

Welcome

The City of Vancouver has been approached by a development team (developer, architect, and property owner) about a potential redevelopment of the Safeway site located at 1780 East Broadway, at Commercial Drive.

The Grandview-Woodland Community Plan provides guidance about how this site should redevelop and sets a requirement to provide a new at-grade public plaza on the site. The development team is proposing that the plaza be located at an alternative location, over the Grandview Cut.

Community feedback will be used to inform next steps in the process, as the City considers the rezoning enquiry.

This Event Will Discuss:

- The approved policies for the safeway plaza
- The proposed alternative
- Factors to consider when assessing plaza location, design, programming and use.

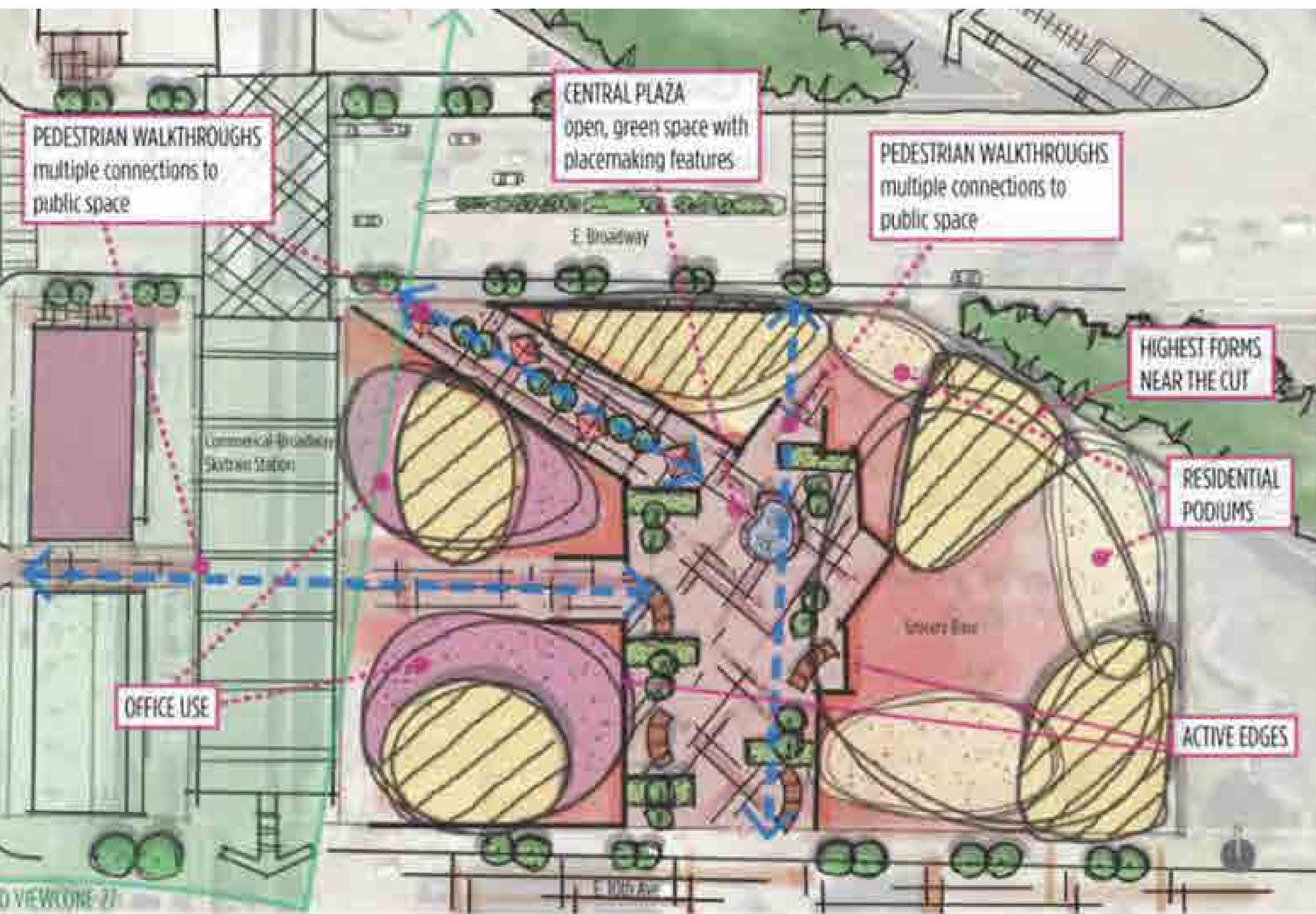
We want your feedback!

