



# **BUILD BACK VICTORIA**

Engagement Summary | October 2020

## Build Back Victoria Engagement Summary

Since the launch of the Build Back Victoria initiative, staff from the Engagement department have worked closely with the Business & Community Relations and Transportation teams to support the new program. Online access to forms and guidelines, door-to-door outreach to businesses, promotional signage, and social media education and awareness campaigns are some of the ways information has been shared with local businesses and the public.

Since the program launched, staff have been responsive to feedback and input from businesses, business groups and the public to learn as we go and make practical adjustments to initiatives to improve their success.

A three-pronged approach was taken to assess the success and impact to date of the Build Back Victoria initiatives on business economic wellbeing and community livability:

- A survey of participating businesses to gauge the value they place on the program to their economic wellbeing during the ongoing devastating economic effects of the pandemic;
- Consultation with local business and tourism groups to gain insights and understand any concerns about the impacts of the program on the broader business and visitor economies; and
- A review of public feedback received through correspondence to the City and the Business Hub about the program to help assess livability issues in the downtown and village business districts.

### Survey of Participating Businesses

A survey of participating businesses indicates strong support for Build Back Victoria with more than 97 per cent of respondents saying they were satisfied with the program and 88 per cent confirming that they would continue the program if it were extended into the fall and winter.

The vast majority of participating businesses reported that the program was easy to understand and apply for and that approvals were quick, with staff helpful and responsive. They indicated that the program contributed positively to their economic wellbeing, with several them stating that the program was “make-or-break” for their business.

Here is one example:

*“Our BBV space has been a major saver for us. Now with the new restrictions on hours we need all the space and help we can to drive business for the hours are open. We really hope to see all the BBV space stay. I think many businesses around town have put a lot of time, effort and money into their spaces. It would be a huge shame to see them go. Local businesses need BBV space to survive.”*

Businesses also provided the following suggestions and input through the survey on adjustments they would like to see to help support them with their recovery:

- Permission to add heaters and overhead cover or shelters for patios
- Requests for more space, waste bin re-locations, additional bicycle parking and options to increase accessibility (ramps, wider areas, etc.)
- New/more signage for public awareness
- Avenues to make the program permanent

A total of 89 individual businesses were asked to complete the survey, with 33 surveys completed.

### Input from Business and Tourism Groups

City staff have engaged regularly through our Small Business Support calls with the Downtown Victoria Business Association, Destination Greater Victoria, and the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce to hear their input and suggested adjustments to aspects of the various Build Back Victoria initiatives. Feedback was also sought from the Cook Street Village Business Association. These four business groups say that the feedback from their members is the program was beneficial and well received by customers. They indicate that they would like to see the City extend this temporary program to support business recovery while pandemic restrictions on indoor seating continue.

The DVBA, while stating that the feedback they have received from members has generally been very positive, has indicated that there are some concerns regarding Government Street. They would like to see street closures along Government to be limited to one lane, and only when a patio or flex-space is using the roadway. The Cook Street Village Business Association has provided feedback that in the future when the pandemic restrictions on business are lifted, they would like to see all the parking returned and do not want to restrict traffic flow as the neighbourhood business group sees both as being critical to the health of Cook Street Village.

### Feedback Received through Correspondence

Input from the community received through correspondence to the Business Hub, Engagement, Transportation, and Mayor and Council was assessed as it was received to make responsive adjustments to the program and to help evaluate the success of the program on.

More than 100 individuals reached out directly to provide input or comment on the program and its specific initiatives. While much of the feedback was complimentary, there were several common themes raised including noise, accessibility features of some patios, access to commercial / passenger loadings zones, on-street parking availability and locations of mobile vendors.

Feedback received, along with on-going monitoring will be used to further refine the pedestrian priority treatments on Government Street over the winter months as part of continued adaptation and implementation of the BBV program.



## Letters From Business Groups

September 28, 2020

Mayor Lisa Helps and Council  
City of Victoria Municipal Hall  
1 Centennial Square, Victoria BC,  
V8W 1P6

## **Re. Build Back Victoria: Re-opening and Recovery**

Dear Mayor & Council,

Thank you for introducing the Build Back Victoria program for the summer months. Many of our businesses have been severely impacted by COVID-19 protection efforts and particularly by the very limited number of tourists during our busiest season. The introduction of flexible street usage for temporary patios has made a significant difference for many restaurants downtown.

The DVBA would like to see the Build Back Victoria program continue. Since the province has announced an extension to expanded liquor licenses, additional patio space will significantly help restaurants, pubs, and similar establishments downtown survive through the winter months. This is the sort of opportunity to help our region successfully recover.

The feedback we have received from our members regarding this program has generally been very positive, however there are some concerns regarding Government Street which we hope you will address when deciding how to move forward with the Build Back Victoria program. The primary concern is Government Street between View and Johnson *must* be reopened by at least one lane. Additionally, closures along the street should be limited to maximum one lane, and only where a patio or flex-space is utilizing the roadway. Many retail businesses have instituted curbside pickup policies, but these policies need to have roadside access for the customer to pick up their purchases.

We appreciate your efforts to help businesses survive the many economic challenges caused by the pandemic. Employers need clear regulations and support as they plan for the difficult months still ahead, as well as the support of their community. Workers need jobs during this critical time. And, in supporting the businesses and workers of Victoria, the City of Victoria can maintain a strong foundation of taxpayers for the future.

Sincerely,



Jeff Bray, Downtown Victoria Business Association Executive Director



September 26, 2020

Mayor Lisa Helps and Council  
City of Victoria Municipal Hall  
1 Centennial Square, Victoria BC,  
V8W 1P6

**Re. Build Back Victoria: Re-opening and Recovery**

Dear Victoria Mayor and Council,

On behalf of the 1,400 members of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, I want to thank Mayor and Council for their efforts to help businesses survive the economic challenges caused by the pandemic.

The Chamber fully supports the continuation of Build Back Victoria. The City's leadership and investment in innovations led by business are making a difference. Many of our restaurants, cafes and pubs were able to sustain their operations because of the opportunity they were given to expand their spaces. With the province announcing an extension to expanded liquor licences, we strongly encourage Council to continue its support of businesses that are relying on this opportunity.

Build Back Victoria is the type of innovative program needed to ensure our region will experience a successful recovery. Our region's employers need certainty to plan for the difficult months ahead, people need jobs during this critical time and municipalities need to ensure they maintain a strong foundation of taxpayers in order to continue providing services to citizens.

The sooner we get back to a thriving economy, the better all of us will be.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bruce Williams  
CEO, Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce

**From:** kristiane baskeville <[lovewhereyoulive@telus.net](mailto:lovewhereyoulive@telus.net)>  
**Sent:** September 21, 2020 1:38 PM  
**To:** Quinn Anglin <[ganglin@victoria.ca](mailto:ganglin@victoria.ca)>; Victoria Mayor and Council <[mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca)>  
**Subject:** Support to extend the Build Back Victoria Program

The Cook Street Village Business Association fully supports the extension of the Build Back Victoria Program. There are 4 businesses in the village that are taking advantage of this very welcomed and well patronized program.

The purpose of Build Back Victoria program was to help small businesses increase seating during the seating-reduction brought on by the pandemic. This was a success in The Village. The flexibility and speed of the City's team was critical to the successful implantation of the additional patio space.

We would support an extension to this program during the winter months as it will be much more difficult for the businesses than summer was for many small businesses. However, the new patios will need to be covered and heated or they won't be used and thus not be effective. If you could share any details of an extension as soon as possible would be highly appreciated so that the needed items can be sourced, purchased and implemented. I'm sure you are aware, timelines are much longer currently due to the pandemic.

We want to note, however, that we want all of our parking back in the future and do not want to restrict any traffic flow as they are both critical to the health of The Village.

Best Regards,

Kristiane Baskerville  
Director CSVBA  
Owner, Surroundings  
249 Cook St.  
Victoria BC

# DESTINATION GREATER VICTORIA

September 28, 2020

Mayor Lisa Helps and Council  
City of Victoria  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Dear Mayor Helps and Council,

I write in support of City of Victoria continuing the Build Back Victoria program.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant negative impacts on the Greater Victoria visitor economy. For example, hotel occupancy in July 2020 was 35 per cent, compared to 85 per cent in July 2019. Overall tourism revenue in Greater Victoria is down a staggering 68 per cent from 2019. This has dramatically affected our community – one where two in five working people are employed either directly or indirectly in the visitor economy.

