm spaces.

Summary of Key Findings

- The COV's Special Event Permit process is comprehensive and involves all of the necessary agencies to oversee and help facilitate a successful event. All safety-related considerations are taken into account, including traffic control, sanitation, security, crowd dynamics, and other risk considerations. This final review concludes that no relevant

information about the outdoor special event planning process was omitted in the Preliminary Report. The COV's comprehensive process is commented on favourably in the Commission's Report.

- This final review of planning documentation for the issuance of the Special Event Permit for the 2025 LLDBP concludes that the standard event planning process was undertaken with all requirements met, and that the planning process was comprehensive and involved all the necessary agencies to oversee the permit process.
- The 2025 LLDBP was risk assessed as 'low' for any major public safety incident. This final review concludes that the 2025 LLDBP was appropriately risk assessed as "low" based on the evaluation of numerous risk considerations described in this report and in the Preliminary Report.
- To re-assure the public and increase the collective sense of safety while at special events following the Incident, the COV and VPD enhanced HVM measures for the summer of 2025. For events held in June and July, there was a more frequent use of Heavy Vehicle Barriers (HVBs), Light Vehicle Barriers (LVBs), Mobile Vehicle Barriers (MVBs), and increased police presence (as compared to the same events in 2024). In general, the increased measures in 2025 for events following the Incident were not due to specific risks at each event, but as a response to support the community feeling comfortable to be at events as concerns typically are heightened after such a tragedy.
- Over the past decade, numerous cities around the world have experienced an HVI. Jurisdictions have responded with a variety of HVM options to further protect large gatherings such as festivals or markets and/or to modify existing public spaces that could be a target of an HVI. A number of jurisdictions within Canada and internationally were surveyed to gain insights on HVM measures.
- There is broad recognition that hostile vehicle risks exist in public spaces and, while these risks cannot be entirely eliminated, they can be reduced through thoughtful design. To manage these risks effectively, a governance model is needed to guide decision-making, as multiple stakeholders are involved in assessment, design, and operation of different types of public spaces in the city. Developing a framework for HVM in the public realm would help identify and prioritize sites for protective measures.
- The Commission made six recommendations, of which five were directed to the Province. The Commission's positive observations about the event planning process in Vancouver supports the conclusion that the COV and VPD process is in alignment with the findings and recommendations of the Commission. The COV and VPD would welcome any invitation to assist the Province with advice or expertise on the potential implementation of the Commission's recommendations.
- Municipalities face a complex challenge in striking the right balance between implementing appropriate safety measures and avoiding undue financial strain that could impact the viability of events and/or a sense of over-policing for event organizers and attendees. The Commission referred to "proportional responses" when it comes to safeguarding special events. The elimination of all risk is a practical impossibility and, as one of the Commission's consulted experts noted, "the realistic goal of any event planner can only be to make events as reasonably safe as possible."
- A broader policy discussion that takes into account all of the factors around safeguarding special events, including the financial sustainability for event organizers and municipal oversight bodies, would be beneficial in finding a balanced level of safety enhancement for future event planning and public realm space design.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made specific to special event safety:

1. Update the COV Special Event Policy (ADMIN 031) to reinforce public safety as a core objective and clarify operational supports.
2. Standardize early safety planning and integrated access control protocols to guide the entry and exit of attendees, vendors, and others.
3. Develop guidelines on the use of hostile vehicle mitigation measures for outdoor special event planning.
4. Explore expanding training, equipment, infrastructure, and tools for event organizers and staff.
5. Advocate provincially and federally for standardized event safety legislation and resources, and for the development of a provincial incident response management guide. These measures would enhance public safety and improve coordination during and in response to major incidents. COV would be pleased to contribute to these efforts.

The following recommendations are made for the design of the public realm:

6. Develop a Vancouver-specific framework for delivery of permanent hostile vehicle mitigation measures in the public realm.
7. Assess new capital projects in the public realm through the hostile vehicle mitigation framework.
8. Propose capital funding allocation for the introduction of hostile vehicle mitigation into existing public spaces in the 2027-2030 Capital Plan, with consideration for ongoing operating costs related to hostile vehicle mitigation for events.

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1. OVERVIEW

As a result of the tragic incident (Incident) at the end of the Lapu-Lapu Day Block Party (LLDBP) on April 26, 2025, the City of Vancouver (COV) and the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) launched a joint review of the COV-permitted outdoor special event planning process and safety protocol. The focus of the review is on vehicle incursions and does not speak to the universe of threats that could impact an event (e.g., planted explosive devices, active shooter). The objectives of the joint review are:

- To describe Vancouver's current integrated special event planning and risk assessment processes for outdoor events held in the public realm;
- To establish an account of the 2025 LLDBP and the Incident;
- To review existing outdoor special event-related policies and business practices, including those for risk mitigation and public safety;
- To identify immediate short- and long-term actions to enhance safety and mitigate the threat of intentional and unintentional vehicle incursions; and
- To provide both Preliminary and Final Reports to Vancouver City Council, the Vancouver Police Board, and the public.

The joint review consists of two reports: (1) the [Preliminary Report](#), which was released on May 16, 2025, and (2) this Final Report. The Preliminary Report provided information on the following:

- The outdoor special event planning process in Vancouver (including any applicable regulations, policies, or procedures);
- The special event planning leading up to the Incident; and
- Current and planned special events' safety measures and potential modifications.

This Final Report provides a more comprehensive analysis and discussion on the following themes:

- An update on any relevant new findings with respect to the 2025 LLDBP planning that were not in the Preliminary Report specific to the outdoor special event planning process in Vancouver (including any applicable regulations, policies, or procedures), the special event planning leading up to the Incident, and the risk assessment of the event;
- A description of the actions taken by the COV and the VPD to enhance the sense of safety at special events since the Incident;
- A discussion on the recent global history of hostile vehicle incursions (HVI) and what hostile vehicle mitigation (HVM) strategies other jurisdictions have implemented;
- Considerations for broader public realm design and management in Vancouver to enhance public safety specific to HVM;

- A review of the recommendations from the Province's Report of the Study Commission of Inquiry Into Community Events Safety (Commission);
- A discussion on finding an appropriate balance between safeguarding a special event, while respecting the community's perspective on what is a tolerable level of security, and also taking into consideration the resource implications that the costs of security may have on the financial sustainability of events for both organizers and the COV; and
- Recommendations for special event safety and the design of public realm spaces.

2. UPDATE ON ANY RELEVANT FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW OF 2025 LLDBP SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT PROCESS

The Incident occurred on April 26, 2025, and the Preliminary Report was released within three weeks based on the information available at that time. As part of the Final Report, the initial information gathered for the Preliminary Report has been re-reviewed to ensure no relevant information was overlooked or new information became available. Generally speaking, there was no new information since the Preliminary Report, but out of diligence, this section of the Final Report is to provide any updates to findings in the Preliminary Report pertaining to:

- The general outdoor special event planning process in Vancouver (including any applicable regulations, policies, or procedures);
- The special event planning leading up to the Incident; and
- The risk assessment of the 2025 LLDBP.

The Outdoor Special Event Planning Process in Vancouver

Overview of Process

Outdoor special events permitted by the COV are governed by COV [Special Event Policy ADMIN-031](#) (Policy). This Policy sets out the terms and conditions on which Vancouver City Council "has resolved to facilitate Special Events in Vancouver and thereby provide clear guidance to the public and to the City employees responsible for administering such terms and conditions, particularly as it relates to approving valid Applications to hold Special Events, the Permitting Process, entering into the required permit/licence agreements, and ensuring compliance with such permit/licence agreements by the Special Event Host." The goals of the Policy are to:

- Encourage greater use of renewable energy sources for Special Events while reducing and ultimately eliminating reliance on non-renewable energy sources such as fossil fuel generators;
- Promote environmental and financial sustainability of Special Events;
- Encourage social connection, active living, and enjoyment of urban life;
- Balance the needs of City services, residents, event organizers and event participants;

- Support planning, early dialogue, monitoring, and assessments to maintain baseline regional public safety and emergency service during large events;
- Support a diverse range of social and cultural opportunities for creative expression;
- Support Special Events of all sizes as they contribute to the local economy and highlight Vancouver as a desirable tourism destination;
- Provide fair and equitable support and services for Special Events, regardless of their individual size or their social, cultural, creative or other attributes or target participants; and
- Establish a streamlined and transparent Permitting Process.

