ACCESSING VANCOUVER'S PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLIC SPACES

George Rahi, Andrew Martynkiw, and Emily Hein.

Abstract: *Our research project investigates privately owned public spaces in the city of Vancouver. With the emergence of public-private partnerships as a widespread form of urban development, the provision of public space has increasingly relied upon private owners and managers. Taking inspiration from Jerold Kayden's work on New York, we document various privately owned public spaces, in the form of the urban plaza, across the downtown core of Vancouver. Our study makes multiple inquiries into the social life of these public spaces, as influenced by their design and management. A historical analysis of the policy context in which these spaces were negotiated by city officials and developers is followed by an assessment of the public spaces themselves using observational research techniques. The assessment is comprised of two parts: (1) a survey of the physical attributes of these spaces, categorized as either encouraging or discouraging accessibility and use, and (2) observations on the social life of the spaces we visited.*

Introduction

Public spaces are a multifaceted and complex object of study. Their objective and physical qualities are bound up with their socially heterogeneous functions. They are a site of both fleeting and enduring social relations, and provide the foundation for a wider, convivial urban community. Many scholars have lamented the death of truly 'public' space (Sennett), and it is certainly true that the character of public spaces has been transformed immensely in North American cities (Sorkin). Privatization, commoditization, and increased surveillance are increasingly common practices of city governments, developers, and corporate sponsors in their efforts to produce a cleansed and selective public sphere for the broader goals of consumption and control. In Vancouver, British Columbia the continual overlaying of historically specific rounds of urban development has produced a series of networked and isolated publically accessible places that have gone largely unexamined by any systematic study. Of particular interest is the vast array of privately owned public spaces (POPS) across the central business district (CBD). For a city whose downtown core has undergone immense residential densification (the downtown population has more than doubled since the late 1980s), many of these spaces no longer exist in the context of the 9am to 5pm work schedule for which they had been designed. The image of the office worker on lunch break has been supplanted by a much more mixed and flexible population of workers and consumers alike. Public spaces are now much more likely to be host to playful events such as flash-mobs and urban sports in addition to their more traditional roles as places for social movements, ceremonies, celebrations, and free speech. We are not alone (Vancouver Public Space Network) in our observation that Vancouver's downtown lacks many central gathering places so crucial for a democratic, civil society (Berelowitz). Rather, what abounds is a series of small and fragmented public spaces, many

of which are hostile to public use. What follows is an attempt to situate a sample of these POPS within a systematic framework that investigates the very notion of 'publicness' itself. Our research is an effort to comprehend the various social, political, and economic processes that create these spaces, and the ways in which the geography of these POPS influences the urban fabric.

Theories of Public Space

As an object of study, public space has increasingly proved integral to theories of urban development, the state, social movements, communication and social justice. Because the notion of 'public space' has many contrasting definitions, a precise one may prove elusive. An objectivist, external view of public spaces as physical entities 'out-there' contrasts with a social constructivist view which posits that public space is an outcome of individual and collective activities by agents who deem a space as public (Carmona et al. 137). For whom then is a space public? Iris Young argues that it would be false to presume a unitary public realm; rather, she holds that there exists a series of overlapping public realms, or 'multiple publics' (qtd. in Carmona et al. 140). We propose the viewpoint that an understanding the social production of public space must not neglect the materiality of public space, lest we forfeit our ability to engage in clear empirical analysis of the spatiality of public life.

Of equal importance to definitions of 'public space' is its opposite: 'private space' or 'private property'. Public space is dialectically related to private property, whereby 'publicness' is produced through a process of private property owners 'freely' joining together to create the public sphere through state provision (Mitchell 132). This prerequisite of private property ownership and freedom of association, argues Mitchell, constructs the notion of 'public' as meaning "having access to private space to retreat to (so that pub-