Despite the challenges, opportunities for Destination Greater Victoria members emerged. One of these opportunities was the creation of the City of Victoria's Build Back Victoria program. The expansion of patios as well as services on sidewalks, streets and neighbourhood squares and plazas enhanced business operations at a critical time. Build Back Victoria is an amazing success. Businesses have found new ways to engage their customers during the pandemic and create cash flow when revenues declined sharply.

As the pandemic is expected to continue through the winter months, Destination Greater Victoria wants to see the Build Back Victoria program continue as well. We realize adjustments will need to be made to 'winterize' spaces and have businesses operate safely, but we feel these obstacles can be adequately addressed. We are also aware the City of Victoria is surveying businesses with an approved Build Back Victoria permit to include within an upcoming report. The consultation is an excellent way to listen to Destination Greater Victoria members and the community regarding the future of this program. With appropriate adjustments we are confident this program can continue in the months ahead.

Thank you for consideration of this proposal as well as the needs of Greater Victoria small businesses and the hard-working people that earn a living in the visitor economy.

DESTINATION GREATER VICTORIA

Mailing address: Suite 200 – 737 Yates Street, Victoria, B.C. Canada V8W 1L6 Tel: (250) 414-6999 Fax: (250) 361-9733  
Visitor Centre: 812 Wharf Street, Victoria, B.C. Canada V8W 1T3 Tel: (250) 953-2033 Fax: (250) 382-6539  
[www.tourismvictoria.com](http://www.tourismvictoria.com)

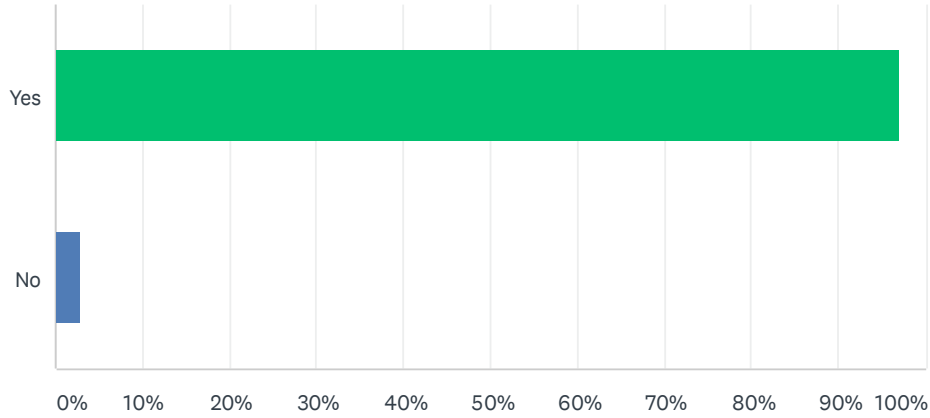




## Build Back Victoria Business Survey

# Q1 Have you been generally satisfied with the Build Back Victoria program?

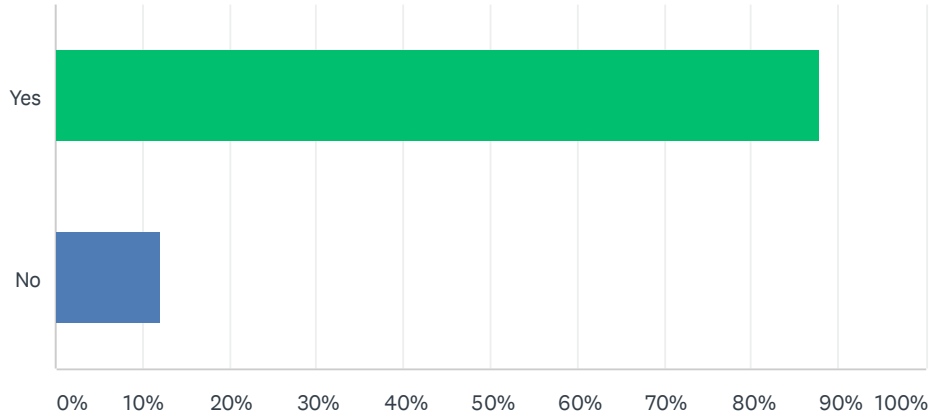
Answered: 33 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	96.97%	32
No	3.03%	1
TOTAL		33

## Q2 If the program were to continue though the fall and winter, would you continue to provide outdoor options for your customers?