Should the City of Vancouver explore an alternative location for the plaza?



Grandview-Woodland

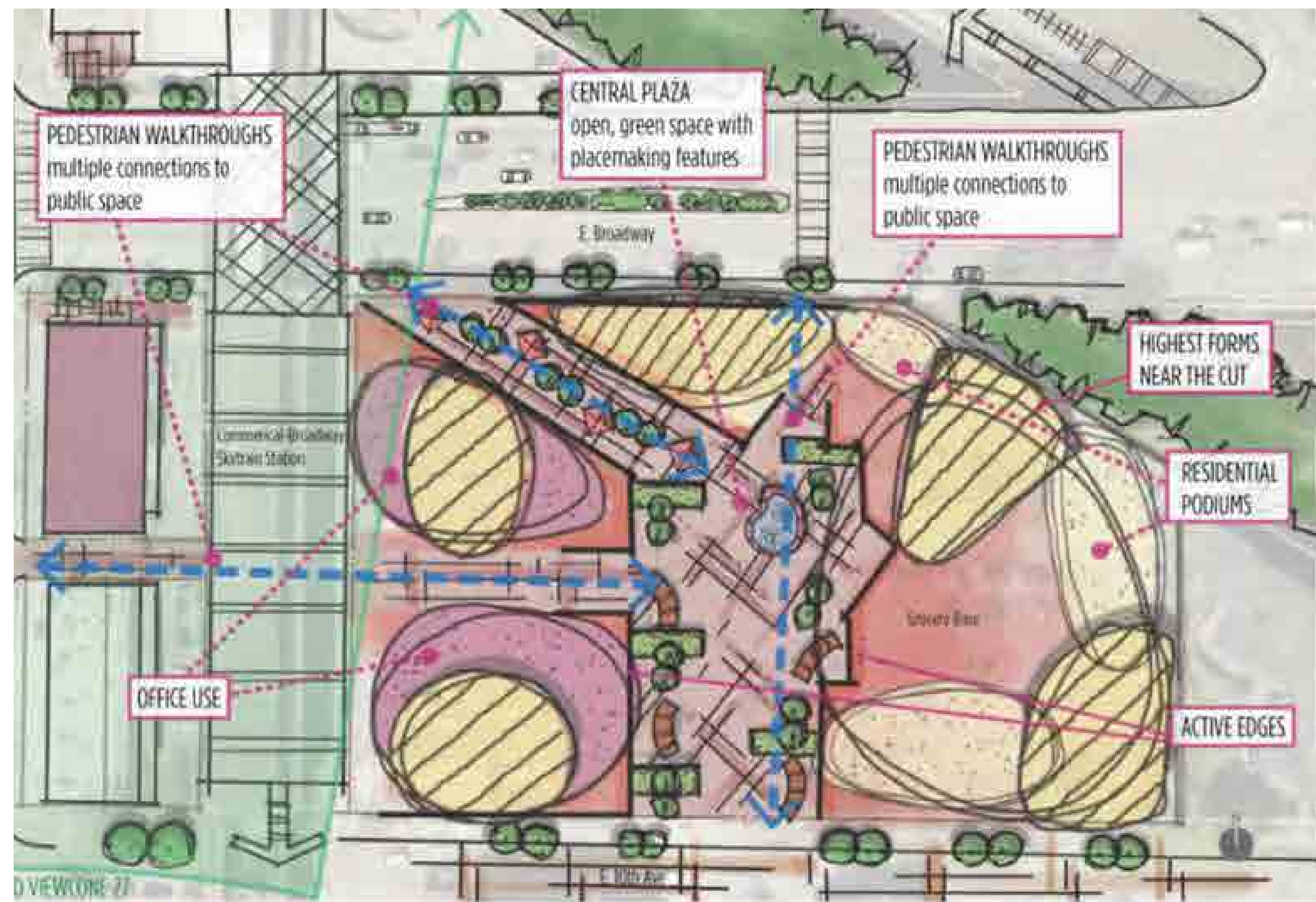
Community Plan Policy



Safeway Site Plaza (s.6.7.1):

Seek a generous, centrally-located public plaza at grade, ideally located near the middle of the site. Ensure the following considerations are taken into account:

- Building arrangement to optimize the use of public open space
- Ensure the site design supports vibrancy in the plaza with varied, grocery and small-scale retail space, office and residential entrances fronting and/or overlooking the open space
- Shading/solar access
- SkyTrain noise mitigation
- Range of programming and uses
- Accessibility, sight lines and design considerations to address public safety
- Highest building forms will be situated adjacent to the Grandview Cut to minimize shadowing of the plaza



Approved Community-Wide Policy - Plazas (s.9.2):

- Create new plazas to support public gathering and enhance existing gathering spaces
- Pursue new and improved hard-surfaced plaza areas as part of key new developments. Programming should consider cultural programming, markets, outdoor theatre, kid's festivals, and weather-proofing measures
- Priority locations include the Broadway and Commercial Safeway Site

General Community Plan References to the On-Site Plaza Describe its Intent as:

- A new social heart of the community
- The primary gathering and social place at the southern end of Grandview-Woodland
- A sunny, welcoming, delightful and people-friendly civic plaza

* This **conceptual diagram** is for illustrative purposes only. It is not intended to be prescriptive but to clearly illustrate one concept that could fulfill the intent of this plan. Detailed project design could alter the elements of the concept plan.

(Page 112-113 of the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan, July 2016).

Proposed Alternative Location Over the Grandview Cut

A local development team (Crombie REIT/ Safeway, Westbank and BTA Architects) has approached the City with an interest in rezoning the Safeway site. As part of early discussions, they have indicated that the potential redevelopment of a new grocery store on the existing Safeway will limit their ability to provide a centrally located public plaza.

They are proposing an alternative location for the plaza, which would bridge over the Grandview Cut on the east side of Commercial Drive, adjacent to (and under) the Skytrain guideway.

While is only conceptual, the development team has suggested that the alternative plaza will:

- Maximize community use and positive impact on the surrounding urban environment
- “Heal the divide” created by the Grandview Cut
- Serve as a true community gathering area
- Offer space for temporary performances, markets, and other programming opportunities (including patios, kiosks, and other seating areas)
- Have a meaningful connection to Commercial Drive and contribute to its energy
- Offer a generous meeting area for people travelling to and from transit
- Accomodate the major flows of people entering the Skytrain station at its north and south entrances.