The Policy directs the City Manager to approve and publish, on the COV's website, the application process and rules to follow. The [Organize an event on a street, sidewalk, or plaza | City of Vancouver](#) webpage explains the steps event organizers need to follow in order to obtain a permit from the COV, when the organizer is seeking to have an event on a public space, such as a street, sidewalk, or plaza. This webpage directs an organizer to first review the COV's [Special Event Permitting Handbook](#) and the Policy. The webpage also provides a very detailed, six-step process that an organizer needs to consider and follow in order to obtain a special event permit.

The process is comprehensive and involves all of the necessary agencies to oversee and help facilitate a successful event. All safety-related considerations are taken into account, including traffic control, sanitation, security, crowd dynamics, and other risk considerations.

This final review concludes that no relevant information about the outdoor special event planning process was overlooked in the Preliminary Report.

It is noteworthy that the Commission stated the “COV, in particular, has developed a complex and sophisticated permitting process for special events, alongside comprehensive planning protocols.” The Commission further stated “the COV’s structured approach provides a useful lens through which to examine how municipal planning infrastructure can support safe, well-organized events” and the application process is “supported by a robust internal framework that ensures coordination across multiple city departments and partner agencies.”

Recommendations for the COV Process

Public safety is a top priority of COV-permitted outdoor special events planning process. An opportunity exists to reflect this by enhancing the Policy language by articulating ‘public safety’ as a core objective. Also, the COV and VPD can formalize early safety planning procedures, including the development of integrated access and egress control plans. These two opportunities are further discussed in the Recommendations section of this report.

Event Planning for the 2025 Lapu-Lapu Day Block Party (LLDBP)

As the Preliminary Report stated, 2025 was the second LLDBP with the inaugural event occurring on April 27, 2024. The 2024 event took place in the EasyPark parking lots behind the west-side stores of Fraser Street, from East 43rd Ave to East 48th Ave. There was an estimate of 50,000 attendees in 2024.



The process to obtain a permit for the 2025 LLDBP began immediately after the conclusion of the 2024 event. The organizers wished to expand the “footprint” of the event by:

- Expanding to use of the laneway, immediately west of, and parallel to, Fraser St., by one block ending at East 49th St.;
- Expanding the use of East 43rd St. up to St. George St.; and
- Expanded use of the John Oliver Secondary School property.

All of the key milestones for the 2025 LLDBP were met including:

- The permit application process;
- The early and mid-planning processes;
- A traffic management plan (TMP) was developed;
- A safety plan was in place;
- All of the necessary stakeholders were consulted;
- All required documents were submitted;
- Event week execution; and
- A walk-through of the event area to ensure traffic barricades were in place consistent with the TMP’s planned locations.

Based on the review of planning documentation, this final review concludes that the standard event planning process was undertaken with all requirements met, and that the planning process was comprehensive and involved all the necessary agencies to oversee the process to issue the Special Event Permit for the 2025 LLDBP.

Risk Assessment of the 2025 LLDBP

As the Preliminary Report outlined, Special Event Permit applications are submitted to the COV’s Film and Special Events (FASE) office. A FASE staff member is assigned to each application to ensure the submission is complete and work directly with event organizers throughout the process.

Events are classified as low, medium, or high complexity, based on a number of factors. All events, regardless of complexity, are distributed for information to the VPD’s Emergency and Operational Planning Section (EOPS) via a Notification of Special Event Application document. That document is reviewed by EOPS to initially assess whether there should be a dedicated deployment of VPD police officers at the special event.

This initial assessment includes actions such as, but not limited to, researching the event’s history (if that exists), open-source searches, communicating with the organizer, and speaking with other VPD or COV staff who may be familiar with the event and/or organizer to assess the potential for event-specific risks that may require a dedicated police deployment.

The 2025 LLDBP was risk assessed as 'low' for any major public safety incident. The reasons for this risk assessment are based on, but not limited to, the following:

- The peaceful success of the 2024 LLDBP, promoted as a family-friendly event, and with no alcohol or cannabis sales at the event;
- No impact on major streets;
- The primary gathering point was on John Oliver Secondary property;
- No information or intelligence to suggest that the event or the Filipino community would be a target for an attack;
- No dignitaries or famous celebrities expected to be in attendance; and
- The event had a TMP with controlled access by Traffic Control Personnel.

This final review concludes that the 2025 LLDBP was appropriately risk assessed as "low" based on the evaluation of the aforementioned risk considerations and the other risk considerations noted in the Preliminary Report.

3. ACTIONS TAKEN TO ENHANCE SAFETY AT SPECIAL EVENTS SINCE THE INCIDENT

Summer in Vancouver is filled with outdoor special events, and both the COV and the VPD have made concerted efforts to enhance event safety - responding not only to assessed risks but also to heightened public awareness and concerns around safety following the Incident. Those enhancements were predominantly the use of Heavy Vehicle Barriers (HVBs), Light Vehicle Barriers (LVBs), Mobile Vehicle Barriers (MVBs), and/or police officer deployment. The following is a breakdown of HVM measures at special events that occurred in June or July of 2025 and how they compared to HVM measures for the same events in 2024:

- 24 events took place in June or July in both 2024 and 2025. Some of these 24 events were held over multiple days, therefore there was a total of 38 event days for each of 2024 and 2025.
- Of these 38 event days, 19 had an increase in the number of police officers deployed as compared to the same event days in 2024;
- The following table shows the increase in the number of event days that deployed HVBs, LVBs, or MVBs in 2025 compared to 2024:

June or July	HVBs Only	LVBs Only	MVBs Only	HVBs + LVBs	HVBs + MVBs	LVBs + MVBs
2024	0	1	NA	2	NA	NA
2025	0	4	2	0	3	4

- In 2025 VPD approved the use of concrete barriers as part of an overall public safety plan for four events, these events are not accounted for in the chart above. In addition, a number of events elected to bring concrete barriers into their footprint as an added level of security outside of the official public safety plan. For example, the Downtown BIA elected to place concrete blocks around šxʷłənəq Xwtl'e7énk Square for the duration of the summer. These blocks were in place for at least 11 events in June/July and will remain in place until the end of September.
- There was an increase in the number of barriers used in 2025 (June or July) compared to 2024 (June or July) over the course of the 38 event days, as follows:
 - An increase of 6 HVBs deployed in 2025 as compared to 2024;
 - An increase of 71 LVBs deployed in 2025 as compared to 2024; and
 - A total of 180 MVBs deployed in 2025 (note: no MVBs were available in 2024).

While the special events following the Incident have all successfully taken place without an HVI incident, there has also been a significant increase in special event safety measures (i.e., use of HVBs, LVBs, MVBs, and police officer deployment) compared to 2024. That noted, the risk profiles of these events did not increase so they normally would not have seen such a significant deployment, and there is no way to assess whether the increase in special event day measures actually deterred a potential HVI. Moving forward, broader policy discussions are needed regarding the resource and financial sustainability of future HVM strategies, and this discussion is introduced later in this report.

4. HOSTILE VEHICLE MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Examples of Global Hostile Vehicle Incursions and Safety Measure Responses

Over the last decade, various cities around the world have experienced HVIs. This section provides a chronological overview of a sample of HVIs that have occurred at public events or large gatherings, and the various safety measures the affected cities implemented after the attacks. The focus of this section is on the safety measures implemented following the attacks. Specific details of the events have been intentionally excluded to avoid causing distress. Readers who wish to explore further information about each incident can refer to the sources cited in the footnotes.

