

1

Purpose

- To provide an overview and update on the Government Street project and next steps
- To re-affirm Council Directions

Government Street Refresh.

Concept Vision Report 06.2022

2 Government Street Refresh | May 18th, 2023

CITY OF VICTORIA

2

The Vision

'Government Street is one of Canada's most iconic pedestrian priority retail streets and is an important part of Victoria's identity.'

A shared street for locals and residents, Government Street reflects and adapts to the culture and values of Victorians. It is where Victorians go to dine, and people watch; to shop and meet friends;

Government Street is a place of beauty and comfort. Streetscape elements speak to the core values of the City; sustainable, welcoming and inclusive.

Government Street is a place where diverse stories are shared, reflecting the rich, layered and complex history of Victoria.'

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3

Approved Council Motions (July 2022)

1. Approve the Government Street Vision and Concept Design to guide future capital planning, detailed design, costing and phased implementation to align with planned infrastructure upgrades and anticipated land development projects from Humboldt Street to Pandora Avenue, and direct staff to incorporate design and construction costs into future financial plans.
2. Direct staff to maintain and improve pedestrian-priority treatments previously implemented through the Build Back Victoria program including street furniture and planters, patios, programming and timed car-free zones. As part of these efforts, pilot a full-time closure between Humboldt and Courtney Streets to inform detailed design and implementation.

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4

Background

- One of Victoria's most iconic streets - a signature destination for residents and visitors alike
- The heart of Old Town - a place of unique historical character
- A place of traditional use by the Songhees and Esquimalt People
- A reflection of City identity, community values

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5

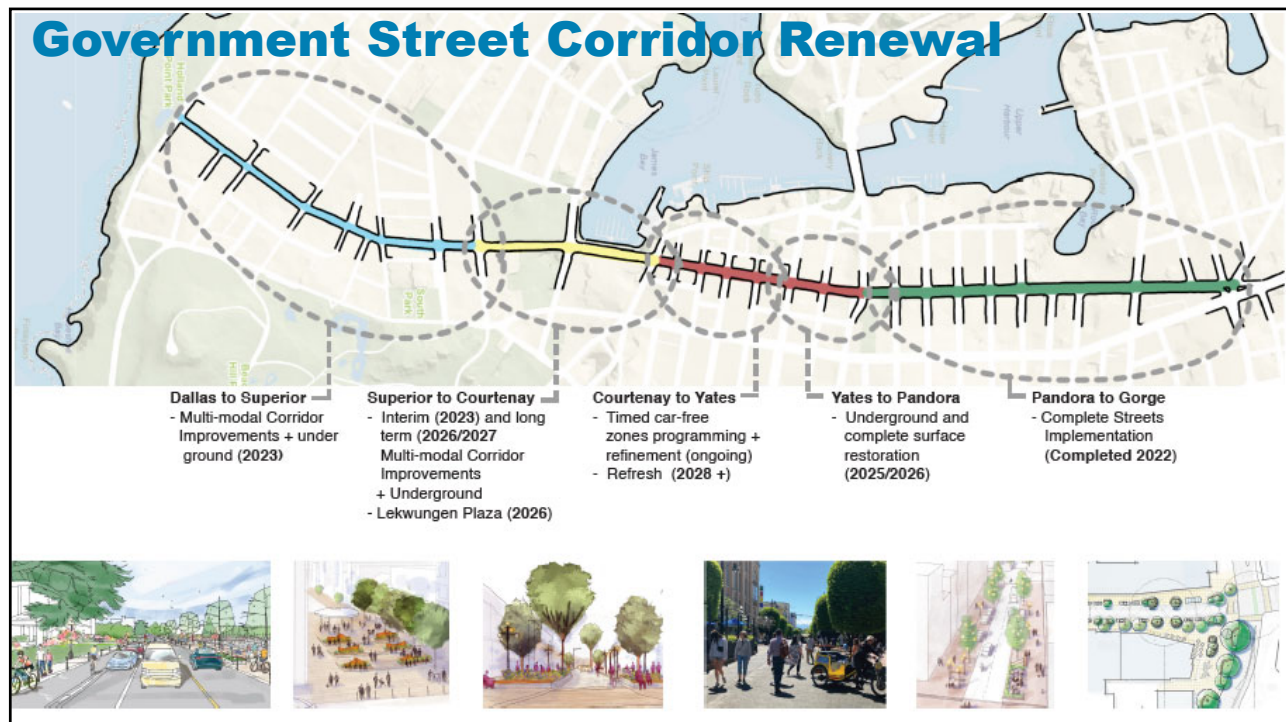
Background

- Build Back Victoria - a great foundation to build on
- Underground infrastructure replacement - an opportunity to build the street back better
- Council Strategic Plan Action ((2018 – 2022): a *'people priority Government Street'*
- OCP + DCAP: *extend 'Pedestrian Mall' through to Chinatown*
- "Made in Victoria" - incremental change building on the legacy and success of Government Street

