

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

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

Date: 4/22/2026 2:08:20 PM

Subject: Upcoming news release: Council approves people-first vision for Gastown

Dear Mayor and Council,

Following your approval with amendments of the Gastown Public Spaces Plan at this morning's Council meeting, I am writing to inform you that the City will be issuing the below news release to share details with the public.

Please keep this news release embargoed until it goes live from the City media email account.

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

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 səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Council approves people-first vision for Gastown

Today, Council approved the Gastown Public Spaces Plan, a comprehensive framework to guide future investment and renewal of Gastown's streets and public spaces.

The plan sets a long-term vision to strengthen Gastown as a welcoming, people-first neighbourhood that supports local businesses, daily life, cultural expression and public events. It was developed in response to [Council direction](#) and informed by [public engagement in 2023](#), learnings from two summer pilot programs testing pedestrian zones on Water Street and other improvements ([2024](#) and [2025](#)), ongoing partnership with the xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm (Musqueam Indian Band), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and səlilwətał (TsleilWaututh Nation), and close collaboration with the Gastown Business Improvement Society.

The plan outlines six key directions to guide future work, including:

- Partnering with local Nations to reflect their histories and cultures in Gastown's public spaces
- Enhancing Gastown's public space network and key gateways, including Maple Tree Square to centre daily life and support businesses
- Making Water Street a people-first, flexible, multimodal retail corridor that can host events and pedestrian zones
- Converting Cordova Street in Gastown to permanent two-way traffic with potential extension east to the Powell Overpass
- Strengthening streetscape character using resilient and accessible materials
- Improving neighbourhood safety, cleanliness and operations through coordinated City and partner services

"This plan sets a clear path for Gastown's future as a people-first neighbourhood for generations to come," said Mayor Ken Sim. "The Gastown Public Spaces Plan will support the long-term vitality of the neighbourhood while celebrating its history, supporting local businesses, and creating welcoming public spaces for residents and visitors alike."

The Water Street Pedestrian Zone will return for summer 2026, with Sunday road closures from noon to 8pm between July 5 and September 6, in collaboration with the [Gastown Business Improvement Society \(GBIS\)](#). The decision follows strong support from summer 2025 surveys, with 84% of public respondents and 81% of business respondents indicating they wanted the Sunday pedestrian zone to return. Programming will be led by the GBIS with City support.

What's next

Following Council approval, the City will engage with the community on future improvements as projects advance. More information about the Gastown Public Spaces Plan is available at vancouver.ca/gastown.

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Note to editors: Please see amended motion below. This is a draft copy provided for your understanding and the published minutes are the official record of the meeting.

- A. THAT Council approve the Gastown Public Spaces Plan, a holistic vision and framework to guide investment in Gastown, generally as outlined in the Report dated March 26, 2025, entitled "Gastown Public Spaces Plan" and presented in Appendix A of the same report.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to advance design for Maple Tree Square in alignment with the Plan and neighbourhood context, including partnerships with local Nations, engagement with the Gastown Business Improvement Society and the public, and implementation planning.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to proceed with actions as outlined in the Report dated March 26, 2025, entitled "Gastown Public Spaces Plan," including:
 - i. Improvements to the interim design on Water Street;
 - ii. Continued support and regularization of Sunday pedestrian zones on Water Street; and
 - iii. Technical work and engagement on the potential extension of two-way vehicle traffic on Cordova Street east to Powell Street Overpass.
- D. THAT Council direct staff to include residents, including organizations such as the Gastown Residents Association by way of example, in ongoing consultation initiatives related to Gastown investments and improvements.

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