licness can remain voluntary)" (132). Obviously, not everyone has the privilege of retreating to a private space, and thus the legitimacy of public space as an outcome of private property relations is compromised. For Mitchell, homeless people threaten to "expose the existence of the 'legitimate' – that is, voluntary – public as a contradiction if not a fraud; voluntariness is impossible if some are necessarily excluded from the option of joining in or not" (135). To expand on Mitchell's insights and move beyond the notion of public and private space as clearly separable (occupying opposing realms in the legal-property sense), we argue that public space and private space differ not just in terms of ownership, but also along a spectrum of accessibility and openness. The extent to which a space is 'public' is furthermore contingent on users actively claiming it as such. The transparent barber shop, the local cafe, and shopping mall represent grey areas of the public/private distinction, where both private and public activities co-exist mutually. For our purposes, we do not include these publicly accessible spaces, referred to as "third spaces" in our analysis (Oldenburg). While most of these third spaces come with the expectation/obligation of consumption, the corporate and civic plazas that we have chosen to study differ in that they represent a taken-for-granted portion of Vancouver's public space that is largely disassociated from direct consumption activities (i.e. no user fee is required).

Like many cities, public space in Vancouver is diverse and covers a spectrum ranging from squares, plazas, waterfronts, sidewalks, parks and indoor spaces such as atriums. We located the outdoor urban plaza as a common and notable example of privately owned public spaces. They are ubiquitous to the urban dweller, and constitute a large proportion of public, 'open space'. We created a list of all 31 plazas in the CBD, 24 of which are privately owned (Figure 1). The remaining seven spaces can be divided into civic plazas (Library Square North and South, and Vancouver Art Gal-

lery North) and plazas managed by publicly-owned corporations (CBC Plaza, Canada Place, and Jack Poole Plaza). These spaces function as primary nodes of public life within the core of the city.

Zoning and Public Space in Vancouver

Vancouver's corporate plazas are the outcome of an informal, case-by-case process similar to the practice of 'incentive zoning' pioneered in cities such as New York and San Francisco. Incentive zoning sees city agencies leverage the ability to control zoning regulations such as height restrictions to secure public amenities from property developers. When developers seek to maximize their building's density above current height restrictions, city agencies such as Vancouver's Urban Design Panel and the Development Permit Committee negotiate lifting restrictions in exchange for urban amenities such as plazas, recreation space, and art installations financed by the developer. From 1989 onward, this process became codified into the Vancouver Community Benefit Agreements and Community Amenity Contributions (Punter 105). However, most plazas date back to the 1970s and 1980s, when more informal negotiations were made on the count of Floor Space Ratio units, also known as Floor Area Ratios. Prior to 1989, the Zoning and Development By-Law of 1957 (No. 3575), which references the Technical Planning Board's ability to permit buildings to rise above height limits on the basis of providing adequate set-backs, gave city planning officials a large amount of discretion for each major development. As Jerold Kayden notes, "The social rationale for this exchange is that the public is better off in a physical environment
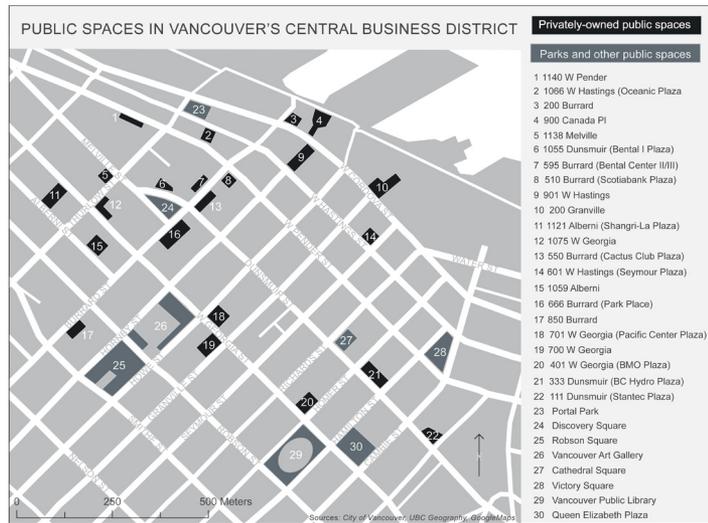

Figure 1. Map of Vancouver's public and privately owned public spaces in the CBD. Source: Alex Leckie, UBC Geography Department.

replete with public spaces and bigger buildings than in one with fewer public spaces and smaller buildings" (177). For the public, these privately provided public spaces serve to offset the negative impacts of increased density, such as street congestion, pollution, and loss of sunlight. For developers, the trade-off is economical, as the increases in land value usually exceeds the cost of providing the public space (Kayden 177). These density bonuses are responsible for all kinds of spaces: plazas, sidewalk widening, open-air concourses, and others. In most cases, private owners legally cede the right to exclude others from these spaces, but in practice this is not always the case. The degree to which these spaces are public is thus further contingent on the management practices of the private owner. Owners have various motivations for controlling who uses these spaces and for what type of activity, such as, "their responsibility for maintenance, their liability for what may happen within the space, and their concern for marketability" (Carmona et al. 154).