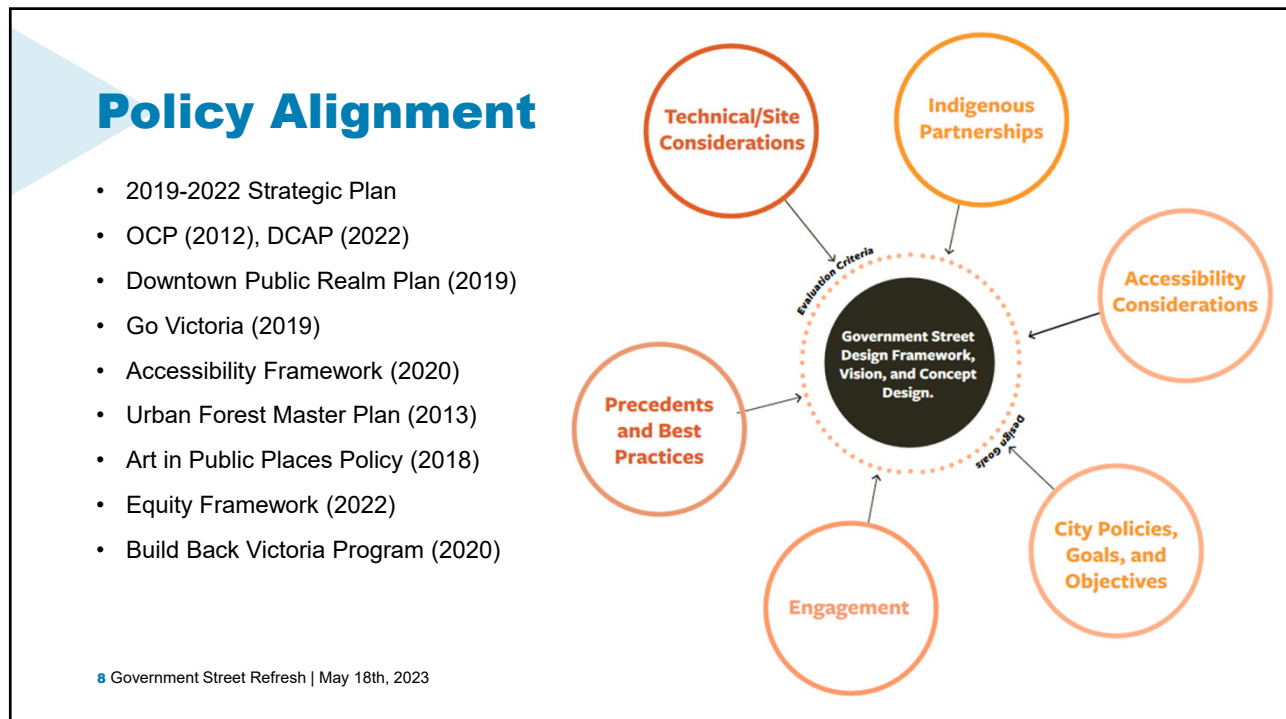
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6



7



8

Indigenous Partnerships & Reconciliation

- Identified as a priority project by Esquimalt Nation and Songhees Nation
- An opportunity to educate about Indigenous past, present and future; to tell the full story of this place; an opportunity to make the street more culturally safe and welcoming
- Advanced the working relationship between the City and the two Nations, a model to build on for ongoing and future partnerships

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9

Public Engagement

- Summer 2021 – Spring 2022
- Diverse and comprehensive engagement
- Working group representing a broad spectrum of organizations and with strong business representation
- Upfront and on-going collaboration with Songhees and Esquimalt Nations Partners
- Focus group and committee engagement provided more focused, technical and topic based input