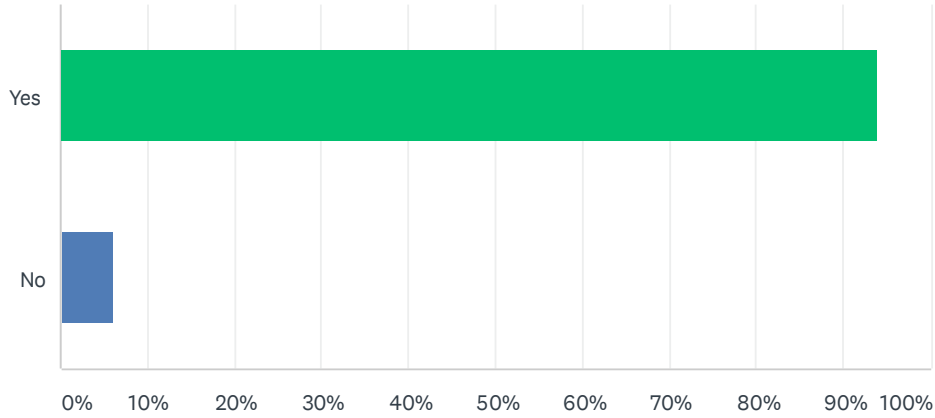
Answered: 33 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	87.88%	29
No	12.12%	4
TOTAL		33

### Q3 Did your customers seem generally satisfied with the flex space you provided as part of the program? If no, please explain

Answered: 33 Skipped: 0

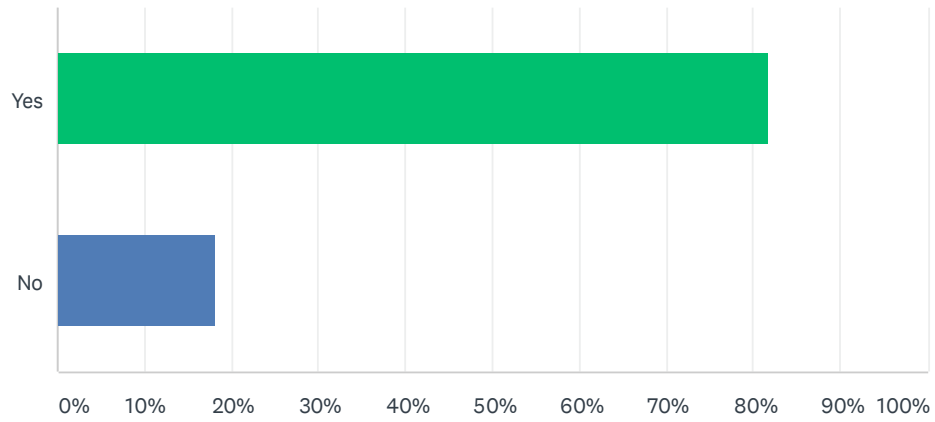


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	93.94% 31
No	6.06% 2
TOTAL	33

#	NO	DATE
1	Horrible service, took the city's staff over a month to tell me I was able to set up since I was within my property line!	9/18/2020 7:24 PM
2	Didn't suit our business	9/18/2020 5:28 PM