Bastille Day, Nice, France, July 14, 2016

Immediately after the attack, security measures in place were criticized. The barriers that were in place to prevent vehicles from entering the pedestrian area were critiqued as “flimsy” and police officers were not present at every entry point. In the year following the attack, the City spent €30 million on protecting potential target areas from possible attacks.¹

¹ Burke, J. “How can cities protect their citizens against vehicle attacks?” *The Guardian*. (18 August 2017). Online: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/18/how-cities-protect-citizens-vehicle-attacks>

Christmas Market, Berlin, Germany, December 19, 2016

In response to the attack, Berlin police installed 160 large, square, lattice-work frames around the perimeter of the site of the attack. Sand and stone filled bags were lowered into each frame, and then the frames were all bolted together to form a long row. Narrow access points were protected with extra temporary bollards. During the market, private guards patrol the grounds, joined by a heavy presence of uniformed and plainclothes police officers. The Berlin State has said the \$2.9 million installation provides "unprecedented protection" against trucks weighing up to 40 tons.²

Bourke Street, Melbourne, Australia January 20, 2017

A coroner's inquest following the attack recommended protective measures to be installed in Melbourne's Central Business District (CBD). The Victoria police created a Hostile Vehicle policy and training, and a Vehicle Borne Attack Supervisor checklist, designed to guide and assist supervisors when making decisions during potential or actual attacks.

The Victoria Government established the Melbourne Protective Security Enhancement program, to prevent and protect against potential vehicle-borne attacks. The program recommended barriers, upgrades to the CCTV network, and the installation of a new Public Address System to provide alerts during an emergency. Immediately after the attacks, 440 temporary concrete blocks and water filled barriers were installed around Melbourne's CBD. They have since been replaced by permanent steel bollards.³

London Bridge, Westminster, London, United Kingdom (UK), 2017

London saw two hostile vehicle attacks near the Westminster and London bridges in 2017. After the second attack, temporary barriers were put in place with plans to install permanent HVM safety structures on eight bridges at a cost of £35 million. However, due to budget constraints, permanent safety structures were only implemented on Westminster Bridge.⁴ In a 2018 report prepared by the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament, it was noted that it would not be practical to install barriers at every public place in the UK.⁵

Stockholm, Sweden, April 7, 2017

Decorative lions, weighing approximately 600kg each, had been placed at the beginning of the street where the attack happened to deter vehicles from entering. However, they were not

² Shepard, S. "New Security Measures for Berlin Christmas Market Following Attack in 2016". *Security Today*. (28 November 2018). Online: <https://securitytoday.com/articles/2018/11/28/new-security-measures-for-berlin-christmas-market-following-attack-in-2016.aspx>

³ Hawkins, J. *Finding in the deaths of the six victims of the 2017 Bourke Street incident* (Report No. 2020/001). Coroners Court of Victoria. (2020). Online: https://www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-11/Bourke%20Street%20Coronial%20Finding%20-%20Digital_6.pdf

⁴ BBC. "London anti-terror bridge barriers plan put on hold". *BBC*. (13 May 2022). Online: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-61434847>

⁵ Grieve, D. *The 2017 Attacks: What needs to change?* (Report No. HC1694). Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament. (2018). Online: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c585646ed915d04538f1198/HC1694_The2017Attacks_WhatNeedsToChange.pdf

strong enough to stop the truck from entering the area. After the attack, the lions were replaced with heavier ones and concrete flowerpots were added.⁶

Las Ramblas, Barcelona, Spain, August 17, 2017

Barcelona's Mayor was quoted after the attack as stating, "Absolute security is impossible, it would mean giving up our freedom and shutting ourselves up in our homes." The Mayor further added, "Having 100 percent control over the many places that could be targets in a large and international city like Barcelona is impossible."⁷ Even after the attack, the City decided not to install bollards as it would hinder the access of cleaning and emergency services to the area, and impact local traffic patterns.⁸

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, September 30, 2017

Police barricades (wooden saw-horse type) and police vehicles were in place near Commonwealth Stadium for the Canadian Football League game on the night of the attack. These measures may have partially mitigated the initial incident by limiting vehicle access and speed, though the attack still occurred.⁹

In the days immediately following the attack, mitigation measures were taken to protect scheduled special events. Trucks were parked at intersections blocking vehicle traffic to an anti-violence rally. For a concert event, police shut down vehicle traffic on several streets to create a five-block buffer zone in front of the venue. An Inspector with the Edmonton Police Service said, "As any major sports events we have operational plans in place all the time and as unfortunate as the incident was, I believe the plans in place were effective."¹⁰

New York City, USA, October 2017

As a result of an attack, NYC Council passed a bill that would require the installation of sidewalk bollards in order to prevent further attacks.¹¹ The Mayor announced that the City would spend \$50 million to secure high-risk public spaces from attacks by vehicles, or vehicles losing control due to a medical emergency. The money would be spent on various safety measures, including

⁶ European Commission. *Security by design: Protection of public spaces from terrorist attacks*. Publications Office of the European Union. (2022). Online:

<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/654492>

⁷ Gonzalez, A. "Why no barriers? Barcelona attack reignites row over securing streets". *Reuters*. (18 August 2017). Online: <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/why-no-barriers-barcelona-attack-reignites-row-over-securing-streets-idUSKCN1AY18Y/>

⁸ Povoledo, E., Morenne, B., Magra, I., Eddy, M., & Minder, R. "European Cities Add Barriers to Thwart Vehicle Attacks". *The New York Times*. (22 August 2017). Online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/22/world/europe/europe-attacks-safety-barriers.html>

⁹ Wakefield, J. "Last night in September: The lingering questions behind the 2017 Edmonton 'terror' attack". *Edmonton Journal*. (5 February 2021). Online: <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/insight/last-night-in-september-the-lingering-questions-behind-the-2017-edmonton-terror-attack>

¹⁰ Parrish, J. "Security measures under review after weekend attacks". *CTV News*. (2 October 2017). Online: <https://www.ctvnews.ca/edmonton/article/security-measures-under-review-after-weekend-attacks/>

¹¹ Toure, M. "NYC Council Moves Bill to Require Sidewalk Bollards to Prevent Terror Attacks". *Observer*. (20 December 2017). Online: <https://observer.com/2017/12/nyc-sidewalk-bollards-terror-attacks/#:-:text=The%20City%20Council%20passed%20legislation,in%20Lower%20Manhattan%20in%20October>



installing 1,500 metal bollards and large planters. These would replace some of the temporary concrete cubes and barriers that had been put in place immediately after the attack.¹² In total, \$103 million was reserved in the long-term infrastructure budget to install vehicle barriers in well trafficked areas.¹³

Muenster, Germany, April 7, 2018

The City had been planning to install bollards in various locations ahead of the German Catholic convention scheduled for the following month. However, these measures would not have prevented the attack, as bollards were not intended for the specific street where it occurred. This highlights a critical vulnerability in the use of bollards: placement decisions must fully anticipate hostile vehicle attack vectors. Muenster's plans included installing bollards at thirteen locations, each costing €20,000.¹⁴

Yonge Street, Toronto, Canada, April 23, 2018

Prior to the attack, Yonge Street had few hardening features to prevent an HVI. The street did not have any on-street curbside parking or barriers between the vehicle lane and the pedestrians on the sidewalk.¹⁵ In 2017 (the year prior to the Yonge Street attack), the City of Toronto had approved vehicle mitigation measures for Nathan Philips Square at a one-time cost of \$500,000.¹⁶

Although no actions were taken to harden Yonge Street, immediately after the attack, temporary concrete barriers were placed around the entrance of Toronto's busy Union Station. In 2025, new permanent giant concrete crash-rated "anti-terror" blocks were installed and anchored to the ground around Union Station at a cost of \$2.4 million.¹⁷

London, Ontario, Canada, June 6, 2021

As this attack took place on a typical sidewalk at an intersection on a suburban street and not part of any special event or festival, no prior barriers or dedicated safety measures existed.¹⁸ Although not in response to the attack, a few months after the attack, the City of London installed new curb-height "protective concrete barriers" at one of the city's busy intersections with the stated purpose to "provide more space for cyclists & pedestrians, reduce the distance to cross the intersection & help reduce vehicle speed. Together these design elements create a