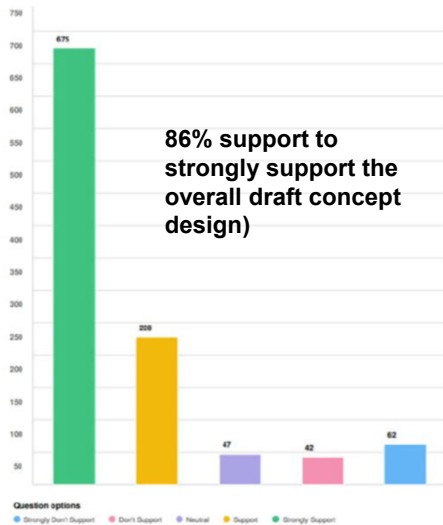
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10

Overall Concept - Engagement Highlights

Online Survey (1,054 respondents):



Feedback Themes

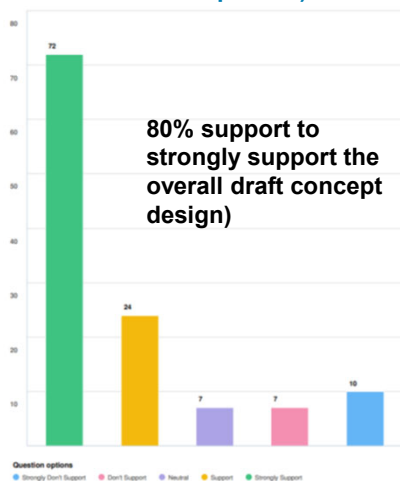
- Welcoming, safe and accessible for all, year round/all weather
- Support business vitality (infrastructure, delivery, parking)
- Reclaim for pedestrians; maintain timed car-free
- Strong support for Indigenous art, programming economic opportunities
- Plan for cultural events and programming, outdoor performance, more public art, family friendly
- Permanent, high-quality outdoor patios; More public washrooms
- Keep accessibility top of mind in all facets of design



11

Overall Concept - Business Engagement

Online Survey (120 respondents: business owner/operator):



Strong support with considerations:

- **Storefront Competition:** mobile vending creates unwanted competition for brick & mortar businesses; Local Indigenous markets, business incubators, and non-competitive ok
- **Safety:** concerns about perceived negative activities and behaviors and business impacts
- **Delivery:** sometimes challenging completing deliveries by noon
- **Traffic:** concern with congestion on surrounding street network; pedestrian awareness of cross traffic during timed car free periods
- **Tour bus stop location:** change form historic location/proximity to specific businesses
- **Construction Impacts**



12

Key Themes Informing the Concept Design

- Maintain/enhance and build on success of BBV
- Support business vitality throughout the corridor
- Reduce role as vehicle thoroughfare to support pedestrian priority people place including activation, street patios, etc.
- Embrace diverse cultural interpretation: beyond colonial history/heritage
- Expand arts and culture including programming, events, performance, music
- Prioritize implementation of capital works in the northern two blocks

13 Government Street Refresh | May 18th, 2023



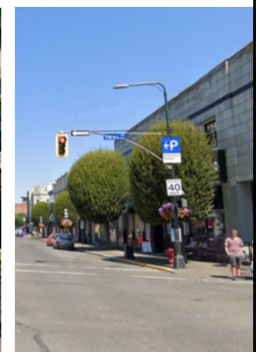
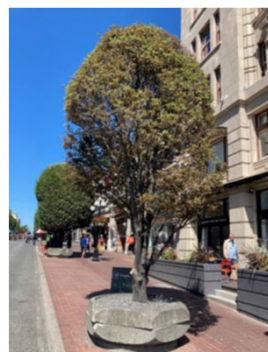
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Technical Considerations

Significant and complex technical considerations informing the concept design including:

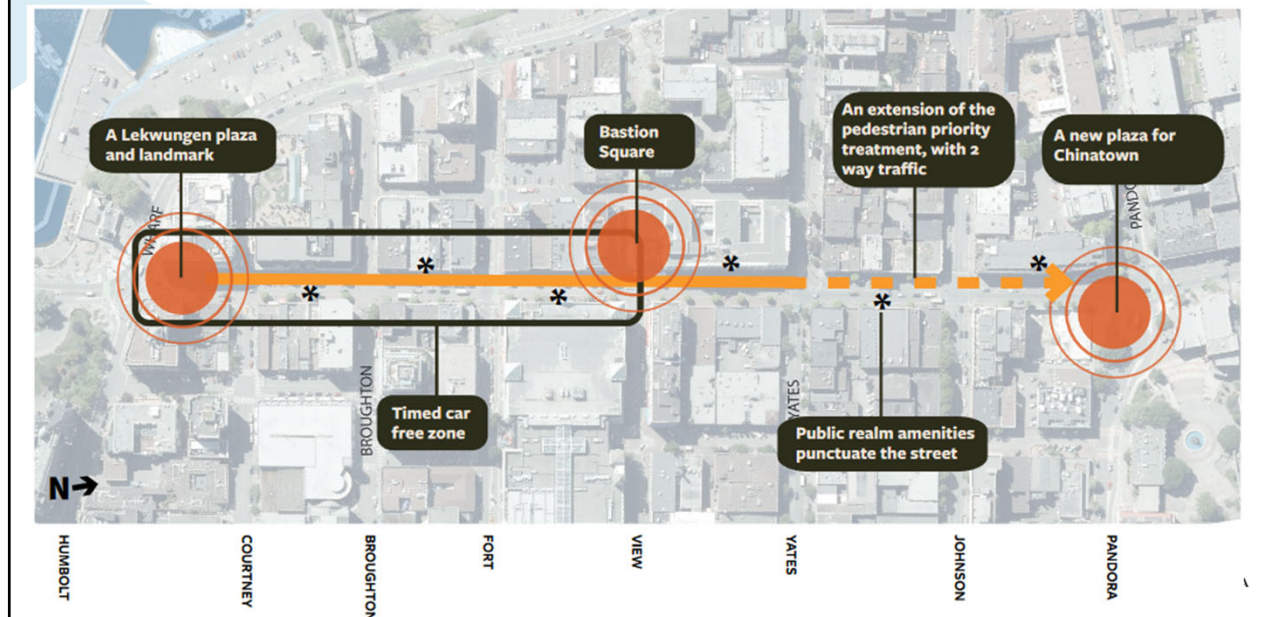
- Infrastructure renewal
- Street tree succession
- Vehicle circulation / emergency access
- Accessibility
- Programming, parades and events

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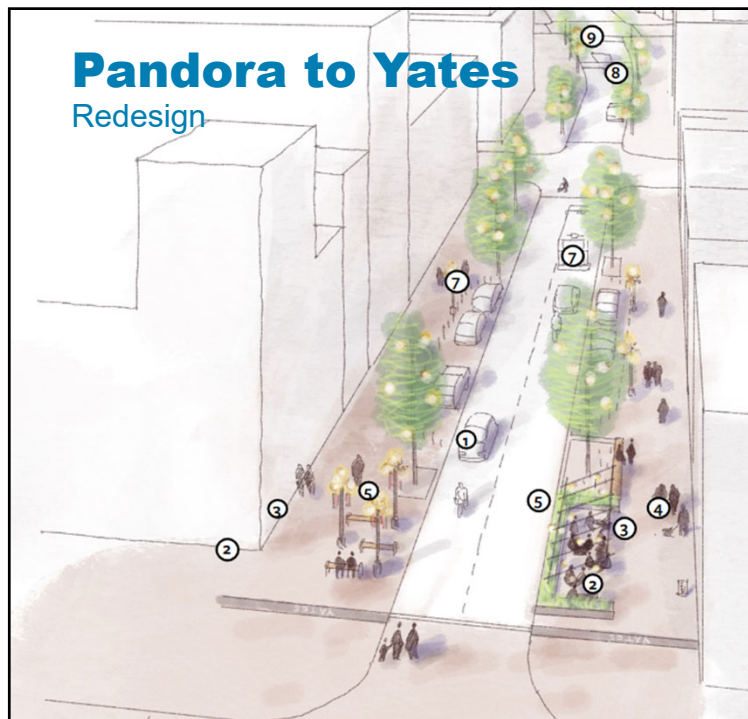
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Concept Overview