## Q4 Is your BBV flex space or patio wheelchair accessible?

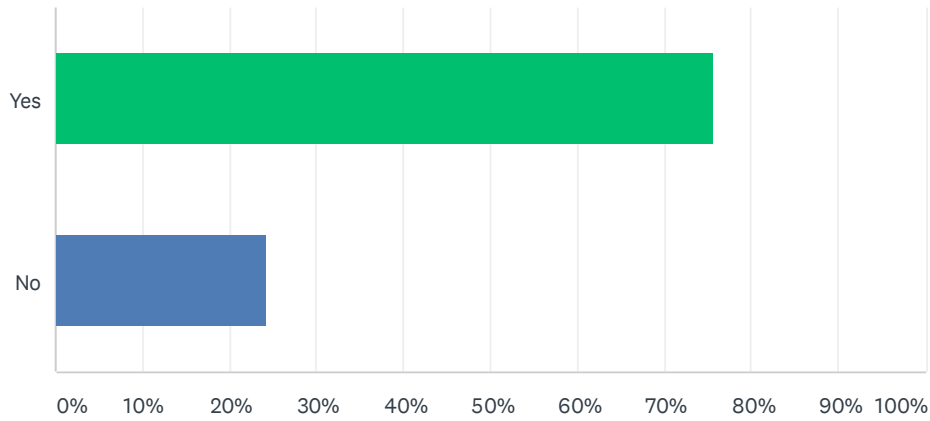
Answered: 33 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	81.82% 27
No	18.18% 6
TOTAL	33

### Q5 Does your BBV flex space or patio utilize hard surface materials so that someone with vision loss could detect its presence?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	75.76%	25
No	24.24%	8
TOTAL		33

Build Back Victoria Survey

**Q6 Have you received any comments, complaints or issues from customers, staff or community members regarding the accessibility of your BBV space?**

Answered: 32 Skipped: 1

## Build Back Victoria Survey

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Only positive feedback	9/24/2020 2:31 PM
2	we have received no negative feed back, regarding this space.	9/23/2020 11:38 AM
3	No	9/21/2020 7:35 PM
4	I don't think so	9/19/2020 7:24 AM
5	No	9/18/2020 7:37 PM
6	We have received nothing but positive feedback!	9/18/2020 7:29 PM
7	no	9/18/2020 7:24 PM
8	The attack on cars needs to stop, people still need to be able to access the area, or we're choking it off to just a dwindling population downtown, really just not smart at all. Why actively work to limit the market like that??? Nonsense.	9/18/2020 5:28 PM
9	Only positive feedback about the outdoor space. Staff were more than thankful for the opportunity to expand there service space.	9/18/2020 5:24 PM
10	We have had nothing but amazing feed back our BBV space. Most of our patrons actually prefer and request this area. Would be heartbreaking to see it go.	9/17/2020 2:41 PM
11	No - The only complaints we received were that there was no signage installed at the Fort and Gov't st. intersection to advise how to get to the Bay Centre parkade.	9/17/2020 7:58 AM
12	We have had an overall WONDERFUL response both from guests and from "passers by"	9/16/2020 11:14 AM
13	No	9/14/2020 1:38 PM
14	Reception was wildly popular, citizens seem to have a desire for food truck availability	9/14/2020 9:55 AM
15	We have had only amazing comments from our customers and neighbours, no complaints or issues.	9/12/2020 12:05 PM
16	Not at all, we have had overwhelming support from our guests and neighbours.	9/12/2020 11:40 AM
17	We have a loading zone and our customers are loving it	9/11/2020 4:13 PM
18	overwhelming satisfaction from the community of Fernwood. The biggest complaint is that the entire street is not closed off instead of allowing one lane of traffic.	9/11/2020 2:43 PM
19	No.	9/11/2020 2:23 PM
20	Tons of positive feedback. Everyone loves it. Lots of compliments like, "feels much more European." "love it."	9/11/2020 2:12 PM
21	No	9/11/2020 1:48 PM
22	People are generally happy	9/11/2020 1:48 PM
23	No. Good feedback only.	9/11/2020 1:48 PM
24	People love it Only grumpy old school folks who are missing the point grumble about losing a spot to park for 20 minutes	9/11/2020 1:48 PM
25	Guests love the outdoor format - love the felling of a market	9/11/2020 1:41 PM
26	Just all positive response!	9/11/2020 1:31 PM
27	no	9/11/2020 1:28 PM
28	We've received alot of positive remarks regarding the easy location and set up along Dallas Rd	9/11/2020 1:22 PM
29	No	9/11/2020 1:13 PM
30	No. I have had people feel they have a right to sit in the space regardless of being a customer of ours.	9/11/2020 1:08 PM
31	no	9/11/2020 1:08 PM





