



# Public Space

**Public plazas and gathering spaces play a vital role in public life, enabling celebrations and protests, community events, and neighbourly interaction. When designed and located well, they are vibrant spaces that allow lingering, and support local businesses with plenty of walk-by traffic.**

## Did You Know?

Public spaces are open and accessible to all, and free to use

Social interaction and creative expression in public spaces benefits our health, generates economic activity, and makes cities more vibrant and inspiring

Public spaces are enhanced and activated through a number of City programs, including Special Events, Street Vending (food and non-food), Busking, Public Art, and Green Streets

Vancouver's public spaces – our plazas, squares, streets, laneways, pathways, and waterfront – are where public life happens. These spaces are where we connect with the city and with each other. They are where community is created.

The City enables and encourages creative uses of streets and public rights-of-way through pilot projects, competitions, and funding partnerships, and also explores seasonal and permanent pedestrian-priority streets and spaces. In all cases, balancing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, transit, services, and delivery vehicles requires careful consideration.

## VIVA Vancouver

Public spaces that are welcoming and inclusive fulfill an important role in fostering social interactions and building community health.

VIVA Vancouver's goal is to support public space innovation and has several goals to help foster this. For example, to empower and support groups that are historically underrepresented in planning processes, to reduce barriers to participation in public life, and to foster a culture shift toward more equitable and inclusive public space.

Have you heard of the 'Pavement-to-Plazas' project? This initiative was Vancouver's first pavement-to-plaza project and was led by VIVA Vancouver. Inspired by New York and San Francisco, road space was converted into people places. Some examples include Jim Deva Plaza, Bute-Robson Plaza, and 18th-Cambie Plaza.



## Places for People Downtown Strategy

Everyone in Vancouver has the right to easily accessible public spaces. As our city grows and transforms, we'll see more people and activity downtown. We need to look at how we can help create and improve public spaces to bring our community together and allow us to remain a friendly and lively city.

Vancouver's downtown is home to more people, jobs, and activity than ever, and it plays a critical role as a cultural and economic centre for the city, region, and province. A vibrant, accessible, and walkable downtown makes Vancouver an appealing destination for residents, employees, and visitors alike. By offering appealing public spaces on our streets, we

can strengthen the downtown's role as a gathering place for the city and region.



## Types of Public Spaces in Vancouver



**Plazas** are largely related to destinations and landmarks. As vibrant spaces, public plazas can support local businesses while encouraging sustainable modes of transportation like walking, cycling, and transit.

Can you think of any examples of a plaza near you? For example, Jack Poole Plaza in Vancouver's Coal Harbour.



**Waterfront Parks & Seawalls** invite locals and visitors alike to enjoy our beautiful natural setting.

Vancouver's Seawall is a popular destination for active recreation, with many people out walking, biking and running. It also serves as a popular bike commute route. In the summer many choose to stop and stay, enjoying the views and making use of the large green spaces for rest, picnics and play.



**Streets** serve as the connective tissue of the city and get people from A to B. Streets account for the majority of the public realm and are a primary scene of public life.

Have you ever taken a selfie in Vancouver's 'Alley Oop' or perhaps simply paused along a quiet street for a moment of calmness?

As our city continues to densify, public spaces become the outdoor living rooms for everyday activities, make our city more interesting and exciting, and help create a sense of identity and place. If you would like to contribute to the future of public spaces within Vancouver, be sure to check out the '**Shape Your City**' website for updates for the latest community engagement opportunities at [www.shapeyourcity.ca](http://www.shapeyourcity.ca)