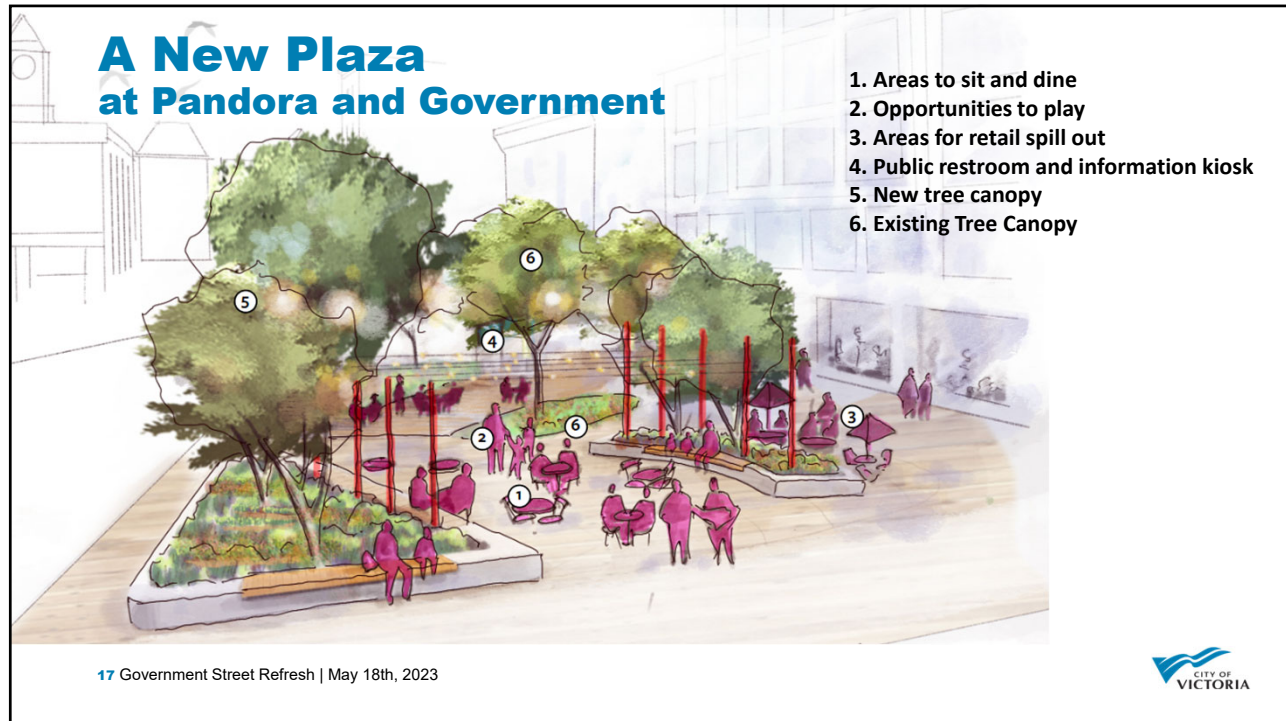
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Pandora to Yates Redesign

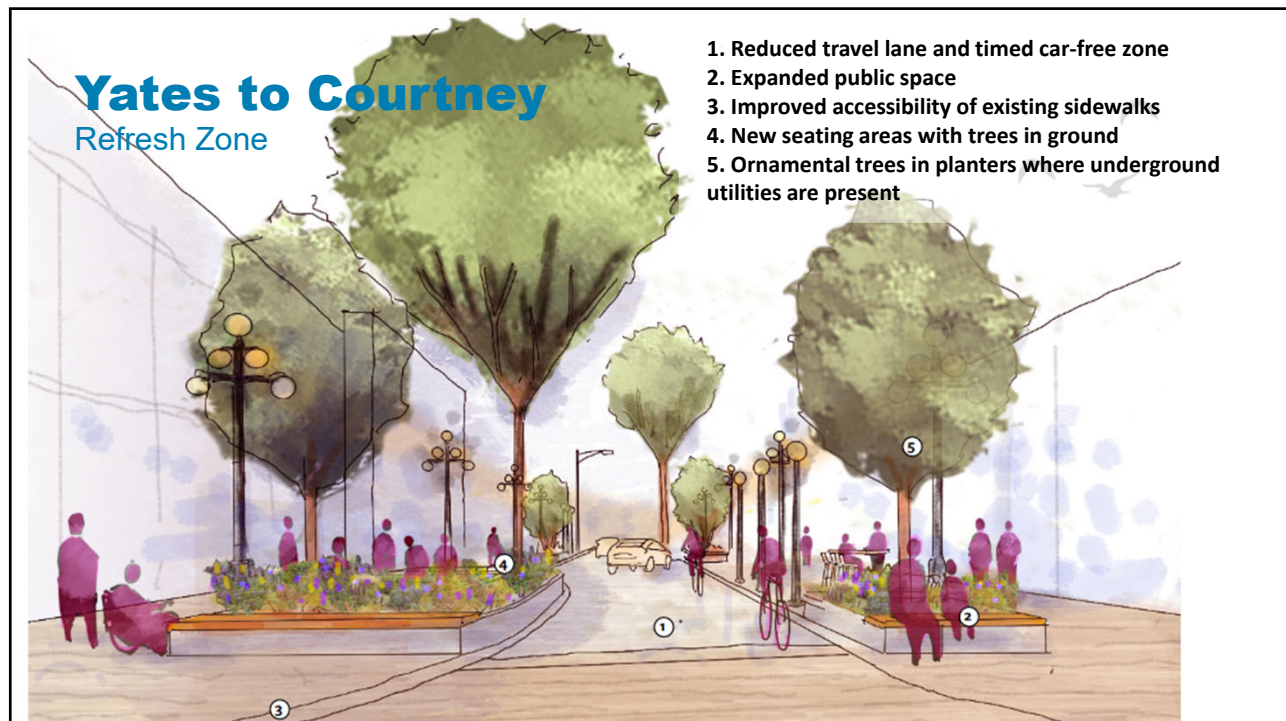


1. Reduced width, 2 way travel
2. Wayfinding markers (in paving)
3. Pedestrian through route (3m)
4. Store spill-out space
5. Urban Room Place Public Space Type
6. Places to Places to Pause Public Space Type
7. Parking, drop-off, pick-up and loading zones
8. Select existing trees to retain
9. Recognition of the historic creek and former boundary between Chinatown and Old Town

