ATTACHMENT 4

Government Street Refresh.

Government Street Refresh: Best Practices

Prepared for the City of Victoria by DIALOG, Winter 2022

DIALOG

CITY OF VICTORIA

1970's Pedestrian Mall Movement

The last time significant streetscape improvements were made to Government Street was in the late 1970's between Humbolt and Yates Street. These improvements emphasized its pedestrian-priority character and heritage and included the use of brick pavers, rolled curbs, widened sidewalks, street trees in planters, pedestrian lighting, street furniture and other streetscape elements.

These changes were a part of an urban design movement that was taking place across North America. In 1959 Burdick Street in Kalamazoo was created as the first pedestrian street. It was designed by Victor Gruen who is credited for popularizing the movement. By the 1980s more than 200 pedestrian malls had been created.

The main objectives driving the pedestrianization movement were:

- a desire to compete with suburban shopping malls and reverse the decline of American downtowns;
- a desire to allow pedestrians to walk from store to store in a leisurely manner and away from congestion, noise, and air pollution.

By 2005 many pedestrian malls failed, and only 20 of the original 200 were still traffic free. Government Street was never fully closed to traffic and has remained successful. The following best practices and lessons learned from successful pedestrian malls include:

1) Build on existing foot traffic. Successful malls aim to work better for the people who are already using the street rather than attempt to attract new people to the street.

2) Served a diverse range of activities, programs and people day and night rather than having a single focus of shopping.
3) Cause minimal disruption to the level of traffic on surrounding streets and allow for cross movement. Short rather than long blocks, like Government Street, helps.
4) Limit vehicular closures to a single or partial block, or to a timed and seasonal closure. Some, like Government Street, maintained all vehicles.
5) Keep the street well maintained and programmed. An agency that is responsible for their funding, maintenance, and program can help.

References:

- Who's afraid of the pedestrian mall? Alexandra Lange, September 30, 2019
- Revisiting Pedestrian Malls, Jessica Schmidt, 2010
- Why Was the State Street Pedestrian Mall a "Failure"? John Greenfield, March 11, 2013
- Yonge Street Mall: The fun and failure of pedestrianizing Toronto's iconic strip during the 1970s, Daniel Ross, March 16, 2017.

Mall pedestrian treatment under construction along 900-block, circa 1970s, CVA M09926_141

Mall pedestrian treatment under construction along 900-block, circa 1970s, CVA M09927_141

Heritage Best Practices and Standards

The Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada should be consulted before undertaking interventions to historic sites. Interventions should be based upon the information outlined in the Standards and Guidelines, which are conservation principles of best practice. The following should be considered before carrying out any work to an historic site, such as the Government Street landscape.

Standards For All Conservation Projects

- Conserve the heritage value of a historic place. Do not remove, replace, or substantially alter its intact or repairable character-defining elements. Do not move a part of a historic place if its current location is a character-defining element.
- Conserve changes to a historic place, which over time, have become character-defining elements in their own right.
- Conserve heritage value by adopting an approach calling for minimal intervention.
- Recognize each historic place as a physical record of its time, place and use. Do not create a false sense of historical development by adding elements from other historic places or other properties or by combining features of the same property that never coexisted.
- Find a use for a historic place that requires minimal or no change to its character-defining elements.
- Protect and, if necessary, stabilize a historic place until any subsequent intervention is undertaken. Protect and preserve archaeological resources in place. Where there is potential for disturbance of archaeological resources, take mitigation measures to limit damage and loss of information.
- Evaluate the existing condition of character-defining element to determine the appropriate intervention needed. use the gentlest means possible for any intervention. Respect heritage value when undertaking an intervention.
- Maintain character-defining elements on an ongoing basis. Repair character-defining element by reinforcing the materials using recognized conservation methods. Replace in kind any extensively deteriorated or missing parts of character-defining elements, where there are surviving prototypes.
- Make any intervention needed to preserve character-defining elements physically and visually compatible with the historic place and identifiable upon close inspection. Document any intervention for future reference.

