Hello everyone. Welcome to ULIBC's latest virtual event. Today we are going to be talking about Granville St. the revitalization of Granville St. and the preservation of character. It's a topic that I think many are passionate about. It's been in the news quite a bit and Granville St. has seen, you know, quite a decline and lots of ideas on how that can improve and we can make the streets really a excellent center to our downtown. So I think it's going to be a great conversation. We've got some excellent speakers. Just to give you a really brief background on ULIBC. For those of you who are not aware, ULIBC is a nonprofit organization. Dedicated to research, education, city building. We like to lead with dialogues like this, where we bring experts from various industries together to lead conversations, bring new ideas to the table. And so my name is Rachel Thexton. I'm the communications chair here at ULIBC. And with that, I will pass it off to our first speaker. But before I do that, I just want to give you a quick rundown of who is joining us today. We're fortunate to have our wonderful moderator, Lorraine Lowe. She is the executive director of the Doctor Sunvat San Classical Chinese garden here in Vancouver. We have Carrie Bonus who is the property owner, cofounder, coprincipal of bonus properties. We also have Royce Chewin
I was born in the 60s. I'm almost 60 years old when Granville St. was first closed to public and.

Private transit and was made a pedestrian mall in the 70s. I don't know. Sorry. Pardon me. Can you hear me? Oh, sorry. There's somebody at speaking. Anyways, I have a long history with Grandma Street, with my cousins, my friends, kids, brother, and so I've I've seen it in its heyday. I have photos from.

My immigrant parents and seen many parents, there was people being snapped down. So I've done a lot of research.

My brother and I bought property there, including the Commodore almost a quarter century ago. We've been working and participating with the downtown Business Improvement Association and other stakeholders from small business holders and visitors and everyone who has a love and passion for downtown core in general and Granville St. in particular.

And that's why I think speaking for myself and and our company, we have a lot of expertise with respect to Granville Street and the needs and of what it requires and what it requires most is immediate action. And I'm going to be very critical today.

What's proposed now is is is too slow and not enough, especially when policies can be enacted immediately to affect the media change. City planning and city staff have already proven their track record actually is quite terrible in
the middle of a housing crisis.

We spent about a decade working on the Broadway plan. It's being passed, there's a lot of inconsistencies, unanswered questions with it, and we basically froze any development in the middle of a housing decade long plus housing crisis to do nothing really. And there is no interim policy to boost housing and live in workspace. And I'm afraid we're going down the same slippery slope and the same dangerous path with Granville St. with the proposed study. I don't understand why we're talking a limited amount of blocks less than a kilometer that's under the study that's proposed and my understanding is it's to take an 18 month long period now the BIA. Focus Group stakeholders we've been working on it for decades. All the work has been done. In fact the city when they want to act fast, they can act fast. And they wanted to do a little subsection of a few blocks rezoning about a year or two ago and they moved lightning fast to make that happen and that was the same time that the.

You know, politically expedient decisions were made like converting the hotel to residential and COVID and so the city can act fast when they want to. But that hasn't been the case here. All the stakeholders have been for decades chasing the city to do something. They've done nothing. In fact, we've, you know, we've worked on multiple projects on Granville St. and and. Going on half a decade, can you put the slide up please, Rachel, there are a few. There are a few things that can be done quickly and one is what I've got on the slide here. This shows what's currently allowed in the masking now for those of you who don't really know.

The real estate lingo FSR is 4 square ratio. What's allowed is a building that's 90 feet tall and but what's only allowed to be built there's 3.5 times. So basically 3 1/2 times volume to to fill the space, the envelope. That's permissible, but in fact we can fit six to seven plus stories in that same envelope and
what we have in green.

Shows what can be fit and what's allowed is in red. Now we could have interim policy that would allow for this density to be passed. It could be done in a day or two, just really a formality that would allow for increased density to be fit with no change in the current heights and no change in the current setbacks.

And we brought this to the attention of the senior planners half a decade ago. We actually have a building under construction on 900 block that where we’ve asked for this, we pitched them five years ago, but the need to add density and the benefits of it and we followed up for three years straight and two years ago we had some meetings and conversation and it's almost. A year and a half to two years now, we're still waiting to hear back from them. Now these two senior planners, they're the ones in charge for the Granville St. Plan. So I'm concerned that they can't be relied on to deliver what's needed and their their focus and passion is simply not there. And I encourage, you know, with respect to this study, we can add more bodies and have more ridership.