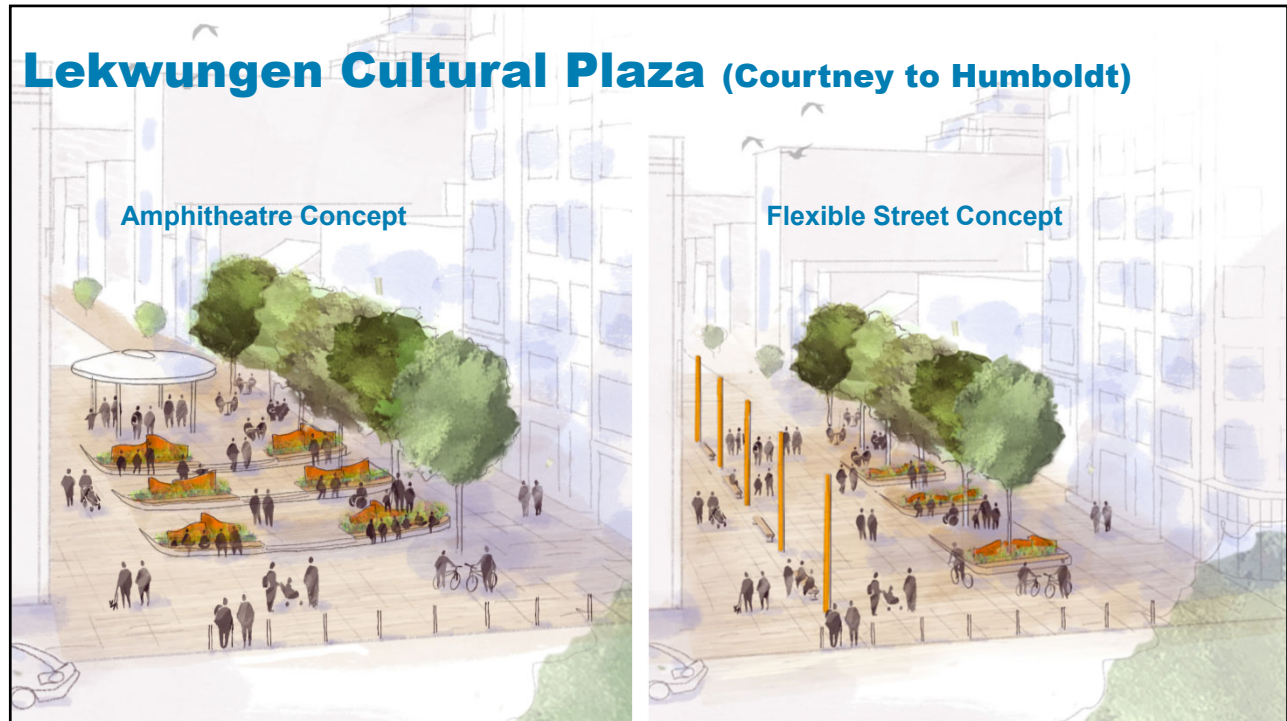
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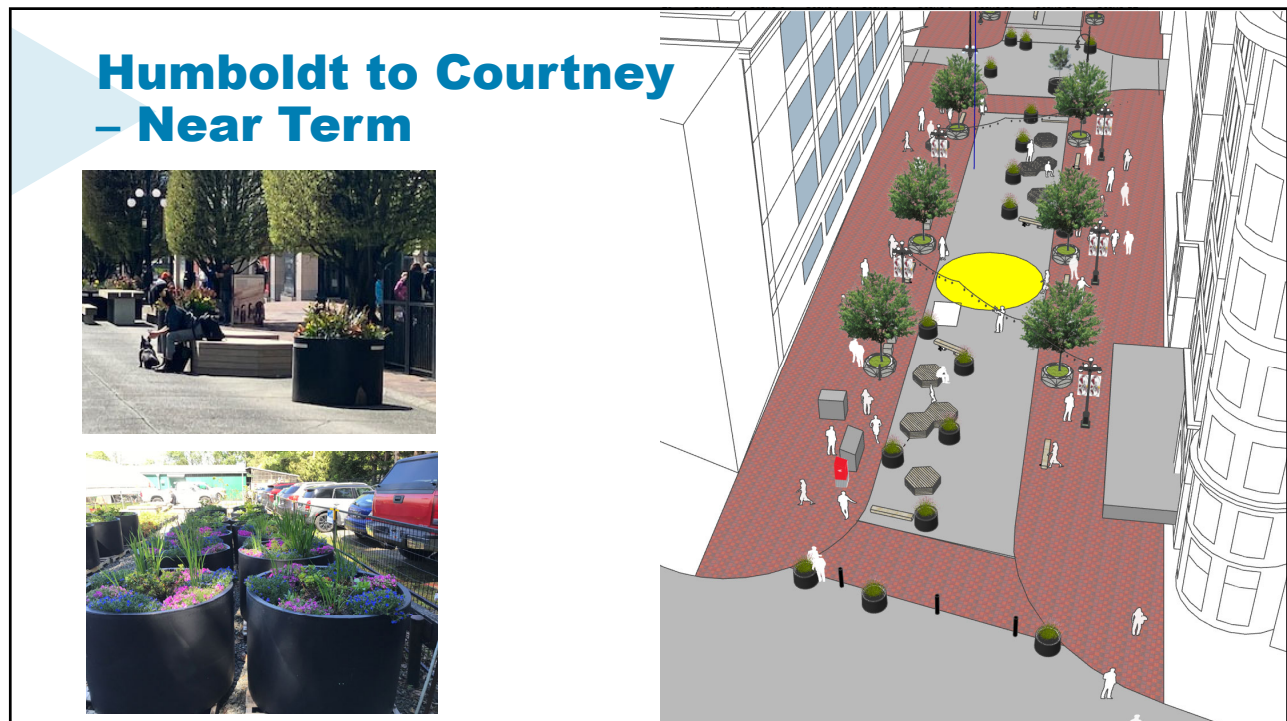
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20

Mobility and Placemaking

- Continued transformation into a *vibrant people-priority street* that functions as a destination and place for community gathering
- Building on what's there – making it better
- Prioritizes placemaking and programming and supporting business vitality
- A respite from the noise and exhaust from other downtown streets
- Facilitating access to Government Street with supporting circulation on surrounding street network

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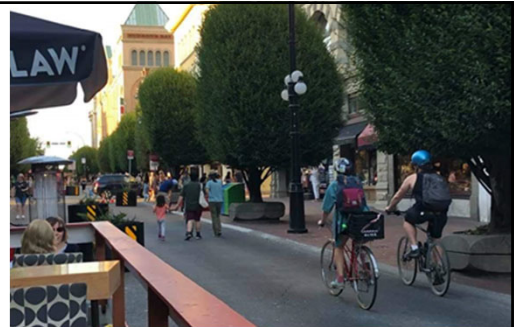


