



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of September 14, 2017

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** August 30, 2017
From: Jonathan Tinney, Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development
Subject: **Draft Ship Point Master Plan Design Concept**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council direct staff to:

1. Proceed with the proposed Ship Point Design Concept with the following refinements:
 - a. Replace the urban beach at the north end of the site with a plaza space that complements the adjacent Harbour Air Sea Plane Terminal and explores a combination of soft and hard landscaped elements which may include other amenities such as seating, a playful water feature and a commercial kiosk space.
 - b. Incorporate design elements and features to better activate the southern portion of the site year round and create a more inviting gateway and connection for people entering the site from the Lower Causeway.
2. Proceed with the detailed design and development of the draft Ship Point master plan including Class 'C' costing and an implementation strategy.
3. Report back to Council with the draft Ship Point master plan, the related implementation strategy and a summary of public and stakeholder input by January 2018.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the Ship Point master plan process, present the draft Ship Point design concept (Attachment 1) and to seek direction to proceed with more detailed design, costing and phasing as part of the development of the overall master plan.

The Ship Point master plan process was initiated earlier this year, starting in March 2017. From March to July 2017, the City and the project stakeholders worked with a consultant team led by a landscape architecture and urban design firm, PWL Partnership, to undertake a comprehensive analysis and assessment of Ship Point and resulting in a draft design concept that provides an illustrated overview of the desired outcomes for Ship Point. It is intended that the draft design concept will form the basis for developing the overall detailed master plan including Class 'C' costing and an implementation strategy as part of Phase 3.

The proposed design enhances the existing functions of Ship Point as a celebrated gathering space, connection hub and working harbour by creating a seamless civic connection between downtown and the harbour front, and an accessible shoreline as an extension of the Harbour Pathway, incorporating flexible open spaces featuring a major festival plaza and terraced amphitheatre, and by celebrating working maritime industries of the Inner Harbour to help define the character of the site.

The draft design concept was largely informed by an earlier analysis stage that included City staff and the consultant team working closely with a range of stakeholders to identify and confirm the programming and operational requirements for Ship Point, address geotechnical issues and constraints, and explore a range of site design, programming and placemaking opportunities. Most recently two public open house events were held at Ship Point along with an online survey available on the project website to present and receive feedback on the draft design. Input and feedback received was used to identify refinements to the concept and confirm the direction moving forward.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the Ship Point master plan process, present the draft Ship Point design concept (Attachment 1), and to seek direction to proceed with the development of the overall master plan including schematic design, Class 'C' costing and an implementation strategy.

BACKGROUND

As part of the Ship Point master plan project which began earlier this year, City staff worked with the project consultant (PWL Partnership) to develop three preliminary design concepts for the Ship Point site. These concepts were largely based on the *Harbour Vitality Principles* (2014) and were used for several rounds of extensive engagement and technical discussions with key user groups and stakeholders. The feedback received was then used to develop a single draft design concept for Ship Point.

The project is being undertaken in three phases between March 2017 and January 2018 with several steps now completed as part of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the overall master plan process (an overview of the process and key milestones is included as Attachment 4 to this report).

The draft design concept was then presented to the public for feedback through two open houses and an online survey. Feedback received was then considered by staff and the consulting team, resulting in a number of proposed revisions to the design concept which are outlined in this report.

The draft design concept was developed through close consideration of the key findings that were identified in the *Ship Point Master Plan Assessment Phase Summary* (Attachment 2) which includes a summary of key background information including city policies, a detailed analyses of the Ship Point site and larger Inner Harbour and city context as well as a summary of the existing geotechnical conditions for Ship Point which will all need to be carefully considered through the development of the Ship Point master plan.

Phase 2 will be followed by the detailed design and development of the master plan including Class 'C' costing and an implementation strategy as part of Phase 3. The complete detailed master plan will be presented to Council for consideration in the beginning of 2018. This project will be carried out using the City's new Project Management Framework instituted in 2017.

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

1. Draft Ship Point Design Concept

The draft Ship Point design concept reflects the vision and objectives for Ship Point as identified in the *Harbour Vitality Principles* (2014) as well as a range of technical, programming and operating considerations that were identified by key stakeholders and user groups. In general, the draft design concept reflects an approach for transforming Ship Point into a more welcoming

and attractive public space that provides year-round vitality and which continues to strengthen and support the working harbour.