More density, more security, a plethora of diverse uses rather than limiting the density. But most importantly, limiting density is inconsistent with the city's policy to to be a green city. If we reduce supply, that demands not going away. So what happens? We have to, you know, build. Well, we could fit in one building. We have to build 2 buildings. So we have twice the construction cost, twice the carbon footprint and it's irresponsible. So there are a lot of policies that are incompatible with the city's primary focus of being a green and sustainable city. And these solutions can be passed and approved within seconds. But to our experience, City staff are being tone deaf to it and and and done nothing. For years and they focus on policies for their own ideology and their own self-interest, like protection of sunlight and things like this. That's fine when we want to protect the park, but we’re talking about the core of our
downtown city that drives this province economically and for tourism
and and.
Self-interest decisions like protecting sunlight so one can go lecture
in New York and so forth instead of putting the
focus to develop workspace and process sign permits quickly and
have change of use processed within days when there's no
changes, when they take months. The message to all the
retailers we have is that Vancouver's at the tough place
to work in and there a lot of people don't
want to open here and.
The problem is that the city staff has been directing
the past Council and telling them, oh, this is what
we'll do and this is our time frame. I'm sorry,
that's simply not acceptable. I, you know, I'm Greek, I
speak in metaphors and analogies and when one opens a
restaurant.
They don't tell the chef. You decide the menu, you
decide when the food gets delivered. You decide everything.
City staff is there to serve management and management
answers to
Council and Council answers to the Vancouver citizens.
Citizens of
Vancouver are not happy with the status quo. Somebody was
murdered yesterday, I believe in downtown Vancouver.
People butchered with
machetes.
We can affect policy right now without changing the envelope
of anything as an interim to increase security, increase sustainability,
and these things are not being done and it's simply
not acceptable. And I'd like to see some of
these things passed and I'm always open and every stakeholder,
hundreds have consulted with the city, but we've just seen
in action this time frame of a year and a
half is unacceptable.
If it's passed in 2 years, a rezoning application will
take two 2 1/2 years. A building permit will take
a year, year and a half. It'll be six years
out before a shovel goes ground. Best case scenario, then,
two years to construct. That's eight years. So we're speaking.

Whatever this timeline is now is to be, you know, realized 8 to 10 years from now.

Well, as we've seen in other parts of the world, from the Middle East to Asia, there've been entire cities that have been built from scratch within two decades. We are a leader in terms of British Columbia and Canada, in terms of our ability to construct, to design. We export all our knowledge. Yet here at home, we're allowing for, you know, the planning to.

Have a lackadaisical and chase their own self-interest in ideologies rather than deal with what's necessary at hand and I think it's unacceptable and I think we have to pass set time frames. We need to condense the time frame. There's not a year and a half is required for a 6-7 size. This can be done in weeks. I think Council has to revisit it and consult with the stakeholders.

And find a logical time frame that's not going to be dropped out. The results to be realized 7 to 10 years from now. I'm sorry, that's not acceptable. And if the staff does not have the resources to do for this, well, let's quantify. Let's allocate resources. If they can't do it, then let's outsource their certified professional engineers that could actually review. And stamp and certify that everything's compliant with current zoning and it could. There are so many ways to fast track things. It's unacceptable that code compliance signs, which are critical for new businesses and even business licenses take months when really the approval to the review and approval is minutes, if not, you know, maybe 10 or 15 minutes to an hour at Max to approve. It's crazy that change of uses that have not even in a nail or a screw changed in the premises for permissible uses take months. This is unacceptable. The status quo is not acceptable and I think we have to demand counsel to change the time frames. Speak with outside
of the staff to determine what's necessary and I hope, We can have a discussion about all this. You know, having a polylog and many stakeholders and experts speaking is how we find solutions and then open in an open country, in an open city. And this is not what's going on in City of Vancouver, City of Vancouver City staff are dictating what's what's to be done and they're. They can't be relied on pass on their past record and and furthermore they're not being responsive to the current needs of the stakeholders. And I I think I don't think it's acceptable for them to do on quick whims like converting hotels to residential. Fine during COVID that was actually a good solution but it should have been temporary and I I I don't agree with hotels and other. Changes being to the city get done without proper consultation and they they don't correspond to the history of Granville St. Granville St. was a commercial St. It had a lot of density. What I showed you on the on the envelope, the green represents actually the density and height historically, of what Granville was for a full century. And that's not what's what's here now. So I encourage everyone to speak to Council and put pressure to put some interim policies in place with immediate action and we can see immediate change but the status quo is not acceptable and and I hope we can make changes to revisit that, I'll pass it on. Thank you very much, Carrie. I appreciate that. Appreciate your insight and. And ideas? I'm going to pass it straight to the president, cofounder of Daily Daily Hive, Karm sumo. Thanks, Rachel, and thanks, Kerry. That was very insightful. And since you've already kind of spoken to the city staff and all the other stuff and how they've held most of this, the processes in the city almost like hostage, I'll, I'll kind of talk about something different and talk about, let's say, in a perfect world that the city staff finally got their shit together.
And we knew that we can make progress. What would we want Granville St. to look like? I look at it, you know, having traveled all over the place when I was in my 30s, now being in my 40s, I still consider myself young at heart and I still gravitate towards entertainment districts and zones such as this.

And I feel like in Vancouver we have this opportunity to create something great. What was once great, as Carrie alluded to, can be great again. I see an opportunity where culture, creativity and commerce can collide. It's that street that can have it all. It's that street that many cities would love to have a street like this. And we kind of have the skeleton already in place to make it happen. We just need the policies and the individuals to drive it forward.

It's got to be the destination we got to. We got to think about it as a destination that isn't just to serve Metro Vancouver or BC or hey, someone from Toronto. Montreal came over. Yeah, you got to check out Granville St. when people come over from all over the world, Granville St. is a spot where they want to go. It's something that we should look at in a way to attract more tourism from the 20 to 30 year olds that aren't looking to just go on a hike.

Go to the you know go on a kayak and attract different types of tourism and I think Bramble has that has the ability to do that. So some of the things and I know we're kind of I I want to be mindful of the time. So some of the things that I in in my head where you know if you look at the DVBIA plan that they put out I think a couple years ago that plan was pretty damn close to being perfect and should be something that City Hall should have been like. Thank you for putting this together let's make this.

Let's, let's put this in action. Was it perfect? No.