Toolkit for Studying Public Spaces

To measure the 'publicness' of privately owned

public spaces in Vancouver, we have implemented an index developed by Németh and Schmidt in New York. Their index is premised on the question of whether private provision of publicly accessible spaces "reduces the publicness traditionally associated with it" ("The privatization of public space" 12). It is also recognized that successful public spaces strike a balance between liberty and security ("Toward a Methodology" 280). Németh and Schmidt propose that 'publicness' can be assessed according to three core components: ownership, management, and uses/users ("Toward a Methodology" 281). Their index was developed in consultation with various planners and urban designers, and is divided into four major dimensions: (1) laws and rules governing the space; (2) surveillance and policing present in the space; (3) design and image-building techniques to both literally and symbolically dictate appropriate behaviour; and (4) access restrictions and territorial separation to control space. Each dimension covers a number of indicators of material practices and design features utilized in making spaces more or less controlled. The twenty indicators are separated into two groups, ten of which signify practices that encourage use, and ten which signify practices that discourage use of spaces.

Index Results for Vancouver's POPS

Using Németh and Schmidt's index, we calculated a score for each space based on the twenty indicators. The scoring criteria for indicators in the section 'Features that control uses' are weighted negatively (i.e. 0, -1, -2) while the scoring criteria for indicators under the section 'Features that encourage use' are weighted positively (see Table 1 in Appendix A). These twenty indicators are detailed in Table 2 (Appendix B). The lowest score a space can receive is -20 (meaning most restricted) and the highest score is +20 (meaning least restricted). Our results are given in Table 3(Appendix C).

Our results reveal substantial differences between corporate and civic plazas. While we do not have a sufficient sample size to compare corporate and civic plazas using statistically rigorous methods, the range of scores indicate a surprising amount of variability between plazas. The average score for POPS was (+1), while the average score for publicly owned plazas was (+7.5). POPS differed most from publicly owned spaces in that they were under more surveillance by cameras and guards, had fewer accessible washrooms, and provided less lighting, art, and cultural enhancement. However, it should be noted that ownership alone cannot account for whether a plaza is an inclusive public space or not, as our survey identifies five POPS with scores of (+5) and more.

Assessing these spaces using the index above enabled us to more reliably assess the spaces on objective terms. Because Németh and Schmidt's index was focused more heavily on physical design features, we felt it was necessary to combine it with a social survey to allow us more insight into how these POPS actually perform in terms of user behaviour. Using observational methods, the social survey gave us insights into how people use these spaces, how long they used them for, and for what purposes. We documented three spaces – Waterfront Centre, Cathedral Square, and the Shangri-La Plaza – on three different days to produce a total of 3 hours of records for each space. Each site was visited at noon on a weekday, at 5pm on a weekday, and at noon on a weekend.

The discussion of our social survey results which follow is highly influenced by William Whyte, who is well known for his extensive observational studies of public spaces (Whyte). Whyte highlights that many public spaces, the civic and corporate plaza in particular, provide the opportunity for citizens to express and negotiate a sense of civic identity. Compared to sidewalks which have a sense of shared/common public space, these spaces can be viewed as eddies or pockets of relief. This is what Matt Hern discusses in terms of differ-

entiating public space from common space when he states, "People move through public space – but common space is where they stop, what they learn to inhabit, and make their own" (59). This involves creating spaces that do not elicit or demand specific behaviour. Whereas the primary purpose of sidewalks is to move people from one place to another, common spaces play an active role as meeting places, facilitating "face-to-face meetings and the surprising and unpredictable character of experiences" (Gehl 26). These unpredictable spaces, where people are able to engage with what Hern describes as encounters with the "other" and the unexpected (154), are critical in allowing a sense of civic identity to emerge. More so, in a social and built environment that is increasingly changing as buildings are demolished and re-constructed to serve different functions French notes that, "public spaces tend to remain relatively constant and unchanging through time" (21). Thus, as the built form continues to change rapidly in the downtown core, public spaces provide citizens with a sense of continuity, reliability, and predictability through time.

By observing the ways in which people entered the spaces at Waterfront Centre, Cathedral Square, and Shangri-La Plaza, we were able to discern, to a degree, their level of accessibility. People typically size up new situations quickly to figure out who is there, what is happening, and what might happen next (Cialdini 12). These judgements help people navigate new spaces when the rules of what is socially acceptable are not explicitly given. Thus, the perceived accessibility of a space becomes crucial to the initial judgments people make regarding how public a space feels, and thus, in determining their likeliness of using the space. If no rules are apparent to dictate how a space should be used, the individual must rely upon the rest of the public for cues, and if the space is not populated then private security becomes the default source of information (Gehl 210). However, when people entering a POPS are primed with a sign stating that

the space is for public use, they are likely to feel less tension from the presence of security guards and more personal autonomy. As Jan Gehl notes, "Security and the ability to read a situation are reinforced when social structures are supported by clear, physical demarcations" (102). One of our recommendations is that Vancouver would benefit from signage declaring its POPS for public use. A similar initiative to sign its privately owned public spaces has been taken by the city of Seattle, Washington an example of which is shown in Figure 2 below.

Social Survey Observations:

Waterfront Centre (200 Burrard St)

The Waterfront Centre, situated across the street from the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centres, serves as a transport hub, and as a

Figure 2. Public Space sign in Seattle. Source: Adrian Martynkiw.

major centre for shopping, hotels, and offices. Inside and below the main floor of the building there is also a food court connected underground to other buildings that serves business people, tourists coming off cruise ships, and conference delegates. The main entrance to the space on the southwestern corner has a transparent glass wall making the security guards inside visible from the street. Outside, massive colonnades descend in

a semi-circle as structural supports for the build-ing, creating a large space outside with protection from the rain. The design of the open space is relatively plain. White stone barrier walls zigzag through the middle of the space serving as seat-ing backed by glass barriers that divide the open from a few patches of grass that make up a about a third of the space itself. Planters less than a few feet from the ground occupy a large portion of the open space exposed to the elements. Although most of the seating faces the skyscraper, there are great views of the North Shore.

Shangri-La (1121 Alberni St)

The Shangri-La is currently the tallest build-ing in Vancouver, providing space for a hotel on the first 12 floors with the rest fitted for high-end condos. Pedestrians engage with the building on the street level through its glass hotel lobby, a boutique food store, and public open space which includes a public art installation by the Vancouver Art Gallery. The public open space is minimally landscaped, provides no seating despite ample space for it with protection from rain, and serves primarily a conduit for pedestrian movement be-tween Georgia and Alberni Street. Vegetation is planted either one floor below on the parking level protruding up into the space, or is located up the flight of stairs leading up the designated bar and lounge areas. These design features may be due to the fact that the Shangri-La's plaza was not fac-tored into the developer's Community Amenity Contributions. Rather, just enough space for the art installation was given along with payments for heritage restoration of the Coastal Church next door. No amenities were provided on or off-site for lower-income members of the community. Thus, the Shangri-La reveals how the practice of up-zoning for increased density ensures and en-hances developer profitability with a selective package of benefits targeted at a specific, more af-fluent public.