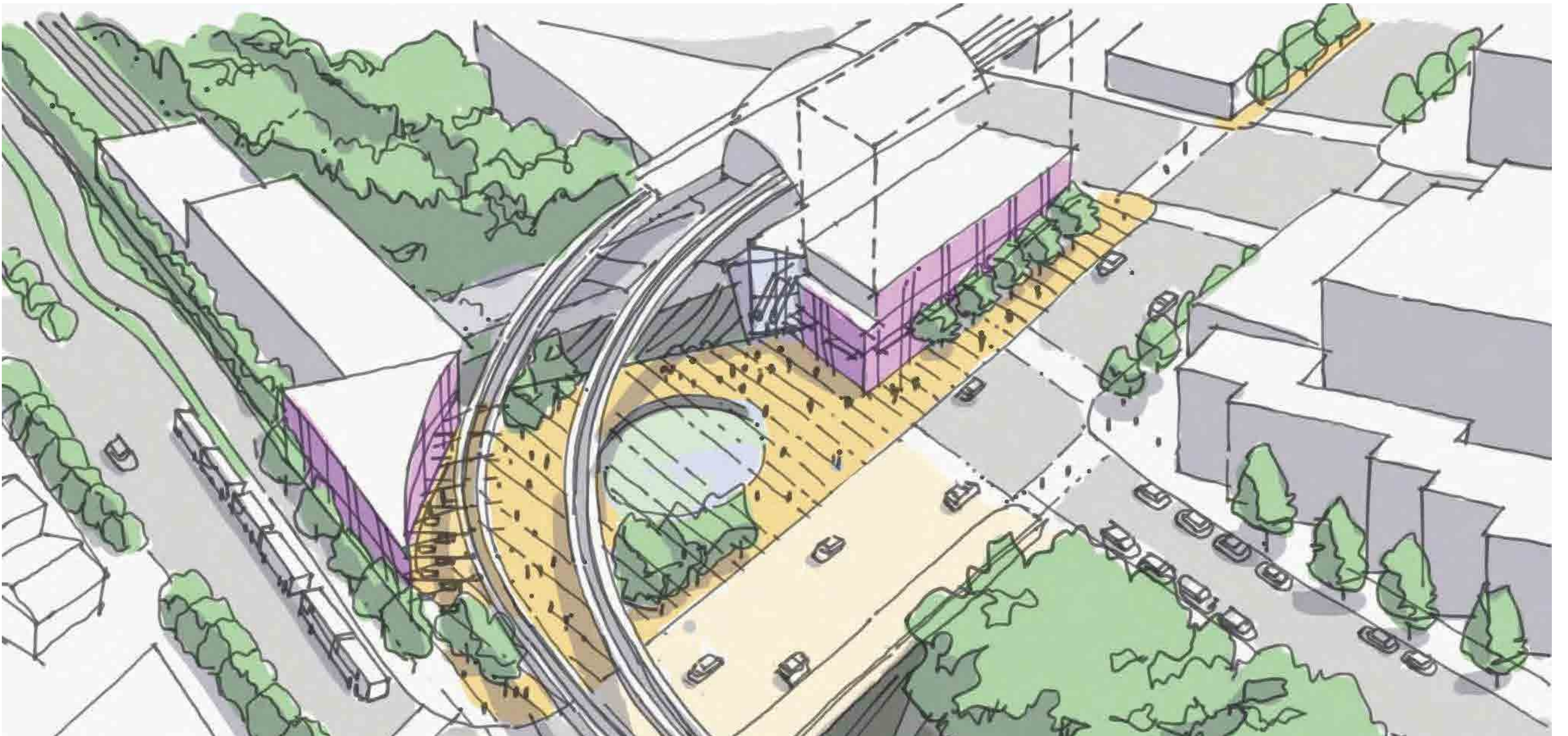
Approved Plaza Location

Per Community Plan Policy

Conceptual rendering of the plaza, located per approved Community Plan policy



Conceptual rendering of the plaza, in proposed alternative location



Community Input

Community Plan Process

Early community planning process & Emerging Directions (2013)

- Creation of plaza area at NE corner E 10th and Commercial (Emerging Directions)

Broadway & Commercial Workshop #1 (2013)

- Strong support for the idea of a plaza; however, no consensus on location. Possibilities discussed: Broadway and Commercial; Broadway and E 10th; or located near station (e.g. within the area bounded by Commercial, E 10th, Broadway and Victoria)

Broadway & Commercial workshop #2 (2015)

- Strong support for the idea of a plaza in the Broadway & Commercial area; however, divergent opinions about where the plaza should go, including at the intersection of Broadway & Commercial; near the bridges, near the station area, near 10th Avenue; and on the Safeway site.
- There was also the opinion that multiple plazas and gathering areas are needed.

Citizens' Assembly Final Report (2015)

- Citizens' Assembly members assessed the aforementioned feedback and recommended locating the plaza on the Safeway site, as part of future redevelopment.
- The Assembly tested a draft version of this recommendation with the community during a public open house; and a refined version was incorporated as part of their final report (presented to City Council in June 2015).
- Citizens' Assembly recommendations were then used as a basis for the Community Plan.

Citizens' Assembly Recommendation 16.1. *We expect the City to create a welcoming viable public plaza at the Safeway site. This south-oriented plaza should be visible to pedestrians at the main intersection and have multiple pedestrian access points.... The plaza should have an open feel and must connect to the Skytrain Greenway.... [It] is intended as a pedestrian area... and must be vibrant and safe for everyone...*





Good public plazas: factors to consider

Edges

To encourage the creation of an 'urban room,' plazas can have defined edges. These can include surrounding buildings, or other features (landscaping, stairs, art, water features, etc.) which can help to define the perimeter and help to infuse the space with public life. A sense of 'containment' creates an intimate, social environment.

Good public plazas: factors to consider



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Edges can include surrounding buildings, which can help to **define the perimeter** and help to infuse the space with public life. Other features, such as roads, landscaping, and water can serve this purpose as well. Stronger, more defined edges, are generally considered desirable. A **sense of ‘containment’** creates an intimate, social environment.

Classic plaza design (found in places like Europe, south and central America), generally incorporates well-defined edges – often multi-storey buildings with a variety of ground floor uses: cafes and bars, stores, etc. Other surrounding buildings can include places of worship, civic buildings, and cultural institutions. To a lesser degree, streets and other transportation infrastructure can also be used to define edges.

