

Appendix A

BUILD BACK VICTORIA

Engagement Summary Report

Executive Summary

In spring 2020, the Build Back Victoria temporary public space initiative was created to help local businesses respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program included a number of new temporary options for businesses to expand their space to safely conduct commercial activities outside during the pandemic, such as flex spaces and temporary patios, businesses in parks, customer loading zones, mobile vendors, full and partial street closures, and pedestrian priority treatments on Government Street.

These initiatives allowed businesses to temporarily expand their operating capacity into public space (parks, sidewalks, streets, boulevards) in line with public health recommendations for physical distancing, while maintaining the accessibility and liveability of streets and sidewalks.

On October 8, 2020, Council extended the Build Back Victoria Program and Business Recovery from Pandemic Bylaw until October 31, 2021. Council also directed staff to report back in Spring 2021 with proposed improvements for the program based on public feedback and to provide recommendations on whether Government Street should be closed between Fort Street and View Street for the spring/summer 2021 season.

City staff conducted a series of public engagement activities between February 1 - March 2, 2021 to hear more about the experiences of businesses and the public with the program and gain insights to inform staff recommendations on how the program can be further improved.

Engagement activities included a survey for businesses and residents, a focus group meeting with business and neighbourhood stakeholders, and a canvassing of businesses located along Government Street. Neighbourhood Associations were contacted and given the opportunity to provide feedback on the program.

More than 795 people participated in engagement activities.

This feedback received provided essential insights into the experiences of businesses, visitors and residents with the temporary public space initiatives and helped to identify areas where the program can be improved moving forward. All feedback received was considered by the project team and helped guide the recommended program improvements for Council's consideration for the spring and summer program.

Engagement Approach

The engagement process ran from February 1 to March 2, 2020 and included public and targeted stakeholder consultation activities:

1. Online Survey

The survey asked respondents to describe their experience with the Build Back Victoria initiatives and whether they were satisfied with the program. Additionally, the survey asked for feedback on specific program initiatives including street closures, patios and flex space, mobile vendors, and businesses in parks. The street closure section was broken into Government Street, Broad Street and Gladstone Avenue to get feedback on each of the major closure areas to help inform the future

program activities on these streets during spring and summer 2021. The survey received 787 responses and 8,729 comments.

2. Targeted consultation

- One focus group dialogue session (1.5 h) was held with businesses and key business, tourism and placemaking organizations to review the City's temporary Build Back Victoria initiatives.

Attendance: 8 participants:

- Jeff Bray, Downtown Victoria Business Association
- Darlene Hollstein, The Bay Centre
- Henry Kitchell, Placemaking Toolkit Working Group
- Matthew Holme, Destination Greater Victoria
- Jessica Walker, DVBA Board Member and Munroe's Books
- Ray Straatsma, Greater Victoria Placemaking Network
- Jim Zeeben, The Chamber
- Britta Gundersen-Bryden, Active Transportation Advisory Committee/ Walk On, Victoria

Participants provided feedback on current initiatives and discussed various potential options to improve the program on Government Street for spring and summer 2021.

3. In-person canvassing of businesses located on Government Street to discuss potential upcoming changes to the Build Back Victoria program.
 - Staff hand-delivered letters to businesses on Government Street (View Street to Humboldt Street) detailing upcoming potential changes to the Build Back Victoria program and inviting feedback from business owners.
4. City Neighbourhood teams were provided with the survey to share with their neighbourhood networks and provide an opportunity for feedback on the program.

Promoting the opportunity to participate

Opportunities for public participation were directly promoted through:

- The City's engagement platform: engage.victoria.ca
- City of Victoria website: victoria.ca/bizresources
- City E-News: February edition
- Direct emails to the licensed businesses in Victoria
- Social media posts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
- Advertisements in print media (Victoria News)
- Survey was shared directly with Victoria Chamber of Commerce, Destination Greater Victoria, Downtown Victoria Business Association, The Bay Centre, Greater Victoria Placemaking Network, City of Victoria Art in Public Places Committee, Victoria Community Association Network, Active Transportation Advisory Committee, Victoria Youth Council
- Media release and interviews promoting the opportunity for public input

Examples of promotional and advertising materials are included later in the report.