Cathedral Square (596 Richards St)

Located along Dunsmuir St. across the street from the 110 year old Holy Rosary Cathedral, Cathedral Square is comprised of two distinct areas. Accessibility along the entire southern en-trance is via the sidewalk so pedestrians walk-ing by need not worry about making a decision as to whether they wish to enter the space. The streetscape seamlessly blends in, and the seating is laid out in a semi-circle facing the church across the street. Throughout the rest of the space there is ample seating arranged in a variety of orien-tations. The fountain in the centre of the space acts as a psychological and physical divider of the space. Trees along the perimeter provide protec-tion from the rain for some seating, and there is a grassy area near the front that could comfort-ably accommodate a group of individuals wishing to sprawl on the grass. In contrast to the other spaces described above, Cathedral Park is not di-rectly adjacent to any buildings and therefore does not imply any specific function. The north side of the space was originally equipped with a large glass awning that provided protection from the rain. This is supported by massive bollards that draw the eyes of exploring individuals who wish to see what lies ahead. During the 1990s, the glass paneling was removed after homeless people be-gan using the space at night. Currently, only the awning's bulky steel skeleton remains, with the glass paneling having been removed along with the seating below. What is unique about this case is that a comfortable space was initially provided and then revoked, due to fear of 'undesirables'. William H. Whyte took note of the way this fear operates in his description of the purposeful hardening of spaces in New York, as justified by fears that homeless people would take advantage of it (36). The result is a hardened, underutilized place where it easier for deviant activities to take hold. The north end of Cathedral Square is now commonly used for intravenous drug-use. Perhaps this would be different if the space's comfortable

amenities had been left intact; the collective eyes of the community that would have resulted from its active use would likely have been sufficient to regulate it.

Conclusion

Public spaces are pivotal to the daily course of people's lives. Whether as a respite from the hustle and bustle of the automobile-dominated streetscape, a space for moments of reflection, or a place to connect with others, public spaces are the last vestiges of an urban commons. The existence of privately owned public spaces complicates the neat binary between public and private, as they combine elements of private ownership, securitization, rules and restrictions, with publicly accessible amenities such as shelter and seating. For many of the plazas we visited, design features that discouraged use tended to prevail over features that encouraged use. Our observations from the social survey suggest that many of these POPS were designed more as spaces for movement into their respective buildings, with the public nature of the space seemingly an afterthought of development. The social survey, though limited in scope, indicated a paltry number of actual users of Shangri-La and Waterfront Centre public spaces. The exception is Cathedral Square, which we view as a well-designed public space that provides inviting seating. Whyte's incredibly simple observation that "people tend to sit where there are places to sit," is as true now as it was then (16). The developers of Shangri-La and Waterfront Centre plazas stubbornly (or intentionally) ignore Whyte's observations, to the detriment of the social life of the space, whereas Cathedral Square is more inclusive as a result of its well-designed public seating area. After assessing Vancouver's POPS using the index and the social survey, we began to recognize what was absent from these spaces. What can be inferred from the absence of people and the silence of their activities? In recognition of the fact that Vancouver is often reduced to the stylized "Vancouverism" of the waterfront mega-projects in Yaletown and Coal Harbour, we would like to avoid essentializing Vancouver's public realm by adding that our study is confined to a very specific local context. A comparison between public spaces in the CBD and other peripheral downtown areas would likely produce different results. One thing is clear, the arguments made throughout our research is not the first critique of Vancouver's downtown POPS. Frederick Brookes, a practicing architect during the 1970s, made the following astute observation:

"[Today] the general trend by more progressive developers is towards landscaped plazas, court spaces and roof-scapes which are integral parts of the development….while things have begun to change in a visual way, little progress has been made to improve the social function of the city landscape. In Vancouver we have become used to a downtown that discourages participation: we are not allowed opportunities for creative loitering; we are overprotected against injuring ourselves from everything but the automobile; we are warned to keep off or keep out by barriers and signs; and there are no sculptures or other structural design elements in the downtown area that can be used functionally. Many restrictions need to be changed so that improved people participation in downtown and other densely developed areas can be encouraged. (qtd. in French 152)