Additional Standards Relating To Rehabilitation

- Repair rather than replace character-defining elements. Where character-defining elements are too severely deteriorated to repair, and where sufficient physical evidence exists, replace them with new elements that match the forms, materials and detailing of sound versions of the same elements. Where there is insufficient physical evidence, make the form, material and detailing of the new elements compatible with the character of the historic place.
- Conserve the heritage value and character-defining elements when creating any new additions to a historic place and any related new construction. Make the new work

physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place.
- Create any new additions or related new construction so that the essential form and integrity of a historic place will not be impaired if the new work is removed in the future.

Accessibility

The Hidden Mobility Disabilities Alliance Ltd. has identified the following best practices for accessibility and accommodation.

These guidelines for public spaces address the four main areas of challenge that can hinder the full and effective participation in society guaranteed in the Canadian Human Rights Act:

1. **Limit distance to be walked – one way:**
- 35 feet from a main entrance to on-street parking near that entrance.
- 50 feet from a main entrance to off-site lane parking.
- 35 feet from a main entrance to at least one universal rest room.
- 20 feet from an elevator to the driver's door in handicapped parking stalls.
- 35 feet from a seated waiting area to the service window in a government office.
- 35 feet from public parking to out-of-doors public amenities such as water-fronts, parks, viewing sites, etc.

2. **Address terrain:**
- Provide a short distance alternative to having to navigate a slope (which puts stress on knee joints), such as a ramp.
- Provide a smooth, stable, even terrain so that walking is as effortless as possible.

3. **Provide alternatives to standing and waiting:**
- Where access to a public service requires standing in line, provide a ticket number dispenser at the entrance with seating for people waiting their turn.
- Where individuals are expected to stand using service kiosks, provide a seated alter-native.
- Where possible, provide online alternatives for accessing public services from home.

4. **Provide resting opportunities on benches or chairs during pain episodes:**
- For individuals waiting for elevators.
- At intervals of least every 35 feet for:
- Buildings with entrances set back from the street more than 35 feet
- Corridors longer than 50 feet
- Shopping malls
- Public viewing sites

Source:
www.HiddenMobilityDisabilities.com
alliance@hiddenmobilitydisabilities.com

Entrances along Government Street.

Streetscape Best Practices

The Downtown Public Realm Plan identifies the following five best practices for streetscapes and public realm that are relevant to this project:

Identify of Place
Create public spaces with authentic character and identity.

Diversity of Use
Provide a mix of varied public spaces to support the diversity and uniqueness of the precincts and to meet the needs of current and future populations.

Community Focus
Ensure public spaces engage the local community and contribute to community health and wellbeing.

Sustainability
Design a public realm that improves environmental, material, financial and social sustainability.

Accessibility
Incorporate universally accessible design into the public realm to allow barrier-free access.

Government Street Refresh.

Government Street Refresh: Precedents

DIALOG Prepared for the City of Victoria by DIALOG, Winter 2022

CITY OF VICTORIA

Precedents

The following are seven creative precedents and international best practice related to innovative street design concepts. These precedents can serve as a model to inspire and inform the Government Street Refresh project.

1. Yonge Tomorrow

Location: Yonge Street, Downtown Toronto Canada

The focus of the Yonge Tomorrow project is to improve mobility and safety for all users in a busy, well-used downtown street. The project places particular emphasis on pedestrianization efforts and the expansion of public space. The design can be operated flexibly on a block-by-block and timed basis, accommodating the needs of different users (e.g.: pedestrians, cyclists and cars)

Conceptual rendering of Yonge-Dundas Square

Conceptual rendering of Yonge Street between College/ Carlton and Gerrard Street

Conceptual rendering of Yonge Street between Dundas Square and Shuter Street

2. King Street Transit Priority Corridor

Location: King Street West, Downtown Toronto Canada

King Street is now a transit priority corridor that restricts through traffic and certain turning movements. The primary purpose of this project was to improve mobility for pedestrians, cyclists and TTC streetcars. The project also demonstrates ways that new public space can be created through the appropriation of things like parking spaces.

