

Blood Alley Square Redesign



May 2019
Detailed Design Questionnaire
and Engagement Summary

Blood Alley Square Redesign

Background

- The City of Vancouver is redesigning Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley, important public spaces in the heart of Gastown, which is a designated heritage area and a National Historic Site.
- In 2010 the City met with local residents and business to identify their priorities and developed concepts for the square. For the current Square redesign, the previous preliminary designs were a stepping off point . The public were asked to share their thoughts on these and other preliminary concepts.
- From June 2 to June 18, 2016, members of the public were able to provide their input on the Kick-Off Events.
- From August 24 to September 24, 2016, members of the public were able to provide their input on the Concept Designs.
- Since the 2016/2017 Square public open house events, the preferred concept for the Square was developed and refined.
- In spring 2019, The City of Vancouver decided to focus the project on the redesign of Blood Alley Square, with the redesign of Trounce Alley be incorporated with the Gastown Complete Streets project.

A total of 231 **people** attended the Detailed Design Open House on May 15, 2019 and **193 respondents** provided feedback on the Blood Alley Square redesign by completing a questionnaire accessible between May 16 and June 16, 2019.

Who did we hear from?

- The majority of respondents lived in Downtown and West End (68%).
- 41% were between 40-59 years of age. An additional 40% were 20-39 years old.
- 50% live in the neighbourhood of Gastown, 24% work in the area and a significant proportion frequented the area for entertainment (57%).

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Summary of Questionnaire Results

The results of the hard-copy and online questionnaire, feedback from conversations at the Detailed Design Open house indicates that there is an overall support for the detailed design presented. There is a 71% response for liked or really liked for the overall opinion of the design as compared to disliked or don't like at all.

The comments reflect mixed opinions on the various issues that relate not only to the redesign but the various influences of the Square. The opinions expressed centered around a few main concerns:

- The historical elements of the Square
- The existing trees
- The concerns for safety in the Square
- The balance of commercial activity in an area that also has residential
- The nature of an area shared by different socio-economic groups

Summary of Detailed Design Open House

Hosting the Open House at the Woodward's Atrium was successful, allowing for passerbys who were not aware of the Open House to also participate and engage. Not only did they include the DTES community, but also people who worked in the area but live elsewhere. Many who did attend were aware of the project and the Open Houses and have been keenly following the progress. All were able to speak to the team of consultants as well as City Staff about the project, as well as other initiatives in the area.

It was mentioned that the notification card process may not have a large enough mailing radius, and that for this project, it should be expanded as Blood Alley Square has a larger audience than just the immediate neighbourhood.

The conversations during the Open House were mainly about the same concerns that were raised in the previous public engagement open houses. Residents facing the alley were most concerned about the removal of existing trees and the noise generated by garbage trucks and future events in the Square. There is general concern that the use of lights, sound systems, increased pedestrian traffic will be disruptive if the Square is to be an active event space.

In contrast, many attendees that included people who frequent the Square or work in the neighbouring businesses would like to see more activities, commercial activity, events etc.

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Tree Management Update

In direct response to the public feedback received, the tree management plan for Blood Alley Square, which initially retained 4 existing trees, has been updated to retain the existing significant tree that is located at the northern edge of the Square. Additionally, we have developed a tree succession plan that incorporates the planting of two large-size specimen trees that will replace existing trees that are to be removed due to their poor health. This will ensure that the tree canopy is restored and enhanced.

Next Steps

Next steps will include commencement of unhealthy tree removals summer of 2019 in coordination with the adjacent development, design refinement based on feedback received at the May 15th 2019 open house, engagement with local stakeholders to develop community partnerships for stewardship of Blood Alley Square, and coordination of a final design open house in conjunction with the Gastown Complete Streets Project (visit vancouver.ca/gastownstreets for more information) in early 2020.

