



## **Committee of the Whole Report**

### **For the Meeting of September 14, 2023**

---

**To:** Committee of the Whole **Date:** September 1, 2023  
**From:** Karen Hoesle, Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development  
William Doyle, P.Eng., Acting Director, Engineering and Public Works  
**Subject:** Ship Point Master Plan Update

---

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council Direct staff to:

- Report back with a revised design concept for seawall and site remediation and landscape improvements prior to proceeding with detailed design and costing, and
- Explore other potential funding opportunities.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Ship Point Master Plan represents a bold, comprehensive, and well supported long-term vision for Ship Point as a distinctive people place and signature cultural destination in the heart of Downtown and the Inner Harbour. At the same time, the costs and cost uncertainties associated the long-term vision for the site, including structural stabilization of the seawall and inland portions required over the short to medium term, are significant. Given these risks, there is a need to review the Master Plan to prioritize structural stabilization to maintain this important City asset and enhance and activate the site for public use well into the future. Design review and refinement is also an opportunity to integrate new information related to sea level rise and modern shoreline approaches, while finding cost efficiencies for seawall restoration and the overall site design approach. This report provides relevant background on the site and the master planning process and seeks direction to implement strategic components of the Master Plan that advance required geotechnical work along with initial public realm improvements.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council direction to update initial phases of the Master Plan to achieve public realm design improvements and activate an important public space, while also addressing needed geotechnical improvements to maintain and improve this strategic City asset.

### **BACKGROUND**

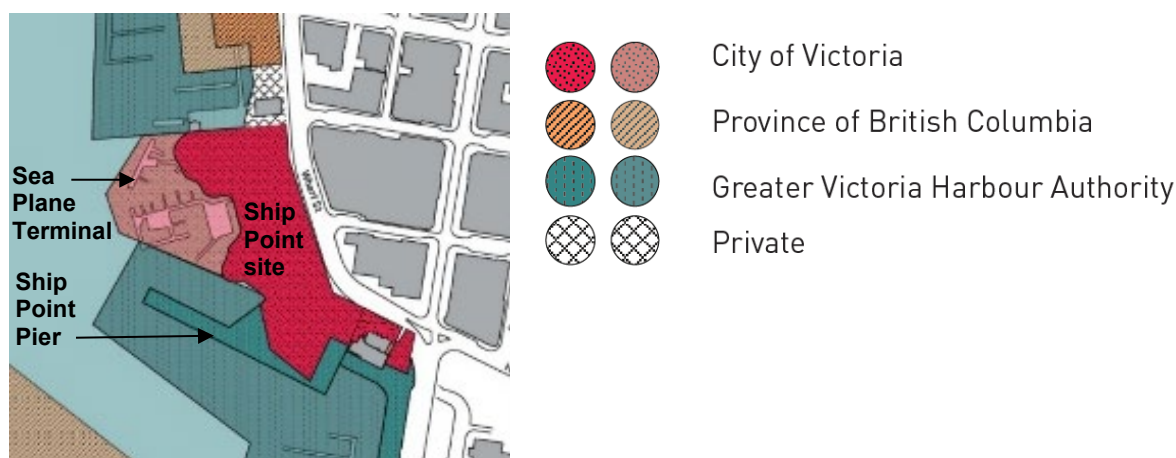
#### **Site History and Conditions**

Ship Point is located within the traditional territory of the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, and was used traditionally as a place for gathering, water access and harvesting, and more recently as a venue for viewing canoe racing.

Over the past century, Ship Point has been shaped by its colonial history as part of a working harbour with heavy industry, fishing fleets, transportation, cargo and other marine development industries. The site embodied these uses with a focus on the movement and storage of materials and goods and the production and storage of cement, which was its principle uses up to the mid-1970s. More recently, the site has been used as a surface parking lot, for music, arts and recreational events and festivals, and provides access to commercial activities including the seaplane terminal, 812 Wharf Street businesses, and the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority (GVHA) marina and lower causeway.

For industrial activities, the site was expanded seaward past the natural shoreline using poor quality fill materials which contain various levels of contamination depending on site location. The expanded site created by the fill materials is retained by a sea wall constructed in the early 1970s and understood to be constructed on a combination of seabed floor and wood piles. Geotechnical studies of the site have found that the seawall is slowly settling, likely due to the deterioration of the wood piles, resulting in gradual loss of fill materials in inland portions of the site due to wave action.