In order to accommodate what could be opposing elements, the concept design provides a shared and flexible public space that is enriched by overlapping uses and a thoughtful balance of soft and hard components. Recognizing Ship Point as a vital connection hub, the draft design concept is premised on creating a more accessible and vibrant 'people place' that creates a seamless civic connection between downtown and the Harbourfront as well as for an accessible shoreline as an extension of the Harbour Pathway. Working maritime industries of the Inner Harbour are celebrated and help to define the site's character while selected areas of softened shoreline are reminders of the site's natural history and a rare opportunity to access the water.



Figure 1: Ship Point Draft Design Concept

2. Key Design Features and Approaches

The key design features are illustrated and annotated in the draft Ship Point design concept and are further explained below:

Remediated shoreline and geotechnical approaches

Based on recent analysis of the sea wall structural integrity and geotechnical conditions of the shoreline, it has been identified that Ship Point will require a combination of repair, replacement and structural stabilization of the sea wall and portions of the site. The City's proposed risk-management approach includes the repair and stabilization of the vertical sea wall at the north end of the site adjacent to the floating Harbour Air Terminal building and Flying Otter Grill while the middle of the site includes a reconstructed wall including a naturalized and sloped shoreline. The balance of the site to the south is largely comprised of the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority (GVHA) wharf structure which has also been identified as requiring structural repairs. More detailed information on the repair of the wharf is currently not available; however, the City of Victoria and the GVHA are currently working together to quantify the conditions of the wharf and adjacent sea wall in order to develop options for any required repair, management or replacement.

Initial geotechnical assessments of the site has identified five potential options/approaches for addressing the structural restoration of the overall site. These options include combinations of erosion control, sea wall repair, replacement of the sea wall with rip rap, installation of a seismic dike to mitigate seismic impacts such as liquefaction and removal and replacement of subsurface materials. The various options are described in the *Ship Point Master Plan Assessment Phase Summary* (Attachment 2).

Harbour Air Sea Plane Terminal

The draft design concept has been developed to enhance and complement the new Harbour Air Sea Plane Terminal and surrounding area as a major gateway and activity node. Key improvements include a landscaped passenger pick up/drop off area in front of the terminal as well as a small plaza space on the north side of the terminal with complementary finishes and materials, public seating (tables/chairs), umbrellas, wind break and soft landscaping. This small space provides an attractive and welcoming public amenity along the Harbour Pathway and maintains direct access to the Harbour Air Terminal.

Access, Circulation and Shared Open Spaces

The length of the Ship Point site between the Harbour Air Terminal and the GVHA wharf has been designed to accommodate pedestrian and vehicle movement through a 'shared street' concept that includes a waterfront pedestrian pathway (Harbour Pathway) defined through distinct surface treatment, pedestrian-scaled lighting and separation from vehicles by removable bollards. Although primarily designed as a pedestrian-oriented environment, shared use and access by private and commercial vehicles and integration of parking and commercial loading has also been included. Vehicle circulation is in the form of a one-way loop with an access point at the north and egress to the south. The design allows for the use of the northern entrance for two-way traffic and egress during event times when the rest of the site may be closed to vehicles.

Ship Point Plaza

A complete redesign and reconstruction is proposed for the small plaza space located on the south side of the Flying Otter Grill. Reconstruction measures would likely include a slight retreat of the existing shoreline as a means to better stabilize the sub-surface conditions and to accommodate a terraced and naturalized shoreline. The design includes an attractive lookout space that could also be used to accommodate a small performance stage and a small floating plaza structure that could provide a unique and attractive opportunity to improve connectivity to the water.

Wharf Structure/Festival Site

The majority of the wharf structure that projects into the water is constructed on wooden pilings while the wider portion is situated on pilings as well as on land. The original portion of the existing wharf was constructed in 1949 and the narrower extension was added in 1979. Given the age of the wharf, the existing wooden pilings and underlying structure are deteriorating and are in need of repair.

The design concept identifies the retention of the wharf structure including an attractive boardwalk surface material, landscaping elements on the south edge of the wharf, pedestrian-scale lighting, a raised viewing platform/outlook at the end of the wharf and a better defined pedestrian pathway. Surface parking on the wider portion of the wharf would be retained, however, in a reconfigured approach that locates the parking stalls closer to the edges of the site through parallel or angled parking in order to retain a more open festival and plaza space. In this way, this portion of the

site is designed as a pedestrian-oriented festival and events plaza that can also accommodate parking during non-event times. Additional features may also include public seating, public art, a water feature and other play features that will serve to draw pedestrians from the lower causeway and provide a complementary amenity for the existing commercial vendor.