Approved Community Plan Policy

- Building arrangement to optimize the use of public open space.
- Site design that ensures vibrancy in the plaza with varied, grocery and small-scale retail space, office and residential entrances fronting and/or overlooking the open space.
- Conceptual diagrams note opportunity for ‘active edges’

Proposed Alternative

- Proposed concepts suggest a more open space, with a smaller retail “edge” in the NE corner of the site
- SkyTrain tracks and Commercial Drive also comprise a type of “edge condition”

A photograph of a public plaza with several rows of colorful picnic tables (yellow, orange, pink, blue) made of wood. People are sitting and walking around. In the background, there are trees with green and yellow leaves, a street with cars, and a traffic light. A semi-transparent blue banner is at the top.

Good public plazas: factors to consider

Connectivity

In order for a plaza to be well-used it has to be both easy to get to, and easy to move through. It can benefit from having connection with other public spaces.

Good public plazas: factors to consider



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Classic plaza design typically features **multiple ways to enter and leave** an open space, as well as **various pathways through a given space**. These sorts of linkages can be realized through the addition of connecting pathways, arcades and other features (including **pedestrian walkways, steps, and bridges**) – each of which can be reinforced through features such as landscaping and trees, signage, and paving patterns. As noted in the City’s Plaza Design Guidelines, “**a plaza should be linked to other surrounding open spaces**, as well as interior spaces such as lobbies, to create a dynamic pedestrian network.”

With regard to the Safeway plaza, both the approved location described in policy, and proposed alternative locates, locate a plaza near the region’s largest transit hub.

Approved Community Plan Policy

- Accessibility and sight lines – which support goals of connectivity
- Conceptual diagrams note pedestrian walkthroughs – and other connections to surrounding public spaces – including the station, Commercial Drive, Broadway, and the E10th Avenue bikeway
- The on-site plaza would likely front E 10th Avenue

Proposed Alternative

- The plaza would front onto Commercial Drive, and face a high-volume pedestrian sidewalk
- Plaza location is seen as a way to “heal the cut” and bridge north-south connections along Commercial Drive



Good public plazas: factors to consider

Sun, shade & weather

Access to sun is important. Warmth and sunshine are major attractions in public plazas. When the weather is inclement, protection from rain, excess heat, or wind is also key.

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As suggested by designers Clare Marcus and Carolyn Francis, “a plaza should be located so as to receive as much **sunlight** as its surrounding environment will permit. The seasonal movement of the sun and the existing and proposed structures must all be taken into account so that the plaza will receive the maximum amount of **summer and winter sunshine**.”

In addition to a good weather forecast, solar access is also a consequence of the surrounding buildings. Buildings located to the south/south-west of a plaza can be designed to ensure that they **don’t cast a shadow over the open space**. Additional design features – such as canopies, arcades, glazing and building design, can be used to provide **shade, protection from rain**, and minimization of high winds.

Approved Community Plan Policy

- Buildings on the Safeway site are required to take shading and solar access into account. Proposed concepts locate higher buildings to the north where shadowing will impact Broadway, and lower buildings to the south to minimize loss of sun onto the Safeway site
- New buildings to the south of the site (south side of E 10th) must consider public realm enhancements that support adjacent plazas, bike routes, or shared spaces

Proposed Alternative

- A plaza on the east side of Commercial will have minimal shadowing based on the current height of surrounding buildings
- The building (2-storey office/retail) on the NE corner of Broadway & Commercial is zoned for 10-storey office development – which could create shadowing impacts on the proposed site.



Good public plazas: factors to consider

Acoustics

How noisy, or quiet should a plaza be? It depends on what kind of functions are envisioned. A comfortable level of background noise can encourage people to talk, linger, and laugh. In other cases, the volume of noise is louder with the hustle and bustle of activity.

Good public plazas: factors to consider



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The City’s Plaza Design Guidelines suggest that “high levels of traffic, industrial and other ambient **noises detract from the enjoyment of a plaza.**” Similarly, urban theorist Jan Gehl says that “**being able to hear and talk** are important qualities in urban public space.” While this may seem straightforward, a normal conversation is about 60 decibels (dB), and every 8 decibels more than that, is actually perceived as a doubling of volume.

Noise can be partially mitigated by detracting attention from the noise source through the introduction of such elements as fountains or waterfalls.