¹² Goldstein, J. "City Will Place 1,500 Bollards to Counter Vehicle Attacks". *The New York Times*. (2 January 2018). Online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/02/nyregion/city-will-place-1500-bollards-to-counter-vehicle-attacks.html>

¹³ Gelinas, N. Vehicular "Terrorism in the Age of Vision Zero". *Vision Zero Cities Journal*, 3. (13 November 2018). Online: <https://medium.com/vision-zero-cities-journal/vehicular-terrorism-in-the-age-of-vision-zero-80454262a7e4>

¹⁴ Chase, J. "Do bollards help prevent vehicle attacks?" *Deutsche Welle*. (4 August 2018). Online: <https://www.dw.com/en/do-bollards-offer-protection-against-vehicle-attacks/a-43300057>

¹⁵ Rozdilsky, J. L., & Snowden, E. "The 2018 Toronto Van Attack: Understanding the Disaster by Looking at Vulnerability, Tactics, and Motives". *Canadian Journal of Emergency Management*, 1(1), 10-39. (2021). Online: <https://doi.org/10.25071/g87b7dy24>

¹⁶ Carnegie, B. "Vehicle barriers to be installed at Toronto's Nathan Phillips Square". *Global News*. (8 December 2017). Online: <https://globalnews.ca/news/3906287/toronto-city-hall-security/>

¹⁷ Landau, J. "Toronto's Union Station now surrounded by ugly concrete anti-terrorism blocks". *blogTO*. (23 April 2025). Online: <https://www.blogto.com/city/2025/04/union-station-toronto-concrete-blocks/>

¹⁸ BBC. "Canada truck attack: Muslim family victims named". *BBC*. (8 June 2021). Online: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-57404388>

safer experience for all.”¹⁹ The barriers are only as high as the street curb and as such would not be able to stop a vehicle incursion.

Christmas Parade, Waukesha, Wisconsin, USA, November 21, 2021

In response to this attack, various other cities cancelled their Christmas parades or increased security at their events.²⁰ This included increased law enforcement presence as well as additional and earlier road closures.²¹ In 2022, the Waukesha Christmas parade returned, however security was tighter: uniformed officers were posted along the parade route and the City added barriers at intersections to prevent vehicles from entering the parade route.²² According to the City, they also deployed drones and cameras.²³

Christmas Market, Magdeburg, Germany, December 20, 2024

The country had been adding security to their Christmas Markets since the Berlin Christmas market attack in 2016; however, this was not enough to prevent the Magdeburg attack. All Christmas markets now have some sort of barrier around them, usually large concrete blocks, with gaps large enough so emergency vehicles could pass through them. The attacker used these emergency vehicle access points to enter and exit the market.

Bourbon Street, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, January 1, 2025

At the time of the attack, various bollards had been removed as they were malfunctioning and needed to be replaced before the 2025 Super Bowl. The posts had been installed 10 years ago as part of a US\$40 million public safety project.²⁴ A police SUV was parked at the entrance of the street, but at multiple times during the evening a gap large enough to drive a vehicle through had been left open.²⁵ The driver deliberately bypassed the police vehicle by driving onto the sidewalk.²⁶ Additionally, a hydraulic metal barrier on Bourbon Street was not raised for unknown reasons, allowing the car to drive over 300 meters.

¹⁹ Heisel, T. “New protective concrete barriers at Dundas and Colborne Streets”. *CTV News*. (1 September 2021). Online: <https://www.ctvnews.ca/london/article/new-protective-concrete-barriers-at-dundas-and-colborne-streets/>

²⁰ The Associated Press. “Rockford beefs up security for parade after Waukesha”. *The Associated Press*. (24 November 2021). Online: <https://apnews.com/article/wisconsin-rockford-c51cee491f2861e763184dc4fa4ae69c>

²¹ TMJ4. “Communities canceling or modifying holiday parades in light of Waukesha tragedy”. *TMJ4*. (22 November 2021). Online: <https://www.tmj4.com/news/waukesha-christmas-parade/communities-canceling-or-modifying-holiday-parades-in-light-of-waukesha-tragedy>

²² Garcia, J. “Waukesha parade 2022: Holiday event returns with added security 1 year after deadly attack”. *ABC7 Chicago*. (4 December 2022). Online: [https://abc7chicago.com/when-is-the-waukesha-christmas-parade-2022-wisconsin-dancing-grannies-attack/12525974/#:-:text=\(WLS\)%20%2D%2D%20lt%20was%20an,also%20increased%20security%20this%20year](https://abc7chicago.com/when-is-the-waukesha-christmas-parade-2022-wisconsin-dancing-grannies-attack/12525974/#:-:text=(WLS)%20%2D%2D%20lt%20was%20an,also%20increased%20security%20this%20year)

²³ City of Waukesha. (n.d.). *News Posts*. City of Waukesha. https://www.waukesha-wi.gov/news_detail_T4_R120.php

²⁴ Halpert, M. “Security barriers removed for repairs before New Orleans attack”. *BBC*. (2 January 2025). Online: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cvg70eg97dgo>

²⁵ Blaskey, S., Oakford, S., Ley, J., & O’Connell, J. “How New Orleans failed to protect Bourbon Street from attack, block by block”. *Washington Post*. (13 January 2025). Online: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2025/01/13/new-orleans-bourbon-street-security/>

²⁶ Blair, J. P., Martaindale, M. H., Johncox, J. D., & Tanksley, P. T. *Active Attacks with Motor Vehicles: A Short Report and Case Study of the 2025 New Year’s Day Attack in New Orleans, LA*. American Journal of Criminal Justice. (2025). Online: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-025-09806-x>

Hostile Vehicle Mitigation in Non-Affected Cities

Most cities that experienced an attack implemented additional HVM practices after the attack. Some cities and countries that have not experienced an attack have proactively implemented HVM practices. Below are examples of those HVM practices, based on publicly available information.

France

After the 2016 attack in Nice, security was increased at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival. Metal barriers and large concrete planters were placed along the Promenade de la Croisette in order to prevent a vehicle from driving through.²⁷ The City of Avignon bought a Modular Vehicle Barrier system for €23,000 ahead of the 2017 Theater Festival. This device clamps around the wheels of a vehicle attempting to drive through.²⁸ In 2018, Paris installed a fence around the base of the Eiffel Tower and an additional 420 concrete blocks around the area. The added security measures cost the City nearly €35 million.²⁹

Spain

After the attack on Barcelona, Spain, various other Spanish cities started implementing security measures around their main pedestrian areas. Installing bollards, planters, and concrete blocks; however, it was up to individual cities to decide. The City of Bilbao opted to rely on police vehicles to regulate traffic and protect pedestrians instead of installing permanent HVM fixtures.³⁰

Italy

In 2017, Italy began installing concrete barriers at major landmarks to protect against potential attacks, despite not experiencing any major incidents. Citing terrorism threats, authorities increased security at crowded tourist sites, especially after the Barcelona attacks.

Rome placed barriers around shopping streets and attractions like the Colosseum, while Milan added them near the Duomo and the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele. Other cities, including Genoa, Naples, Palermo, Pisa, Turin, and Bologna, followed suit with Bologna enhancing protection at the Basilica of San Petronio (a past target). Across Italy, some cities adopted a softer, aesthetic approach, inspired by architect Stefano Boeri, using tree planters as barriers. Though proposed by counter-terror experts for decades, such methods are often rejected as costly or insufficiently robust.³¹

²⁷ Donadio, R. "At Cannes, the Glam and the Grim Mix Uneasily". *The New York Times*. (22 May 2017). Online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/22/movies/at-cannes-film-festival-politics-farhadi.html>

²⁸ La Provence. "Sécurité à Avignon: la Ville a acheté des barrières israéliennes anti-intrusion". *La Provence*. (29 August 2017). Online: <https://www.laprovidence.com/article/edition-vaucluse/4595936/la-ville-a-achete-des-barrieres-israeliennes-anti-intrusion.html>

²⁹ BBC. "Eiffel Tower perimeter fence built to stop terrorism". *BBC*. (18 June 2018). Online: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44502949>

³⁰ Almeida, D. "Spanish cities start to reinforce security in central pedestrian areas". *El País*. (24 August 2017). Online: https://english.elpais.com/elpais/2017/08/24/inenglish/1503573457_131798.html.