But was it enough to get the ball rolling? Hell
yeah. And I think you know if we look at Gramble St. and if we specifically look at, you know, I look at it from like let's say Georgia and Gramble to Drake, that should be our entertainment zone. That is where people that it it as much as it can be a 24/7 playground on certain streets. The certain days of Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, we should aim to make it that. And how do you do that? I, I, you know, I think it like. Number one, I think we got to up the cleanliness and the security. I think the street is, you know, I live a couple blocks away from it. It's usually pretty disgusting. And on my way to work, it's eight AM, 8:30. You know, there's a lot of lot of just litter and gum and all the stuff. And I think having it clean, treating it with the respect that it deserves, you'll see that the residents will also start to overtime treat it with that same level of respect. And I think cleanliness is something that we can enact action quickly. So every every day at 2:00 AM or 3:00 AM, somebody should be out there scrubbing the streets hard, getting rid of all the gum, the cigarette butts, the trash, the puke and piss and everything else that happens on that street. It should be all clean. So the next day it's renewed and you're like, whoa, I didn't even know a big party happened here. That's what they do in all major cities. I just came back from Tokyo, and you would not know that anything even hit the ground there. We could do that in certain areas, and I think that's one of the things that we should look at. Security is another thing. They should be foot patrol. I, I, you know, having foot patrol cops going up and down the street, friendly cops, there's nothing wrong with that. I think we need more of that in the city. It deters it. It has a deterrent effect on, you know, certain types of behavior. The other thing that I'd, I'd love to see in Granville St. is better placemaking. You know, I I think as a whole Vancouver doesn't
do a good job of placemaking. We have a gate in Chinatown. That's great. That's the one thing that I can think of where you know you're entering the significant area. You go to Gastown. Sure you're there. But you know I know it's there because I live here. But a tourist doesn't know what Gaston is. There's no sign. Whopping the same thing with Gramble St. you should look at the digital signage and getting digital billboards putting it up and have it where it's. That those could be sponsored. You can have those be paid by an advertiser and have a sign that says welcome to the Gramble Entertainment District on both ends. Large digital signage, place it on Georgia and Gramble. Place it on on Drake and Gramble wherever you wanted to end and have it signify that you've entered the zone. That alone makes a big deal. And then taking that a step further and going back to our neon roots and. Going a step above that and embracing technology and art and culture that is transformed and really going hard on digital billboards and really looking at certain intersections, certain buildings and part of the requirement for new buildings should be, hey, you need to look at digital signage. What kind of signage are you going to in? Are you going to put into your building either neon signage or digital signage, the London drugs building? Has that blank wall that's white. It's boring. It's pathetic. And I think in a lot of ways signifies what's wrong with Vancouver. We become boring and as a lifelong resident it's become pretty pathetic in many ways. And how boring we become. And it's annoying because I know we have the people and the and the businesses and the ideas to do things. But it continually gets thwarted and to what Kerry eluded it's. Mainly if City Hall and the few people that have hijacked the narrative of what they think Vancouver should be and they're not listening to the citizens, they're listening to their own ideologies and their own agendas. So that's another thing that I think that we could really do other
things that I mean, the Sr. O's should not be on gramble, they should be relocated. I'm not saying get rid of Sr. O's. I think it's a great program. I think it should not be on a primary district where there's booze, alcohol, partying going on. The two don't mix well. You got to put them in a different environment, wherever that is. Hopefully not the downtown east side because there's already too many there but like spread them out and you can work with developers. I know developers are more than welcome to and open to discussion on making you know that work but you know don't put them on grammar St. there should be hotels, commerce, bars, restaurants, cafes, whatever, commercial like retail but not not S Toro's and a few other things that are live music and Busters the amount of. We used to have great busking happen on Granville St. and then I don't know if something happened and then kind of went away. I think we should bring that back. Shutting down the streets. I know this is a contentious 1 Translink, you know, has its thoughts, but I think there's a way where you can shut down the street just on certain days. You don't need to shut it down 24/7, 7 days a week. I actually think the bus is going up and down Granville, add an element of vibrancy and bring people to that street right now. And I think for the time being I think it needs to be that way until it completes its transformation. But on Thursday, Friday, Saturday nights from a certain, let's say 6:00 PM or 7:00 PM, it gets shut and the buses get diverted. I think that's a, that's a bit more achievable looking at ideas of like bar hopping. If you, if you're on the Granville St. District and you want to go to a bar and you're trying to get in those long lineups piss me off. I don't like going into those long like you're just waiting there. Like sometimes you go into a bar and you're
like, nothing's even happening in here. And I waited 30 minutes to get in. There should be some sort of like.
You go into one bar, you get a pass. That pass lets you get into another bar because that bar is already pre qualified. You, you've gone through all the bar watch stuff, you're ready to go. You can go into the other ones or at least you don't have to stand in line again or something like having a bar hopping element again adds an element of liveliness to the street. And then the final thing is like, I think then the other thing that we sometimes forget is the alleyways sometimes become a almost like a nogo zone. But if we look at the alleys and we animate those alleys with. Doing what Toronto did with a they had this alley, graffiti alley. And you put Graffiti Alley on both sides. You put it on the House St. side and on the Seymour side. Let the artists create, let them create. And then what happens is you find that people end up walking those alleys and they want to see what's been created. So there's alleys that essentially become places where you kind of like, hey, don't go there, become overtime places where you'll walk through and. From that, businesses are born like people are doing tours of graffiti Alley in Toronto, and I remember I specifically would go and seek it and go and check it out. And there's lots of people that love that kind of stuff. And there's a lot of travel and tourism around graffiti and art that I think we in the city tend to ignore. And I think we need to look at how do we evolve our ourselves and how do we pitch ourselves to the world beyond. Or competitive advantage, which everybody knows by now. But how do we get them to now explore the city from a urban landscapes perspective? Because I think our urban landscape is pretty good. It just needs, it just needs some TLC. So that's kind of like my quickly condensed gist of how we want to do it. You can always find me ranting on Twitter more about how what we
should do as well. So I'll let Royce go next.