King Street pilot project

King Street Transit Priority Corridor

3. Argyle and Grafton Street Streetscape Project

Location: Argyle Street, Downtown Halifax Canada

The Argyle Street Streetscape project transformed a once cramped, narrow, two-way road into a more people-focused street, with expanded pedestrian and patio space as well as zones where vehicles are not permitted. The project balances mobility and design features on a “small” street-level scale, implementing universal access design features (e.g. flush curbs and tactile strips) together with shared space for all road users.

Argyle Street at night

4. Bernard Avenue Revitalization

Location: Bernard Avenue, Downtown Kelowna Canada

The Bernard Avenue Revitalization project transformed one of Kelowna's busiest and most desirable street destinations, improving and expanding pedestrian and public space. The project also included public art, patio extensions and expansion of green space and street trees. Universal access design features and on-street bike lane for cyclists were also incorporated. The City has continued to program Bernard Avenue as a "open streets" space, or a "car free" zone during busy summer months.

Patios along Bernard Avenue

Seating along Bernard Avenue

5. Pedestrianization of New Road

Location: New Road, Brighton UK

The New Road project demonstrates how a shared street space can be designed to safely accommodate all users, while also capitalizing on opportunities to provide enhanced pedestrian and public space. The street is designed to balance between pedestrian and vehicle flows, without restricting motorised vehicle access. Design options such as this minimize the need for complicated mobility and engineering designs that are associated with restricted vehicle access and turning movements.

New Road, Brighton UK

6. Place des Arts / Quartiers des Spectacles

Location: Esplanade Place des Arts / Rue St Catherine, Downtown Montreal Canada

The recently redeveloped Place de Arts sector in the heart of Downtown Montreal is a permeable and interconnected pedestrian priority / public space that has controlled car access. The sector also features public art, street furniture, event space and expanded green space / street trees. Rue St Catherine, a popular commercial /downtown street, was extended to better accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists. The project is one of the most successful examples of redesigning streets for people.

Interactive installation art, Quartier Des Spectacles

Place des Arts, Montréal

7. Bloor Street Transformation

Location: Bloor Street, Downtown Toronto Canada

The Bloor Street Transformation project revitalized the pedestrian realm between Yonge Street and Avenue Road, one of Toronto's signature retail avenues. Key improvements included sidewalk and public space extensions, public art and urban street furniture as well as street trees and flower / plant boxes. This project serves as a design-centric / streetscaping precedent for Government Street.

The Festival Walkway, Bloor Street

The following images were shared by members of the stakeholder working group following the ‘walkshop’.

Public library with outdoor amenity

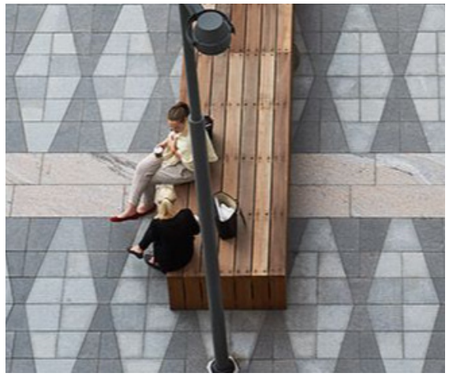
Umbrella installation

Car free Sundays, Kensington Market

A dream for Centennial Square and Pandora Street, Victoria, B.C.