³¹ Povoledo, E., Morenne, B., Magra, I., Eddy, M., & Minder, R. "European Cities Add Barriers to Thwart Vehicle Attacks". *The New York Times*. (22 August 2017). Online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/22/world/europe/europe-attacks-safety-barriers.html>

Germany

Concrete barriers have become common at festivals and gatherings in German cities. Frankfurt added 3-ton concrete barriers around the grounds of a night festival. Munich increased security at its Oktoberfest celebrations, requiring all delivery trucks to leave the festival grounds by 9 am, at which point the visitors would be allowed to enter. In previous years, the beer tents opened to the public at 8 am with delivery vehicles still having access.³² Additionally, more officers have been deployed, security cameras set up, and large pedestrian-only areas created.³³

Australia

After the 2017 vehicle attacks in Melbourne, Australian cities started upgrading safety measures in high-pedestrian areas and during special events such as New Year's Eve. This has included planter boxes and other barriers to stop vehicles.³⁴

Canada

During the 2021 Santa Clause Parade in Ottawa, the City and the Ottawa Police Service worked together to ensure the safety of crowds. Temporary road closures and traffic control followed Ontario Traffic Manual Book 7, including full deployment, setup, and removal procedures. Site hardening measures included traffic redirection away from the parade route and HVM using a mix of city dump trucks and mobile vehicle barrier systems at main access points. Lower-risk internal roads were blocked with city pickup trucks and sawhorses, while Ottawa Police cruisers enforced soft and hard closures by parking across roadways. The combination of city vehicles, police vehicles, and MVB systems provided flexible and rapid HVM deployment before, and removal after, the event.³⁵

During the 2022 Canadian Open Golf Tournament in Toronto, Ontario various measures were put in place to prevent vehicle attacks during the event. Given the event's duration, expected crowd size, and international media presence, high-risk HVM measures were implemented on roads leading to the venue. Hard and soft road closures were established around the perimeter. Hard closures were placed at a safe distance from high-density areas, including the concert stage, while soft closures extended further out. HVM consisted of Omni-Stop portable bollards and gates at all entry points, staffed to allow access for authorized personnel, including police, EMS, and fire services.³⁶

³² Povoledo, E., Morenne, B., Magra, I., Eddy, M., & Minder, R. "European Cities Add Barriers to Thwart Vehicle Attacks". *The New York Times*. (22 August 2017). Online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/22/world/europe/europe-attacks-safety-barriers.html>

³³ Chutel, L., & Gross, J. "Germany Bulked Up Christmas Market Security. An Attack Still Happened". *The New York Times*. (December 2024). Online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/21/world/europe/germany-christmas-market-security.html>

³⁴ 9News. "How the Bourke Street massacre changed Australia". 9News. (24 December 2019). Online: <https://www.9news.com.au/national/bourke-street-massacre-melbourne-2010s-how-it-changed-us-decade-in-review/40e730c0-e572-4e06-bad9-61992cc6c16c>

³⁵ Suggett, J., & Wang, J. *Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Guidelines*. Ontario Traffic Council. (2023). Online: [https://otc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/B001463_OTC_Hostile-Vehicle-Mitigation-Guidelines_e01-Final-Draft.pdf#:~:text=Hostile%20vehicle%20mitigation%20\(or%20measures\)~20involves%20the,act%20by%20a%20driver%20of%20a%20vehicle.&text=In%20response%20to%20](https://otc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/B001463_OTC_Hostile-Vehicle-Mitigation-Guidelines_e01-Final-Draft.pdf#:~:text=Hostile%20vehicle%20mitigation%20(or%20measures)~20involves%20the,act%20by%20a%20driver%20of%20a%20vehicle.&text=In%20response%20to%20)

³⁶ Suggett, J., & Wang, J. *Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Guidelines*. Ontario Traffic Council. (2023). Online: [https://otc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/B001463_OTC_Hostile-Vehicle-Mitigation-Guidelines_e01-Final-Draft.pdf#:~:text=Hostile%20vehicle%20mitigation%20\(or%20measures\)~20involves%20the,act%20by%20a%20driver%20of%20a%20vehicle.&text=In%20response%20to%20](https://otc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/B001463_OTC_Hostile-Vehicle-Mitigation-Guidelines_e01-Final-Draft.pdf#:~:text=Hostile%20vehicle%20mitigation%20(or%20measures)~20involves%20the,act%20by%20a%20driver%20of%20a%20vehicle.&text=In%20response%20to%20)

Vancouver

HVM has been implemented in Vancouver for major events, including the 2010 Olympic Winter Games and other events assessed as high risk. This has included measures such as concrete barriers/blocks, using vehicles as barriers and, more recently, mobile vehicle barriers, plus varying scales of VPD officers. HVM has also been installed as a part of major public space projects, such as 800 Robson, and by private property owners such as PavCo at Terry Fox Plaza adjacent BC Place Stadium. Design and implementation of these measures have evolved over the years as the COV has learned from other jurisdictions and as international guidance has advanced.

Survey of Preventative Practices at Special Events from Other Jurisdictions

The COV developed a survey to gather updated insights on preventative practices from other jurisdictions that have faced similar incidents or have proactively implemented safety measures for special events. The survey was conducted from June 24 to July 15, 2025, and it was sent to 18 jurisdictions with the following 13 responding:

- Richmond, BC
- Victoria, BC
- Calgary, AB
- Edmonton, AB
- Winnipeg, MB
- London, ON
- Toronto, ON
- Montreal, QC
- Halifax Regional Municipality, NS
- Austin, TX
- New Orleans, LA
- Liverpool, UK
- Sydney, Australia

The following summarizes the survey's key findings:

Use of Vehicle Barriers

- 11 of 13 jurisdictions use vehicle barriers at events. The types of barriers used include:
 - HVB;
 - LVB (e.g., police vehicles);
 - MVB; and
 - Other (e.g., concrete, water-filled, planters).
- Criteria for deployment includes crowd size, event profile, location, threat level, and police input.

Guidelines & Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Related to Barrier Use at Events

- 8 of 13 jurisdictions responded that they do not have formal SOPs or guidelines for deploying barriers at events. Of the remaining five jurisdictions:
 - One has developed a guide on securing public gathering sites and specifically references the use of barriers;
 - One is developing an SOP/guideline;
 - Two rely on barrier manufacturer instructions; and

- One uses a state-level regulatory standard covering overall traffic control devices.

Ownership & Funding of Barriers

- 8 of 13 jurisdictions use a mix of owned, rented, or third-party barriers. Of the remaining five jurisdictions:
 - Two use owned barriers;
 - Two use rented barriers; and
 - One uses third-party provided barriers.
- The costs related to barriers was most commonly reported (8 of 13 jurisdictions) to be funded through a combination of the following sources:
 - City funding (annual operating budgets);
 - Passed on to organizers; and/or
 - Grants, subsidies or user fee.
- No jurisdictions reported using a dedicated tax to cover the cost of barriers.

Vehicle-Resistant Infrastructure in Public Space Design

- 11 of 13 jurisdictions incorporate vehicle-resistant infrastructure (e.g., bollards, planters, concrete blocks) into the design of public spaces, especially in high-traffic pedestrian areas, parks or locations with recurring events.
- The type of infrastructure used varies by location and event frequency.

Vehicle Threat Risk Assessments & Future Planning

- 4 of 13 jurisdictions have conducted or are currently conducting formal risk assessments related to vehicle threats in public spaces.
- 8 of 13 jurisdictions plan to upgrade or change their barrier systems or public space design within the next 3–5 years, with planned changes including permanent installations and improved equipment (e.g., mobile, deployable hazardous vehicle mitigation equipment and rated vehicle barriers).