Approved Community Plan Policy

- The community plan suggested an at-grade plaza “ideally located” in the middle of the Safeway site. This location would assist with buffering against SkyTrain and traffic noise.
- Current noise conditions mid-site, mid-afternoon are approximately 71 decibels (dB)*

Proposed Alternative

- The alternative concept proposes a plaza located adjacent to, over, and under, the SkyTrain tracks, and facing Commercial Drive.
- Acoustic testing is required to fully understand the implications; however, current volumes adjacent to the proposed site range are approx. 82 dB.* Under the SkyTrain guideway during train pass-overs the volume is approx. 85-90 dB.
- Buffering of SkyTrain noise may be possible in this location (to be determined)

* Figures shown reflect the average for a min 10+ minute average sample taken between 2-2:30pm on Wednesday, June 7th, 2017.



Good public plazas: factors to consider

Amenities

Plazas can benefit from an array of supporting amenities, such as seating (moveable or fixed), tables, bathrooms, drinking fountains and more. These sorts of features can encourage people to linger, meet friends, and ensure a space is a comfortable for users of all ages.

Good public plazas: factors to consider



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As part of general policies for the public realm, the Community Plan calls for the provision of “more and better public **seating and tables** ... with a focus on shopping streets and other destination areas such as parks and plazas...” Other policies call for **public art**, improved public **bathrooms**, **drinking fountains**, waste and **recycling receptacles**, and other features (see Grandview-Woodland Community Plan, section 9.3 – Public Realm Features, p.161).

It is expected that specific public realm features would be identified through more detailed design work and concept refinement later in the process.

Approved Community Plan Policy

- No site specific policies around amenities on the site; requires planning around a “range of programming and uses.”

Proposed Alternative

- No specific amenities or features noted at this time.



Good public plazas: factors to consider

Sustainable design

Plaza design and development can incorporate principles of sustainable design, and in so doing, support a range of 'green' goals. This can include enriching the surrounding landscape, making use of natural materials, and supporting the use of sustainable transportation options.



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While sustainability can be a general consideration at this point, there is an expectation that the **environmental performance** of a given plaza option would be further assessed when the initial plaza concept is designed in more detail.

Approved Community Plan Policy

- No specific sustainable design concept to evaluate at this time
- The site is located adjacent to the SkyTrain station, and on the E 10th bikeway. It is close to Commercial Drive - proposed for Complete Street design improvements

Proposed Alternative

- No specific sustainable design concept to evaluate at this time
- The alternative plaza extends over the Grandview Cut, which was identified by the community as a valued greenspace
- The site is located adjacent to the SkyTrain station, and is close to Commercial Drive - proposed for Complete Street design improvements



Good public plazas: factors to consider

Views & visibility

Plazas can be designed to consider the visual environment in two ways: by enabling views from the plaza to the surrounding landscape (buildings, street life, or natural setting) and by ensuring that the plaza itself is visible from nearby areas.

Good public plazas: factors to consider



Plazas can be designed to consider the visual environment in two ways: by enabling views of the surrounding landscape (buildings, street life, or natural setting) and by ensuring that the plaza itself is visible from nearby areas.

As the City's Plaza Design Guidelines note, "**good street-to-plaza visibility** announces the plaza's internal attractions. It signifies that it is a public space." This is further enhanced by opportunities to have a **visual connection with adjacent streets**, which reinforces safety. The Guidelines further suggest that "a plaza should ... take advantage of **distant views** to the mountains, ocean and other landmarks wherever possible."

Approved Community Plan Policy

- Identifies requirement for "accessibility, sight lines and design considerations to address public safety concerns."
- Conceptual diagrams suggest focus on interior plaza space and surrounding stores/buildings, with additional visual connections to adjacent streets

Proposed Alternative

- Would have strong visual connections to Commercial Drive
- Support views down to the West and East along the Grandview Cut



Good public plazas: factors to consider

Safety

In order for a plaza to be well-used, it has to feel safe and comfortable for everyone.

Good public plazas: factors to consider



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Key elements of safety include the opportunity for “**natural surveillance**,” which involves good sightlines, and the opportunity for casual observation (this is the sort of feature that Jane Jacobs referred to as “**eyes on the street**”).

A second element includes a sense of territoriality – enough of a **feeling of public ownership** over the space that people will act in times of need (e.g. offering assistance, calling for help). While it may seem obvious, both of these are further premised on a key ingredient: the presence of other people. As the old maxim goes, there is **safety in numbers**.