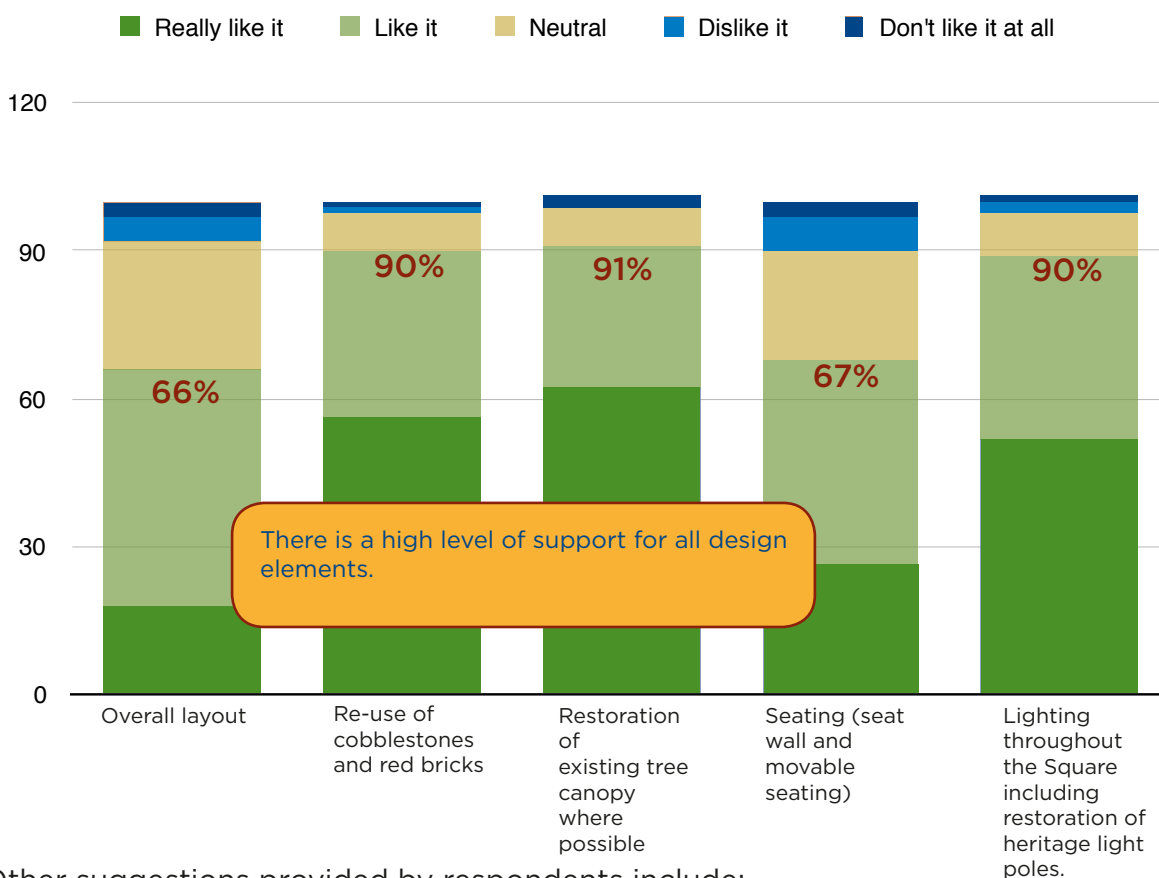
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Question 1:

DETAILED DESIGN

What do you think of these design elements in the Square?

Results:



Other suggestions provided by respondents include:

- That the Square needs more animation with art, murals, graffiti etc. other than the grey cobblestones.
- That the Square needs to maintain its' aesthetic 'grit' and not be modern nor contemporary.
- Movable seating would be preferred over fixed seating.
- That there should be more lighting.
- Trees should all be maintained.