Challenges Implementing/Maintaining Vehicle Barriers

- Jurisdictions identified a range of challenges related to the implementation and maintenance of vehicle barriers. The most commonly cited issues include: budget constraints; storage and transportation logistics; and the availability of appropriate equipment or trained personnel.
- Several jurisdictions also noted difficulties in coordinating across departments, selecting the right type of barrier for different contexts, and ensuring compatibility with public space design and accessibility standards.

Considerations for Vancouver

While Vancouver's Special Event Permitting process has been found to be robust and expansive, arising from the jurisdictional scan, a workshop with Vancouver-based event organizers, and the assessment of the Commissioner, several opportunities for enhancement, support, and clarification have been observed.

Recognizing budget pressures and complexities when planning events in a shared public realm, updating standardized plans for event organizers who activate frequently used event spaces such as within the Stadium District would create process certainty and efficiencies for organizers and the COV and partners.

Within the standardized plans for event spaces, clarification of roles and responsibilities for the ingress/entry and egress/exit areas (referred to as Area Ex) would be beneficial, as that transition area forms part of the event experience but is often outside of the designated "event space".

Further, consideration of other event organizer supports such as expanded training, planning resources, and access to safety equipment could enhance on-the-ground safety at special events by supporting event organizer staff and volunteers to be well-prepared, equipped with shared safety resources, and supported by consistent standardized guidance.

While Vancouver has a well-established safety planning process, the development of guidelines for the use of HVM measures would benefit the COV and event organizers by establishing a clear understanding of the expected measures and clarity of roles and costs for the organizers.

5. CONSIDERATIONS FOR BROADER PUBLIC REALM DESIGN

The previous section summarized 15 HVIs that have occurred around the world, the actions the affected jurisdictions took after the attack, and proactive actions taken by jurisdictions that have not experienced an HVI. Most of those summarized HVIs occurred at a special event where people gathered (e.g., Bastille Day in Nice, Christmas Markets in Germany, Santa Clause Parade in Wisconsin); however, there are some others that occurred in busy areas of a city when there was not an event (e.g. London, Ontario). This latter scenario raises considerations related to the design of the public realm to minimize the likelihood of an HVI and/or reduce the harm an HVI can cause.

These international examples demonstrate that there is a risk of vehicles being used as a weapon in many contexts, and while that risk is low in many places, a consistent approach to threat evaluation needs to be taken to ensure a balanced approach. To support a consistent understanding of how to manage those risks, the COV engaged Arup, a consultant with wide-ranging expertise including public realm design, security, and HVM. Arup led staff-level workshops that provided background knowledge of HVM assessment and deployment.

The workshops brought together staff from a number of internal stakeholders who are responsible for design or assessment of the public realm, including Engineering Services, Planning and Development Services, Risk Management, Real Estate Services, Vancouver Park Board, and the VPD. The workshops engaged the different groups on: approaches to public realm HVM vulnerability assessment and deployment in different jurisdictions; examples of HVM implementation in the public realm; and high-level exploration of a potential framework that

could be developed for use in Vancouver. Public spaces that were discussed are shown in Figure 1 below.

 <p>Civic Squares / Plazas Civic squares, plazas, closed streets with seating</p>	 <p>Commercial Streets Streets with high pedestrian traffic, businesses, restaurants, etc.</p>	 <p>Green Spaces / Parks Major parks, gardens, neighborhood/ local parks, green spaces</p>	 <p>Beaches Natural and man-made beaches that are accessible by or open to the public</p>	 <p>Seaside / Seawall Designated pathway for pedestrians on a wall or area immediately proximate to the ocean</p>
 <p>Arenas & Stadiums Large venues for sporting events, concerts, etc.</p>	 <p>Transport Transportation hubs, rail stations, bus stops</p>	 <p>Schools / Campuses K-12 school campuses, universities, academic buildings, etc.</p>	 <p>Sports Fields Fields for outdoor sports such as soccer, baseball, etc.</p>	

Figure 1

Some outcomes of the workshops were:

1. A widely accepted recognition exists that there are broad hostile vehicle risks in the public realm that can be mitigated through design, recognizing that elimination of risk is not possible.
2. That there is a need for a governance model to guide decisions around HVM in the public realm, as there are many groups responsible for assessment, design, and operation of public spaces, including during events.
3. That development of a framework for public realm HVM could help identify sites to prioritize for mitigation.
4. Site-level design for HVM requires a detailed design process and could be guided by a toolkit to support that process.

Recommendations resulting from these consultations are discussed in the Recommendations section of this report and include developing a HVM framework to assess public spaces, reviewing new designs through that framework, and pursuing funding for a program to deliver HVM to high-priority existing public spaces.

6. PROVINCE OF BC'S REPORT OF THE STUDY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO COMMUNITY EVENTS SAFETY

On May 7, 2025, the Province announced that former Chief Justice of the BC Supreme Court, Christopher Hinkson, was appointed to serve as Commissioner of the Commission of Inquiry into Community Events Safety in BC. The Commission's Report was publicly released on July 9, 2025. The Commission made six recommendations, with five of them (recommendations #2 through #6) addressed to the Province:

Recommendation 1: Risk Assessments in Event Planning

This recommendation was not addressed to the Province as the Commission recommends that all public events in BC, regardless of size, should be supported by a risk assessment. This assessment does not have to be complicated but it "should be thoughtful, structured, and appropriate to the scale and nature of the event. It may be prepared by event organizers, municipal staff, or collaboratively, depending on local capacity."

The Commission opined that "a comprehensive risk assessment should consider the event's scale, location, activities, and potential hazards, including risks to specific groups and environmental factors. It should evaluate existing safety measures, identify any gaps, and assign clear responsibilities for emergency planning, access, and crowd management. Additional considerations may include fire safety, medical response, weather impacts, and supports for overnight stays where applicable."

Vancouver:

The COV and VPD have achieved this recommendation. As explained in the Preliminary Report, all Special Event Permit Applications received by FASE are forwarded to EOPS, upon which EOPS conducts a risk assessment to determine if a dedicated deployment of VPD police officers is required at the special event.

For large special events, such as the Celebration of Light, Vaisakhi, and Italian Day, EOPS uses a risk assessment tool known as the Hazard Risk Vulnerability Tool (HRVT), to record the results of the risk assessment. Smaller events, such as the 2025 LLDBP, are risk assessed; however, the results are not recorded onto the HRVT. Moving forward, and to be consistent with this Recommendation, EOPS will record the result of the risk assessment onto the HRVT for all medium and high complexity open space events.

Recommendation 2: Clarifying Jurisdictional Roles in Event Oversight

The Commission noted that "event organizers and approving authorities frequently encounter both overlaps and gaps in jurisdictional oversight" and "these uncertainties create confusion about who has the authority to make decisions or enforce requirements, particularly when multiple agencies or levels of government are involved."

Vancouver:

While this recommendation is to the Province, it is worthwhile to explain how such jurisdictional uncertainties are prevented in Vancouver. The COV Special Event Policy defines the following decision-making authorities:

- The COV's City Engineer may decline a special event application;
- The COV's City Manager may set out how the Application and Permitting Process will vary based on the type of Special Event (e.g. Block Party, Festival, Parade, etc.), location, and proposed number of participants and size of area being utilized; and
- The provision of Public Safety Services which are protective units for the mitigation of deadly threats to participants and all other residents in the vicinity of the Special Event taking into account the VPD's current assessment of global threats and risks. The provision of these services is at the sole discretion of the VPD and generally outside of the control of the event organizer.

Given that, for many special events, all of the necessary partners (e.g., COV Engineering, VFRS, VPD, Vancouver Park Board, Vancouver Coastal Health) are involved in event planning, their respective areas of authority are understood and respected by all participants.

Recommendation 3: Training for Planning Support and Centralized Hub

The Commission states that most event planners and organizers do not have access to consistent advice or resources for event safety planning. Standardized training is limited, especially for volunteers and municipal staff who often carry significant responsibility without formal expertise.

The Commission recommends that the Province establish a centralized hub to support event safety. Such a hub would provide accessible, standardized advice, training, and practical tools for event organizers, municipal officials, and others involved in planning public gatherings.

Vancouver:

While this recommendation is addressed to the Province, it is worthwhile to briefly describe FASE resources that are made available to event organizers. FASE's [Special Event Permitting Handbook](#) provides 82 pages of detailed information and explanation of how to apply for a Special Event Permit, the steps involved in the process, and all of the considerations for the planning and delivery of a safe event. The handbook is supplemented by four online tutorial videos that the applicant can access.

If the Province were to implement a centralized hub as recommended by the Commission, COV and VPD will be willing to share information in support of the effort.

Recommendation 4: Support for Event Delivery and Local Capacity

The Commission notes that rising safety and security costs are one of the most significant barriers to hosting community events. For many organizers, particularly in smaller or under-resourced communities, these costs threaten the viability of their events altogether. Organizers also highlighted the high costs of acquiring appropriate safety equipment.

The Commission recommends that the Province consider expanding the availability of targeted grants or financial support to help offset event-related safety and security costs. This may include cost-sharing programs for infrastructure such as fencing, barriers, and traffic control equipment, as well as for emergency services where appropriate.

Vancouver:

The financial sustainability of outdoor special events is increasingly challenged, particularly with the rising costs associated with implementing HVM measures. Exploring opportunities for Provincial support could be a valuable step toward ensuring these events remain viable and accessible for communities.

Recommendation 5: Foster Local Collaboration on Event Safety

The Commission states that, in many smaller communities, event organizers would benefit from more focused collaboration with emergency services to address safety considerations tailored to their specific events. Consultation during the planning phase can improve readiness and build trust between interested partners.

The Commission recommends the Province encourage and promote regular tabletop exercises that include police, fire departments, emergency management services, and event organizers. Also, the Commission recommends that the Province support and promote community-led safety planning efforts, particularly for Indigenous-led and culturally specific events. Ensuring that these communities have the tools and support they need to lead their own planning processes is essential to fostering safe, inclusive public gatherings.

Vancouver:

While this recommendation is aimed at smaller communities, the COV's and the VPD's collaboration with organizers is robust. COV and VPD staff, at various points along the planning process, engage with organizers to ensure events are as safe as they reasonably can be.

Recommendation 6: Promote Learning Through Event Evaluation

The Commission recommends that the Province encourage the routine use of after-action reports and structured public feedback collection following events. These tools can help evaluate safety outcomes and identify areas for improvement. The Commission also recommends that the Province should explore the creation of a centralized, anonymized repository of event safety data, including case studies and lessons learned.

Vancouver:

The COV and EOPS have established standard practices for internal and joint debriefings of special events and the making of adjustments for future events based on those debriefs. The 2025 LLDBP is an example of such an adjustment. The crowds were larger than anticipated in 2024, which led to the expansion of the 2025 LLDBP's 'footprint' and deployment, with the addition of a COV Incident Command Post.

The Commission's positive observations about the event planning process in Vancouver supports the conclusion that the COV and VPD process is in alignment with the findings and recommendations of the Commission. The COV and VPD would welcome any invitation to assist the Province with advice or expertise on the potential implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

Although the scope of this Final Report prepared by COV and VPD does not include the emergency response or recovery efforts following an incident, it should be acknowledged that the COV's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was activated for two weeks and many other government and community agencies responded as well. The EOC coordinated public communication, some aspects of community support, inter-agency information sharing, and other related activities. Once the EOC formally stood down, the Vancouver Emergency Management Agency (VEMA) continued to coordinate multi-agency and interdepartmental engagement beyond the initial two-weeks as the longer tail impacts of the Incident required ongoing responsiveness from multiple agencies and departments. The lessons learned across responding government and community agencies should be leveraged to guide response to future incidents of this nature.

It would be helpful to establish a provincial level incident management guide to support communities and government agencies with joint response to public event mass casualty incidents. The guide should clarify specific roles and responsibilities and outline the resources required for effective response and recovery. Such a guide would clarify roles and responsibilities for government agencies, and community partners, accelerate response and recovery activities including directing donations, ensuring effective public communications, and enable more efficient resource allocation at all levels of government and by community organizations. It would also improve community understanding of available support following these types of incidents.

7. FINDING THE BALANCE BETWEEN SPECIAL EVENT SAFETY, OVER-PROTECTION, AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Commission made observations that succinctly summarizes this discussion (emphasis added in italics):

"While public spaces must be reasonably safe, they must also be functional. The need for safety planning at public events brings into sharp focus, the tension between the desires of individuals and groups to organize and celebrate distinct cultural or other events with minimal governmental interference, but the need for some government protections at such events.

For some events, and particularly those of a cultural or community nature, the planners will want to hold the events in their community, as opposed to a space that is perhaps easier to secure. *Striking the right balance between public safety and practical realities requires thoughtful planning, proportional responses, and careful judgment. Measures must be tailored to the specific risks and needs of each event without imposing unnecessary burdens.*”

[And:]

“Security measures can be costly and resource intensive, and if improperly thought out, can alienate members of the public.”

Municipalities face a complex challenge in striking the right balance between implementing appropriate safety measures and avoiding undue financial strain that could impact the viability of events and/or a sense of over-policing for event organizers and attendees. Some organizers may prefer minimal or no visible police presence due to budget constraints or community-specific concerns. In such cases, the COV and the VPD engage in dialogue with organizers, and the VPD makes every effort to accommodate these preferences - provided the event's risk assessment supports such an approach.

The challenge in finding such a balance is exemplified by two *Service or Policy Complaints* that the VPD received, one in June 2018 (regarding the 2018 Italian Day festival)³⁷ and the other in October 2024 (regarding the 2024 Pride Parade).³⁸ Both complaints were about an officer carrying an 'assault rifle', which are carbines, while being deployed at each respective event.

The use of a carbine at such an event is part of the VPD's strategies to be prepared for an HVI. The rationale for provisioning a few officers with a carbine at an event with heightened public safety concerns is that the weapon provides a superior response to active deadly threats. Their deployment near key entry points or in the crowd enables them to stop any threats more effectively in situations involving armed assailants or an attempted HVI. As an example, in the January 1, 2025 New Orleans vehicle attack, the suspect was wearing ballistic body armor and a helmet. Also, the presence of armed officers with carbines often acts as a deterrent, discouraging would-be attackers from targeting the event.

The complainants in the above-described complaints have the right to question such strategies and deserve comprehensive responses. At the same time, this situation exemplifies the Commission's observation of “the tension between the desires of individuals and groups to organize and celebrate distinct cultural or other events with minimal governmental interference, but the need for some government protections at such events.”

In its observations, the Commission also made reference to “proportional responses” when it comes to safeguarding special events. The elimination of all risk is a practical impossibility and,

³⁷ Vancouver Police Board. Report to the Service or Policy Complaint Review Committee, as part of the agenda package for the *Service or Policy Complaint Review Committee Meeting* (6 December 2018). Online: <https://vancouverpoliceboard.ca/police/policeboard/agenda/2018/1206/SP-1812C02-4-2-Report-SP-Complaint-2018-135-Assault-Rifles-at-Public-Events.pdf>

³⁸ Vancouver Police Board. Report to the Service or Policy Complaint Review Committee, as part of the agenda package for the *Service or Policy Complaint Review Committee Meeting* (21 November 2024) p. 34-35. Online: <https://vancouverpoliceboard.ca/police/policeboard/agenda/2024/1121/2024-11-21%20COMBINED%20Service%20or%20Policy%20Agenda%20and%20Materials.x28972.pdf>

as one of the Commission's consulted experts noted "the realistic goal of any event planner can only be to make events as reasonably safe as possible."