Figure 2: Signature festival site with terraced lawn area and open amphitheatre concept

Sloped and Terraced Greenspace

The existing greenspace at the south end of the Ship Point site is proposed to be reconfigured into a more useable and inviting greenspace incorporating terraced seating and in an outdoor amphitheatre form to support concerts, festivals and events. The reconfiguration of the area includes a realignment of the existing vehicle driveway into a more gradual angle/slope that improves egress for passenger and commercial vehicles and integrates more sensitively with the landscape. With the realignment of the driveway, the greenspace on both sides of the access roadway will have a gentle slope with low-rise concrete terraced edges that provide a seating surface.

The greenspace on the north side of the driveway has also been integrated with a gently sloped pedestrian access ramp that provides connectivity from Wharf Street down to the Ship Point site. The pedestrian ramp is designed to have a grade of less than 5% which will better support accessibility use by individuals with mobility devices such as wheelchairs or walkers.

Grand Staircase

The centrally located grand staircase provides a direct connection from Wharf Street (across from Courtney Street) down to the site and includes an open plaza space at Wharf Street that may provide opportunities for programming such as festivals and special events.

Pavilion Building

The northeast corner of Ship Point is defined by a proposed low-rise pavilion style building that may include opportunities for active commercial tenants such as a restaurant or café, as well as flexible open space that can be used to support special events and festivals within a weather protected building. Other key features include structured underground parking with approximately

25-30 stalls, long-term bicycle parking, elevator access between the underground parking and Wharf Street and an attractive rooftop plaza space designed as an extension from the Wharf Street sidewalk.



Figure 3: Grand staircase and pavilion building with Harbour Pathway and shared street in the foreground.

Parking and Vehicle Movement

The draft design concept retains public parking and commercial vehicles on the site which is imperative for supporting the various businesses at Ship Point as well as overall business and tourism activities within the downtown area. Therefore the design concept includes:

- structured underground parking within the pavilion building
- parallel public parking along the shared street as well as within the festival area on the south end of the site
- improved access, egress and movement for commercial and maintenance vehicles including continued access to the wharf and lower causeway.

The site currently contains approximately 146 public parking stalls that are operated by the City of Victoria. While the resulting number of stalls and configuration that would be accommodated within the design concept is not currently known, the provision and configuration of public parking will be further analyzed and confirmed through the detailed master plan.

Wharf Street Cycling Lane

The current protected all ages and abilities (AAA) cycling facility comprises a two-way protected bike lane on the waterfront side of Wharf Street. This bike lane is proposed as part of the City of Victoria Bicycle Network Implementation Program and will provide a north-south connection between James Bay, downtown waterfront destinations and the regional trail networks including the E&N and Galloping Goose multi-use trails. The integration of the bike lane with the draft Ship Point design concept will help to strengthen Wharf Street as a desirable route for tourists, recreational riders and commuters along this segment of the Trans Canada Trail.



Figure 4: Wharf Street looking north towards Custom House

Tour Bus Parking

To improve the pedestrian environment along the waterfront, the draft design concept identifies the relocation of larger commercial tour buses to a dedicated pick up/drop off area on Wharf Street in front of the Homecoming Plaza. This location provides improved access to the downtown commercial area while still maintaining improved pedestrian connections to the Ship Point site including the Harbour Air Sea Plane Terminal. The detailed design of the tour bus parking will be undertaken in consultation with the Bicycle Network Implementation Program to ensure that the design aligns with the functional requirements of the proposed Wharf Street Cycling Lane.

3. Public Engagement

The development of the preferred Ship Point design concept has included ongoing collaboration with key stakeholders through workshops, individual meetings, and site visits to discuss the technical programming and operational site requirements. Key stakeholders include Harbour Air, Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, Songhees Nation, Esquimalt Nation, Urban Development Institute, Downtown Victoria Business Association, Greater Victoria Placemaking Network, Victoria Downtown Residents Association, Victoria Esquimalt Harbour Society, Tourism Victoria, Province of British Columbia, Atomique Productions, representation from various City of Victoria departments as well as other businesses operating on and around Ship Point, marine users and several special event and festival organizations.

In addition to the stakeholder meetings, the City hosted two public open houses at Ship Point on July 22nd and 24th to present the draft design concept and seek public feedback. There were over 300 people that attended the open houses as well as 147 online survey responses that were completed to provide feedback. A summary of the engagement process including a copy of the open house display boards and a compilation of public feedback responses are contained in Attachment 3.