The City acquired the Ship Point property and ownership of a portion of the pier structure as part of a land swap with the provincial government in March 2014. The parcel was previously owned by the Provincial Capital Commission, which at that time, had recently been dissolved by the province. The Ship Point pier structure, located at the south end of the site, has been in service for nearly 75 years since original construction in 1949. The pier structure is partly owned by the City and the GVHA. The City owns approximately one-third of the pier based on current parcel boundaries. The pier platform is approximately 15,000 square metres of timber decking and asphalt surfacing which are supported over marine water by over 500 piles.



**Figure 1: Site Ownership**

## The Ship Point Master Plan

In March 2017, Council directed staff to undertake a master planning process to develop a detailed site plan and implementation strategy based on established policies and technical studies completed to that date ([See Attachment A: COTW Report Project Initiation](#)). The Master Plan process included collaboration with a project stakeholder team and with opportunities for public engagement occurring at key stages throughout the process. City staff worked closely with an integrated consultant team led by the landscape architecture and urban design firm PWL Partnership and other consultants with expertise in architecture, structural and environmental engineering, transportation planning and ecology. An important rational underpinning the Master Plan process was to combine and coordinate public space improvements, including implementing a signature component of the Harbour Pathway and enhancing arts and cultural programming

opportunities, with structural works including required seawall restoration and improvements to the adjacent pathway and inland portions requiring stabilization.

In September of 2017, Council approved the Ship Point Design Concept ([See Attachment B: COTW Report Concept Design](#)) as the basis for proceeding with development of the Master Plan and including schematic design, phasing implementation and funding strategy and cost estimates.

Following approval of the Design Concept, City staff worked closely with the stakeholder and consulting team, and conducted further public engagement, to develop the Draft Master Plan. It includes both the long-term vision for Ship Point captured in the schematic design, together with an implementation and phasing strategy that focuses on shoreline restoration and associated harbour pathway and near shore improvements as priorities for initial phases to protect and maintain this strategic City asset.

## Site Design and Program Overview

The Draft Master Plan is premised on enhancing Ship Point as a distinctive people place and signature waterfront destination within the Inner Harbour ([See Attachment C: Draft Ship Point Master Plan](#)). The site design features a key portion of the harbour pathway that prioritizes universal pedestrian access. The proposed design works with the dramatic grade changes across the site to create a harbour amphitheatre of terraced landscape that facilitates public gathering, universal access, views of the Inner Harbour and opportunities for a wide range of arts and cultural programming.



**Figure 2: Ship Point Schematic Design**

An integrated approach to structural restoration, site sustainability and resilience are expressed in the physical design and character of the site in the form of a terraced foreshore incorporating seating areas, ecological functions, and a marine habitat zone. It envisions a mix of civic, cultural, social, and commercial uses and activities, and provides a place for community gathering and celebration year-round.

The proposed design of the lower promenade and plazas are premised on maximizing flexibility and adaptability to accommodate a wide range of existing and future events and festivals. During non-event times, opportunities for smaller or informal events/activities are accommodated through several small-scale performance spaces provided throughout the site. Together, the range of daily

and special event programming would enrich the cultural vibrancy of the Inner Harbour while maintaining essential access to the working edges of the site.

The Draft Master Plan envisions implementation of temporary interventions in key locations for interim activation of the site, including placemaking and furnishings in support of public use and programming. Temporary interventions can include use of shipping containers, food trucks, temporary canopy structures and other moveable installations to bring a variety of food, art, micro-retail and other active uses to the site, incubating future commercial and cultural uses ([See figure 4, pp. 6, below](#)). A more robust pop-up-park could also be considered over the short to medium term, in advance of, and remaining in place after, seawall restoration and surface improvements.

## **ISSUES AND ANALYSIS**

### **Geotechnical**

A geotechnical study undertaken in 2016-2017 by WSP Engineering found that there are active environmental, marine and geological processes that continue to act on the stability of the sea wall and impact the overall durability of the entire site. Ongoing tidal activity, sea level rise and storm surge will continue to exacerbate the current condition. The study also found that a combination of repair, replacement and structural stabilization of the sea wall and portions of the site would be required. This same study included a number of repair, stabilization and replacement options which informed the structural approach and schematic design proposed as part of the draft Master Plan.