The following images were shared as a part of the Phase 1 Public Engagement Survey

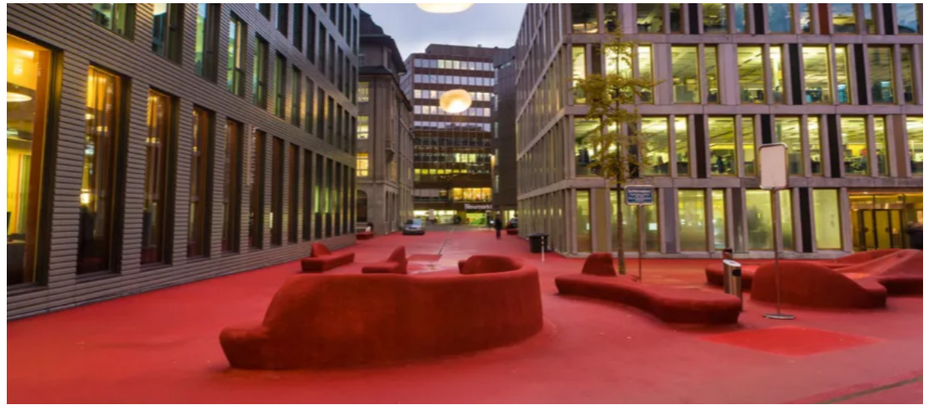
A place for the dogs to hang out



Artistic paving to emphasize pedestrian friendliness

Interactive fun for the kids

Covered bike parking



The Red Lounge, St. Gallen, Switzerland

Additional inspiration images shared by the City working team

Nicollet Mall frame, Minneapolis, MN


The Grove Arcade, Asheville, NC


'18 shades of gay,' Claude Cormier + Associés, Montréal


Nicollet Mall outdoor heater, Minneapolis, MN

In preparing the report, an attempt was made to prioritize findings from locations geographically and culturally similar to Victoria, BC, but examples from around the world greatly enriched the distilled findings and suggestions. Given the rigor normally associated with the academic research and publication process, the primary source of information for this report was drawn from peer-reviewed publications such as journal articles. However, a wide range of governmental and non-governmental grey literature and white papers that report on the successes and failures of pedestrianized streets published by government and non-governmental organizations in Canada, the US, and UK, were also reviewed and referred to in the production of this document.

Prepared by Denver Vale Nixon, PhD
12th of May 2022

Pedestrianization Impact on Disability – Brief on Lessons Learned

This brief presents the lessons extracted from the larger report on the impacts of pedestrianization initiatives on people with disabilities, which was prepared for the City of Victoria's decision-making process on the Government Street Refresh. These findings were distilled from academic and non-academic literature on the topic. For recommendations in response to these findings, as well as a discussion of each topic, please see the main document.

A. Disabled Involvement/Representation

Lessons:

- People with disabilities are often left out of the transportation design and infrastructure planning and implementation process, resulting in the perpetuation of exclusive mobility systems.
- Disability is heterogeneous and thus participatory representation must be diverse.

B. Separation from Motor Vehicles

Lessons:

- The presence of motor vehicles creates "existential insecurity and uncertainty" (Imrie 2012: 2270) for people with disabilities, particularly those visually impaired or slow in movement.
- Shared space environments without consistent indicators of potential automobile presence (street surfaces) may be uninterpretable for some people with disabilities, increasing their sense of vulnerability.

C. Disabled Cycling

Lesson:

- Given the right infrastructure and other access support, cycling mobility is achievable by most people with a disability.

Wheels for Wellbeing and BenGold 2018, permission granted.

D. Universal Bike Racks

Lesson:

- Special cycle designs require universal bike racks / secure anchors.

E. Separation from Cyclists

Lesson:

- Faster moving cyclists (with or without disabilities) may intimidate some slower moving people with disabilities and those with visual impairments.

F. Cyclist Bells and Lights

Lessons:

- Again, faster moving cyclists (with or without disabilities) may intimidate some slower moving people with disabilities and those with visual or hearing impairments.
- Pulsing lights may trigger seizures and other problems for neurodivergent citizens.

G. Proximal Public Transit

Lesson:

- Those with disabilities who do not own a car or cycle need public transit drop-off and pick-up points closer to pedestrianized areas.

H. Disabled Automobile Parking

Lesson:

- Those with disabilities who drive should have access to public parking spaces close to pedestrian areas.
- Enough room must be provided to load and unload assistive mobility devices, including specialized cycles.