Safety can be further supported through careful design (**minimizing places to hide**, providing **multiple entrances and exits**), **lighting**, a variety of surrounding uses (see Edges) and barriers to protect plaza users against adjacent street traffic.

Approved Community Plan Policy

- Policy identifies requirement for “accessibility, sight lines and design considerations to address public safety concerns.”
- Conceptual approach would encircle the plaza with residential, office, and retail uses – supporting natural surveillance and “eyes on the plaza

Proposed Alternative

- Would front Commercial Drive and benefit from pedestrian, cycling and car traffic on Commercial Drive, along with “eyes on the plaza” via adjacent buildings.



Good public plazas: factors to consider

Stewardship

Plazas are about more than just design and use. They can benefit from stewardship approaches that attend to some or all of the following: overall management, the organization or scheduling of activities and events, maintenance, fundraising, among other operational considerations.

Good public plazas: factors to consider



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There are a variety of stewardship models that can be used to enhance the operation of a plaza, ensuring that it responds to the needs of the local community (no one-size-fits-all approach works for every space). Often times, stewardship programs will involve one or more **management structures** (e.g. local government, a non-profit, or management board, a committee stakeholders, a local “friends-of” group, business association, or combination of these and/or other entities).

It is anticipated that a discussion around stewardship approaches would take place at a later stage in the development process.

Approved Community Plan Policy

- No specific stewardship approach identified at this time

Proposed Alternative

- No specific stewardship approach identified at this time



Good public plazas: factors to consider

Activities & Programming

Along with more casual day-to-day activities (such as sitting, eating, people-watching), a good, flexibly designed plaza can be designed to support a variety of special events.



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Special events require particular considerations: an appropriate setting, flexible **performance space**, **loading** and unloading, **seating**, staging and back-of-house areas, on site storage, additional event facilities (food, washrooms, etc.). These may vary depending on the event (e.g. **concert** vs. **street festival** vs. **farmers market**), and plazas that are designed for flexible use will incorporate some or all of the aforementioned features. In addition, other features identified – such as ambient **noise levels**, **weather-proofing**, etc. – will also impact what sorts of events are able to take place.

The broader community plan calls for the creation of plaza spaces that:

- support community events, such as markets, performances, and festival activities; and, related activities.
- Programming should consider cultural programming, markets, outdoor theatre, kid’s festivals, and weather proofing measures.
- Maximize opportunities for cultural use of plazas, through the provision of festival/event infrastructure such as power, water, grey water disposal, and loading, and secure storage and back of house space.

Approved Community Plan Policy

- A range of programming and uses on site
- The location of the plaza could make it a factor in neighbourhood events

Proposed Alternative

- Initial concept discussions suggest various programming opportunities (performances, patios, kiosks, seating)
- the position of the plaza could make it a factor in neighbourhood events