One might speculate as to which restrictions Brookes is referring to; there are many conclusions to be drawn from the array of uninviting and over-protected POPS. An explanation attributing barren plazas to mere poor design quality on behalf of architects would be insufficient; there is also the developer's drive to save money by underinvesting in the space as well as the building manager's interest in lightening their workload by discouraging use. Because of the considerable influence developers have over the design process, it would be naïve to presume that the creation of an

inviting public space was a priority for all parties (Smithsimon 128). Clearly, there has been a long-running scepticism of the 'publicness' of Vancouver's POPS. In 1984, a study of downtown plazas was undertaken by planning consultants Robert Buchan and Larry Simmons in cooperation with staff from Vancouver's Social Planning Department. Their report confirmed the "growing recognition that the open space plazas which have been provided by major downtown developments have not always been successful people places" (Buchan and Simmons i). The municipal report concludes, "Because these open spaces are important urban amenities, it is considered that unsuccessful plazas are a waste of precious public spaces and opportunities" (i). Indeed, POPS only contribute to the social life of the downtown environment to the extent to which they are used. Unfortunately, their assessment did not make much of an impact on the city's public space policies, as it took another decade for city council to implement their first Plaza Design Guidelines document in 1994. Even then, the guidelines failed to specify any hard measures for creating successful people-places, and moreover, the downtown office boom had long passed (Punter 284).

The Vancouver Public Space Network and the City of Vancouver's Planning Department are currently in the process of formulating a new Downtown Public Space Plan. Based on our findings, we have the following recommendations: (1) strengthen plaza design guidelines as part of a larger updated policy on publicly and privately owned public spaces, and include public input to determine desired social functions; (2) require plazas to install signage declaring the space for public use; and (3) require existing POPS to conform to higher standards through renovations. Our public spaces should reflect our democratic ideals as a society and encourage participation by all people. Our study of Vancouver's urban core suggests the need to reconsider the design, creation and management of privately owned public spaces in this city to make our public spaces successful people places

Appendix A

	Dimension	Scoring Criteria
Features that control users		
Visible set of rules posted	Laws and Rules	0 = none present
		1 = one sign or posting
		2 = two or more signs
Subjective judgment/rules posted	Laws and Rules	0 = none present
		1 = one rule visibly posted
		2 = two or more rules visibly posted
In Business Improvement District	Surveillance and Policing	0 = not in BID
		1 = in BID with maintenance duties only
		2 = in BID with maintenance and security duties
Security cameras	Surveillance and Policing	0 = none present
		1 = one stationary camera
		2 = two or more stationary cameras or any panning/moving camera
Security personnel	Surveillance and Policing	0 = none present
		1 = one private security guard or up to two public security guards
		2 = two or more private security guards
Secondary security personnel	Surveillance and Policing	0 = none present
		1 = one person, or space oriented towards reception
		2 = two or more people, or one person with space oriented toward reception
Design to imply appropriate use	Design and Image	0 = none present
		1 = only one or two major examples
		2 = several examples throughout the space
Presence of sponsor advertisement	Design and Image	0 = none present
		1 = one medium sign or several small signs
		2 = large sign or two or more signs
Areas of restricted or conditional use	Access and Territoriality	0 = none present
		1 = one small area restricted to certain members of the public
		2 = large area for consumers only or several smaller restricted areas
Constrained hours of operation	Access and Territoriality	0 = open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, most of the year
		1 = at least part of space open past business hours and on weekends
		2 = only open during business hours or portions permanently closed
Features encouraging freedom of use		

Sign announcing "Public Space"	Laws and Rules	0 = none present
		1 = one small sign
		2 = one large sign or two or more signs
Public ownership or management	Surveillance and Policing	0 = privately owned and privately managed
		1 = privately owned and publicly managed
		2 = publicly owned and publicly managed
Restroom available	Design and Image	0 = none present
		1 = available for customers only or difficult to access
		2 = readily available to all
Diversity of seating types	Design and Image	0 = no seating
		1 = only one type of stationary seating
		2 = two or more types of seating or many movable seats
Various microclimates	Design and Image	0 = no sun or no shade or fully exposed to the wind
		1 = some sun and shade, overhangs, or shielding from wind and rain
		2 = several distinct microclimates, extensive overhangs, trees
Lighting to encourage nighttime use	Design and Image	0 = none present
		1 = one type or style of lighting
		2 = several lightings (e.g, soft lighting, overhead, lampposts
Small-scale food vendors	Design and Image	0 = none present
		1 = one basic kiosk or stand
		2 = two or more kiosks/stands or one larger take-out stand
Art, cultural, or other visual enhancement	Design and Image	0 = none present
		1 = one or more minor installations, statues or fountains
		2 = one major interactive installation, statue or fountain
Entrance accessibility	Access and territoriality	0 = gated or key access only
		1 = one constricted entry or several entries through doors/gates only
		2 = more than one entrance without gates
Orientation accessibility	Access and territoriality	0 = space not visible and oriented away from public sidewalk
		1 = space visible but oriented away from public sidewalk
		2 = space visible and oriented towards public sidewalk

Table 1. Scoring criteria for indicators listed in Németh and Schmidt's Index for assessing the accessibility of public spaces. Source: Németh and Schmidt. "Towards a Methodology for Measuring the Security of Publically Accessible Spaces." Journal of the American Planning Association 73.3 (2007): 279-283.