I. Signage

Lesson:

- Those with disabilities often need signs that do not exceed a certain height and that possess high visual contrast and braille transcriptions.

J. Standard Crosswalk Paint & Audible Crosswalk Signals

Lesson:

- Alternative crosswalk paint designs/patterns can disorient, or be uninterpretable, to neurodivergent citizens.

K. Crossing Signals

Lessons:

- Most crossing time allowances are too fast for people with a range of disabilities.

- Crossing signal trigger buttons must be placed low enough for people with disabilities in recumbent positions to reach them.
- Crossing signals require standardized audible tones to indicate to visually impaired people that they may cross.

L. Flexible Infrastructure

Lesson:

- The mosaic of disability means that good-fit cannot always be estimated in advance.

M. Smooth but Grippy Surfaces

Lesson:

- Some wheeled mobility cannot safely and easily negotiate street/sidewalk surface bumps and undulations.

Chair user negotiating Portuguese cobble in Lisbon 2016 Denver Nixon

N. Benches/Seats

Lesson:

- Those with a disability may need to rest more often than assumed.

O. Lighting

Lesson:

- Sufficient light is necessary for many people with visual impairments to traverse unfamiliar spaces.

P. Plumbing

Lessons:

- People with disabilities may require more accommodating washroom design.
- Slower and more challenging mobility among those with disabilities means that restrooms and fountains should be closer at hand than normally assumed.

Q. Multisensory Navigation

Lesson:

- People with disabilities sometimes employ multiple senses—such as scent, sound, or thermoception—for navigation.

R. Construction Noise

Lesson:

- Construction noise or other loud noises may disproportionately affect people with disabilities, either complicating navigation or triggering disability-related problems.

S. Information Dissemination

Lesson:

- People with disabilities may rely upon a range of non-standard conduits of information, such as screen readers, podcasts / sound files, illustrations, braille or sign language.

T. Street Clutter and Ongoing Audits

Lesson:

- Street clutter may impede the mobility of those with disabilities.

U. Street Design Features

Lesson:

- Well researched guides for disability-friendly streetscape design are available, though these will likely be augmented and/or change over time.

Amsterdam 2015 Denver Nixon

Pedestrianization Impact on Business – Brief on Lessons Learned

This brief presents the lessons extracted from the larger report on the impacts of pedestrianization initiatives on business, which was prepared for the City of Victoria's decision-making process on the Government Street Refresh. These findings were distilled from academic and non-academic literature on the topic. For recommendations in response to these findings, as well as a discussion of each topic, please see the main document.

General Lessons Regarding Business Impacts:

- Businesses often overestimate automobile driver patronage (in some cases doubling the reality) and underestimate (e.g. 50%) the patronage of pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users.

- Business sentiments often improve after implementation of pedestrianization projects. One study of 110 business owners found 20% agreed and 30% disagreed with pedestrianization before implementation whereas 85% agreed and 10% disagreed after implementation.

- Business sales and revenues in pedestrianized areas often increase relative to neighbouring businesses in most contemporary contexts around the world. This may be in the 10-70% range above baseline or controls.

- Proxies of pedestrianization processes, such as substituting parking space with walking and cycling infrastructures (e.g. wider sidewalks or bike lanes), in a majority of cases (86% according to one review article) increase business sales. In Seattle and New York this was found to be in the 48%-400% range. Other studies found increased walkability decreased commercial property vacancies while higher motor vehicle volumes increased them.

- Interpersonal insecurity and crime tend to drop with the introduction of successful pedestrianization, possibly because of 'eyes on the street'.

- Past failures of pedestrian malls in North America were likely owed to unfavourable historical conditions, such as increasing suburbanization, the growth in indoor shopping malls, expanding automobility, and futile efforts to resurrect already failing downtown cores; these trends have now largely reversed with urban cores densifying, lower popularity of automobiles among young people, rising motor vehicle costs, and pandemic conditions that favour outdoor environments.