**Q7 What, if any, improvements would you like the ability to make to improve your flex space that could benefit your business and your customers?**

Answered: 30 Skipped: 3

## Build Back Victoria Survey

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The flex space offered to the south of our property was not used due to an inability to access it during the normal course of business. We had planned to have a staircase from our existing patio down to it but when told that would be problematic and that we would need a building permit we determined that for the length of the program it likely did not justify the work and the cost. Given an extension of the program we would reconsider but there is still the matter of winterizing, lighting and weatherproofing, all of which require substantial capital investment with little security of tenure.	9/24/2020 2:31 PM
2	A ramp to allow wheel chair access.	9/23/2020 11:38 AM
3	None	9/21/2020 7:35 PM
4	Add a bike rack	9/19/2020 7:24 AM
5	Ability to cover it	9/18/2020 7:37 PM
6	Get the city to provide some planters for Fernwood square.	9/18/2020 7:29 PM
7	Please stop attacking parking and cars. Please find a balance.	9/18/2020 5:28 PM
8	Ability to involve patio heating systems	9/18/2020 5:24 PM
9	I would love the ability to had some style of roof or cover to it as well as possible heating to keep the use of it through the fall and winter.	9/17/2020 2:41 PM
10	I would desperately expect more signage as promised. We still don't have signs at our two parking stalls for quick pick-up and we still don't have signage advising customers how to access the Bay Centre parkade on View st. from the Fort/Gov't st. closed off area. We also noticed that people were sitting and smoking at the chairs installed outside of Earls on View St. so there should definitely have been no-smoking signs installed. This was requested as well but to date no signage was installed. Overall guests loved the patio areas though.	9/17/2020 7:58 AM
11	Making it permanent. If it were permanent, we could run power from our building to the space that would allow for heaters etc.	9/16/2020 11:14 AM
12	Addressing the bird feces situation in Victoria generally	9/14/2020 1:38 PM
13	A continuation of the program! Improvements could be more awareness for food trucks, better locations could be good too	9/14/2020 9:55 AM
14	I would like to be able to add additional space to our patio, and allow us more tables and seats and more space to be COVID compliant.	9/12/2020 12:05 PM
15	I would like the ability to have a bit more space, and allow for us to set up more tables and continue to be COVID compliant.	9/12/2020 11:40 AM
16	Bigger sign	9/11/2020 4:13 PM
17	To make it permanent would allow the necessary build outs to accommodate winter service. I am not able to invest the money necessary to winterize the patio without knowledge that I will be able to continue this past covid	9/11/2020 2:43 PM
18	I would like to make a covered area with heaters.	9/11/2020 2:23 PM
19	I would love to make it a permanent patio.	9/11/2020 2:12 PM
20	Extend the food truck spaces from 2-4 per location	9/11/2020 1:48 PM
21	It to be permanent permit	9/11/2020 1:48 PM
22	I love it Could we rent a tent to put up? That way customers stay out of the rain?	9/11/2020 1:48 PM
23	At some point a decision will need to be made concerning the permanency of this program at which time if it were to go forward ( as it should) a more comprehensive plan and program should be put in place to establish a beautiful and finished look in terms of hard landscaping, soft landscaping, programming, street pole flagging and branding and so on.	9/11/2020 1:41 PM
24	Close it in for the winter	9/11/2020 1:31 PM
25	relocate the garbage cans directly adjacent to the space	9/11/2020 1:28 PM

## Build Back Victoria Survey

26	Upgraded sign regarding the permitted space on the road. They have blown away with the weather	9/11/2020 1:22 PM
27	Ability to weather proof the space. Access to cost benefit options	9/11/2020 1:13 PM
28	Nothing from the city. If we learned we'd have access to the space for a longer duration of time we will make further investments in lighting,heating and tech.	9/11/2020 1:08 PM
29	more places for vendors on Dallas rd or on Clover Point	9/11/2020 1:08 PM
30	Cover and heat as winter and rain come.	9/11/2020 1:08 PM