Have Your Say Statistics

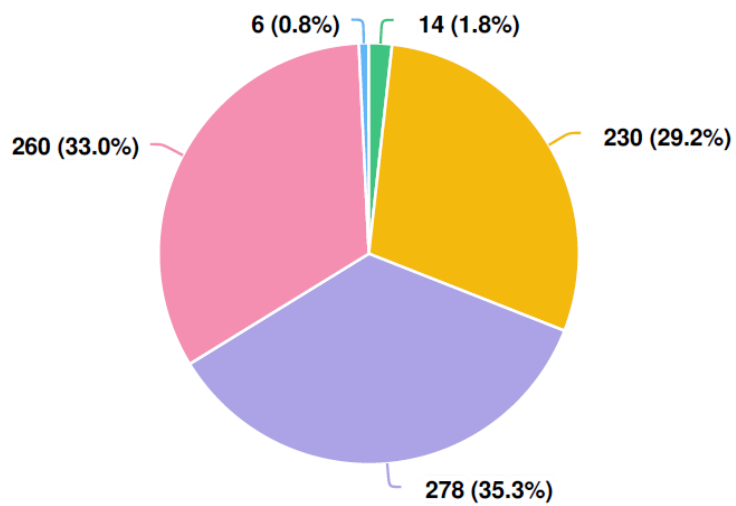
February 1 – March 2, 2021

- **787** survey respondents
- **8,729** comments
- **2,800** aware
- **2,100** informed



Demographics of Survey Participants

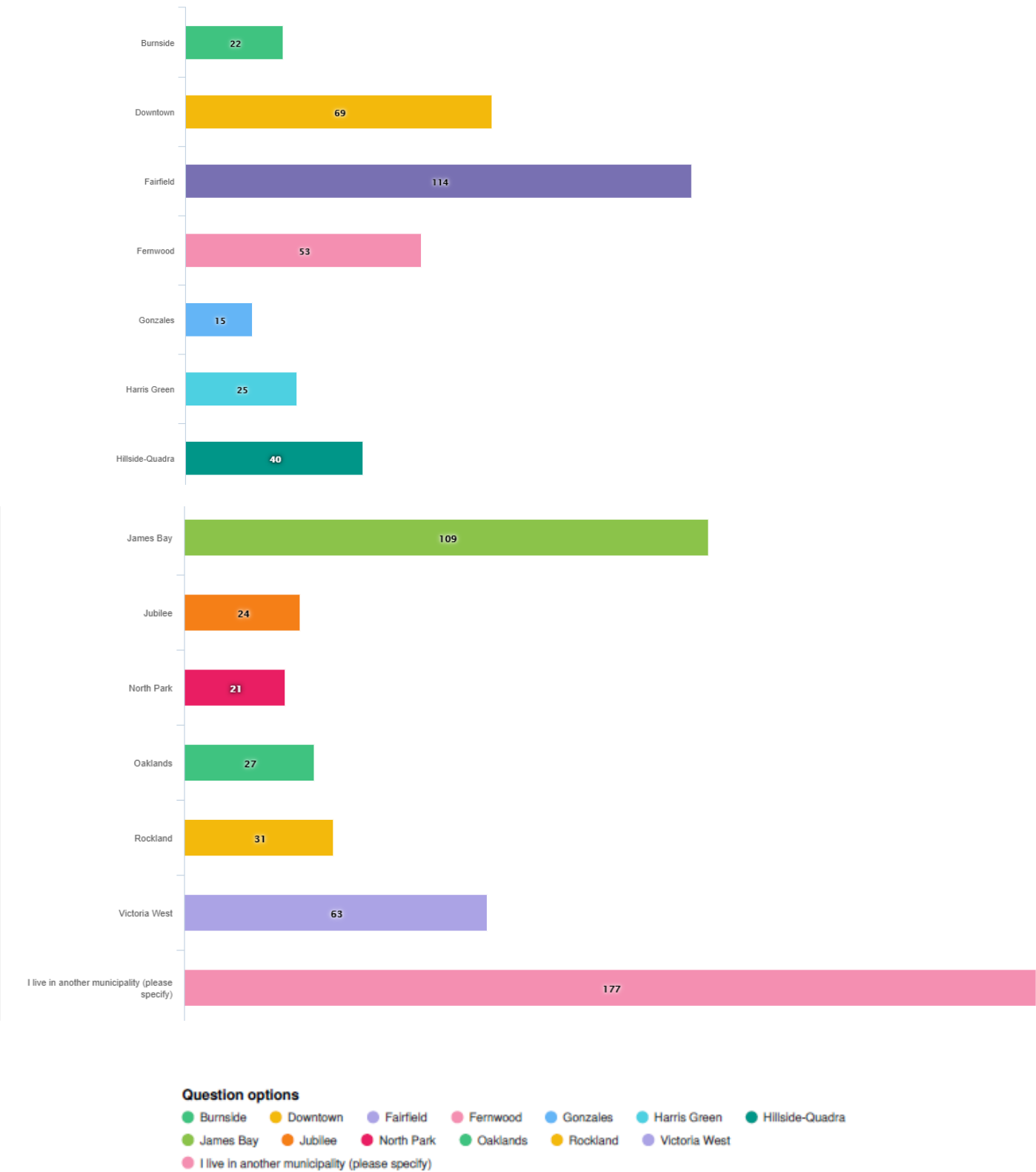
Age of Survey Respondents:



Question options

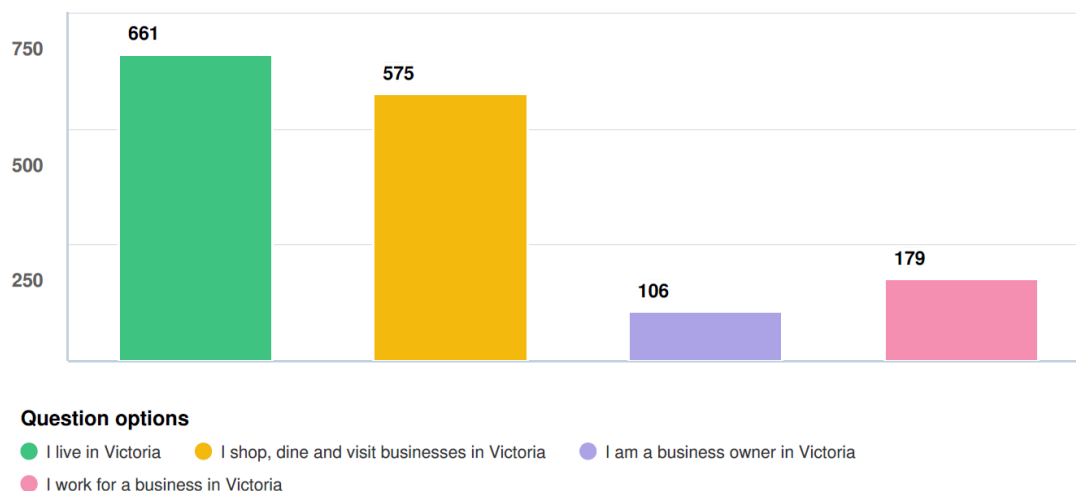
12-24 25-39 40-59 60-79 80+

Neighbourhoods of Survey Respondents:



Victoria Neighbourhoods	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of City Population (Census 2016)
Fairfield (114)	14.4%	14%
Fernwood (53)	6.7%	11%
Hillside-Quadra (40)	5.1%	9%
James Bay (109)	13.8%	14%
Vic West (63)	8%	9%
Downtown (69)	8.7%	4%
Burnside-Gorge (22)	2.8%	8%
North Park (21)	2.7%	4%
Jubilee (24)	3%	6%
Harris Green (25)	3.2%	3%
Rockland (31)	3.9%	4%
Oaklands (27)	3.4%	8%
Gonzales (15)	1.9%	5%
Other Municipalities (117)	22.4%	N/A

Respondent Characteristics



Engagement Insights

More than 8,729 comments, suggestions, and ideas were submitted by residents, businesses, visitors, and stakeholders through the survey, focus group and written feedback. Findings were categorized and key insights are summarized for each of the temporary public space initiatives. Many specific suggestions and ideas were submitted through the consultation process. Project team staff reviewed and considered all feedback to help inform planned improvements to the Build Back Victoria program for the spring and summer.