- Pedestrianized locations in or near "destinations" (e.g. tourist sites, beaches, conference centres, etc.) are more likely to succeed, though some pedestrianized areas manage to do well with primarily local patronage (e.g. downtowns with dense residential presence, or university students).

A. Engagement and Information Dissemination

Lessons:

- Businesses that engage in ongoing dialogue with the pedestrianization process report higher levels of satisfaction with outcomes.
- Jurisdictions that engage in ongoing dialogue with local business report higher levels of success with pedestrianization.
- Jurisdictions that pursue a communication strategy consisting of a range of means—such as branding, photography on social media, contests and prize giveaways, a website and/or blog, radio ads, marketing via influencers, etc.—draw more people to their pedestrianized zones.

B. Data Collection

Lessons:

- Data from ongoing monitoring and feedback help to ensure agile adaptations.
- Pedestrianization projects should ideally be continually stewarded rather than left to fend for themselves.
- Some economic challenges may be owed to external/larger variables, such as global finance volatility, pandemics, or impacts of neighbouring areas or projects; as such, accurate and continuous data on businesses in pedestrianized areas can help to isolate external *versus* internal issues.

C. Gradual and Patient, Yet Two Dimensionally Extensive

Lessons:

- Businesses often do not see economic gains from pedestrianization projects until one or two years after implementation.
- Incremental introduction of pedestrianization interventions may reduce risks, or at least the costs of failure.
- Larger temporal and spatial commitments (longer car-free hours or seasons, more contiguous blocks or neighbourhoods) may offer higher probability of success, though strictly linear pedestrianized patterns (e.g. one street) *may* need to be limited in length (e.g. 4 blocks).

D. Streetscaping & Programming

Lessons:

- Streetscape features such as trees, plants, benches, display windows, and a sense of containment, and programmed entertainment such as festivals and music performances, may increase the appeal and

magnetism of pedestrianization projects (though a minority of pedestrian malls succeed without them), thus benefiting business.
- Several North American cities are in the process of extending their programming into the evenings, and into fall, spring, and even winter seasons.
- Some locations collect fees from businesses to maintain the condition of pedestrianized spaces.

E. Delivery Times

Lesson:

- The efficient delivery of goods to and from pedestrian mall businesses is essential for the survival of the commercial ecosystem but may conflict with the pedestrianized nature of the environment; a number of jurisdictions have successfully dealt with this paradox by allowing delivery vehicle access during particular times, usually the late evening and/or early morning.

F. Green Cartage

Lesson:

- A large portion of deliveries, even large volumes or tonnage, may be made by cargo cycles (with or without electric assist), dollies, carts or other human-powered or electric micromobility means, which reduces the need for separate delivery times and fulfills cities' sustainability objectives.

Cargo trikes in Chengdu 2005 Denver Nixon

G. Business Mix

Lessons:

- Some level of business type and public sector (e.g. library) diversity seems to promote healthier commercial ecosystems on pedestrianized streets. Diversity of business target markets (e.g. low/middle income *versus* high income upscale) may prevent 'instant gentrification'.
- While most commercial activity benefits from pedestrianization, food and drink establishments usually benefit the most.
- The presence of some major retailers may also anchor commercial activity.
- Whereas the growth of indoor malls is cited as one source of 20th century North American pedestrian mall failure, there are a number of contemporary examples of indoor and outdoor malls co-existing symbiotically (e.g. Calgary's Stephen Ave.).

- The efforts needed to maintain the business mix may be subject to both the overall success of the pedestrianization initiative as well as larger global forces; both gentrification and the choices of the global elite can effect the affordability of commercial space.

