

50 Ideas to improve public spaces

The Vancouver Public Space Network is a volunteer-run non-profit doing advocacy, education and outreach on Vancouver's public realm. Since 2008, the VPSN has produced Last Candidate Standing and simultaneously released a series of policy recommendations for improving the state of Vancouver's public spaces. Here are the VPSN's priorities for the consideration of candidates for local government to take action on from 2014 to 2018:

1 The Big Picture

1. Assemble a City-wide Land-Use Plan
2. Create a Downtown Public Realm Plan
3. Initiate a regulatory review of public space "impediments"
4. Work to make the provincial referendum on transit funding a positive step forward for transit

Re-imagine Granville Island – with those who live, work and play on the island – and focus on Granville Island's future following the Emily Carr move.

2 Great Gathering Places

1. Embolden Downtown Vancouver with the creation of new and renewed central public gathering areas
2. Re-imagine Granville Island. Start with first principles
3. Ensure a well-defined system of neighbourhood-scale plazas and squares; make better use of privately-owned public spaces
4. Move beyond the temporary. Make selected Viva Vancouver installations permanent
5. Make more parklets!
6. Make public spaces the first and defining features of new neighbourhoods, including North East False Creek and the Jericho lands

Towards a great gathering space at Robson Square.

3 Great Streets

1. Make Vancouver's pedestrian experience even better with stronger public spaces support systems
2. Enable Vancouverites to ride around (and throughout) the city. Literally.
3. Continue to support cyclist and driver education programs
4. Continue to work towards a public bike share program
5. Initiate an aggressive clamp-down on vehicles that violate the vehicle noise bylaw
6. Create a network of Great Streets.
7. Develop a Lane Way Strategy.
8. Get rid of the Viaducts. Most of them, at any rate.

Make laneways and alleys throughout Vancouver more liveable!

4 Abundant Greenspace and Environment

1. Initiate a program to identify new ways to achieve greenspace or open space in park-deprived areas.
2. Strengthen public access to, and connection along, the Fraser River
3. Create a program to mark (or further mark) the routes of buried streams and 'lost' waterways.
4. Broaden 'heritage protection' to include natural features and animal habitats
5. Continue to implement a proactive policy for community gardens
6. Further integrate rain water filtration into city streets

Put special focus on the Fraser River, Vancouver's southern waterfront.



The Manifesto is a collaborative effort, produced by the Vancouver Public Space Network with broad input from our membership and in consultation with various experts in urban issues. This year, VPSN will produce the third edition of our Manifesto on Public Space Policy. We've made online access to the Routemap 2012-2014 and the original Manifesto 2008-2011, available at: vancouverpublicspace.ca/our-work/publications/more-publications

5 Great Economics of Place

1. Strengthen the economy of the 5-minute city
2. Encourage businesses to work with their neighbourhoods to develop place-making initiatives
3. Support the Sharing Economy
4. Expand the scope and distribution of our public markets
5. Enliven Vancouver's industrial public spaces
6. Improve the guidelines that encourage lively storefronts
7. Explore new financing tools for generating funding for public space initiatives

Create a comprehensive plan on digital signage/billboards and other corporate signage.

6 Great Art, Culture and Expression

1. Make more Public Art
2. Support new and enhanced celebrations: reduce zoning and licensing restrictions on neighbourhood pubs, restaurants and entertainment spaces
3. Re-jig the hours for the City archives so that they are open late one day a week
4. Unfurl the Georgia Street Cultural Corridor with new and revitalized spaces for culture and learning
5. Enrich Neighbourhood Libraries and Community Centres.

Support annual gatherings in support of neighbourhood and civic character.

7 Socially Inclusive Spaces

1. Keep Public Spaces for all ages, genders, and abilities
2. Support vulnerable populations in their use of public space
3. Support an "Open Doors" program with Aboriginal and other ethnocultural organizations
4. Get beyond canopies and umbrellas. Create more and better rain-proof spaces
5. Design a safety audit tool for residents to assess their public spaces
6. Strengthen investment in Community Policing initiatives
7. Refine policy for surveillance tools, including police bodycams, drones and CCTV
8. Ensure appropriate lighting in Vancouver's spaces – for safety, health and habitat

A public bike share system.

8 Great Public Involvement and Expression

1. Expand civic representation at the neighbourhood level – assign Council representation to each of the City's 22 Local Areas
2. Enable better two-way conversations between the City and residents
3. Put it on the ballot. Support action on electoral reform
4. Allow residents the means to access public space for public expression.
5. Facilitate, rather than hamper, public and political expression
6. Create a progressive plan on digital signage/billboards

Expand civic representation at the neighbourhood level.