### **Pier Structure**

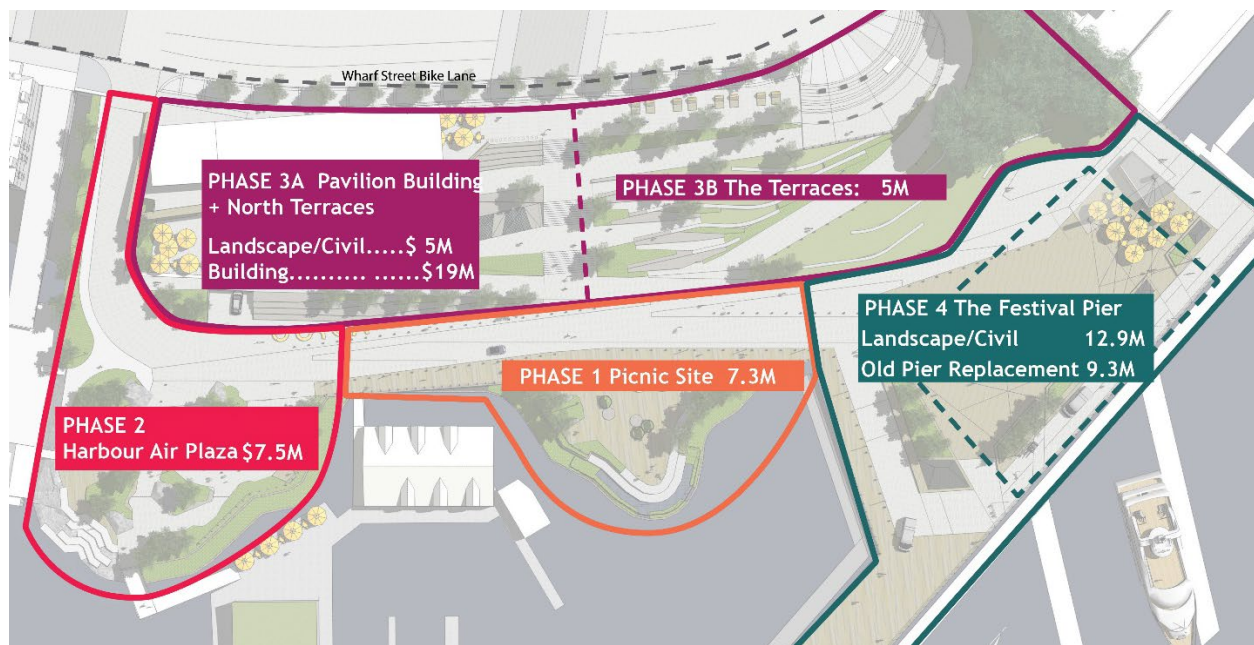
A detailed condition assessment of the existing Ship Point pier, along with high-level lifecycle cost estimates for major repair and replacement options, was completed in early 2018. This study found that the original 1949 pier structure (jointly owned by the GVHA and the City) was in poor condition, while the 1979 pier extension (owned by the GVHA) was in relatively better shape. In 2019, emergency repairs were completed to the original pier structure, involving replacement of several wooden piles with steel piles and replacement of the deck surface. It was anticipated that complete replacement of the original pier structure would be required in the future and would be incorporated into the phasing and implementation strategy for the Master Plan.

### **Concept Design, Implementation, and Phasing**

A conceptual phasing strategy was prepared as part of the Master Plan based on several considerations, including: the timing and sequencing of required ground improvements, seawall restoration and repair/replacement of the pier structure; a desire to maintain operations of and access to current site uses and functions; and achievement of priority public realm improvements on the site (e.g., David Foster Harbour Pathway).

The phasing strategy included required restoration of the sea wall and related ground improvements to adjacent upland areas, as well as associated surface improvements in the western portion of the site in Phases 1 and 2. The potential for a pavilion building and associated public spaces (Phase 3A) and the sloped and terraced lawn areas (Phase 3B) on the eastern portion of the site were envisioned to occur in future phases. Construction of the festival pier and associated plaza area is envisioned to occur as the last phase of redevelopment (Phase 4). This work was envisioned to coincide with replacement of the old pier as recommended in the Ship Point Pier Condition Assessment and Feasibility Study (Stantec 2018). The following diagram illustrates conceptual phasing and costing by phase and component based on 2018 numbers.





**Figure 3: Ship Point Conceptual Phasing and Costing\* Diagram**

\*These cost estimate numbers are based on 2018 figures and will need to be updated as part of future work.