H. Public Transit and Taxi Access

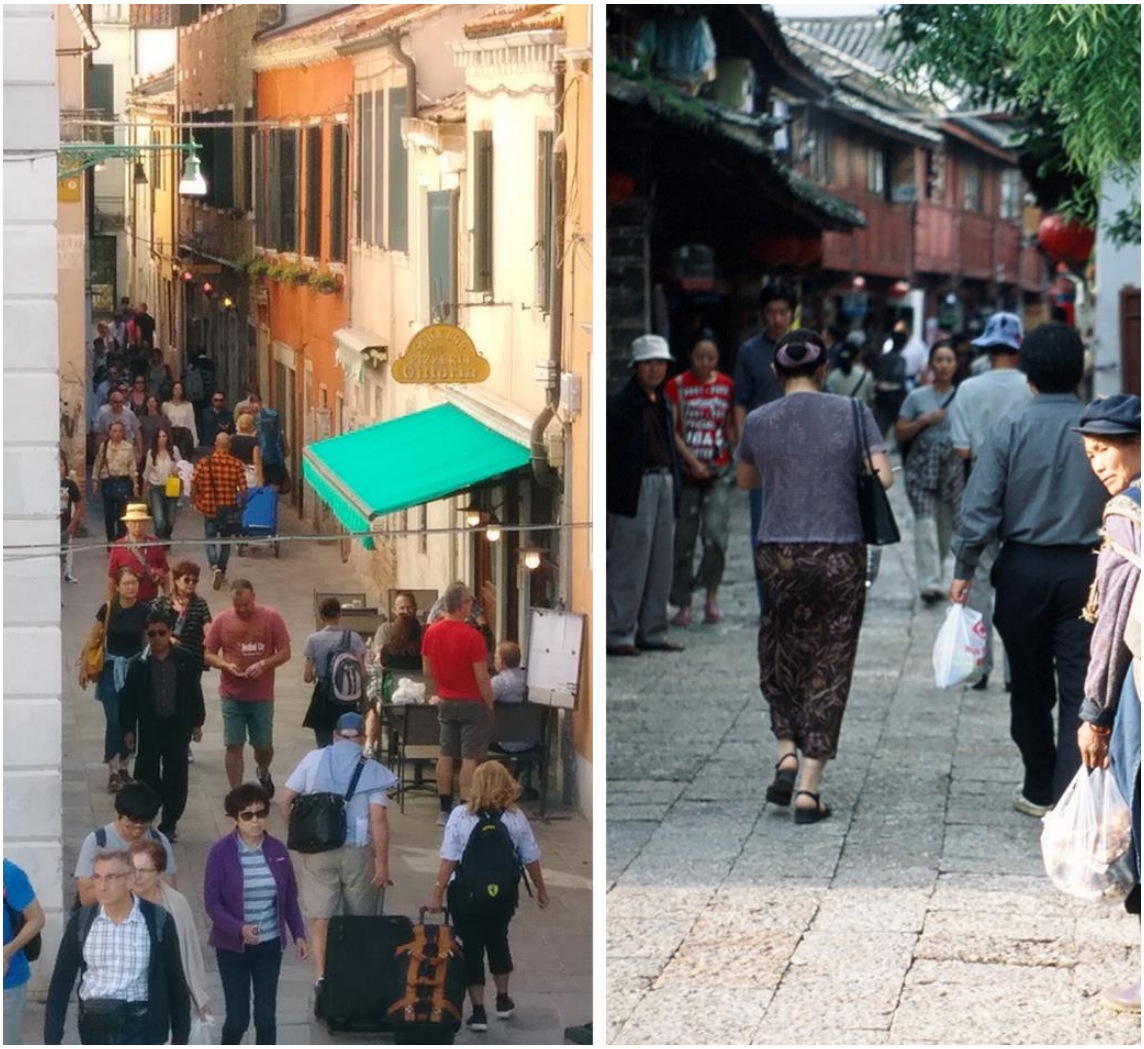
Lesson:

- Higher numbers of visitors may be achieved by improving public transit and taxi access to pedestrian malls.

I. Noise Scheduling

Lesson:

- Given that pedestrians walk without soundproof enclosures, loud noises can discourage their visits to pedestrian malls.



Venice & Lijiang, thriving pedestrianized environments for 1500yrs. 2018 & 2001 Denver Nixon.