



## Governance and Priorities Committee Report

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**Date:** July 15, 2012      **From:** Katie Josephson, Director of Communications  
**Subject:** Public Realm Elements of Johnson Street Bridge Project

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### Executive Summary

Over recent months, the City has consulted the public to seek input on the public realm elements of the Johnson Street Bridge Replacement Project. 130 people attended the first session in June. Over 80 people attended the second session in July designed to close the loop with the community in terms of what we heard and demonstrate how it influenced the project design.

124 surveys were received with 76% of the respondents indicating they were from Victoria. In addition, written submissions from both the Downtown Residents and Victoria West Community Associations were received. The input from all respondents was very constructive and a number of themes emerged which resulted in several refinements to the initial plan.

#### Common themes:

- The area is very much seen as a transportation hub, with a desire for enhancing walkability and cycling connections and improving overall accessibility.
- A strong desire for animation of the public realm. Supporting opportunities for social gathering through community events, festivals, and entertainment in the plazas areas and new green space area.
- Creating opportunities to sit and view the harbour.
- Improving overall safety and introducing elements to encourage traffic calming.
- The approaches are considered gateways to neighbourhoods.

A strong majority were satisfied with the level of information and input opportunities and the majority who responded would like to continue to be involved in the future.

This input and the City's guiding policy documents have guided further development of concept drawings prepared by the landscape architects and once final will be form the basis of an addendum for the request for proposals regarding the main construction contract.

Attached are the proposed public realm concepts for the area within the scope of the Johnson Street Bridge Replacement Project. A binder of all of the survey comments received is available for Council's review.

### Recommendation:

- 1) That Council receive this report for information.

Respectfully submitted

  
Katie Josephson  
Director of Communications

  
Dwayne Kalynchuk  
Project Director

  
Peter Sparanese  
Project Principal

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

  
Gail Stephens

For

## **Purpose**

To update Council on the public input received on public realm elements of the Johnson Street Bridge Replacement project and the refinements incorporated as a result of public consultation.

## **Background**

In preparation for issuing the Request for Proposals for construction of the Johnson Street Bridge, public input was sought to finalize the public realm elements of the project.

Two sessions were held in June and July, and a survey (online and written) was used to solicit public input on these elements.

Building on earlier discussions and guiding policies in place, the following engagement objectives were developed and guided the process:

**Openness:** Be open, clear, and proactive in communicating expectations and impacts of engagement activities and project realities, such as the budget and resource implications of activities.

**Tell the whole story:** Present all factors holistically. Provide improved maps that:

- show a clear illustration of pedestrian and cyclist connectivity;
- include peripheral areas and road connections;
- identify private and public lands, including proposed developments and hotel access;
- better illustrate future connections to the Harbour Pathway, and
- document fixed elements and identify areas for input.

**Informed discussion:** Provide timely information to help inform discussions. Supply material prior to the workshop to allow citizens an opportunity to review prior to participating. We are aiming to have format and materials available a week prior to the event.

**Inclusive:** Develop an understanding of the range of views in the community, and use a diversity of approaches to connect to various segments of the community. Provide opportunities for group discussions that involve various stakeholders.

**Mixed methods of engagement:** use both broad and deep engagement tools to ensure a diversity of input. Design the workshop to provide both drop-in and more "hands on" opportunities for those who want to engage at a deeper level.

**Innovation:** Use creative engagement approaches to help engage a broad range of stakeholders and community members representing residents, businesses, cyclists, pedestrians, frequent bridge users, and anyone affected by the bridge project.

**Set priorities / Identify trade-offs:** Recognizing resource and budget limitations, provide an opportunity for the community to set priorities and identify trade-offs.

**Clarity:** Use plain language to be clear in communication.

**Close the loop:** Keep participants informed of outcomes from the workshop and outline next steps in the process



## Issues & Analysis

A number of themes emerged during consultation.

### Issues:

#### Common themes:

- The area is very much seen as a transportation hub, with a desire for enhancing walkability and cycling connections and improving overall accessibility.
- A strong desire for animation of the public realm. Supporting opportunities for social gathering through community events, festivals, and entertainment in the plazas areas and new green space area.
- Creating opportunities to sit and view the harbour.
- Improving overall safety and introducing elements to encourage traffic calming.
- The approaches are considered gateways to neighbourhoods.