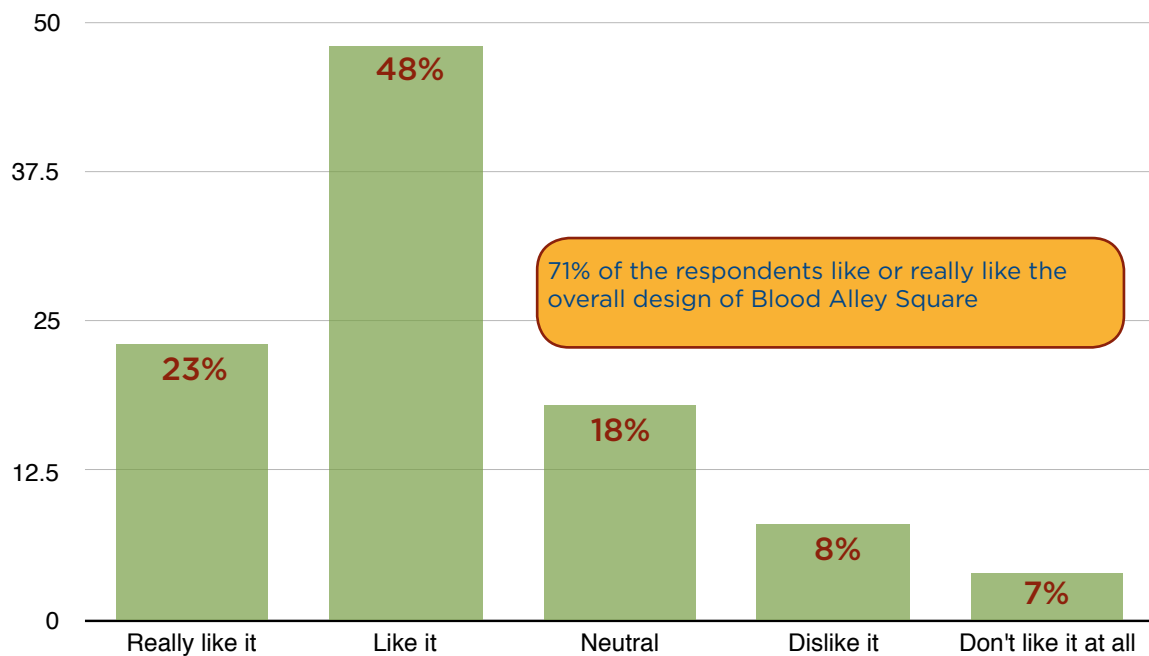
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Question 2:

DETAILED DESIGN

What's your overall opinion of the design for Blood Alley Square?

Results:



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Question 2b:

DETAILED DESIGN

Is there anything you would change, or anything you think is missing from the detailed design?

Results:

109 responses were received for this question.

Some of the main themes in the responses included:

Heritage:

- That the character of the Square is changed because of loss of the back facade of the Stanley/New Fountain Hotel.
- That the design is too modern and contemporary.
- Include information boards and signage on the history of the Square.

Community

- Challenges to balance the all socio-economic communities that value and frequent the Square.
- That the Square should not host any events because it creates too much noise for the surrounding residents.
- That the Square should be maintained as space for the DTES population.
- That the Square be opened to restaurants and patios.

Design:

- The seating should be comfortable, with backs and made of wood.
- There should be plants and flower.
- Integrate a water feature.
- That the design has too many dark colours.

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Question 3: WASTE MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP STRATEGY

As mentioned, we have been exploring ideas for waste management, and developing a stewardship strategy to ensure Blood Alley Square is a safe, vibrant, clean and comfortable space for everyone at all times.

What are your suggestions for community partnerships, programming or events that could help keep the Square clean and comfortable for all users?

Results:

128 responses were received for this question.

Some of the responses included:

- Partnering with DTES residents and organizations to provide cleaning services and security.
- Integrate public waste and recycling receptacles as well as sharps boxes, cigarette boxes and dog waste bins.
- Remove dumpster bins and change to one service contract for the Alley.
- Closing the lane to traffic.
- Discouraging camping.
- Ensure regular maintenance, controlled noise levels and clean-up after events.
- Having a public toilet nearby.

Suggestions for events include:

- Free and accessible events
- Family friendly events
- Zero Waste Days
- Concert series
- Using the Square for food trucks, local artisan markets, yoga classes, Vancouver Pride events
- Community bbqs and dance party
- Shared library
- Public theatre

In general, respondents would like to see strategies that would keep the Square well-maintained with planned events that include the whole community of residents, visitors and businesses.