Appendix B

Features that control users	
Laws and Rules	
Visible set of rules posted	Official, visible signs listing sets of rules (not individual rules) on a permanent plaque. Rules should generally be objective and easily enforceable, like prohibition against smoking, sitting on ledges, passing out flyers without permit, or drinking alcohol.
Subjective judgment/rules posted	Official, visible signs listing individual rules describing activities prohibited after personal evaluations and judgments of desirability by owners, managers, or security guards. Such rules might include: 'no disorderly behavior', 'no disturbing other users', 'no loitering', 'no oversize baggage', or 'appropriate attire required'.
Surveillance and Policing	
In Business Improvement District	Spaces located in Business Improvement District (BID) are more likely to have electronic surveillance and private security guards, and less likely to include public input into decisions regarding park management. BIDs can employ roving guards to patrol especially problematic neighbourhood spaces
Security cameras	Although camera must be visible to the observer to be counted, many cameras are hidden from view. Cameras are often located inside buildings or on surrounding buildings but are oriented toward space. Stationary cameras are more common, and often less intimidating than panning/moving cameras.
Security personnel	Scoring dependent on time of visit. Publicly funded police, park rangers, private security guards. For index, score only when security is dedicated to space. Since private security guards are directed only by the property owner, these can be more controlling (and score higher on index), since police are trained more uniformly.
Secondary security personnel	Scoring dependent on time of visit. Includes maintenance staff, doorpersons, reception, café or restaurant employees, bathroom attendants. Also, spaces often oriented directly toward windowed reception or information area to ensure constant employee supervision.
Design and Image	
Design to imply appropriate use	Small-scale design to control user behavior or to imply appropriate use. Examples might include metal spikes on ledges; walls, barriers, bollards to constrict circulation or to direct pedestrian flow; folded, canted, or overly narrow and unsittable ledges; or crossbars on benches to deter reclining.
Presence of sponsor/advertisement	Signs, symbols, banners, umbrellas, plaques tied to space's infrastructure, and not to immediate services provided (e.g. cafes, kiosks). While non-advertised space is important for seeking diversion from city life, sponsored signs/plaques can push sponsors to dedicate resources for upkeep since company name is visible.
Access and Territoriality	
Areas of restricted/conditional use	Portions of space off-limits during certain times of day, days of week, or portions of year. Can also refer to seating tables only open to café patrons, bars open only to adults, dog parks, playgrounds, corporate events open to shareholders only, spaces for employees of surrounding building only.
Constrained hours of operation	While some spaces are permitted to close certain hours of the day, spaces not open 24 hours inherently restrict usage, and clearly prioritize employee use over use by the general public.
Features that encourage freedom of use	
Laws and Rules	
Sign announcing public space	Most zoning codes require publically accessible space to exhibit plaques indicating such. Some spaces are clearly marked with signs denoting their public nature (e.g. New York's Sony Plaza), but when a sign or plaque is hidden by trees or shrubs, or has graffiti covering it, its intent becomes null.
Surveillance and Policing	