The engagement process focused on gauging public and business satisfaction with the program and collecting insights on how the program design could be improved to better meet the needs of businesses, locals and visitors.

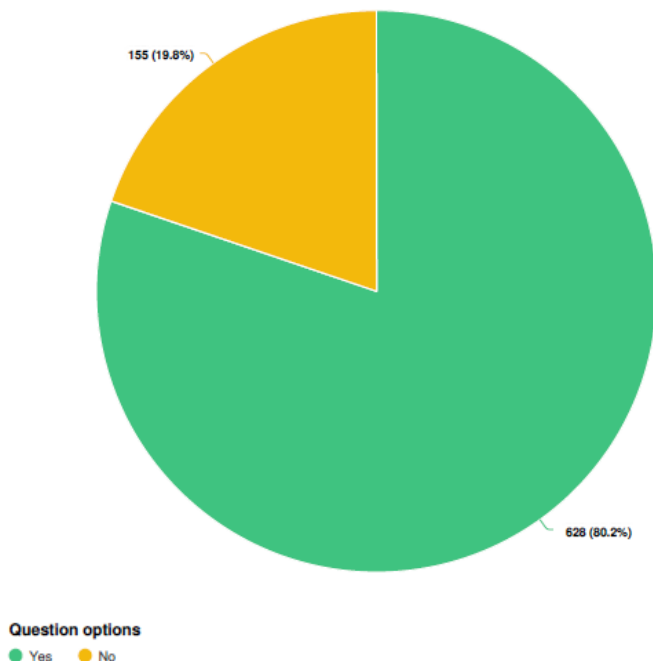
1. Survey Insights

What We Heard – Key Findings

General

- 80% of survey respondents were generally satisfied with the Build Back Victoria program
 - Among business respondents, 69.5% indicated they were generally satisfied with BBV initiatives.
- Most residents, businesses and visitors indicated they would like to see the program continue, they enjoyed the extra space, increased safety from vehicles and the vibrancy it brought to the City
- Most common remark was “the City felt more European and lively”

Q5 Have you been generally satisfied with Build Back Victoria?



Spotlight: Government Street

- We heard from 348 people who said they drive to Government Street. 72% of drivers said they were generally satisfied with Build Back Victoria initiatives.
- We heard from 272 people who said they visit Government Street as a cyclist. 90% said they were generally satisfied with Build Back Victoria initiatives.

- We heard from 718 people who said they visit Government Street as a pedestrian. 83.5% said they were generally satisfied with Build Back Victoria initiatives.
- We heard from 575 people who said they shop, dine and visit businesses in Victoria. 45% of this cohort indicated they visit Government Street by car, 35% by bike, 94% by foot (respondents could select more than one mode of travel).

There was strong support for continuing to keep Government Street pedestrian priority, with a full or partial closure to vehicle traffic. Many indicated they liked:

- extra space for patios
- safety from vehicle traffic
- space to socially distance from other pedestrians
- music and entertainment
- European feel and increased community space

Key themes for improvements on Government Street include:

- more live music and entertainment
- increased signage for pedestrian and vehicle traffic wayfinding
- Better support for pedi-cabs, slow cycling, and other non-motorized transportation
- lighting
- secure bicycle parking
- incorporation of art and artisan vendors into street animations
- improved maintenance of street furniture and temporary animations
- more bathroom access
- more youth-focused street animations

Specific concerns were noted, including:

- loss of on-street parking to facilitate patios and flex spaces. Others supported converting more parking stalls to support loading and customer pick up / delivery.
- accessibility for seniors and people with mobility challenges related to patios and parking
- traffic navigation and traffic flow challenges
- limited access for tourist buses
- delivery challenges for businesses
- the need for more pick-up zones and short-term parking for businesses
- street closures provided an unfair advantage to restaurants located in pedestrian priority zones.
- There were suggestions to consider a timed closure or seasonal closure of Government Street, rather than a full permanent closure to better facilitate deliveries, tradespeople and shoppers driving to downtown businesses.
- Some were concerned that a full closure could negatively impact businesses who depend on customers driving downtown to visit shops, services and restaurants.