## Cost Estimate

A class 'C' cost estimate was undertaken by Advicas Professional Cost Consultants in 2018 to provide an understanding of the scale of work for future planning and project prioritization and is based on the work being carried out in sequential phases. It includes civil/structural and landscape components, the pavilion building and pier, and includes design/management fees, escalation costs and 35-45% overall contingencies.

The projected cost estimates, shown in Table 1, are based on 2018 numbers and will need to be updated based on future construction timeline as well as in response to any changes in design, phasing and regulatory codes.

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3A	Phase 3B	Phase 4	All Phases	% Of Total
Civil/Engineering Work	\$6.5 M	\$6 M	\$1 M	\$1.3 M	\$7. M	\$ 21.8 M	33%
Landscaping	\$1 M	\$1.3 M	\$4 M	\$3.7 M	\$5.5 M	\$ 15.5 M	24%
Potential New Building	-	-	\$18.9 M	-	-	\$18.9 M	29%
Pier Replacement COV	-	-	-	-	9.3 M	\$9.3 M	14%
<b>PROJECT COST</b>	<b>\$7.5 M</b>	<b>\$7.3 M</b>	<b>\$23.9 M</b>	<b>\$5 M</b>	<b>\$22.2 M</b>	<b>\$65.5* M</b>	

*Table 1: Sequential Phase Cost\* by Discipline (Rounded)*

\*These cost estimate numbers are based on 2018 figures and will need to be updated as part of future work.

The Master Plan work concluded in 2018, however, due to other strategic priorities, further consideration of the overall draft plan was postponed. Subsequently, in 2021, Council requested that staff review the draft Master Plan in 2022 and report back on opportunities for a reduced scope, provide funding options, and to undertake some targeted engagement. As part of the 2022 Financial Plan, Council approved resources to explore alternate seawall restoration and subsurface ground/harbour pathway improvements options and trade-offs.

## OPTIONS AND IMPACTS

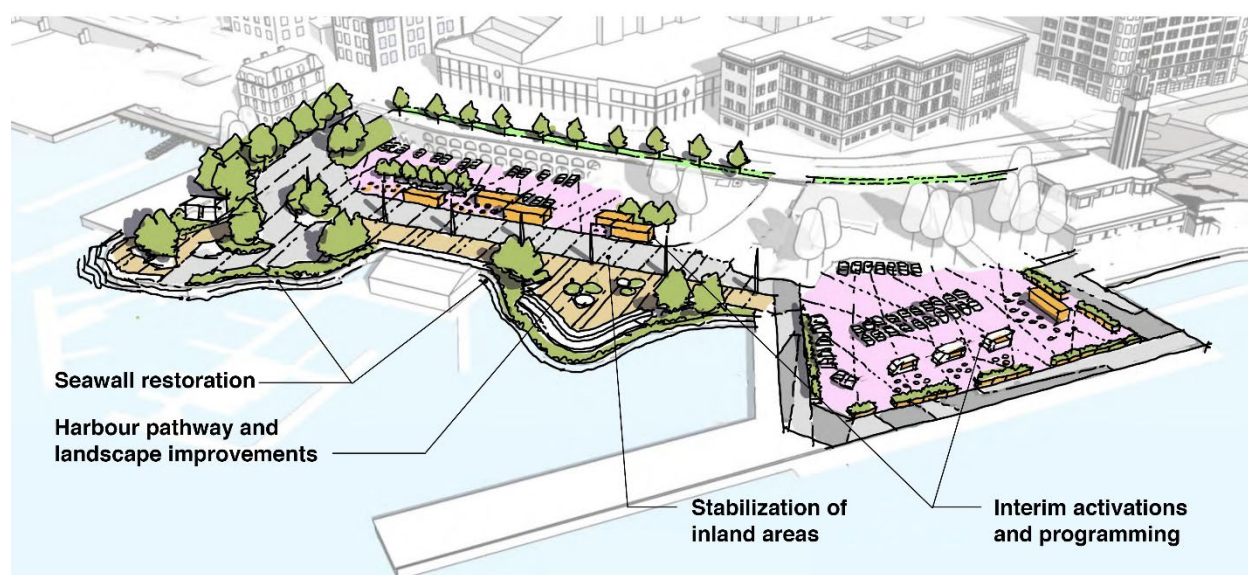
The Master Plan represents a bold, comprehensive and well supported long-term vision for Ship Point as a distinctive people place and signature waterfront and cultural destination in the heart of Downtown and the Inner Harbour. At the same time, the costs and cost uncertainties associated with the long-term vision are significant, and new information has emerged that should be considered as part of design refinement. Given this, there is an opportunity to review the draft Master Plan to prioritize structural stabilization of the seawall and inland portions of the site to maintain this important City asset and enhance and activate the site for public, cultural and commercial uses well into the future. Design review and refinement is also an opportunity to integrate new information related to sea level rise and shoreline approaches and the new seismic code, while finding cost efficiencies for seawall restoration and the overall site design approach.