Thank you, Carm. I like that. I think TLC is a great way to describe it, some some awesome ideas there. I'm now going to pass it on to the President and CEO of Destination Vancouver, Royce Chewing Royce. I'll pass it to you.

Thanks very much Rachel. Thanks Kerry. Thanks Carm. Great comments and I'll take I'll be out of it and take a little bit of a different approach.

For those of you that have been around long enough, you'll remember a term that that popped out over a decade ago, well over a decade ago, and that was white elephant. And the white elephant term referred to the Vancouver Convention Center that that when that was built, that would be a white white elephant. It would not be additive to downtown. It would impact downtown. It would not be used. And we can see now from the evidence that happens on a daily annual basis that that is simply not the case.

That the policy decisions that were made to allow that structure to go up in what it did to be a massive additive force for downtown has reaped huge benefits all the way around. We're not just talking about from tax base, of course, job creation, experience creation, it is an epicenter of culture and creativity coming together. It is really a center of transformation. So when we think about the Gramble Entertainment district.

And Granville St. as a whole, we think about it as as water to water that entire strip. And in the center of that entire strip, you have the opportunity to rebuild and recreate an incredible anchor, a destination within the destination. I reflect back to what Mayor SIM has been saying lately since he's been elected and that is that Vancouver's open for business.

And if you look at that statement, Vancouver must be open for business, not only for investors, because investors were global capital can work and it can be additive, but
open for business in terms of the citizens here, in terms of the developers here, in terms of the communities here, the Community members that want to invest in the city to transform it and to evolve it and make it better, you can’t be one of the best cities in the world.

If policy decisions are in place that inhibit transformation and evolution, that inhibit an investment in a downtown core for which Vancouver is noted for globally. When I talk to my peers around the city or, sorry, around the globe, whether it’s Los Angeles, New York, it’s the UK, it doesn’t matter. We are globally recognized progressive city. So we need to think about the right kinds of decisions that will enable development to happen that will enable. An evolution of the downtown core. As we often say, there’s tourism policy and there’s policy that impacts tourism. Destination Vancouver doesn’t own anything, but we have a responsibility and an ability to amplify and share the stories of what makes the city great, not just from a tourism perspective but also from a community perspective perspective. And that’s what this idea and this re envisioning of the GEGED does. It rethinks about how to reconnect with the downtown core, especially with a number of downtown cores throughout North America are suffering. Vancouver score has been one of the cores that’s come back the quickest. So how do you continue to demonstrate leadership in a civic arena around development of downtown cores that make it livable for workers, for community and visitors when you put policy in place or decisions in place or speed by which? That inhibits a continuing need for transformation and renewal, which is what you want to do to attract people. Attracting people attracts more people, attracts commerce, attracts creativity, attracts transformation. And then that’s a great story to show to sell because we are in competition with destinations around the world.
for investment, talent, thought leadership and visitors. So the bodice development as a great example. Is a stake in the ground that says we can see something different, we can see something better and we're willing to put the capital into it to continue to be additive to Vancouver story. And that creates a great story to sell beyond just adding visitors, but destination transformation and that's the story and that builds competitiveness. So I'll stop there for questions and engagement and people that have joined the call. And now turn it back over to you, Rachel. Thank you, Rachel. Thank you. Thank you so much, Royce. Appreciate that. I'm now going to pass it off to our moderator, the lovely Lorraine Lowe, executive director of the Doctor Sun Yatsan Classical Chinese Garden, and I will leave it to you to ask some questions of our panelists and audience. That's great. Thank you so much, Rachel. It's been wonderful listening to everybody's comments. I think we are all on the same page here. Things need to change. You know, Carrie, I'm going to propose this question to you first. You did discuss how the narrative has been hijacked and you know what can, what more can we do as a public, this group here to even get the ball moving? Even more because you said it's been over a couple decades we've had different administrations come in. Now we've got a majority ABC Council. So you know there there's going to be repercussions within the next few years if we don't act on this. Soon so and and I know that there's been calls from Counselor Kirby Young to help speed up the process. We have a new counseling place, So what else can we do as a public to to get things get moving on this quicker? You're on mute, Kerry. Kerry. Sorry. Thanks Larry for the question. I think you know, I think it has to be up to Council and citizens
to demand what's required and and and state we need this within this time frame. And for example we have FIFA coming up, we have a lack of hotel rooms. Royce spoke about you know, the Convention Center. For years I've been hearing we're short 3 to 5000 hotel rooms and now I'm hearing 2030 thousand. So it was actually a travesty that the city allowed change of use from the budget hotels on Granville St. to be converted to residential. If I bought that hotel and asked for a change of use to residential, they would have showed me the curb. And so it's it's absolutely crazy. That we are destroying, you know, doing quick fix knee jerks solutions. They're not even solutions because you know, people need to be housed with dignity in residential areas. Historically, Granville St. was never residential, even the Sr. O's. They were short term residences for a hotel. Like people would come in for a few weeks. They'd be like a lumberjack coming to get a job. Or, you know, small business. All these affordable hotels disappeared with the Sr. O's and we we need to house those people in residential areas but we also need to stop the conversion of hotels to residential. And just as the city on a dime turned and allowed the province to buy the hotel in Granville St. that was converted, they should pass the law pass, you know, a motion and say. We want this hotel return to hotel use because it's that's to the historic use because, okay, it's all the thing. But there are no kitchens in there. I believe the per room cost was half $1,000,000 per unit. So it's actually inexcusable for the province to buy that. If the city had actually denied the use, it would have never been purchased. They could have built 3 to 4 units for the price of 1 room. That doesn't even provide the occupant with the dignity of a kitchen to cook or warm or eat something. So I think these, you know, it's crazy because the city reacts really fast, making decisions that lack common sense, but then common sense decisions like passing a change of use
when there's no structural change, passing a code compliance sign that could be done in. An hour or two takes three to six months. We have a 40,000 square foot approximately tenant that's moving in to the former Steve Nash gym next to the Hudson. That whole building's vacant has been ravaged through COVID. There's just the keg on the corner and Judith and Charles. Judith and Charles, they lock the door and they have to buy key, lock and unlock for every customer because there's mayhem. It's anarchy out on the streets. Now I just got an e-mail while we're talking here from the tenant Rep going what's going on with the sign, it's a neon code compliant sign. I personally reviewed it to make sure it corresponded precisely to what's required for Granville St. it's been around three months. This multinational tenant is concerned that they won't have a sign. So this is the message we're sending, you know, to to. You know to to echo what Roy said to to retails to visitors that this is not a place to do business. And I think with the city needs to quantify what the correct processing times are. They need to take higher third party or and and analyze how long does it take to approve something. And just like you know there's a warranty for Volvo saying an oil change takes 20 minutes a break, change like this. We should quantify the time frame to do this. We have all the historical data to see how many applications are coming in and we can say, okay, we need X amount of resources, people to process this current need. It's actually so simple and it infuriates me that instead of city management finding these solutions and Speaking of people that have common sense intelligence to. Suggest these things. It all files on deaf ears. It's like the staff are in charge of basically self monitoring and doing whatever they want and they're held unaccountable and it's just wrong. So I think we need to provide the resources to find the time frames and demand that
our city.

At least meets the minimum sort of speed that it takes to process it. I mean it's it's crazy that it takes up to half a year to effect some changes that actually there's nothing physically changed. We

block, we wanted to divide a space into two. It took a year and a half to get to put a wall to divide the space.

We had a multinational 10 and a 400 year old stationery shop that wanted to go in. Would have been fantastic to use for Granville St. they walked. They couldn't stay for a year and a half. They were obligated to pay rent. Well, we didn't charge them rent so we ate it. They lost and they they went elsewhere. They didn't. They ended up not locating in downtown Vancouver,

but I'm sure they spoke to many people.

So I think we need to define what's needed. We need to have time frames. We have to, you know, demand that we want to see this by then. And we want to see immediate interim policies that signs, you know, we asked the city plan planners and staff, when will we hear? We never get a definitive answer. The whole world does not operate that way, and I don't know why.

You know, maybe we're too polite as Canadians, but we allow city staff to do whatever they want to not be accountable and not work on the same time frame that the rest of the world and all of us are obligated to work under. So I think we should put pressure on the Council and we should tell them, you know, we want policies definitively made. And you know, echoing what Karm said, you know, there were so many studies. There's so many brilliant ideas passed.

But we don't need big you know big change. It's not rocket science. What's laughable is that rocket science in the last decade has progressed far further than the City of Vancouver has. And it's it's crazy. But I think you know we can we can affect change immediate because grimble St.
It's in major decay and it's accelerating with murders now happening on a daily basis and personal attacks. We can use Granville St. as a pilot program and go, you know what we're going to allow third parties or, you know, let's say what a specific time is to process something. If it's code compliant and no change or nothing like this business license should be fast track. Let's do a fast track with defined time frames, do it as a pilot program, see if it works and you know the pros and cons and how we got to tweak it for Granville St. so then you know if it would obviously be successful and then actually look at exporting that sort of pilot program to be in all the main high transit density areas throughout the city and then spread, you know, put it. That sort of program where it's most needed and and Granville St. needs it. But you know Granville St. was the host to the 2010 Winter Olympics. This is where we hosted the entire world. I've never felt more proud as the Vancouver right as to the vibe, the energy, the enthusiasm, the community, the camaraderie that existed for those. Leading weeks. I know it's just some people only hours and days but here it is years later and I I'm like, I almost, you know, get goosebumps talking about. It was so exhilarating and that was us at the best and we need to work towards doing that. But just as we did everything fast track for the Olympics, we need to do it now. And not just because of FIFA, you know. You want to make your home nice for visitors, but first you have to make your home nice for yourself and the citizens of Vancouver, they deserve to have a street downtown with arts and culture, with multiple uses, where it's safe, where families can watch. There could be animation, multi uses. You know, I look at the Tom Lee building, it had, you know, ballroom dancing. It had music lessons. The 6-7 stories, that's the history of Granville St. let's learn from the past and let's do that now. Now
let's not change. Chase the sun, you know, shadow, sunlight, protection and the nonsense that these senior planners are talking about, which is only for their self-interest and personal agendas, which actually was never voted on and is not policy. They're spending time on these little self-interest projects. Instead of affecting immediate, change where it's required. Right. OK. Thank you, Carrie. Sorry, we're just a little bit sure in time I feel your frustration and and yeah, it's, I've got a question for Royce here, you know, events and in the city, placemaking in the city, weather's a huge factor here. Affordability is another big issue. What do you think our city can do to make Vancouver a more appealing city to attract the talent to come work here and live here, you know? We have such a small group here in Vancouver that puts on a lot of these placemaking events. There's a lot of work and there's a lot of burnout is a huge factor. And you know, to piggyback on that like what types of industries besides tech, as we heard Mayor SIM in his address, do you want to see in the city that will attract that type of talent? Great question. How much time do we have? As you know, a city is successful as the alchemy or the mix of things that are happening. Whether it's vents, whether it's tech, whether it's existing industries, we have an incredible and thriving restaurant industry that is an industry nobody ever said I want to move to a gulag, come to a place that attracts people because it has a variety of interest. We have the competitive advantage in where our city is located. You can and it is true, you can golf during the day or ski in the morning and golf in the afternoon. You can literally do that. We have a city that is a major shipping port. We have a city that is a major hub as it relates to air service. So we have a lot of the necessary ingredients that can connect regionally, locally, nationally and internationally as it relates to placemaking. And activities. During COVID we are able to convene a
call of over 70 event producers that spend the time
spend the the, the time, the effort, the lifeblood and
animating putting on events for the city. So to say
that there's nothing going on which I hear from time
to time is simply not true. One of the things
that I would suggest that we look at is while
we've got a very action-packed summer, we need to stop
apologizing for the weather it rains.
Get over it, the city is green, not by accident,
it's because of this the weather is part of the
environment. So how do we think of place making, how
do we think of further developments in the city that
account for the seasonality that we have so that we
can spread out visitorship, we can spread out a Community
use throughout the season and not just bundle up for
late spring, summer and and early fall that.
In our opinion would start to entice event producers. It
would give reason for event creation and other parts of
the city that would allow for more visitation and spreading
out the commerce. So there's not one solution here. It
is a mix of a bunch of different things to
have to come into place. And I go back to
my earlier comment, there's tourism policy and then there is
policy that impacts tourism and that can be as simple
as patio permitting.
How do we do things rapidly to open up the
city for visitors and residents and to do that and
create activity and channels throughout the city can do that
with place making and we can do that as it
relates to seasonality, but we have to create the conditions
to allow this to happen.
Great answer. Yes, I agree work with the weather and
not against the weather. And next question I have for
Carm there, it's in the chat group here about Nordstrom's.
What do you see? It's a huge void to fill
here. So let me just ask the question that was
proposed. Let's see here. Where is it? It's got about
what could go in there. I believe we see the
effects of Nordstrom leaving and what we could do to
fill that hole. What do you envision?
I mean Nordstrom leaving.
Does suck because it was one of the more profitable
locations that the that they had. That being said, it's you know if you look at it, I see it as an opportunity. It was a place where it didn't fail because Vancouver couldn't support it. We could support it. We had the we, we had the pedestrian activity, we had the mall. The mall does really well right. So I think you have an opportunity now to maybe go back and see if you can get. Some of the the stores or you know restaurant groups or something like that that can fill that 300 almost 300,000 square feet and we we we we had kind of our our writer do up an article and he's like well split the space into 300,100 thousand 100,000 get assignments a uniflow in a in a downtown IKEA in there those three if split and done right hell I heard that what's my call.

One of those burgers that a smash burgers or whatever, I can't remember they're coming into Canada. Put a little like where the milk bar used to be put a little restaurant with a patio action there you can do, you can do a lot with that space and I think there is an appetite so long as the city doesn't get in the way obviously. Sorry K you wouldn't say something.

Yeah, I just want to jump in. So just just I was actually speaking with the top decision makers at Cadillac Fairview with regard to the space last week and. Nordstrom, actually Vancouver, that was one of the top three performing locations in their entire chain. So it was a big success. But Canada is it's an Internet. You know, it's it's a sovereign country so there's you know bilingual requirements, import tax duties, admin. So the assisted, you know the whole chain couldn't you know rest on one or two successful stores when the rest of the chain was failing within Canada. I think what it, you know, to echo a karm saying it really presents itself with a huge opportunity. And you know and in our discussions there's like well, it would make sense to open up some storefronts along Granville and how and Robson in addition to the entries of
Pacific Center, Pacific Center's actually being one of the top ten performing shopping centers through. Basically multiple decades in North America, top ten in North America, dollars per square foot. They actually have a supply issue they have. They don't have enough supply for the demand. So they could do a combination of some big users, expand the mall, but opening the storefronts, you know, to the street level sort of how it is now withritzia. You can enter on Granville and that and enter from within the mall. So you've got you know, double access. So that makes for exciting retail and our discussion was how long would it take? Well, you know, doing a few storefronts inside and out is a couple of weeks, maybe a month or two. But how long is the permit going to take, right. We have a main and Union project in Chinatown. Code compliant application every single time. 10 years ago we started that project and it's going to take two years to construct. We still don't have building permits. So I think if this is the problem when actually planning and city staff processing take longer than the physical work to be done, something is wrong here and we need we need to hold them accountable. We need to give them firm deadlines and time frames and expectations. When we all in it in the rest of the world, we have job descriptions, we say duties and tasks and what the level of processing time to do that work. And you know what? If I fall behind my brothers, my partner, he comes and kicks my butt and says, you know what, do this, do that you're not like, and likewise and. City staff is. It just does its own thing and they're not held accountable and I think it's time the citizens and Council demand management to provide fine night time frames and also tell them what they want to see, not allow for them to propose whatever they want to propose. Right, so, so you know, Council should be going back and requesting from staff strict timelines and report back
No, sorry, sorry. They should not request strip. They should not be requesting timelines, right? That's like a I opened a $6 million restaurant. I tell the chef, hey, what do you think we should stock it with? Who should we buy the things from? Who's going to be my demographic? No, I'm sorry. They work for us, the citizens. They work for management, they work for council. We've all told Council what we want. Council can ask us any time they need not to request city staff what to do and when to do it, and what time frame they need to tell them we need this precisely, we need in this time frame, and if you need help, we'll give it to you. But there's. We don't ask the the you know, when you do a restaurant, you create your concept, you know your demographic, you choose what's served and how it's prepared, and the chef executes what you tell them to. So we got it, you know, make this happen at the city level and make city staff work how the rest of the world operates in every industry, from multinationals, from charities to organizations, every with this is how it's got to be. Sorry to interrupt. Sorry to interrupt. Carrie, we've got a few questions here and I just don't want to make, I want to make sure that we get to them. I'm so sorry. I wish we had longer for this event because there's just so. Much none of my apologies. No, your insight is amazing. I just, I just don't want to miss. We have so many here. Right. Thank you. So I just want to get a quick thoughts from Royce and Carm. I there's rumors that you know rec rooms going in. How about more play based bars bring more of that interactive entertainment options like Dave and buster's like with the bar with Bowling Alley, Lucky Strike, I think it's called like I'm vision envisioning like Bellevue. You know how it's connected to the hotel. There's a
a complex where people like families can go to like
your thoughts on that?
Royce, do you want to go first?
Sure. There's a reason why these kinds of places have
been created because there is a demand is clearly a
customer base. So the question is it putting these in,
putting these in the right areas?
What are you trying to attract to transform the customer,
the community base and the locations that they're at? And
then how do you think about the surrounding amenities? It
is interesting the transformation of Vancouver, which was
largely a
bar culture back in the day and all the rest
of that, but but the demographic and how they interact
and how people interact is changing. I think it's fantastic.
It provides more option and more opportunity and it quite
frankly creates more salability.
In the communities for which these places are at and
attracts people, that's the key. If you're not attracting people
for some specific reason to do something, to drop commerce,
to have a great time to create memories, to create
advocates of that particular location, then we are failing the
community, whether it be community members or the
investors who have been involved and quite frankly, the
city brand. So I think it's a great idea if
those places are coming in because to me it seems
additive and that's what customers are looking for.
I just want to add, you know with respect to
uses, if we have more density in the things you
know, we can actually have more 24/7 more animation. You
know having bars at St. level is bad for the
street. So we need to get the bars to be
above grade or below grade open balconies and and we
need to have with more density and more height or
you know in the existing height we can actually have
multiple uses and have an active.
You know street from 6:00 AM till 4:00 AM and
you know density is key to this and having policy
that allows for that.
I.
Mean. Yeah, yeah. I agree with everything that everybody's
saying

00:55:28 --> 00:55:30: here. I think the city lacks attractions.
00:55:31 --> 00:55:33: If I'm a teenager in this city, I was like,
00:55:33 --> 00:55:35: where do I even go? Like, you know, you can
00:55:35 --> 00:55:37: only go to Stanley Park so many times when you
00:55:37 --> 00:55:40: live here. And the rec room edition I think is
00:55:40 --> 00:55:41: going to be a good test to see how we
00:55:42 --> 00:55:44: react to it. Like, there's a rec room in Brentwood,
00:55:44 --> 00:55:46: but you're not going to get me driving out to
00:55:46 --> 00:55:49: Brentwood or even taking the train out to Brentwood every
00:55:49 --> 00:55:51: day. But if it was right down the block, I'd
00:55:51 --> 00:55:53: go play some games, go grab a drink, you know,
00:55:53 --> 00:55:55: hang out at the bar. It's multi use. It's for
00:55:56 --> 00:55:58: families. I think we need more stuff like that. I
00:55:58 --> 00:55:59: think Dave and Buster's.
00:56:00 --> 00:56:03: You know, looking at supporting our, our, our own artists,
00:56:03 --> 00:56:07: working with some and you know the people at Creative
00:56:07 --> 00:56:09: BC or Music BC and being like look, let's let's
00:56:10 --> 00:56:13: create some small intimate bars that allow live local
musicians
00:56:13 --> 00:56:16: to play. They don't have to be large, it doesn't
00:56:16 --> 00:56:19: have to great. But you then can rotate and have
00:56:19 --> 00:56:22: the talent that we have in the city. We have
00:56:22 --> 00:56:25: great artists, musicians, creators that in our own town. We
00:56:25 --> 00:56:27: don't give them an outlet to perform.
00:56:28 --> 00:56:31: So create an outlet to perform live. Jazz bars are
00:56:31 --> 00:56:34: something that people go to of all ages. People love
00:56:34 --> 00:56:37: that stuff. We have live music in this city's been
00:56:38 --> 00:56:41: kind of killed by bureaucracy by these rules that are
00:56:41 --> 00:56:43: put in place for I don't know what. Like I
00:56:43 --> 00:56:47: don't know who these people are that are in charge
00:56:47 --> 00:56:49: and what happened to them as a child.
00:56:49 --> 00:56:52: Or in high school, how bullied they were or what?
00:56:52 --> 00:56:55: But something happened for when they became in charge that
00:56:55 --> 00:56:57: they went on this ego and power trip and that
00:56:57 --> 00:57:00: to what Kerry's been saying is we as citizens need
00:57:00 --> 00:57:02: to demand that. They either need to shape up or
00:57:02 --> 00:57:05: get the hell out. Because if we're open for business,
00:57:05 --> 00:57:07: then these people need to get out of our way
00:57:07 --> 00:57:10: or they need to jump on the fucking train. I'm
00:57:10 --> 00:57:12: sorry, I'm supposed to not say, but or they need
00:57:12 --> 00:57:14: to get on the train and be like, okay, how
do we make this happen? Because it's ridiculous to me.

It's frustrating seeing.

Peers and the younger generation be like, you know what, I don't why do I want to be in Vancouver?

It's expensive and there's nothing to do here.

No, absolutely. And you know, growing up in Vancouver, Granville St. was the place to go. There was capital six there, theater there, there. There's a place where we, there's a purpose to go down there is what I'm hearing.

And you're right. Like there's nothing other than like what is there. There used to be arcades down on Granville.

I don't know if they're still even operating, but there was that attraction.

Now I I to go on with I've got another question for you Carl about the graffiti and the legal graffiti wall. Like do you think you can see yourself working or or the city would work with like a digital hopes from our communities like just having a a tech and and like not NFT but having that graffiti alley kind of tie in with the tech and what you were talking about the digital wall.

Definitely. There's great, amazing artists that create great digital art that I think we should put on display. You know, if we were to put, we got those two screens at Robson and Bramble, the two screens, they're nice, they're small, but they're nice. But I look at that corner and I was like, well, why don't you put screens everywhere in that intersection and start building it out. You have all these blank canvases that are just screaming for something to be there. This.

Cities becomes bland in many ways because it kind of we don't like advertising. Why don't you like advertising? That ship pays bills and there's nothing wrong with creating a district where advertising can go. People from all over the world will go to those areas and and and it becomes animated through those, those activations and you and it creates this energy. And then from that energy it creates a sense of safety over time. I think we can do that. And I think from a graffiti alley perspective,
I know that.

Down the DVBA has tried to do the murals and then I saw the price of those and I was like OK, that's that's expensive. I think you just talked to the owners and be like look your back walls are we're going to open it up to artists. They're just going to do what they're going to do and we have some guidelines, but they're going to go and just do the thing. I think we need to encourage that and create a zone where artists can feel like they can go to town and do the graffiti and then they will police themselves. Artists know not to tag. Other artists work.

And if they do there's repercussions and they deal with it. So I I think we need to let people create and do and and I think what we do here is we don't allow that. We tell people what either you know you can't do that or we don't want to do that you know or it's it's unattainable. No we can't it's not achievable can't happen. We have a lot of can't do attitude where the people actually want to do stuff and you're we as a city get in the way of it. So how do we enable them to reach their full potential? How do we shine a light on great individuals?

Some of the greatest digital artists actually are from Vancouver, guarantee you, people don't know that. They have to go to LA, they got to go to New York, they got to go to Toronto to get the stuff put on display. Some of the greatest, some great musicians, their billboards are going up in Times Square. You know, Toronto's whatever square, the young Dundas Square, like, they're paying to get the stuff put on there. Why aren't we retaining some of that? Cash here, like they would pay to put some stuff here or we would just advocate for them and have the, the advertisers pay for stuff and and do exchange. So I mean I'm, I just feel like we have great people, we have great producers of placemaking. The one
thing that we don't do well as a city that we need to change from a placemaking standpoint is, is different groups need to come together and work together and not compete against each other. Right. Because what happens when they compete against each other? It waters down the product to a point where you're like, yeah, it's good, but like could have been better. Now if you get them all together and find some sort of coalition and maybe this is something that the night economy person can add on to it and a cultural element to it. How do we create and work with all sorts of these groups and and maybe some of these groups have people that are running it that are no longer fit to run it. They're burnt out. They ain't or whatever. They're just not. Whatever it is, it's the same thing. Sometimes these groups need renewal to get fresh blood, fresh ideas, and it's the same as City Hall. I think we need a renewal. I think we need to get rid of a bunch of people. That's what I would do if I was kinsim.

Well, thank you all. I'm getting some comments here. Excellent talk. And we've got somebody that says we need to own and be proud of our city center and it's all there. I'm going to hand it off to Rachel. Thank you guys so much. That was a very insightful chat we had, Rachel.

Yes, thank you so much. I say again, I only wish that we had more time. I think that there's so much to discuss here, so. Hopefully in the near future we can plan something that expands on some of these ideas. Specifically. Thank you Lorraine.

Thank you Royce Carm Kerry for for being here and for providing such honest and innovative ideas and insight. I'd like to thank the ULIBC annual sponsors for making these events possible. For everyone who came, this is a very popular event. Thank you for taking the time in your day to come.

And join us and yes just have a wonderful day.
Hopefully some of this actually comes to reality and we see some some great change and and Granville St. becomes the place we all see it being. Thanks everyone.

Thanks everybody. Bye.