

THE WATER FRONT EXPERIENCE

This study should be considered as a component of the long term planning strategy for the waterfront.

The Harbour Pathway is about more than just a waterfront route for cyclists and pedestrians. It is about experiencing the waterfront as a special place in the city. It is a place for gathering, celebrating, special events, watching the marine based activities, enjoying nature and landscape and participating in a vibrant public realm for the city.

As one moves along the Harbour Pathway one will engage in a variety of places, landscape and activities. Many of these exist and many will come in the future as redevelopment along the much of the route occurs. The pathway should respond to these conditions to provide a range of interesting and engaging places and experiences.

SPECIAL PLACES

The Harbour Pathway is intended to link a series of special, engaging public places. The special places along the route correspond to both existing conditions and future opportunities for enhancing public use of Victoria's urban waterfront. For example, the Harbour Pathway proposes to extend Bastion Square right down to the waterfront, with broad flights of stairs and terraces that provide Public access from Wharf Street to the water's edge. This will become a key public entry point to the Harbour Pathway, and extend the Bastion Square public open space to the water.

Another example of a special place is the opportunity to develop Ship Point as a public space for festivals, concerts and other special events.

NEW DEVELOPMENT

The Harbour Pathway also both anticipates and accommodates new development on several key sites along the route. While this study is not a land use study, this work does inform longer term land use planning and supports potential future changes in land use along the route. Development of these sites will bring more diverse uses to the waterfront, and these new uses will front onto and help animate the Harbour Pathway.

Key adjacent sites that are expected to redevelop in the near future, and some possible uses, include:

- Fisherman's Wharf area (expected to add tourist commercial operations, a pub, and a performance area)
- Belleville Street ferry terminal site (expected to be redeveloped as a marine gateway transportation hub with a mix of supporting uses including retail, restaurants, tourist attractions, etc.)
- City of Victoria owned parking lot along Wharf Street between Humboldt and Broughton streets (envisaged to be redeveloped as a public celebration space with arts performance area, First Nations longhouse and tourist/commercial operations)
- Provincial Capital Commission owned parking lot along Wharf Street between Fort Street and Bastion Square (envisaged to be redeveloped as a mixed use, active public area, with a mix of tourist commercial, retail and food services)

Taken together, redevelopment of these and other adjacent sites will bring a more diverse, lively, active range of uses to Victoria's waterfront. The Harbour Pathway, with its generous width, is specifically designed to accommodate and support these uses and the increase in pedestrian and cyclist traffic that will accompany them. The Harbour Pathway can also provide other opportunities to expand and improve existing commercial uses of the water itself such as for kayak launches, canoe rentals, ecotourism, whale watching, additional ferry services, etc.

PROGRAMMING

A key aspect of the success of the proposed Harbour Pathway will be the intensive programming of spaces along the pathway. Programming of the Harbour Pathway could include such elements as:

- Mobile food/drinks/crafts vending kiosks;
- Tourist Information kiosks;
- Public Washrooms;
- Public Art installations or temporary displays;
- Arts and Cultural Festivals
- Special events
- Seasonal flower displays/hanging baskets
- busker program
- Sports events such as fundraiser walks, jogging races, etc.
- Environmental Interpretive program (signs and plaques)

The Harbour Pathway is designed to support a wide range of intensive programming. Locations for the infrastructure (e.g. electric power, lighting) and facilities (e.g. public art sites, gathering spaces, bike racks) required to support such programming will be included at various sites along the length of the pathway. The pathway is sufficiently wide (typically 7.0 m) to ensure that such programming should not impede the flow of pedestrians.

EPHEMERAL VERSUS PERMANENT

The Harbour Pathway route plan recognizes that there are both short term or interim conditions and longer term conditions. For example, the pathway route around Rock Bay cuts inland onto City streets to avoid compromising the water access requirements of existing industrial uses. At the same time, the plan identifies the long-term preferred pathway route along the waterfront when such land uses change.

Similarly, the pathway is designed with built-in flexibility to accommodate a wide range of ephemeral uses or activities within its undifferentiated 7.0 m width, such as busking locations, mobile kiosks, craft stalls, temporary art displays, etc. These ephemeral uses can be added, relocated or terminated as required by program managers.



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