Spotlight: Broad Street

- Strong support for Broad Street closure. Many said they enjoyed:
 - increased vibrancy and thought the animation was well-suited for the small street
 - increased pedestrian zone and plaza-like space
 - reduced vehicle access
 - live music
 - expanded patio spaces
- Key themes for improvements include:
 - more wayfinding signage
 - more public seating
 - aesthetics -- more plants, art and prettier street barricades
 - better traffic flow management and increased signage

Spotlight: Gladstone Avenue

- Strong support for the Gladstone Avenue one-way closure. Many said they enjoyed:
 - community feeling it brought to the area
 - patios and flex space
- Key themes for improvements include:
 - More traffic calming measures
 - improved aesthetics – nicer, more cohesive temporary fixtures
 - increased parking
 - increased bicycle parking
 - more lighting
 - more seating

Spotlight: Patios and Flex spaces

- Strong support for patios and flex spaces on Government Street, Broad Street and Gladstone Avenue and other areas, with many indicating they wanted to see more in the city.
- Key themes for improvements:
 - more cohesive animation / permanent infrastructure to beautify areas and create cohesive look (i.e.: planter boxes, tables, chairs, bollards)
 - improved maintenance to keep areas and furniture clean
 - continued focus on ensuring accessibility of patios

Spotlight: Mobile Vendors

- Food trucks were generally well-supported and many commented they wanted more in Victoria as long as they did not conflict with brick-and-mortar businesses, managed waste and noise pollution.
- Key themes for improvements include:
 - solutions to reduce waste
 - more food trucks outside of the downtown area
 - more public bathrooms and mobile water stations near food trucks
 - increased advertising and creation of a food truck map to better locate vendors

Spotlight: Businesses in Parks

- Businesses in parks were generally well-supported by respondents, many commented that businesses worked best when they balanced the needs of other park users.
- Some voiced concern over the suitability of parks to host businesses while bylaws were in place that supported temporary sheltering measures.

2. Stakeholder Focus Group

What We Heard – Key Findings

General

- The Build Back Victoria program was thought to be generally successful and provided the opportunity for restaurants and businesses to safely operate
- Many felt Build Back Victoria provided a sense of rediscovery for residents by providing a different look and feel with patios, community and colourful amenities
- Some felt Build Back Victoria made downtown a safe space to go as a pedestrian and shopper and drew people into other areas of the core that they might not have visited otherwise
- Some noted their appreciation for the City's willingness to make changes to better accommodate deliveries through the introduction of a loading zones, curbside pick-up and liked the quick Build Back Victoria application process.

Spotlight: Pedestrian Priority Areas

- Broad Street initiative was well-supported, participants thought it was suited for a road closure and animation. Opportunities were identified for more plants.

- Many participants voiced that Government Street was good as a temporary initiative, but were concerned the current set-up takes pedestrians away from storefront windows, reduces parking and inhibits loading zones critical for businesses

Spotlight: Patios and Flex spaces

- Many commented patios and flex spaces were a great temporary addition to streets, helped bring vibrancy to the area and noted the positive impact of small scale BBV initiatives
- Concerns were voiced on the lack of accessibility requirements for patios and some felt patios infringed on safe walking spaces for pedestrians
- Concerns were raised about seating maintenance and inappropriate use of the space (pop-up vendors, smoking), small or lack of wayfinding signage and there was also a desire for uniform infrastructure to better define areas and create a more cohesive look

Spotlight: Mobile Vendors

- Mobile vendors (primarily food trucks) were generally positively received and placement was not seen to negatively impact or compete with established businesses
- A few voiced that clustering food trucks together would help with place making

Spotlight: Government Street - Improvements for Spring/Summer 2021 Design

- Some voiced they would favour a more cohesive look to the design, easier street crossings and increased protection from traffic
- Many voiced that seasonality and physical characteristics of Government Street (windy, limited sun, large scale) should be considered with any new design treatments
- Some voiced concerns for potential negative impacts on business: reduced parking, loading zones, parkade access and the movement of people into the street away from storefronts
- A few voiced concerns a full 24/7 closure would hurt businesses, and that a partial or timed closure would be more manageable to accommodate, potentially with nighttime activities, animation and entertainment in designated areas
- A few participants voiced concern on how a full road closure would impact tourist bus drop off and noted the need to accommodate local B.C summer tourists travelling by car
- Many wanted the removal of the hornbeam trees

3. Canvassing of Government Street Businesses

Staff handed out letters to businesses on Government from Humboldt Street to View Street to provide information on the proposed changes to the Build Back Victoria program for spring and summer. One response was received with positive support for the program and is included in this Engagement Summary.

4. Neighbourhood Associations

The City's neighbourhoods team approached neighbourhood associations to inform them on the Build Back Victoria program and the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions on future improvements to the program. No feedback was received.

Conclusion

Staff engaged widely with residents, businesses, neighbourhood associations and visitors on Build Back Victoria temporary public space initiatives and collect feedback to help improve the spring and summer program. Feedback was collected through a number of engagement touchpoints to encourage broad and meaningful public participation.

Input from diverse stakeholders provided valuable insights to assist staff in balancing priorities and trade-offs for improvements to the Build Back Victoria temporary public space initiatives.

Promotional Materials

Victoria News Print Advertisement:



**BUILD
BACK
VICTORIA**

In the spring of 2020, the City of Victoria launched Build Back Victoria, a series of temporary initiatives within public space to support local businesses as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Build Back Victoria includes:

- › Flex Space and Temporary Patios
- › Businesses in Parks
- › New Customer Loading Zones
- › New Mobile Vending Locations
- › Partial and Full Street Closures
- › Pedestrian Priority Treatments on Government Street

The City of Victoria has committed to extending temporary Build Back Victoria permits through to October 2021, but is asking for feedback on any potential changes to improve this program for the spring and summer.



Learn more and share your feedback before
February 22: engage.victoria.ca

Examples of Neighbourhood Newsletters:

Fernwood Neighbourhood Association Newsletter:



February 2021 Update

Fernwood

Build Back Victoria 2021

In spring 2020, temporary public space initiatives were created to help local businesses respond and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Build Back Victoria has been extended through to October 2021 and we are looking for your input to help improve the spring and summer program. If you are a resident, business or visitor who experienced Build Back Victoria initiatives, please fill out the 10-minute survey at engage.victoria.ca before February 22.



City of Victoria E-Newsletter



[Learn More](#)




We Want to Hear From You

Take the survey and have your say on Build Back Victoria's spring and summer program! If you are a resident, business or visitor who experienced Build Back Victoria initiatives we want to hear from you. Fill out the 10-minute survey before February 22 at engage.victoria.ca

Social Media Posts

 **City of Victoria**  [@CityOfVictoria](#)

Share your feedback to help improve the [#BuildBackVictoria](#) program this spring and summer. If you are a resident, business or visitor who experienced initiatives such as temporary patios or partial street closures, fill out the survey by March 2: engage.victoria.ca/build-back-vic... [#yyj](#)



9:00 AM · Feb 28, 2021 · Hootsuite Inc.

26 Retweets 6 Quote Tweets 34 Likes

 **cityofvictoria** · [Follow](#)

 **cityofvictoria** Have you experienced the Build Back Victoria program initiatives such as flex space, temporary patios or full & partial street closures? We want to hear from you to help improve the spring and summer program. Survey deadline has been extended to March 2. Visit engage.victoria.ca – or click the link in our bio and visit the Have Your Say platform.

 Liked by [ef.vancouverisland](#) and 221 others

6 DAYS AGO

 Add a comment... [Post](#)

 **City of Victoria**  [@CityOfVictoria](#) · Feb 2

 Take the survey and have your say on [#BuildBackVictoria](#)'s spring & summer program! If you are a resident, business or visitor who experienced Build Back Victoria initiatives we want to hear from you. Fill out the 10-min survey at engage.victoria.ca before Feb 22.