The Incident at the conclusion of the 2025 LLDBP understandably shook Vancouverites' sense of safety. This report describes the safety enhancements that the VPD and COV implemented at events in the two months following the Incident. However, a broader policy discussion needs to take place to shape the future safeguarding of special events and the design of the public realm. This discussion should explore the appropriate balance when implementing safety enhancements so that safeguards are effective, yet reasonable and proportional, and financially sustainable for organizers and the COV.

To inform this discussion, one can consider the safety measures implemented at the June 8, 2025 Italian Day on the Drive festival (Italian Day), that occurs annually along the entirety of the 900-2200 blocks of Commercial Drive. Italian Day is a very popular event with an estimated number of participants being between 100,000 and 200,000.

Given the Incident and its impacts on Vancouverites' sense of safety, safety measures were expanded for the 2025 Italian Day, for example:

- The 2024 Italian Day used four HVBs and eight LVBs. The 2025 Italian Day replaced the four HVBs with the use of 73 MVBs, and the number of LVBs used increased to 26. Most of these MVBs and LVBs replaced 'saw-horse' style barricades that had been traditionally used;
- The 2025 Italian Day experienced a 7% increase in VPD members being deployed;
- For 2024, the total public safety costs paid for by the City and VPD in support of Italian Day was \$128,207, while in 2025 the total cost was \$199,013 – an increase of 55%;
- 64% of the increase in 2025 was a result of renting 65 MVBs, while the remaining 36% was a result of increased police deployment;
- Hypothetically, if the deployment of police resources (both officers and Traffic Authority members) had not changed for the 2025 Italian Day, then the cost of the festival would have increased by approximately 35% just by renting 65 MVBs; and
- Every possible street that could connect to Commercial Drive was guarded from an HVI by the presence of a LVB or an MVB. The HVM strategies used at the 2025 Italian Day could be considered an acute response for public assurance following the Incident.

The deployment resourcing for Italian Day, a one-day event, is described here not to set the expectation that this level of HVM measures will be the standard going forward. Rather, the discussion is intended to contextualize the resource allocation that needs to be considered given the number of special events that annually take place in Vancouver. The COV closes streets for over 225 events per year using a variety of barricades, such as HVBs, LVBs and sawhorse type barricades. In 2024, there were 21 special event days requiring an HVB deployment and 63 special event days that deployed LVBs. Events involving street closure also included 103 block parties that were permitted in 2024. Block parties typically include the closure of about half of a residential block and do not use LVBs or MVBs as they have traditionally used saw-horse barricades.

While the 2025 Italian Day experienced a 55% increase in costs, largely due to HVM requirements, it is important to recognize that each outdoor special event presents unique logistical and risk considerations. Although such cost escalations could potentially impact the viability of future events in Vancouver, particularly in terms of permitting or accessibility, broad generalizations should be approached with caution. A comprehensive business case is recommended to evaluate HVM options and accurately assess their financial implications across a diverse range of event types.

Recommendation

A broader policy discussion that takes into account all of the factors around safeguarding special events, including the financial sustainability for event organizers and municipal oversight bodies, is required find a balanced level of safety enhancement for future outdoor special event planning and public realm space design.

To contribute to this policy discussion, guidelines should be developed on the proportional and financially sustainable use of HVM strategies for outdoor special events in Vancouver. The development of these guidelines should be informed by a robust business case that evaluates the deployment characteristics and operational and financial implication of each HVM strategy, weighing both benefits and challenges.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are focused on special event safety:

1. Update the COV Special Event Policy (ADMIN 031) to reinforce public safety as a core objective and clarify operational supports.

- Updating the Special Event Policy will further reinforce public safety as a top priority at special events and reflect learnings from the Incident.
- Furthering safety in policy, planning and interdepartmental coordination (including outcomes from other recommendations within this report), and updating plans for high-activity areas like the Stadium District, will help ensure outdoor special events prioritize safety, are well-coordinated, and are responsive to community needs. Clear operational supports for the changes will allow COV, VPD, and event organizers plan for future events.

2. Standardize early safety planning and integrated access control protocols to guide the entry and exit of attendees, vendors, and others.

- COV and VPD formalizing early safety planning procedures, including standardized plans for frequent event spaces that integrate entry/exit control plans and “Area Ex” will enhance safety of events for attendees, workers, volunteers, and the surrounding community.

3. Develop guidelines on the use of hostile vehicle mitigation measures for outdoor special event planning.

- These guidelines will detail the use of hostile vehicle mitigation measures such as heavy vehicle barriers, light vehicle barriers, mobile vehicle barriers, the presence of police officers, private security, or contracted traffic control personnel. The guidelines will include the types of measures, responsibility of roles, and the financially sustainable use of these measures.
- The development of these guidelines should be informed by a robust business case that evaluates the deployment characteristics and operational and financial implications of each HVM strategy, weighing both benefits and challenges.

4. Explore expanding training, equipment, infrastructure and tools for event organizers and staff.

- Expanding training, planning resources, and access to safety equipment will enhance on-the-ground safety at special events by supporting event organizer staff and volunteers to be well-prepared, equipped with shared safety resources, and supported by consistent standardized guidance.
- These actions will help the COV and VPD support events with the appropriate level of public safety measures in place.

5. Advocate provincially and federally for standardized event safety legislation and resources, and for the development of a provincial incident response management guide. These measures would enhance public safety and improve coordination during and in response to major incidents. COV would be pleased to contribute to these efforts.

- Modernizing event guidelines with standard approaches, including nationally consistent tools and planning documents would enhance the safety and preparedness of communities across Canada. This would benefit Vancouver as we would learn from the expertise developing these tools and efficiencies could be shared between jurisdictions.
- A provincially developed incident management guide would support coordinated responses to outdoor special events mass casualty incidents, clarify roles and responsibilities for various government agencies and community partners, accelerate response and recovery activities (including donation management), and enable more efficient resource allocation across all levels of government. It would also improve public understanding of available support following such incidents.

The following recommendations are made for the design of the public realm:

6. Develop a Vancouver-specific framework for delivery of permanent hostile vehicle mitigation measures in the public realm, including:

- Formalization of roles in inter-agency (COV-VPD) collaboration to identify and prioritize public safety approaches in the design of new and retrofitted public spaces.

- Exploration of a vulnerability assessment process and tool to assess site vulnerability based on factors which could include crowd size, site symbolism, occupant vulnerability, vehicle access, event frequency, or similar characteristics.
- Development of a toolkit to provide guidance on design of hostile vehicle mitigation measures in different contexts, considering accessibility, public realm design, and other factors.

7. Assess new capital projects in the public realm through the hostile vehicle mitigation framework.

8. Propose capital funding allocation for the introduction of hostile vehicle mitigation into existing public spaces in the 2027-2030 Capital Plan, with consideration for ongoing operating costs related to hostile vehicle mitigation for events.

9. CONCLUSION

This Final Report builds upon the foundation laid by the Preliminary Report released on May 16, 2025. This Final Report provides a comprehensive examination of Vancouver's outdoor special event planning processes, a detailed account of the 2025 LLDBP planning and the tragic Incident, and information on immediate event safety modifications implemented in response.

This Final Report also: incorporates a thorough analysis of existing regulations, policies, and procedures; assesses compliance during the LLDBP planning; evaluates best practices from other jurisdictions for mitigating vehicle incursions, and; offers targeted recommendations for policy, planning, and design enhancements to bolster public safety while addressing community expectations around balanced security measures at events.

Informed by the findings of the British Columbia Commission of Inquiry into Community Events Safety, released on July 9, 2025, this Final Report acknowledges the positive observations the Commission made about the COV's and VPD's event planning and execution processes.

Vancouver is a large, dense city and a key destination for business, tourism, festivals, rallies, marches and events. On major event days there can be over a million visitors in addition to the 700,000 residents. Supporting public and community events is key to the city's vibrancy, livability, social cohesion, and economy - prioritizing public safety during events is an important part of making Vancouver a dynamic, welcoming, diverse, and culturally rich city.