### **Option 1 – Update Options for Structural Remediation and Surface Improvements – Recommended**

Given the significant cost and cost uncertainties, and the need to minimize disruptions to site activities and operations, the implementation of improvements will need to occur in a phased manner that integrates structural restoration and surface improvements at each phase. While a conceptual phasing plan was developed for the entire site as part of the Master Plan, it is recommended that prioritization is given to the structural restoration and remediation of key infrastructure elements which are necessary to stabilize and maintain the site over the short to medium term.

Initial phases will focus on stabilization of the seawall and upland portions of the site, including surface and landscape improvements to adjacent areas including the Harbour Pathway, as envisioned by the Master Plan.

Certain aspects of the Master Plan, specifically the potential for a pavilion building and the landscaped terraces will be deferred and subject to future consideration based on funding availability and community/Council priorities as they change over time.



*Figure 4: Conceptual sketch showing recommended initial phases of site redevelopment.*

Staff will update engineering design options to include new information from recent capital work at Ship Point, and new information that has emerged after the Master Plan concepts were developed, specifically:

- New flood construction information from the CRD Coastal Flood Inundation Mapping Project.
- Recent infrastructure projects completed along the Inner Harbour involving shoreline stabilization and adjacent harbour pathway development, specifically associated with the Pearl redevelopment, and the Canoe Club/Mermaid Wharf project.
- Opportunities for enhancing nature-based approaches to create a more resilient and adaptable shoreline, while at the same time reducing capital and maintenance costs, and with potential eligibility for new federal grant funding opportunities.
- Opportunities for interim, temporary designs and uses to support activation and use of the site in advance of, and during, phased implementation of site improvements.

This option is consistent with previous direction provided by Council, where as part of the 2022 Financial Plan, Council approved resources to explore alternate seawall restoration and subsurface ground/harbour pathway improvements, options and trade-offs. The commencement of this work, which had been postponed due to prolonged staff vacancies, is now anticipated to take place in early 2024.

## **Option 2 – Alternate Direction**

Council to provide alternate direction.

### ***Accessibility Impact Statement***

The plan prioritizes universal accessibility and barrier free design through incorporation and use of pathways, seating areas and other site features designed to facilitate the movement and comfort of people with a full spectrum of disabilities to ensure the site is as inclusive as possible. Design refinement will continue to incorporate universal accessibility and barrier free design strategies and include collaboration with the Accessibility Working Group.

## **2023 - 2026 Strategic Plan**

### ***Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces***

*Begin major capital projects that support parks, recreation and public experiences (e.g., a re-imagined Ship Point).*

### ***Impacts to Financial Plan***

Funding to undertake an update of options for structural remediation and surface improvements consistent with the Master Plan has been allocated in the draft 2024 Financial Plan. Future works will be identified and scoped for inclusion in future financial planning processes for consideration by Council.

### ***Official Community Plan Consistency Statement***

The Master Plan aligns closely with the goals of the *Official Community Plan* by contributing to downtown vibrancy, walkability, arts and culture, community health and well-being, environmental sustainability, and resiliency.

## CONCLUSIONS

The redevelopment of Ship Point is an opportunity to undertake necessary work to stabilise the seawall and inland portions of the site and maintain this important City asset while enhancing the site as a signature waterfront and cultural destination in the heart of the downtown. The project is significant and will need to occur over several phases, with each phase requiring additional planning that balances required geotechnical work and public realm improvements with the need for prudent financial management. Since the pause of the Master Plan there has been new information available that will be important to consider for climate adaptation measures and cost saving opportunities. Review of the initial phases of the Ship Point Master Plan will allow the project to restart with an initial focus on structural remediation and site improvement, together with interim, temporary improvements to activate and enhance the site over the short term.

Respectfully submitted,

Joaquin Karakas  
Senior Urban Designer

Jas Paul, Assistant Director  
Engineering and Public Works

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager.

### List of Attachments

- Attachment A: COTW Report – Project Initiation
- Attachment B: COTW Report – Concept Design
- Attachment C: Draft Ship Point Master Plan