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Question 4:

GENERAL

Did we miss anything important to you? Please share anything else you would like to tell us.

Results:

85 responses were received for this question.

Some of the responses included:

- Integrate weather protection.
- Create more for families and families with young children.
- The Square is not being inclusive to the DTES residents and that they will be displaced.
- The Square should have 24 hour security and be designated drug free.
- Bringing people into the Square from Water Street to Cordova Street is important.
- Safety and security.

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The following are some examples of respondents' general comments about the redesign:

I'd like to see a plan to ensure that it stays clean, safe and welcoming for everyone (including people of low income and families with young children).

Let's not delay the redesign of the Square from happening. It can't be left as is - its been decommissioned as a viable space for too long!

I would love to see the addition of signage to tell the story of Blood Square with photos of how it looked in the past.

Preserve all trees.

Pop up events for local businesses, artist groups, or advocacy. Would love to have things going on when I walk through there.

As an alley facing resident I'm concerned about the huge increase in noise levels with all the scheduled outdoor 'events' talked about, all the pick ups and deliveries this is going to entail, and garbage pickups three times a day. Amplified sound and music outdoors is going to be highly invasive of nearby living spaces on weekdays and weekends.

I would ensure there are desirable areas within the surrounding buildings that face out onto the space via the first floor. Commerce would be best but make sure it's not just the back door / garbage collection for all buildings. Make sure there is resources or art available to keep the space alive, rather than another quiet corner for people to tuck into.

The plaza design not being very different or offering much to do - the concern was that it will be more "of the same uses".

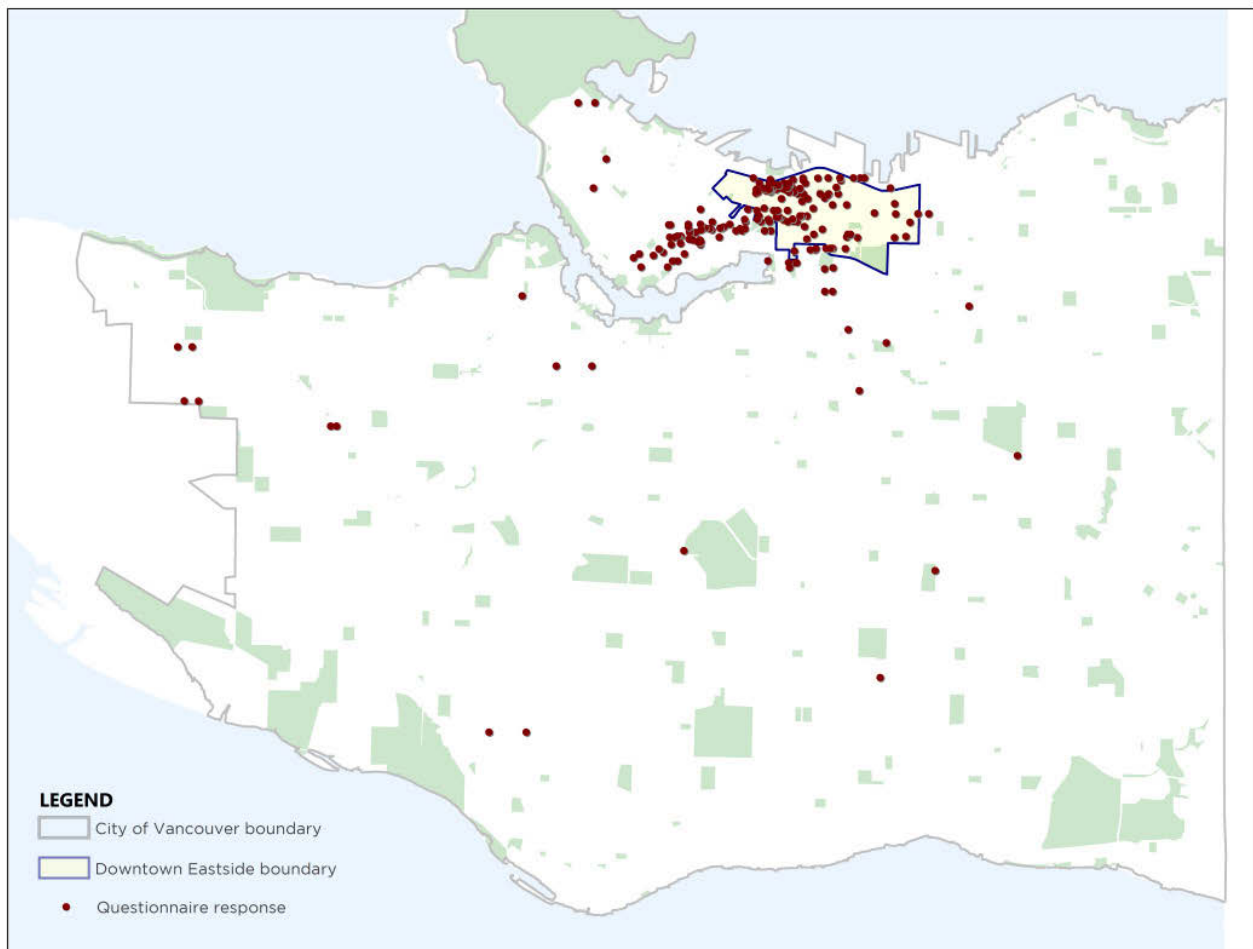
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Demographics