4. Proposed Revisions to Design Concept

Based on a review of the public feedback balanced with the objectives in the Harbour Vitality Principles, staff recommend that the design concept should be refined to incorporate the following revisions as part of more detailed design and development of the master plan in Phase 3:

Revision 1: Replace the urban beach at the north end of the site with a plaza space that includes a combination of soft and hard landscaped elements. Additional design considerations for the plaza space may include:

- exploring other amenities such as seating, a playful water feature and a commercial kiosk
- considering design and materials for the plaza space that complement the design of the new Harbour Air Terminal.

Revision 2: incorporate design elements and features to better activate the southern portion of the site year round and that provide more visual interest and create a more inviting gateway and connection for people entering the site from the lower causeway. Additional design considerations may include:

- providing opportunities and related infrastructure to support mobile vendors/commercial kiosks
- considering playful/moveable furniture, dynamic public art/interactive water feature and other 'play elements'
- exploring parallel or angled parking along the edge of the site to avoid rows of parking in the middle of the site where possible
- providing seating/amenity space for the existing commercial vendor on GVHA wharf
- considering site design as a plaza space that allows for parking.

5. Phasing and Funding Considerations

A significant outcome of the detailed master plan will be the development of an implementation strategy that identifies Class 'C' costing and options for the phased implementation and potential approaches for funding, based on a schematic level of design for the site. It is anticipated that a project of this magnitude and complexity will benefit from a phased approach that allows for the gradual implementation of both temporary and permanent site enhancements. The overall phasing of the concept will need to consider engineering and technical requirements, approaches that minimize disruptions to existing businesses and activities, coordination with current and future City initiatives, and alignment with funding source requirements.

OPTIONS AND IMPACTS

Option 1:

Direct staff to proceed with the detailed design and development of the draft Ship Point master plan including an implementation strategy based on the preferred concept and the proposed refinements as described in this report. **(Recommended)**

Option 2:

Council may identify any further amendments or considerations to the Ship Point master plan design concept prior to staff preparing the draft Ship Point master plan.

Accessibility Impact Statement

The draft Ship Point design concept has been developed to include improved accessibility to and within the site for people of all ages and abilities. Some of the proposed improvements include a gently sloped pedestrian access ramp with a grade of less than 5% that provides connectivity from Wharf Street down to the Ship Point site as well as a protected pedestrian pathway along the shoreline (harbour pathway). It is anticipated that the pedestrian ramp will better support accessibility use by individuals with mobility devices such as wheelchairs or walkers. The proposed pavilion building on the north end of the site is also anticipated to include an elevator to provide direct access from Wharf Street to the lower Ship Point site.

2015 - 2018 Strategic Plan

The Ship Point master plan is identified as a priority project in the *2015 - 2018 Strategic Plan*: "Undertake and begin implementation of the Ship Point Plan".

Impacts to Financial Plan

The Ship Point detailed design budget of \$200,000 forms part of the draft 2018 Financial Plan that will be presented to Council in October for consideration.

The funding strategy will also explore a range of short and long-term funding opportunities such as, but not limited to public-private partnerships, government grants, leasing revenue from commercial tenants and private donor initiatives. City staff and the project consultant will continue to collaborate with key stakeholders in developing the implementation strategy. Funding for the total project will be incorporated into a future Financial Plan for Council's consideration in the context of the City's overall priorities.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

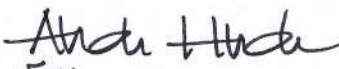
The Ship Point master plan will help contribute to downtown vibrancy, walkability, arts and culture, and community well-being and aligns closely with the goals of the *Official Community Plan*.

CONCLUSIONS

Ship Point represents a unique opportunity to re-envision Victoria's most important harbour gateway that links the City by water and air as a vibrant public destination and signature cultural space. The Ship Point master plan process is at the end of Phase 2 with the development of the draft design concept. The draft concept was developed through close collaboration with PWL Partnership Landscape Architects and key stakeholders, and presented at two public open houses with feedback collected. Phase 3 will involve more detailed schematic based on refinements to the draft design concept as directed by Council.

Phase 3 will also include development of Class 'C' costing and a detailed implementation and phasing strategy. The final master plan will be presented to Council by January 2018 for consideration and adoption.

Respectfully submitted,


For
Joaquin Karakas
Senior Urban Designer


Jonathan Tinney, Director
Sustainable Planning and Community Development

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:

Joseph J. Jenkyns
Sept 8, 2017

List of Attachments

- Attachment 1: Draft Ship Point Design Concept
- Attachment 2: Ship Point Master Plan Assessment Phase Summary
- Attachment 3: Public Engagement Summary
- Attachment 4: Process Overview.