

# Government Street Report



## Purpose

To update and seek Council direction based on a previously approved downtown public realm plan and information received from businesses regarding the pilot to close Government Street.



## Government Street Charrette

Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA) organized a charrette with Government Street businesses, key highlights:

- Better way-finding
- Beautification with flowers
- Improve areas with street furnishings, activity spaces, micro parks & cafes
- Deal with unsightly buildings
- Sidewalk shopping
- Promote mixed use along entire corridor



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## Pedestrian Mall – 2018 Pilot

### Close Government street between Yates and Fort

The pilot ran from August 12 to September 16 on Sundays only and lessons learned were:

- Pilot was a soft closure and not a special event
- Lack of promotion, signage and animation
- No decorative ways to close the street other than formal construction barricades
- For the last three Sundays, staff engaged with the Greater Victoria Placemaking Network to support the closure with tables, chairs, games, etc.
- The last 2 Sundays were cancelled



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## Government Street Businesses Meeting – March 2019

Key concerns raised were:

- Why recommendations from the 2015 charrette had not been implemented?
- Was there an analysis of data collected to inform the pedestrian-only pilot?
- Businesses are supportive of other street closures even though retail sales suffer as they realize the positive community impact



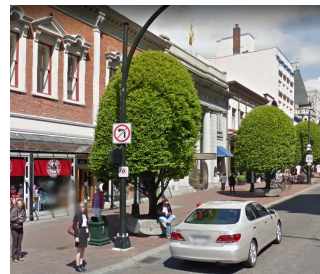
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## Downtown Public Realm Plan

### Government Street - a priority for improvement

#### Short Term:

- **Reconfigure Government/Humboldt intersection** (currently under construction as part of Wharf St Bike Lane implementation)
- **A streetscape refresh from Yates to Humboldt**, including furnishings, and replacement of street trees and planters (given their deteriorating condition and lack of suitability for this location)



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## Downtown Public Realm Plan

### Government Street - a priority for improvement:

- **Medium Term:** Incorporate a 2-way AAA bike facility, including consideration for reducing traffic volumes and re-introducing two-way vehicle traffic in support of a more pedestrian and bike oriented 'shared street' and potentially curbless approach
- **Long Term:** Extending the shared street approach from Yates Street to Chinatown



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## Issues & Analysis

- Staff have received feedback from the Government Street businesses expressing their concerns and request that further research and data analysis be done to inform Council's decision
- Scheduling short & long term actions must also consider timing for infrastructure upgrades. Utility master plans have identified the replacement of the watermain between Broughton Street and Herald tentatively scheduled for 2021



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## Recommended – Option 1

- Defer the decision to open Government Street to pedestrians' pilot to 2020,
- Direct staff to research other cities with people first multi-use streets and determine best practices,
- Direct staff to bring forward a budget request as part of the 2021 Financial Planning process to undertake a detailed design and cost estimate to implement the short term actions identified between Humboldt and Yates as approved in the 2017 Downtown Public realm plan for consideration,
- Coordinate timing of short term actions in conjunction with other major infrastructure work.



## Option 2

- Council to provide alternate direction to staff.



# Questions