#### Setting priorities:

When asked where to prioritize the public realm budget of \$1.3 million, the top priorities were:

- Investing in landscaping.
- Plaza amenities.
- Pathway lighting / pedestrian and cyclists' safety.
- In terms of prioritizing investment in plazas, the two south plazas were ranked as most important.
- The south west plaza is seen to be an opportunity for social gathering and harbour viewing.
- The south east plaza is seen to be an opportunity for harbour viewing and trail connections.
- The northeast plaza is seen to be a trail connection and social gathering point.

#### Additional feedback areas:

- There was no strong desire for gateway signage on either side, however, both approaches were seen to be gateways to the respective neighbourhoods and there was a desire to be treated as such with other elements such as landscaping and banner or lighting treatments.
- It was felt that a combination of way-finding and interpretive signage was needed in the area.
- 64% agreed with the proposed transit stops. 17% didn't.
- Several comments were focused on the importance of preserving the rail corridor, public art and the consolidated green space. This information will inform the respective consultation processes and planning on these matters.
- There were comments about the potential treatment of the walls and pedestrian overpass.
- A strong majority were satisfied with the level of information and input opportunities and the majority who responded would like to continue be involved in the future.

## Analysis

### Proposed enhancements as a result of community input:

#### Connectivity

- Separated sidewalks on west approach where space allows.
- Way-finding signage to direct pedestrians/cyclists.
- Intersection with crosswalk markings at all four crossings at Esquimalt and Harbour Road intersection.
- Sidewalk added on south side of Esquimalt Road to improve pedestrian connectivity. The earlier proposed pathway on the south side was removed as it may have a potential conflict with protected rail corridor.

- Enhanced crossing for pedestrians and cyclists (elephant's feet bicycle crossing) at north east trailhead. An elephant feet bicycle crossing is a new standard introduced by Transportation Association of Canada that provided dedicated, marked crossings for cyclists. This is the first crossing of this kind in Victoria, and likely one of the first in the province.
- Cyclist left turning lane (north on Wharf to access multi-use trail).
- Recognize north west trail junction potential as a meeting point and opportunity for wayfinding signage.
- Ensure connections to David Foster Way (harbour pathway).

#### Traffic Calming

- Raised medians for traffic calming effects on west and east sides.
- Landscaped median west of harbour and a treed median on east approach into downtown.
- Delta Ocean Pointe Resort and future public space access road reduced to two narrow lanes.
- Minimize left turn lane length at the intersection of Esquimalt and Harbour Roads.
- Consideration of banner installation on Westside median to serve as traffic calming and gateway feature for Victoria West.

#### Plaza Areas

- Plaza space on south west designed for harbour viewing, including seating, lighting and utilities for potential future programming.
- Plaza space on north east designed for trail connection with bike racks and drinking fountain.
- Staff will look at opportunities for programming, street entertainers etc over next few years.

#### Landscaping

- Landscaping will be a mix of ornamental and native plantings and trees, with bedrock where appropriate.

#### Treatment of Retaining Walls

- Staff are exploring opportunities for treatments on the retaining walls of the pedestrian overpass on the west side to prevent graffiti and incorporate creative elements, while remaining within project budget.

#### **Options & Impacts**

The proposed concepts are within the allocated budget of \$1.3 million for the public realm. The options for the treatment of the walls in the area will need to be finalized and considered with the budget in mind.

The public realm elements must be finalized by the close of the request for proposals on August 17, 2012 for construction of the Johnson Street Bridge.

#### **Recommendations**

- 1) That Council receive this report for information.

#### **Attachments**

- 1) June 9, 2012 Public Spaces Map
- 2) July 7, 2012 Public Spaces Map - Summary of Enhancements
- 3) July 20, 2012 Landscape Rendering



# Public Spaces

- |   |                                     |   |                                     |   |   |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|
|  | Public plaza space                  |   | Protected rail corridor             |  | Future David Foster Way (Harbour Pathway) |
|  | Surfacing area                      |  | Proposed transit locations          |  | Pathways                                  |
|  | Green space                         |  | Retaining walls                     |   |   |
|  | Future park/public space/greenspace |  | Galloping Goose/E&N Rail Trail Head |   |   |



# Public Spaces

- 6 Plaza space designed for harbour viewing
- 7 Ensure connections to David Foster Way (Harbour Pathway)
- 8 Enhanced crossings for pedestrians and cyclists (Elephant's Feet Bicycle Crossing)
- 9 Cyclist left turning lane to access multi-use trail