Public ownership/management	Could fall under Laws and Rules, but more likely to impact type/amount of security and electronic surveillance in a space. Management often by conservancy or restoration corporation. Spaces can be publically owned and managed, publically owned and privately managed, or privately owned and managed.
Design and Image	
Restroom available	Clearly some spaces are not large enough to merit a public restroom. Realizing that free public restrooms often attract homeless persons, managers often remove them altogether, or locate them in onsite cafes or galleries available to paying customers only (or providing keyed access for 'desirable' patrons only).
Diversity of seating types	Amount of seating is often most important factor for encouraging public use of space. Users often evaluate entry to space based on amount of available seating and ability to create varying 'social distances'. Movable chairs allow maximum flexibility and personal control in seating choice.
Various microclimates	Spaces with various microclimate enclaves broaden choice and personal control for users. Potential features might include shielding from wind, overhangs to protect from rain, areas receiving both sun and shade during the day, or trees/shrubs/grass to provide connection with the natural landscape.
Lighting to encourage nighttime use	Studies indicate the vulnerable populations often avoid public spaces at night if not well lit. Lighting spaces encourages 24 hour use, and has been shown to make users feel safer/more secure. However, critics argue that night lighting aids surveillance efforts and implies authoritative control.
Small-scale food consumption	Most agree that vendors enhance activity and vitality. This variable only includes small cafes, kiosks, carts or stands selling food, drinks, or simple convenience items. Sit-down restaurants, clothing stores, or other full-scale retail establishments are not described by this variable.
Art/cultural/visual enhancement	Art and aesthetic attraction can encourage use. Variables can include stationary visual enhancements like statues, fountains, or sculptures, and also rotating art exhibits, public performances, farmer's markets, and street fairs. Interactive features encourage use and personal control by curious patrons (often children).
Access and Territoriality	
Entrance accessibility	If a space has locked doors or gates, requires a key to enter, or has only one constricted entry, it often feels more controlled or private than one with several non-gated entrances. In indoor spaces where users must enter through doors or past checkpoints, symbolic access and freedom of use is diminished.
Orientation accessibility	Spaces must be well-integrated with the sidewalk and the street, as those oriented away from surrounding sidewalk, or located several feet above or below street level make the space less inviting. Well-used spaces are clearly visible from the sidewalk, and users should be able to view surrounding public activity.

Table 2. Indicator definitions according to Németh and Schmidt's Index for assessing the accessibility of public spaces. Source: Németh and Schmidt. "Towards a Methodology for Measuring the Security of Publically Accessible Spaces." Journal of the American Planning Association 73.3 (2007): 279-283.

Appendix C

Location	Score	Location	Score
1. 601 West Hastings St. (Seymour Plaza)	5	17. 901 West Hastings St.	5
2. 111 Dunsmuir St. (Stantec Plaza - Now Amec)	4	18. 250 West Waterfront Rd. (Canada Place)	-2
3. 333 Dunsmuir St. (BC Hydro Plaza)	3	19. 200 Burrard St.	-7
4. 608 Hamilton St. (Queen E Plaza)	4	20. 555-595 Burrard St. (Bentall Centre II/III)	-1
5. 700 Hamilton St. (CBC Plaza)	4	21. 1140 West Pender St.	8
6. 596 Richards St. (Cathedral Park)	6	22. 1138 Melville St.	3
7. 401 West Georgia St. (BMO Plaza)	-4	23. 1100 Melville St.	7
8. 350 West Georgia St. (Library Square North)	8	24. 1075 West Georgia St.	-3
9. 350 West Georgia St. (Library Square South)	7	25. 1040 West Georgia St.	2
10. 700 West Georgia St.	1	26. 1055 West Hastings St.	-3
11. 750 Hornby St. (Vancouver Art Gallery Plaza)	6	27. 1066 West Hastings St.	-4
12. 701 West Georgia St. (Pacific Centre Plaza)	-3	28. 1055 Dunsmuir St. (Bentall I Plaza)	4
13. 850 Burrard St.	-1	29. 639 Hornby St. (Cathedral Place)	-2
14. 666 Burrard St. (Park Place)	1	30. 200 Granville	-3
15. 550 Burrard St. (Bentall 5/Cactus Club Plaza)	-1	31. 1121 Alberni St. (Shangri-La Plaza)	-1
16. 510 Burrard St. (Scotiabank Plaza)	1		

Table 3. Selection of Vancouver's public spaces scored according to Németh and Schmidt Index. Positive scores indicate higher accessibility, while negative scores indicate lower accessibility.   Adapted from: Németh and Schmidt. "Towards a Methodology for Measuring the Security of Publically Accessible Spaces." Journal of the American Planning Association 73.3 (2007): 283-279

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