Share your feedback and help improve the Build Back Victoria program for spring and summer 2021

BUILD BACK VICTORIA

INCLUDES:

- Flex Space and Temporary Patios
- Businesses in Parks
- New Customer Loading Zones
- New Mobile Vending Locations
- Partial and Full Street Closures
- Pedestrian Priority Treatments on Government Street

 Learn more and share your feedback before February 22: engage.victoria.ca

1 12 8

Letter to Government Street Businesses (Humboldt Street to View Street)



1 CENTENNIAL SQUARE, VICTORIA, BC V8W 1P6 | victoria.ca

Engineering and Public Works | Transportation
1 Centennial Square, Victoria, BC V8W 1P6
E engage@victoria.ca T 250.361.0300

March 17, 2021

Dear Government Street Merchants,

We know that this past year has been difficult for many businesses and services in our community. The COVID-19 Pandemic required creative responses to respond to public health orders and changes to traditional shopping, entertainment, and dining experiences in our Capital City.

The **Build Back Victoria program** is just one way the City of Victoria is continuing to support adaptation and recovery by allowing private use of public space until October 31, 2021. You can learn more about options to participate in this program by visiting our website at www.victoria.ca.

Over the past six weeks, the City has been reflecting on the Build Back Victoria program and the pedestrian priority interventions on Government Street. More than 800 survey responses were completed by business owners, shoppers and residents. Staff have also been collecting feedback from stakeholders like the Downtown Victoria Business Association, Destination Greater Victoria, the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce.

As we look ahead to summer 2021, the City is considering what worked well and what could be improved on Government Street. We want to ensure that your business has a chance to weigh in as we consider seasonal changes between Humboldt Street and View Street, such as:

- Replacing the temporary furnishings with new street furniture, planters and gateway treatments to improve the aesthetic of Government Street, while maintaining our iconic hanging basket program.
- Daily time-based openings to facilitate loading and vehicle access each morning while providing additional space for businesses and pedestrians in the afternoon and evening.
- Introducing new passenger and commercial loading zones on Government Street and adjacent roads.
- Maintaining on-street parking between View Street and Yates Street.
- Providing streetscape animation such as performances, live music and cultural activities.

Staff anticipate bringing recommendations to Council on April 15, 2021. Please feel free to share your thoughts by emailing engage@victoria.ca before April 6, 2021. We also welcome new ideas or suggestions as the program continues through the summer. Part of the process is continuing to adapt and make modifications to best serve the local community.

Thank you for your time,
City of Victoria

Response to Government Street Letter to Businesses

From: Sandy Black [REDACTED]
Sent: March 19, 2021 5:19 PM
To: Engagement <engage@victoria.ca>
Subject: Government St.

Hello,

My name is Sandy Black, I am the owner of Merchant Quarters General Store at 801 Government St.

We are absolutely thrilled with the initiatives being introduced on Government St. and think the city is right on with their ideas and direction.

I was a retailer in Whistler for 20 years. It's funny how when something is taken away from people it is an enormously big deal and yet never having experienced the same thing renders itself as not such a big deal at all. I am speaking specifically of parking, vehicles, and delivery on Government St. Whistler has over 450,000 sq.ft. of commercial, over 200 retail stores and 100 restaurants. There are no roads through the village and yet food was delivered, retail stores received goods, Starbucks was never out of coffee and The Longhorn was never out of beer. People adapted, delivery was a little trickier (especially in a foot of snow), parking was never easy and yet the place was packed!

My point is that the focus needs to be on the GUEST and their experience in Victoria. We want locals and tourists to want to come back again and again and have great experiences while enjoying everything Old Towne has to offer. I would spend less time worrying about delivery methodology and introducing loading zones on Government St. and more time thinking about the design, hard landscaping and animation which will contribute to the experience.

If this becomes what I think it can become and the City brands it as say " OLD TOWNE STROLL" and really makes it special - then every single visitor to Victoria will find their way there one way or another.

Great work so far!

Regards,

Sandy