21

Ongoing Refinements

- Annual refresh and placement of furnishings
- Timed Car Free zone between Humboldt Street and View Street noon – 10 pm
- Deferred 24-hour Car Free Zone of south block Humboldt to Courtney to 2024
- New loading and hotel zones on and adjacent Government Street
- Flexibility to support activation during busiest hours while still allowing loading and taxis at non-peak pedestrian times
- Increased adjacent vehicle and accessible parking
- Removed traffic signal and refined traffic signal timing to prioritize pedestrians
- Focus on high quality furnishings, treatments and aesthetic to reflect importance of the street

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22

Next Steps:

- Ongoing operational refinements in consultation with businesses and stakeholders
- Install furnishings in timed car free zone Humboldt to Courtney Detailed design Yates to Pandora underground and surface works
 - Construction in 2025/2026 based on resourcing
- Council reporting to occur as part of future financial planning processes

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23

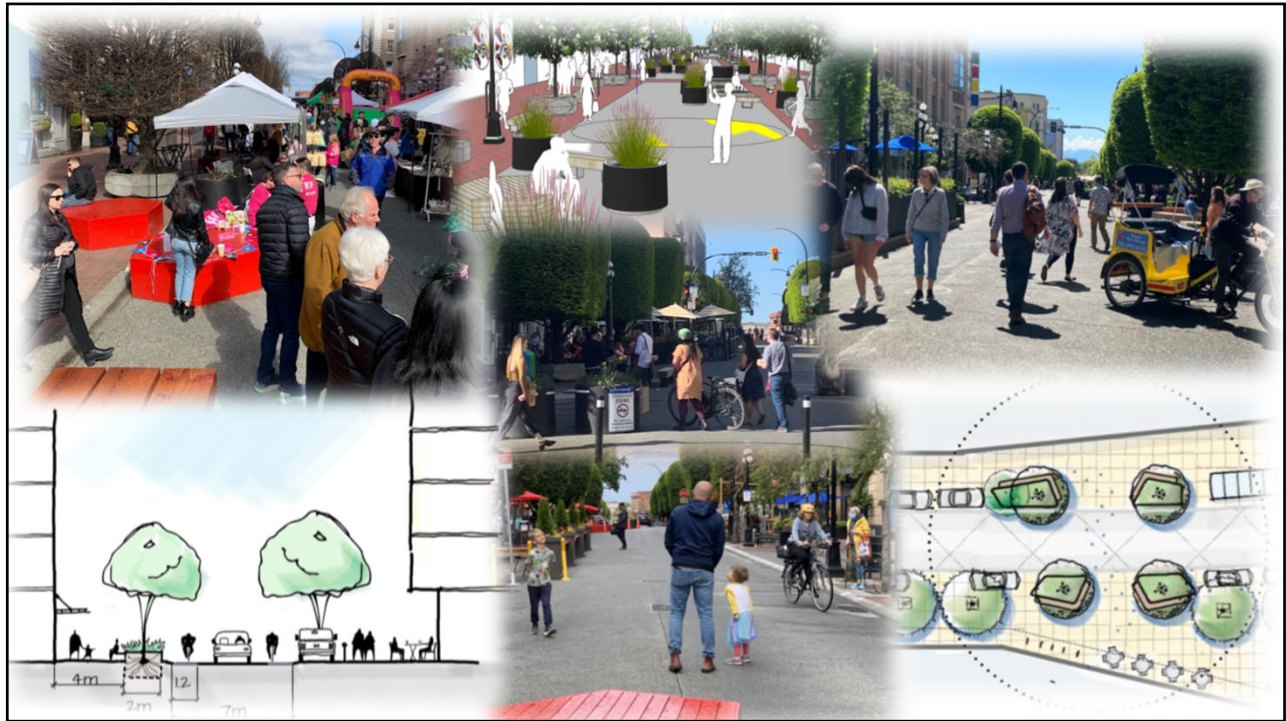
Conclusion

- ✓ Strongly supported vision and design concept implementing existing council direction and policy
- ✓ Opportunity to create a more inclusive and welcoming streetscape
- ✓ Successful legacy of successive placemaking and urban design that is unique to Victoria
- ✓ Solid foundation for its continued evolution into one of North America's great pedestrian priority streets

24 Government Street Refresh | May 18th, 2023



24



25