Build Back Victoria Survey

**Q8 Do you have additional information to share?**

Answered: 24 Skipped: 9

## Build Back Victoria Survey

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Given the nature and longevity of the pandemic, the decrease in commercial activity, the development of usable people places amongst our streetscape should be considered as a much longer term proposition.	9/24/2020 2:31 PM
2	This space has been greatly appreciated by the cook street community and we hope to see it continued. thank you for you time.	9/23/2020 11:38 AM
3	I am looking at tent options but am concerned that in order to cover the space, I will exceed my allowable square footage (permit). Considerations will be needed by city staff in order to accomplish these for many street patios	9/18/2020 7:37 PM
4	Thank you for making this happen! We look forward to opening it up again next spring!	9/18/2020 7:29 PM
5	Took the city staff over a month to tell me I was able to set up since I was within my property line.	9/18/2020 7:24 PM
6	Our BBV space has been a major saver for us. Now with the new restrictions on hours we need all the space and help we can to drive business for the hours are are open. We really hope to see all the BBV space stay. I think many businesses around town have put a lot of time, effort and money into their spaces. It would be a huge shame to see them go. Local businesses need BBV space to survive.	9/17/2020 2:41 PM
7	We really feel that with the uncertainty of the future that our outside space should be made permanent.	9/16/2020 11:14 AM
8	It was an excellent sales driver/ambiance driver for downtown Victoria, would love to see it continue next year!	9/14/2020 1:38 PM
9	Please consider the extension of this program and the possibility of permanent improvements to the coty of Victoria, food trucks need events or spaces to sell their products and the patios in town are beautiful and add much more life to downtown	9/14/2020 9:55 AM
10	I would like to thank the City of Victoria for allowing us to have this opportunity, it has allowed us to be more financially viable as we go into the fall/winter.	9/12/2020 12:05 PM
11	I would like to thank the City of Victoria for allowing us to operate with additional space over the summer. It has allowed us to be more financially viable because of this.	9/12/2020 11:40 AM
12	We are just launching a curb side pickup. The new loading zone is critical for its success	9/11/2020 4:13 PM
13	the extended patios of Fernwood have furthered the already strong sense of community within the neighbourhood. The ability to stay within the community and not head downtown is a positive and hopefully longterm positive of covid. People are able to enjoy a good meal without worrying about travel plans, they see and engage with their fellow neighbours and they develop a strong community pride.	9/11/2020 2:43 PM
14	No	9/11/2020 2:23 PM
15	I'd like to thank city council for being proactive and helping businesses during this difficult time.	9/11/2020 2:12 PM
16	Thanks for your help	9/11/2020 1:48 PM
17	No. Thanks for making the process easy	9/11/2020 1:48 PM
18	The natural hair salon We love this city	9/11/2020 1:48 PM
19	It is a great program that I believe has helped the merchants and retailers in the core.	9/11/2020 1:41 PM
20	This almost doubled my sales I was able to do. I went from a 84percent loss in revenue to a 70 percent loss. MASSIVE help in this struggling time.	9/11/2020 1:31 PM
21	program was very easy to be involved in. Good communication and response from City and Province	9/11/2020 1:28 PM
22	The community has been very supportive of this program and we have enjoyed offering our treats in such a great area. We would love to see the program extended. Thanks	9/11/2020 1:22 PM
23	I have been selling as a vendor in parks around town...I have done Vancouver and Pembroke	9/11/2020 1:08 PM

## Build Back Victoria Survey

and Dallas Rd...Dallas Rd is a good place because of all the walkers, and the general public absolutely loved having food trucks there...The other spots are just are not worth putting in the time...I am currently suppose to be at 2100 block Vancouver...after driving by, and seeing what a state that park is in, I decided I wouldn't feel safe there...why not open up Clover point? No ones view is impeded, and it would make a great food truck spot for the people of Victoria...Thank you for doing this for us vendors...it was looking pretty bleak for us this year...your efforts are appreciated ....Tracey

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24	Thanks for this, it really helped our business. The City staff responded quickly and well. The only negative I can think of is that the City should remain careful about messiness and garbage. This can lead to an unwelcoming atmosphere.	9/11/2020 1:08 PM
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