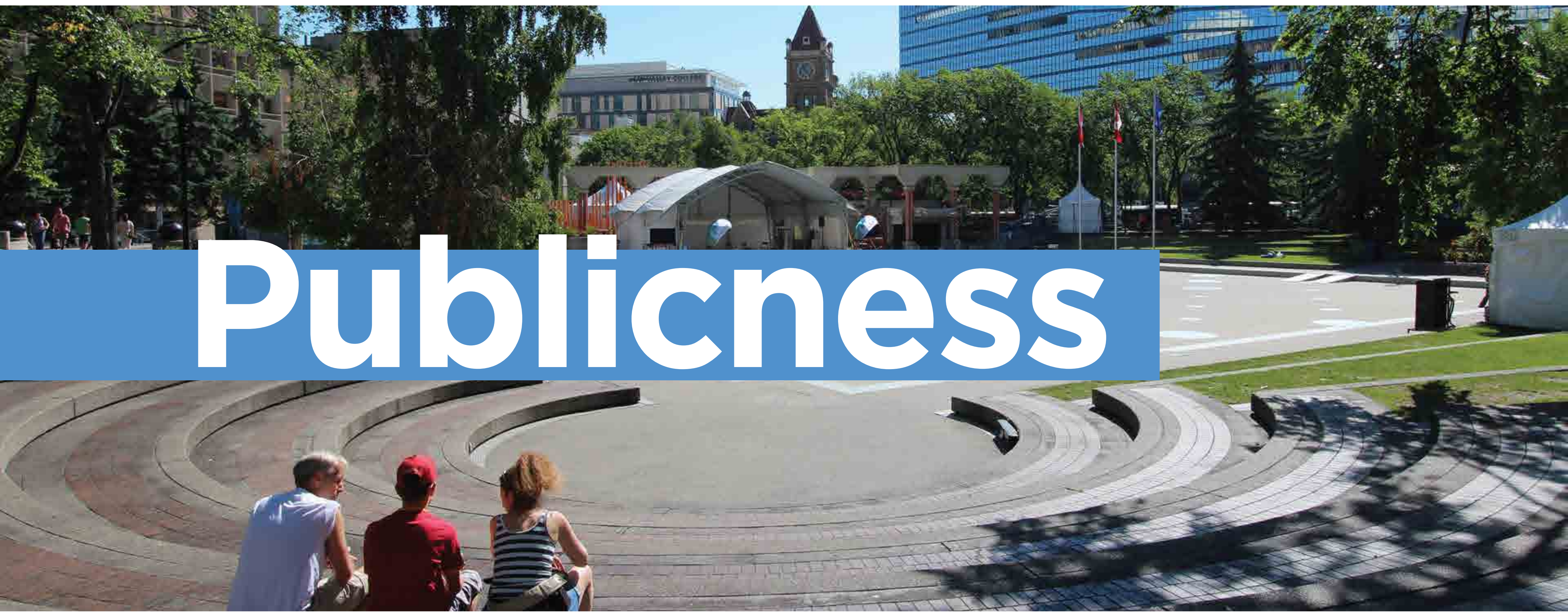


Good public plazas: factors to consider

Publicness

Plazas have a long history of informal and formal social and democratic functions. In addition, plazas can play an important role in fostering social inclusion – ensuring a public space that is open to all, regardless of age, gender, income, ability, or background.

Good public plazas: factors to consider



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As a forum for public life, **plazas serve as gathering areas**, supporting **meetings, protests, celebrations, vigils, flashmobs**, and spontaneous gatherings of all sorts. They can also be a relaxing space in which to watch other people, listen to a busker, or meet a date or co-worker for a coffee.

The idea of “publicness” refers to the degree to which **a plaza ‘reads’ as public space** (versus private property). The overall sense of publicness can affect the level engagement that community feels with the space. It can be influenced by the presence (or absence) of amenities, programming, welcome signage, advertising, security features, and any other features that welcome (or discourage) the use of the space.

Approved Community Plan Policy

- No specific policies around publicness; however the Plan describes the Safeway plaza as “[A] new social heart for the community”; “the primary gathering and social place at the southern end of Grandview Woodland” and “a ... welcoming, delightful and people friendly civic plaza.”

Proposed Alternative

- No specific policies around publicness;



Safeway Plaza Discussion Feedback Form

The City of Vancouver has been approached by a development team (developer, architect, and property owner) about a potential redevelopment of the Safeway site located at 1780 East Broadway, at Commercial Drive.

The Grandview-Woodland Community Plan provides guidance about how this site should redevelop and sets a requirement to provide a new at-grade public plaza on the site. The development team is proposing that the plaza be located at an alternative location, over the Grandview Cut.

Community feedback will be used to inform next steps in the process, as the City considers the rezoning enquiry.

Please email your answers to the following questions to grandviewplan@vancouver.ca by Friday, June 16th, 2017.

An Alternative Plaza Location?

1. Should the City consider an alternative location? Please indicate your level of support for the proposed alternative location over the Grandview Cut.

- ☐ Strongly support
- ☐ Support
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Opposed
- ☐ Strongly Opposed
- ☐ Not sure

Additional comments:

2. Based on your review of the Factors, what do you think are the most important considerations for evaluating a public plaza?

Good Plaza Design and Plaza Activities?

3. Setting aside the question of location, what sorts of activities would you like to see in a future plaza?

4. Do you have a favourite public plaza or square (in Vancouver or elsewhere?) If yes, which one and why?

Tell us about yourself

5. Which of the following describes you?

Please select all that apply

- ☐ I live in Grandview-Woodland Plan area
- ☐ I work in the Grandview-Woodland Plan area
- ☐ I go to school in the Grandview-Woodland Plan area
- ☐ I was involved in the community plan process

6. What's the closest intersection to your place of residence?

7. Which age group do you belong to?

- ☐ 19 or younger
- ☐ 20-29
- ☐ 30-49
- ☐ 50-65
- ☐ 66-79
- ☐ 80 or older

8. What do you identify as?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other: _____

Thank you for you feedback!

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