

From: ["van Dyk, Donny"](#)

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

Date: 3/25/2026 9:17:44 AM

Subject: Memo - 2026 Water St Pedestrian Zone

Attachments: Memo - 2026 Water St Pedestrian Zone.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire. A brief summary is provided below:

- This memo provides an update on the 2026 Water Street Pedestrian Zone.
- Based on learnings from previous years and collaboration with the Gastown Business Improvement Society (GBIS), the 2026 Water Street Pedestrian Zone Days will take place on Sundays from 12pm to 8pm, starting July 5th through to September 6th, 2026.
- Sunday programming will be led by the GBIS, with funding and permitting support from the City.
- This spring, through the Gastown Public Spaces Plan, staff will be bringing recommendations on how to regularize an annual Pedestrian Zone program moving forward.

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

Thanks,

Donny

Donny van Dyk (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

March 24, 2026

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Donny van Dyk, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
Chris Freek, Director of Civic Engagement & Communications
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Teresa Jong, Administrative Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

FROM: Lon LaClaire
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: 2026 Water St Pedestrian Zone

RTS #: N/A

This memo provides an update on the 2026 Water Street Pedestrian Zone. As shared in an earlier memo, the Sundays-only Pedestrian Zone Days in Summer 2025 were well-received by both the public and Gastown businesses. The 2026 Pedestrian Zone Days are planned to follow a similar approach, with slight modifications based on learnings from previous years. The 2026 Water Street Pedestrian Zone Days will take place on Sundays from 12pm to 8pm, starting July 5 through to September 6, 2026.

2026 Water Street Pedestrian Zone Days

The 2025 Water Street Pedestrian Zone (full-length, Sunday-only closures from 10am to 6pm) was well-received by both the public and Gastown businesses, with 84 per cent of public survey respondents and 81 per cent of business survey respondents wanting the Pedestrian Zone to return in future summers. The 2026 Pedestrian Zone Days are planned to follow a similar approach, with Sunday closures of Water St from Richards St to Columbia St.

The data from Summer 2025 also showed that Water St remained an active area for people to gather and walk into the evenings. Based on those learnings and collaboration with the Gastown Business Improvement Society (GBIS), the 2026 Pedestrian Zone's hours will be shifted to start at 12pm and end at 8pm on Sundays.

The programming approach for 2026 will be similar to 2025, and will be led by the GBIS with support from the City. Programming will be led by the GBIS, building on 2025's "Gastown Sunday Set" theme and branding. The City is budgeting \$75,000 to support with programming, and will also support activation of the Pedestrian Zone through existing community placemaking programs. Additional costs will be covered by the GBIS. The City will continue providing low-barrier permitting processes through the Open Streets Permit to facilitate activations and business tools, like live music and market stalls.

Based on GBIS preferences, the first 2026 Pedestrian Zone Day will take place on Sunday, July 5 and the program will end on September 6.

Looking ahead

The 2024 and 2025 Water St Pedestrian Zone pilots were key learning opportunities to inform the Gastown Public Spaces Plan. Staff will share the draft Plan and next steps with Council this spring, including how to continue an annual Pedestrian Zone program and regularize the processes into existing streams of work moving forward.

Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any further questions about this project.



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

604.873.7336 | lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca