



Places for People Downtown

Vancouver's public spaces—our plazas, squares, streets, laneways, pathways, and waterfront—are where public life happens.

These places and spaces are where we interact with the city on a daily basis, as we work, play, create, explore and connect with each other.

Great public spaces are **Places for People!**



CITY OF VANCOUVER
Planning, Urban Design & Sustainability

A New Way to Think About Public Space



Why we need a strategy for public space in Downtown Vancouver

Downtown is the heart of our city, and home to some of the most popular public spaces in Vancouver. It’s also an area that’s growing with more residents, businesses and visitors each year. This means increased demand on our public space network in the future. Since space and opportunities are limited in our vibrant Downtown core, we need to be creative and strategic in how we deliver public space.

Through **Places for People | Downtown** we will create **a comprehensive strategy to coordinate and deliver Downtown public space over the next 30 years.**

This is the first phase of a public space strategy for the broader City Core area. Future phases will include the Downtown Eastside and False Creek Flats, and the communities south of False Creek.



What will the strategy do?

The strategy will provide the following:

- A clear vision, values and principles for downtown public spaces;
- An inventory of existing public spaces, with an understanding of what’s missing and could be improved;
- Guidance on privately-owned public spaces (POPS) retention, usage and design, and direction on other key public space issues (e.g. diversity of space, programming and design, sponsorship, stewardship, etc.); and
- A strategic framework to prioritize and coordinate the delivery of public space initiatives, to shape a vibrant public space network.

Process Schedule

The 18-month planning process will consist of four main phases:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | SUMMER 2017
Launch: Vision, values & favourite places |
| 2 | FALL 2017
Public space / public life study & policy testing |
| 3 | WINTER/SPRING 2018
Strategic directions |
| 4 | SUMMER/FALL 2018
Draft strategy & report to council |

What areas in Downtown are we looking at?



*Ongoing Northeast False Creek planning process: vancouver.ca/nefc

First Nations

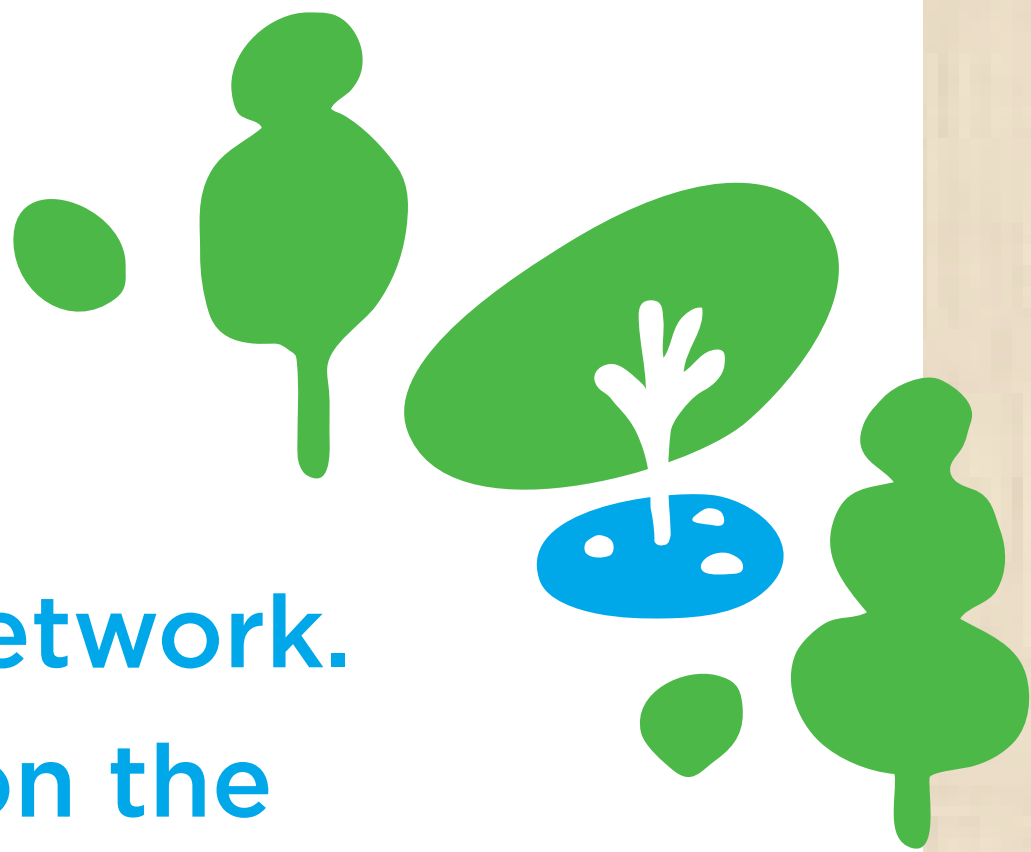
Downtown Vancouver is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

For thousands of years these lands have been their home.

Places for People Downtown will consider opportunities for:



- Public space in the street right-of-way (wider sidewalks, street-to-plaza conversions and laneway improvements)
- Public spaces on City-owned or other public lands? (plazas and open spaces)
- Privately-owned public spaces (POPS) (such as office plazas)



VanPlay: Imagine Parks & Recreation

Parks play a key role in our public space network. We are coordinating with the Park Board on the ongoing citywide Parks and Recreation Master Plan process—VanPlay—as it relates to the downtown area.

vancouver.ca/vanplay

VIVA Vancouver

VIVA Vancouver—the City’s tactical public space and testing program—pilots potential future public spaces and ideas throughout the city, enlivening and reimagining existing spaces, and removing barriers that discourage public life. This year a number of pop-up activations will take place. Lessons learned will shape program priorities moving forward.

vancouver.ca/viva

Get Involved!

Help us create exceptional, vibrant, and memorable public spaces, places, and experiences in the Downtown. We want to hear about your favourite public spaces, what you like or dislike about current spaces, your ideas for the future and more! Visit us online to learn about ways to get involved and provide feedback:

vancouver.ca/placesforpeople

Volunteers Wanted!

Participate in the Public Space & Public Life Study

To support this project, the City will be conducting a Public Space and Public Life Study of the Downtown. The study will evaluate the quality and attributes of public spaces and observe how public spaces are used by people.

Do you have a passion for public space planning and urban design and take pride in this city? We are looking for engaged, committed and enthusiastic individuals to help us with the the study.

If you are interested in volunteering or have questions, contact us at

placesforpeople@vancouver.ca

In the Downtown, do you have a space to...



Your responses and ideas to these questions and others will help us plan the right spaces and places for you to enjoy Downtown life to the fullest!

What's your **B | G** (^{or} little)
idea for public space in
Downtown Vancouver?

Write
your
idea.



Take a
picture
with it



Post it!

#placesforpeoplevan

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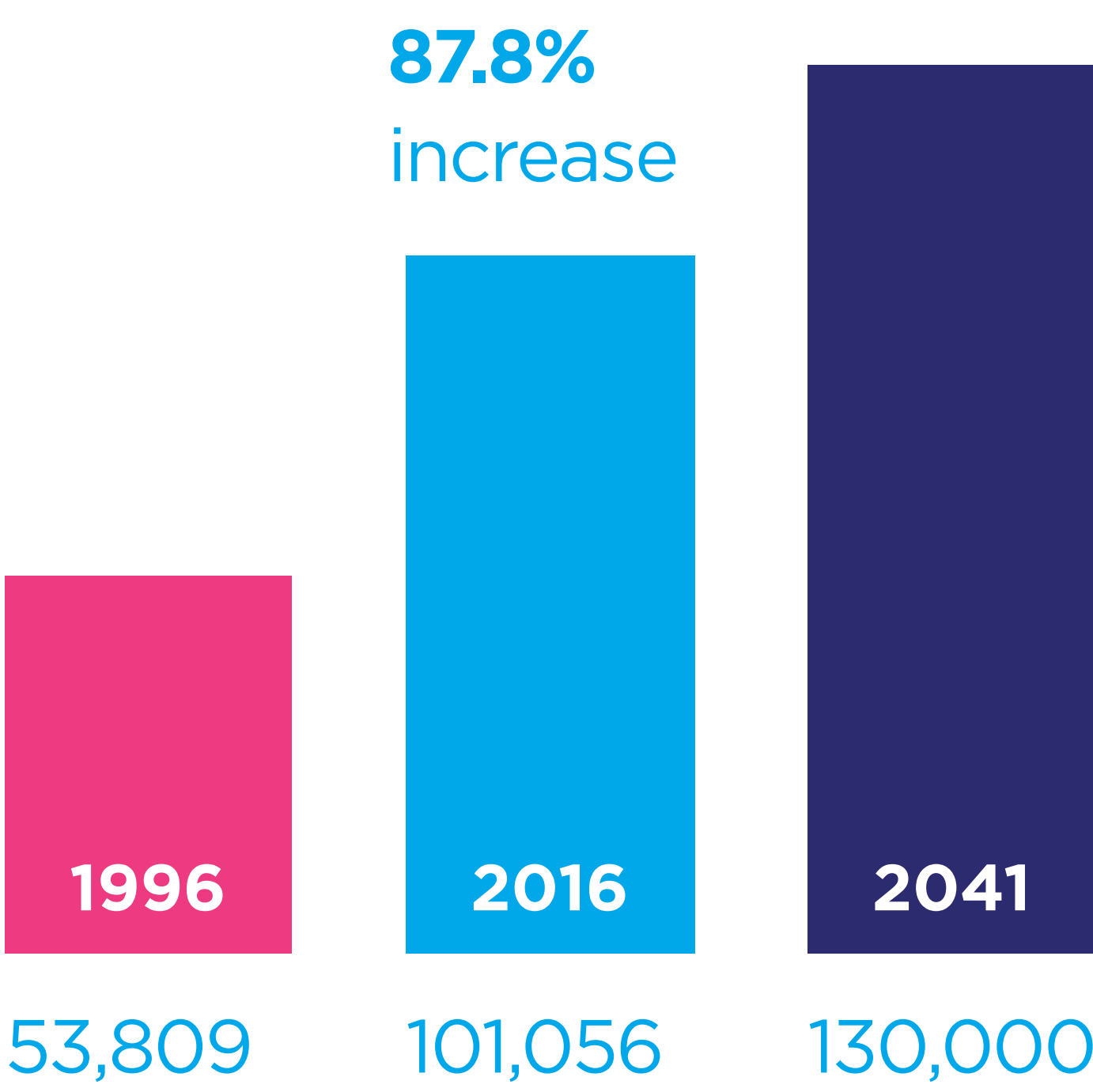
Downtown in Focus: Addressing Challenges

Vancouver has a vibrant, diverse and densely populated downtown, set against a stunning natural backdrop.

With opportunities for working, living and play in close proximity, Downtown offers a complete urban experience. But, an intensifying core also brings complex challenges that require a comprehensive strategy to ensure a welcoming and well-connected public space network.

A Growing Population

How can the existing Downtown public space network work harder to meet demands of a growing population?



Diverse Incomes

The majority of Downtown residents have low and modest incomes. How do we ensure that our public spaces are welcoming to all?

—Average household income is \$44,333 (2011) as compared to a citywide average income of \$56,113)

Limited Land

—How do we deliver new spaces with a limited land supply?

Changing Attitudes

New ways of living and working are having profound effects on how we use and interpret our cities. Many people can now work anywhere and just as easily they can move from city to city, or around the globe.

—How do we consider a more mobile population who want unique and active urban experiences when planning and designing our public spaces?



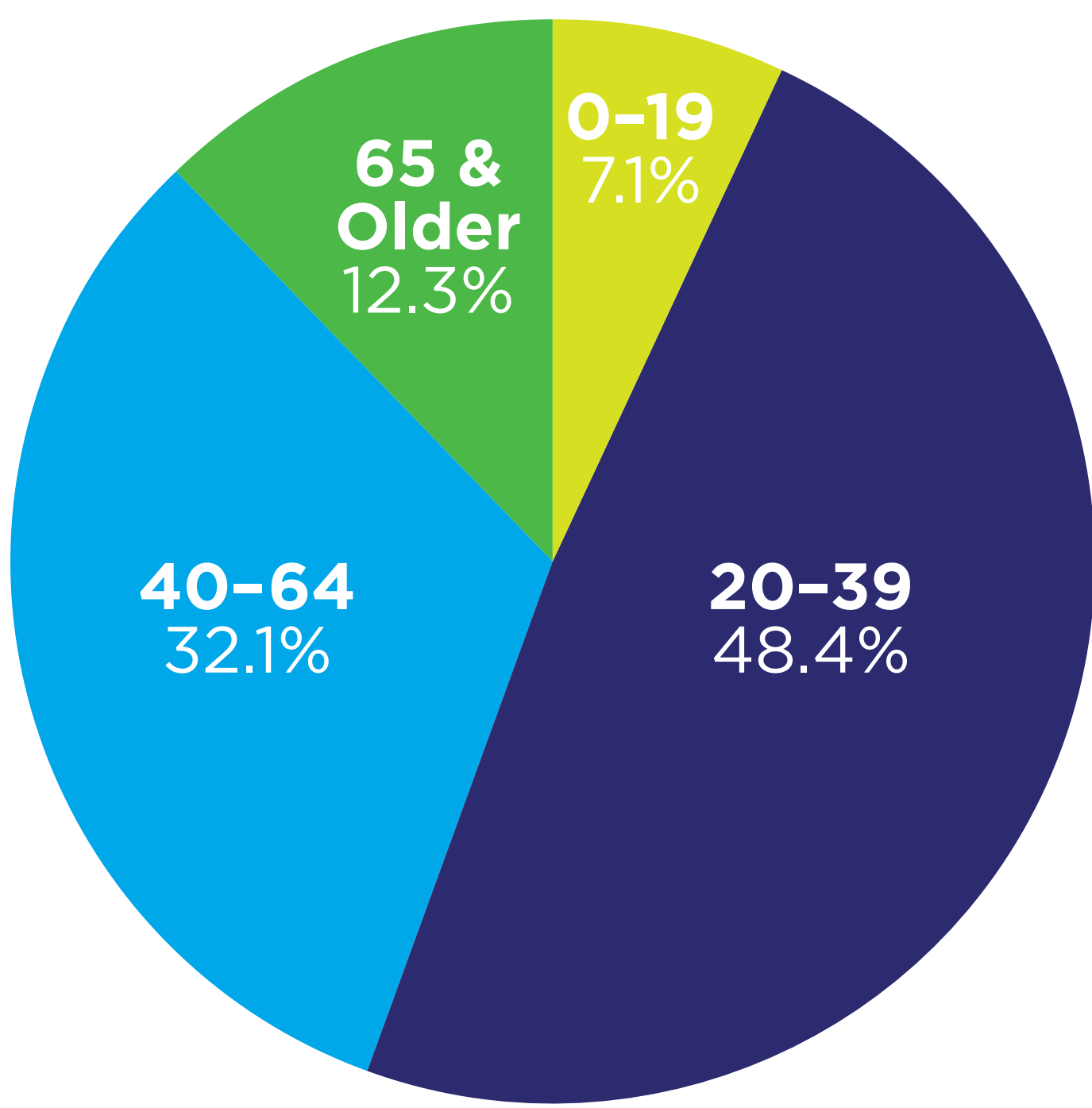
Feeling Connected

According to research by the Vancouver Foundation, it's hard to make friends in Vancouver, leading to a sense of disconnection and isolation.

—How do we promote stronger community ties and social connection through the design, programing and use of our public spaces?

Young and Old

Downtown residents are generally younger than those living elsewhere in the city



—How do we ensure public spaces are accessible and attractive to Vancouverites of all ages and abilities?

Community Momentum

There is significant interest from the public, business and community groups in creating more and better public spaces, including the business improvement associations (BIAs) that are actively engaged in a number of public space initiatives in recent years.

—How do we continue to build upon community partnerships and empower the public to get involved in the creation, stewardship and activation of our public spaces?



Urban Families

There are 4,000 children aged 14 or under living in the Downtown, primarily in the West End and False Creek North. In 2011, there were 8.51 children/ha, which exceeds the citywide average of 6.2 children/ha.

—How do we ensure safe and fun spaces for kids of all ages?

More Compact Spaces

Nearly all downtown residents live in apartment buildings, and the majority are tenants. Neighbourhood plazas, parks, and streets tend to act as the backyards and patios for many residents.

—How do we meet the various needs of residents living in smaller homes to ensure they have the places and spaces they require to relax and enjoy the city?

Other challenges to consider

—How can we ensure public and semi-public spaces truly feel public?

—How can we design spaces that balance mobility and access with great placemaking?

—How do we determine whether corporate-sponsored activates might be appropriate, while balancing the need for community-based events and spontaneous activities?

What issues are important to consider when planning Downtown public spaces?

The City's Role in Public Space



Many different departments of the City work collaboratively on the planning, testing, design, operations, and stewardship of public spaces.

All of our work involves enagaging with residents, community organizations, and businesses, and is based on local area plans and other Council directions. The general roles include:



Planning & Urban Design

Policy plans and urban design help shape the long term vision for public spaces and public life, and define placemaking initiatives that reflect neighbourhood context.

Places for People

is a planning initiative.



Testing & Tactical

Tactical urbanism focuses on innovating, incubating, and integrating new ideas around public space and street life, while testing potential new spaces.

VIVA Vancouver

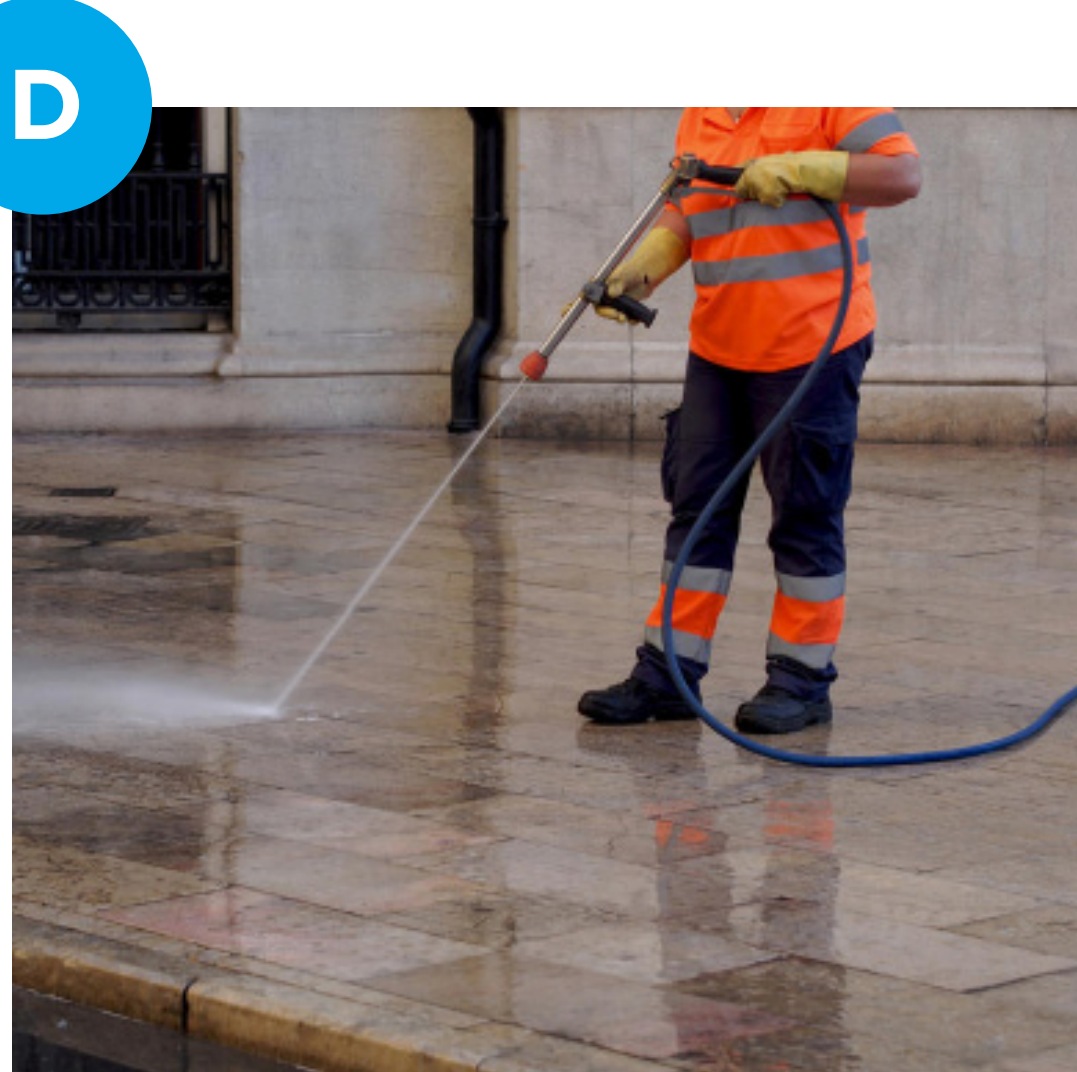
Partnering with the businesses and community groups, and other City departments, VIVA identifies and pilots temporary spaces that can lead to permanent public spaces, such as the pilot plaza that preceded Jim Deva Plaza in Davie Village in the West End.

vancouver.ca/viva



Implementation & Construction

The design, construction and/or implementation of new or improved public spaces.



Maintenance & Operations

General maintenance and operations involved in the upkeep of public spaces.



Stewardship & Permitting

Additional management, programming and maintenance of public spaces; and the supports and event permitting that ensure success.

Plaza Stewardship Strategy

The City is also exploring different approaches to stewarding City-owned plazas. Opportunities for partnerships, funding sources for programming, and maintenance and operations considerations will be addressed as part of the Plaza Stewardship Strategy.

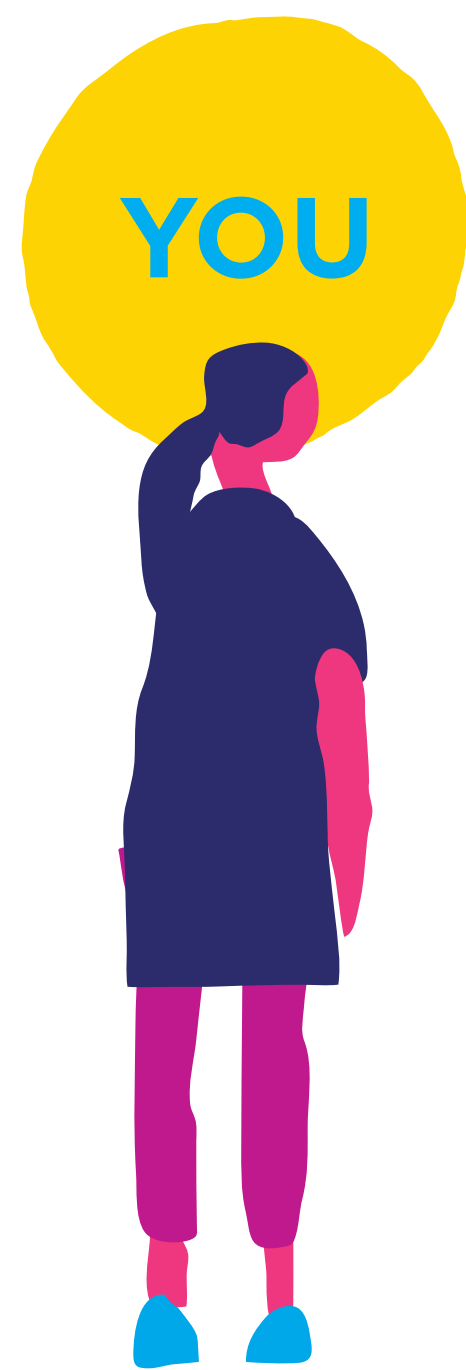


Recent Public Space Planning & Urban Design

The City also has a long-established history of urban design excellence, providing the framework and design guidelines that have helped shape Downtown's public realm. Some of the current City planning initiatives that address public space include: the West End Plan (2013), Northeast False Creek Area Plan (ongoing), Greenest City Action Plan (2011), Transportation 2040 (2012) and Healthy City Strategy Action Plan (2015).

Public Space Programs

The City has a range of programs that contribute to the programming, activation and management of spaces. Most involve partnerships with businesses or community groups such as: VIVA Vancouver, Street Vending Program, Patio Program, Block Party Program, and the Public Art Program.



Community Partnerships

Great placemaking comes from the community. Community partnerships often lead to the places, spaces and experiences that Vancouverites enjoy most.

—Places for People.

What is Public Space?

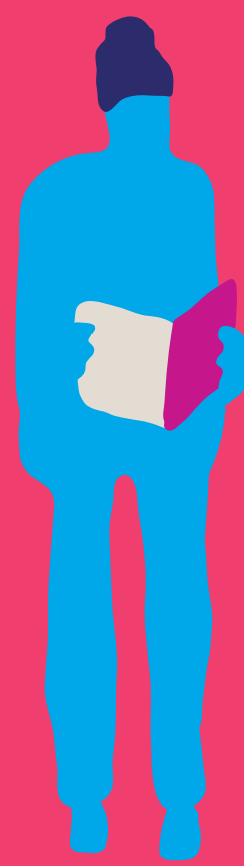


Let’s Start with a Definition

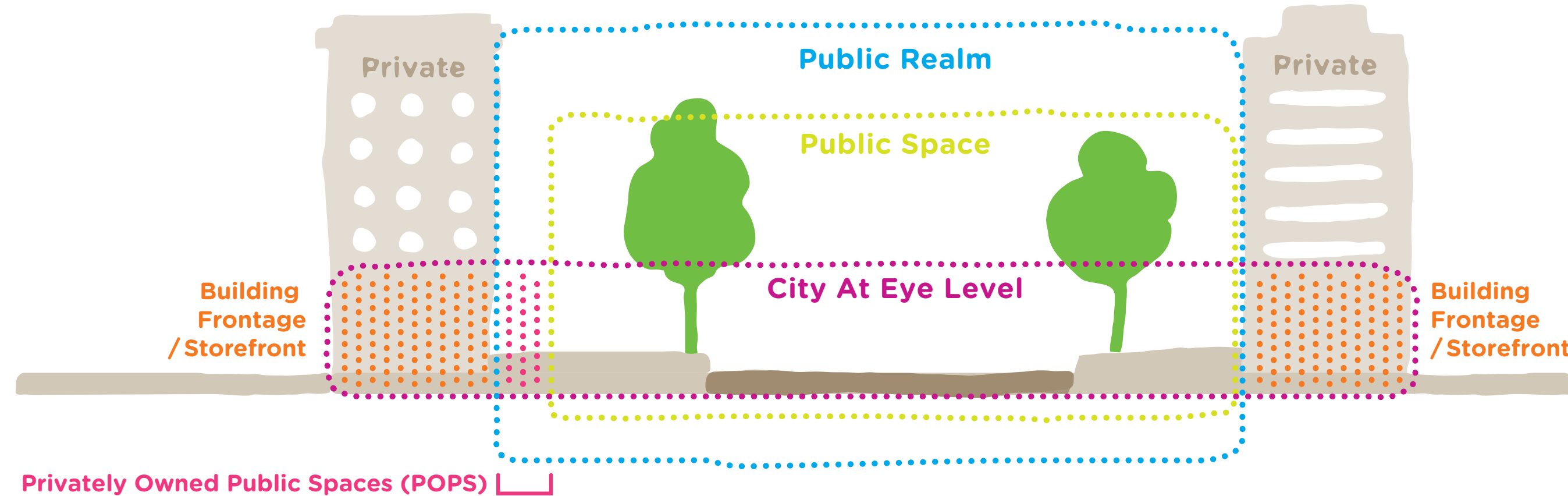
Public spaces are all places publically owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive. Public spaces are a key element of individual and social well-being, the places of a community’s collective life, expressions of the diversity

of their common, natural and cultural richness and a foundation of their identity. The community recognizes itself in its public spaces and pursues the improvement of their spatial quality.

—Charter of Public Space, Biennial of Public Space, and adopted by the United Nations Program on Human Settlements



The Public Realm—The Sum of the Parts



Public realm has a broader meaning than “public space”, as it also includes building façades, storefronts and displays, and patios - generally everything that can be seen and experienced at eye level. It also incorporates streetscape

elements such as street furniture, lighting, public art and distinctive sidewalk treatments. The sum of these parts contributes to the public realm, and the overall experience and attractiveness of an urban space.

Why is Public Space Important?

Public spaces contribute significantly to our city’s attractiveness, health, social well-being, sustainability and economic vitality. They help build a sense of community, promote civic identity, support diverse cultural expression, and

encourage social connection and an open and democratic society. The liveliness and continuous use of public space generally leads to urban environments that are well maintained, healthy and safe, making the city an attractive place in which to live, work and visit.

What is Public Life?

Public life includes all of the very different activities people engage in when they use public space - meeting friends on a street corner, walking to the farmers market with their children through a park, enjoying

a street performance, finishing up some work on a plaza bench, or taking a selfie in a pedestrian laneway. A variety of social and recreational activities naturally emerge in these places when public life is encouraged.

The City at Eye Level

The word “plinth” in Dutch means baseboard, but also describes the ground floor of a building and the experience of the city at eye level. The ground floors are spaces that negotiate between the inside and the outside, between the public and the private; including not only

physical components like the façade, building, sidewalk, street, bikeways, trees—but also the emotional and social aspects of these spaces. Built form plays a critical role in shaping the success (or failure) of our public spaces

thecityateyelevel.com

Types of Public Space

Downtown has a diversity of public spaces including streets and sidewalks, laneways, greenways, bridges, squares, plazas, parks, natural areas, transit hubs, atriums the waterfront and seawall.

Plazas

These outdoor spaces are primarily for gathering, as well as programming and events. Typically the majority of the space is hardscaping (e.g. made of concrete or pavers). They vary widely in size, uses and activities, and ownership. Plazas are divided into three general subtypes:



Civic Plazas

These spaces are often citywide/ regional destinations (including for visitors and tourists) as well as community gathering places, serving as important hubs within the Downtown public space network.

Street Plazas

Like civic plazas, these spaces can be citywide and regional destinations or more informal gathering places, depending on

size, adjacent land use, and local community context. Street plazas are often created by converting road space.

Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)

These spaces play an important role in the downtown public space network, particularly in the Central Business District. They provide amenity for office tenants, and are free for the public to access and use.

Interior Spaces

Downtown has a number of indoor spaces that people can freely visit, though hours of entry may be restricted. These spaces vary in size and are typically part of office or civic buildings.

Streets

Great streets are more than just places to move through—they are places to be, contributing to local character and place. Sidewalks provide space for walking and gathering, as well as store displays, patios and other features that enhance public life.

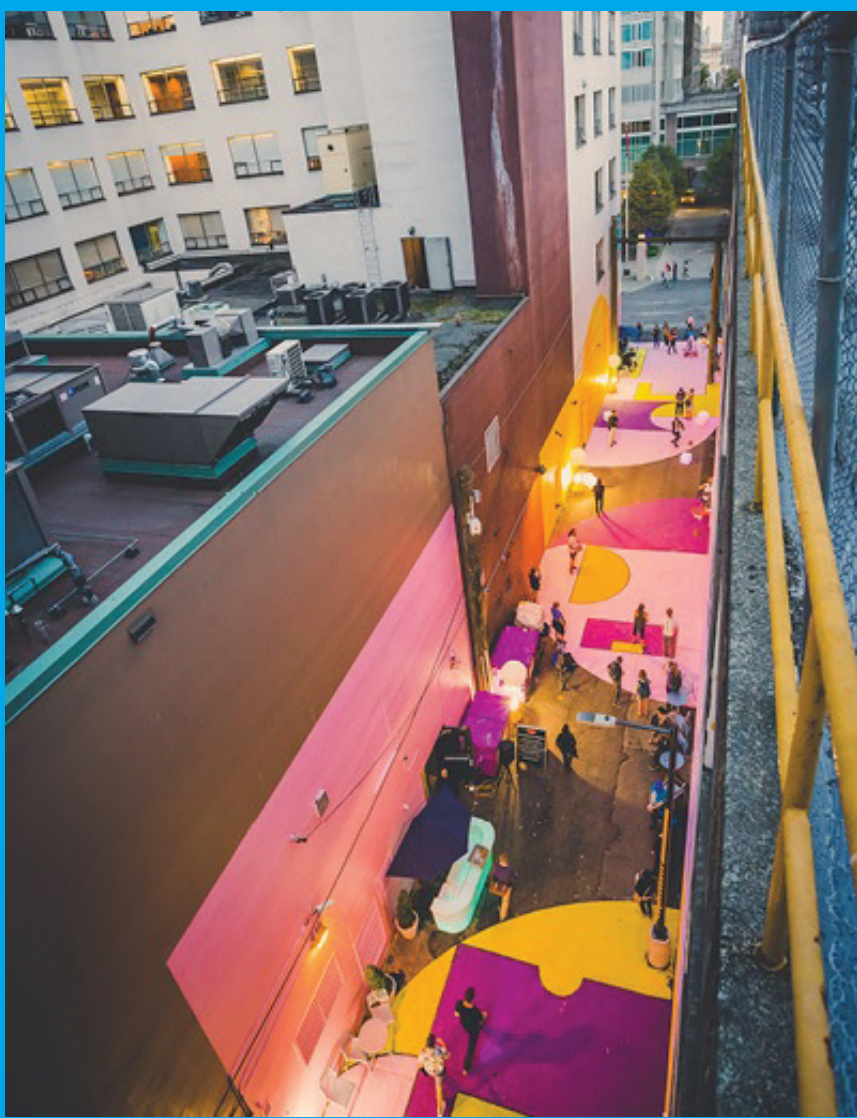


Pedestrian Priority / Shared Streets

There are several streets and “mews” Downtown that provide pedestrian connections between residential buildings, with limited vehicle access.

Laneways

Downtown has an extensive network of residential and commercial laneways. Recently, there has been increased community interest in enhancing laneways as public spaces.



Greenways

Greenways have enhanced walking and cycling facilities, as well as areas for sitting and resting. They connect key destinations such as community facilities, schools, parks and shopping areas.

Mini-Parks

Created in the 1970s and 1980s as part of a traffic calming program, mini-parks are cherished public spaces in the West End’s residential neighbourhoods

Seawall

The Seawall (seaside greenway) is an iconic, defining feature of the downtown public space network. The 28- kilometer route is the world’s longest uninterrupted waterfront path and is the most popular recreational spot in the city. It provides many scenic viewpoints and connects a series of waterfront parks, community facilities, cultural attractions, marinas, beaches, and other key destinations.

Parks

Downtown Vancouver has a diversity of world-class parks, of varying sizes, designs and uses. The waterfront parks are a prominent feature of the downtown public space network, connected by the Seawall. Many of them include plaza-like elements. These are managed by the park board.

Temporary Spaces

Parklets

The City’s parklet program enables businesses and other groups across Vancouver to transform parking spaces into interesting public seating. They are free and open for any member of the public to use.

Other Spaces

There are a variety of other unique, typically smaller public spaces around the Downtown that contribute to public life. These include setbacks or publically-accessible open space as part of residential developments and “leftover” spaces within streets.



Ingredients of Placemaking

Placemaking elements are smaller independent features that contribute to public spaces and the public realm. They can be generally grouped into design, natural, and commercial elements. **Examples include:**

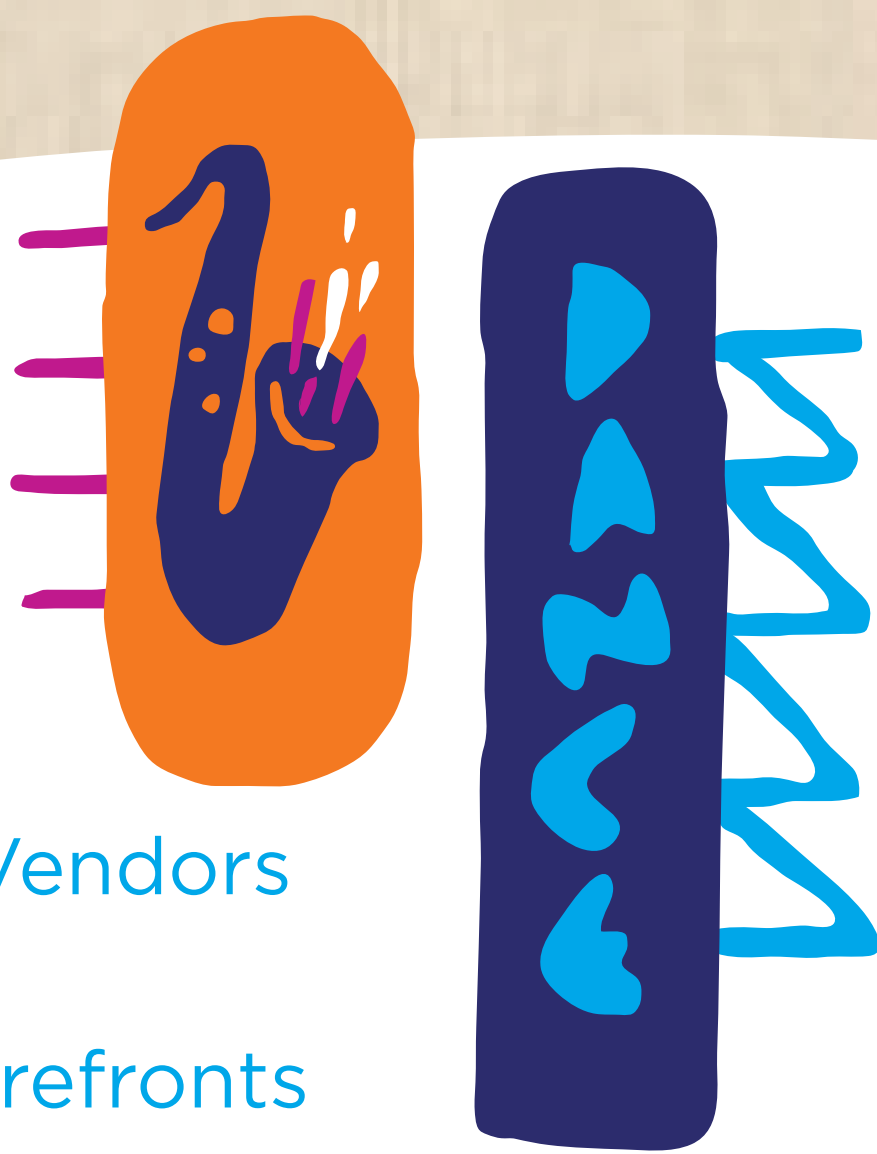
Design Elements

Street Furniture & Seating
Wayfinding
Public Art
Paving & Surface Material
Weather Protection
Landmarks
Murals
Drinking Fountains
Public Washrooms



Natural Elements

Trees
Gardens
Views
Access to Sun
Slopes & Elevation
Commercial Elements



Signage

Food Trucks & Vendors
Patios
Transparent Storefronts
Store Displays
Vendors & Artists



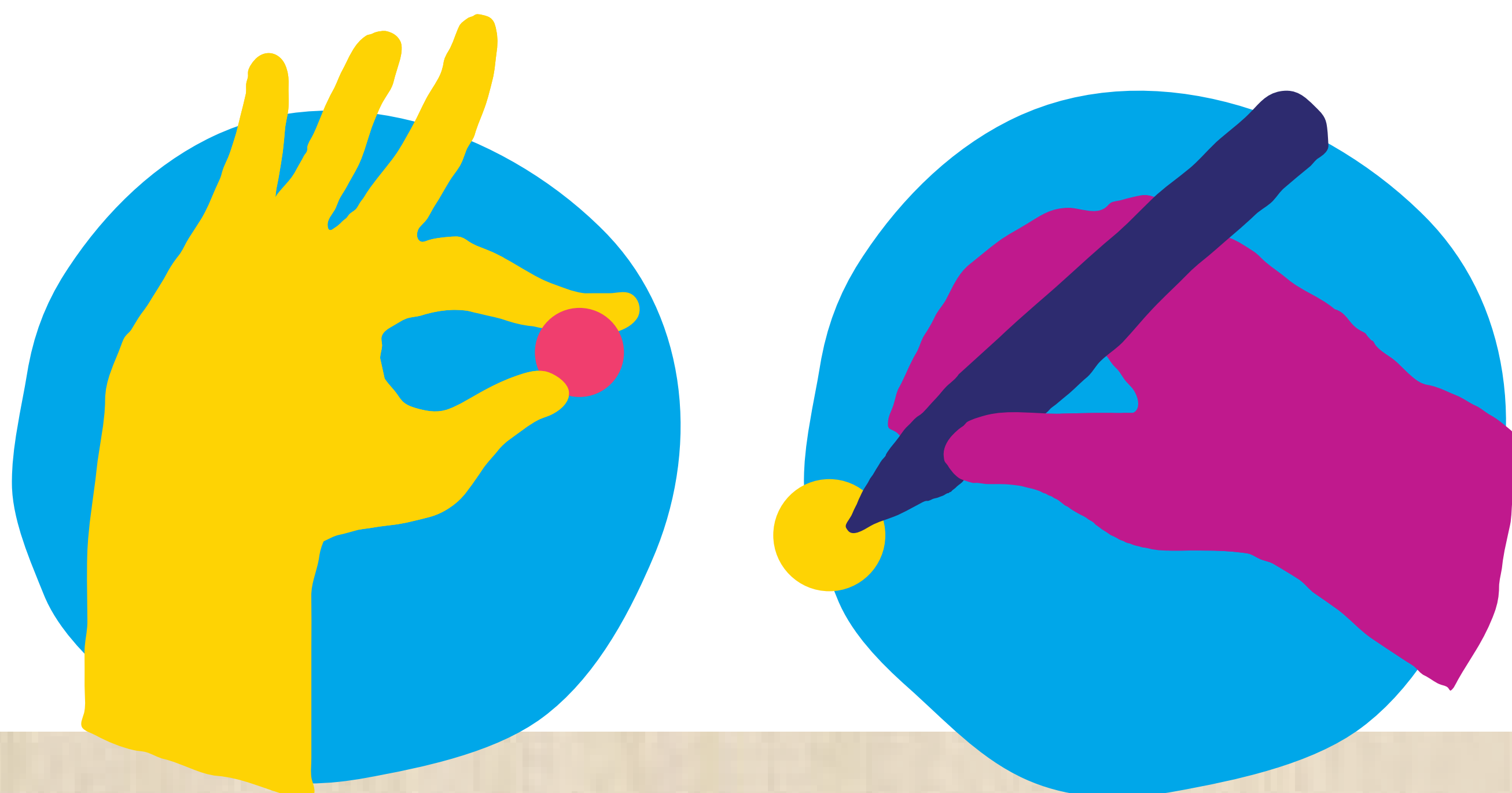
Share Your Favourite Places for People

We’re looking for your feedback on how to deliver exceptional, vibrant, and memorable public spaces, places, and experiences in the downtown peninsula.

We want to know:

- What are your favourite places and spaces in Downtown Vancouver?
- If you could change or add a public space in Downtown Vancouver, where and what would it be?

— Place a dot on the map, number it, and tell us what it is and why you added it!



● Favourite place ● Change a place ● Add a space





Places for People Downtown