What is your postal code?

Results:

193 responses were received for this question. Following is a map of the postal codes provided through the questionnaire.

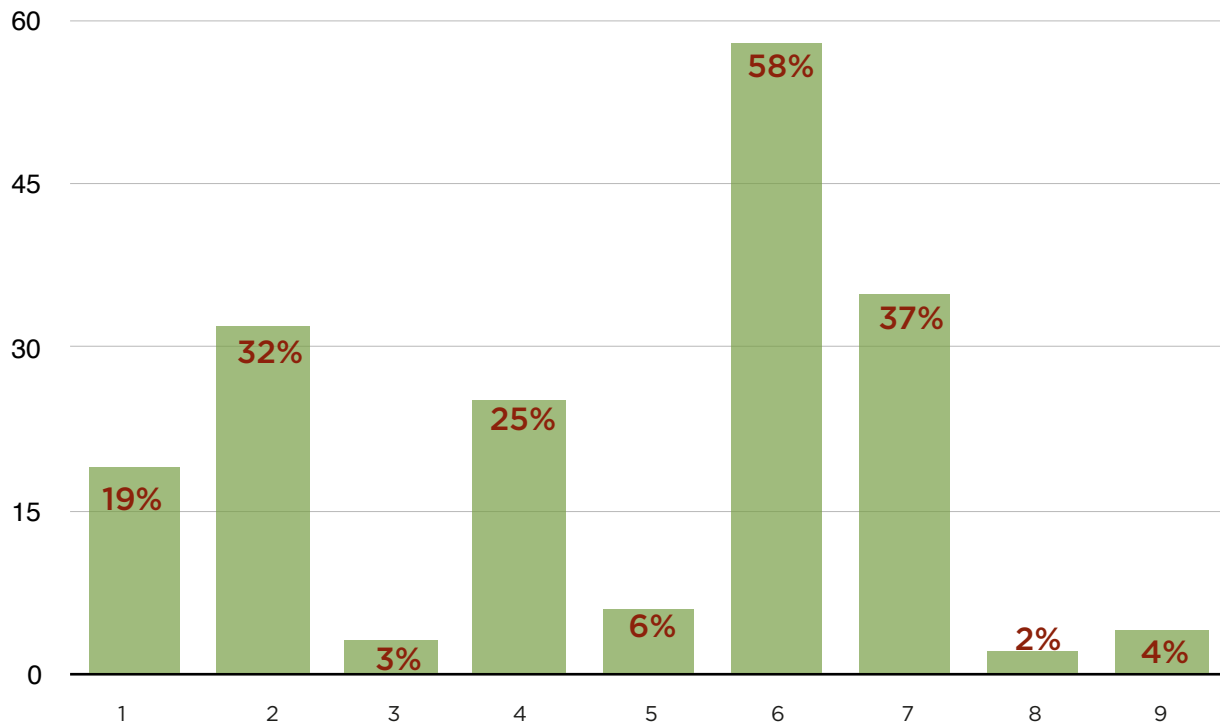


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Demographics

What is your connection to Gastown?

Results:



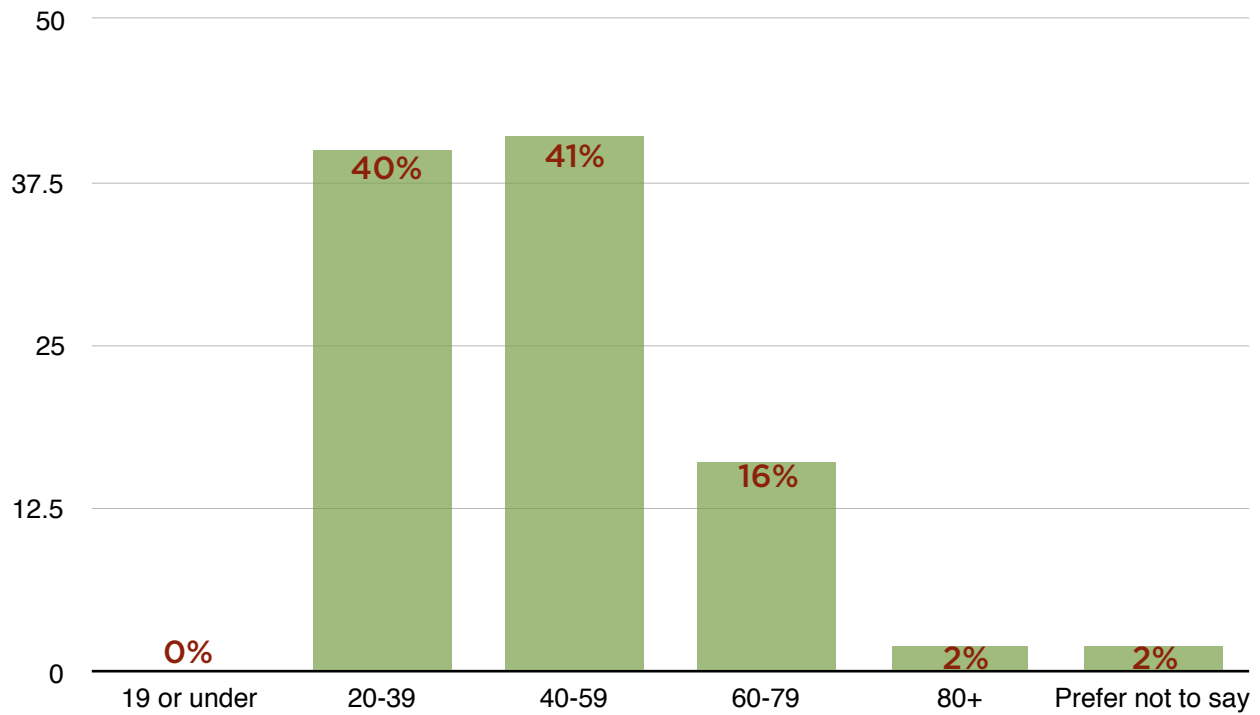
1. Rent in the neighbourhood
2. Own a home and live in the neighbourhood
3. Own a home in the neighbourhood but live elsewhere
4. Work in the neighbourhood
5. Own a business in the neighbourhood
6. Visit restaurants and entertainment
7. Live elsewhere in Vancouver
8. Live outside Vancouver
9. Other

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Demographics

Which age group do you fall under?

Results:



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Demographics

Do you identify as:

Results:

