



Governance and Priorities Committee Report For the June 12, 2014 Meeting

To: Governance and Priorities Committee **Date:** May 26, 2014
From: Dwayne Kalynchuk, P. Eng., Director of
Engineering and Public Works
Subject: Johnson Street Bridge Replacement Project Public Realm Update

Executive Summary

This report brings forward new drawings of the public realm areas for the Johnson Street Bridge Replacement Project.

In July 2012 Council was presented with results of public engagement sessions specific to the public realm areas of the new Johnson Street Bridge. The report included recommendations for additions to the public realm based on public input, including the addition of new sidewalk and pedestrian crossings, plaza amenities, traffic calming measures, and naturalized landscaping including exposed bedrock. A finalized Public Realm and Landscape Design Strategy was brought forward to Council in October 2012.

In September 2013, Council requested that staff bring forward more information related to the public realm for the bridge to help inform further discussions regarding public art.

Recommendation:

That Council receive this report for information.

Respectfully submitted,

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Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:

June 3, 2014

Purpose

This report brings forward new drawings of the public realm areas for the Johnson Street Bridge Replacement Project.

Background

In July 2012 Council was presented with results of public engagement sessions specific to the public realm areas of the new Johnson Street Bridge. The report included recommendations for additions to the public realm based on public input (Appendix A), including the addition of new sidewalk and pedestrian crossings, plaza amenities, traffic calming measures, and naturalized landscaping including exposed bedrock. A finalized Public Realm and Landscape Design Strategy (Appendix C) was brought forward to Council in October 2012.

In September 2013, Council requested that staff bring forward more information related to the public realm for the bridge to help inform further discussions regarding public art.

Overview of Public Consultation

In the summer of 2012, the City consulted the public to seek input on the public realm elements of the Johnson Street Bridge Replacement Project. 130 people attended the session in June and more than 80 people attended the second session in July.

As a result of the first session in June, 124 surveys were received in addition to written submissions from both the Downtown Residents and Victoria West Community Associations and the Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition. The input (Appendix A) was very constructive and a number of themes emerged from the feedback:

- The area is very much seen as a transportation hub, with a desire for enhancing walk ability and cycling connections and improving overall accessibility;
- Animation of the public realm – supporting opportunities for social gathering through community events, festivals, and entertainment in the plaza 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.

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 was seen to be an opportunity for social gathering and harbor viewing. The south east plaza was seen to be an opportunity for harbour viewing and trail connections. The north east plaza was seen to be a trail connection and social gathering point.

Overall, as a result of the community input, proposed refinements touched on themes such as connectivity, traffic calming, plaza areas, landscaping, and treatment of retaining walls.

Upon the City's review of this feedback, the intention of the second session in July was to close the loop with the community in terms of what was heard and demonstrate how it influenced the project design. Changes based on the input included additional sidewalks and pedestrian crossings, plaza amenities, traffic calming measures, and naturalized landscaping including exposed bedrock.

The draft public realm plans produced by Sharp and Diamond, which reflected changes from the public sessions, were presented at the Governance and Priorities Committee meeting (GPC) on July 26, 2012. The final documents produced were provided to the proponents to assist them in the preparation of their proposal. These documents were also available on the Johnson Street Bridge website and shared with the Vic West Community Association and the Downtown Residents Association.

The public realm report presented at the GPC meeting on October 4, 2012 focused on the objectives, strategy, design, and components of the public realm within the project scope. It offered insight to the design rationale behind the landscape design: the scale of spaces; the connections between these spaces; how these spaces might be used; and what combinations of materials were considered. Consideration of, and integration with adjacent development was included.

Issues & Analysis

In 2016, Victoria citizens will have a new bridge connecting downtown Victoria with Victoria West and neighbouring municipalities. The new bridge will provide improved safety and improved connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists and also creates three new plaza spaces for people to gather, meet and enjoy the harbour views.

Connectivity

More than 50 per cent of the new bridge will be dedicated to pedestrians and cyclists. The new bridge will include on-road bike lanes, a multi-use trail for pedestrians and cyclists, and a dedicated pedestrian pathway, in addition to maintaining three lanes for vehicles.

The new bridge will help improve pedestrian (Appendix D) and cycling (Appendix E) connectivity for the region by creating a new downtown trailhead for the Galloping Goose, Lochside, and E&N Trails. Connectivity will also be enhanced at Esquimalt and Harbour Roads with the inclusion of a multi-use overpass connecting the E&N Trail with the Galloping Goose and Lochside Trails.

The future David Foster Way will link with the bridge's new pedestrian walkway, passing underneath the bridge and through the bridge wheel. This new connection will improve pedestrian and cycling connectivity between the Victoria West Westsong Walkway, the north end of downtown, and the Inner Harbour.

Additional connectivity improvements in the area include the addition of "elephants-feet" bicycle crossings at the end of the multi-use trail, a new sidewalk connection on the west side of Wharf Street, and a four-way crosswalk at Harbour and Esquimalt Roads with sidewalk connections leading up to the bridge on both sides of Esquimalt Road.

Plaza Spaces

The bridge will feature three new public plaza spaces; two on the east side of the bridge and one on the west side.

The new north east plaza (Appendix F) will be located beside the new Janion development and will serve as the trailhead for the region's Galloping Goose, Lochside, and E&N multi-use trails. It will include new bike racks, a drinking fountain – accessible for pets as well as people, and new recycling and garbage receptacles. The space will provide for opportunities for future programming such as cafes, entertainment, sitting, and viewing.

The new plaza on the west side of the bridge (Appendix G) will create a new space for the public to sit and enjoy views of downtown Victoria and the Inner Harbour. It will be adjacent to the future

waterfront green space and will be designed to allow for future event and entertainment programming. It will connect with an accessible pedestrian pathway to Harbour Road and pedestrian pathway over the bridge. A staircase will connect directly to the bridge's pedestrian pathway.

The new plaza on the south east side of the bridge (Appendix H) will connect with the new bridge's pedestrian pathway and future David Foster Way. This plaza features new benches alongside new landscaped areas creating a new downtown space for people to sit and enjoy views of the harbour.

The two south plazas (Appendices H and I) will be built on top of the existing bridge's abutments. Leaving the existing bridge piers in place helps preserve existing marine habitat. Wayfinding signage is identified for each of the plazas and can be added by the City at project completion. Interpretive signage recognizing the history and significance of the area may also be added.

Approximately 20 City heritage lamps on the downtown side of the bridge will be relocated during construction and replaced in the area at project completion.

Options & Impacts

The Fixed Price Contract with PCL includes a cash allowance for the landscaping and public realm amenities. The scope of work in the cash allowance includes the following:

- plants and ground coverings;
- topsoil;
- trees, shrubs, lawn and seed mixes;
- irrigation;
- rock boulders;
- bollards and bicycle racks;
- hardwood retaining wall seats and benches;
- fountains and garbage receptacles;
- concrete seating wall;
- landscape lighting;
- electrical connections for artwork and wayfinding.

The final landscaping construction drawings were issued to PCL in May. Once plans are reviewed and approved, plans will be finalized for the work to be completed in 2015.

Recommendations

That Council receive this report for information.

Attachments

- Summary of community input – Appendix A
- Public spaces overview (illustration of response to community input) – Appendix B
- Public Realm and Landscape Design Strategy – Appendix C
- Pedestrian connections illustration – Appendix D
- Cycling connections illustration – Appendix E
- North east plaza – Appendix F
- West plaza – Appendix G
- South east plaza looking east – Appendix H
- South east plaza looking west – Appendix I

Appendix A



JOHNSON STREET BRIDGE SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INPUT ON PUBLIC REALM ELEMENTS JULY 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In June, the City hosted an information session about the public realm elements of the Johnson Street Bridge Replacement Project. 130 people attended.

124 surveys were received. 76% of the respondents indicated they were from Victoria. In addition, written submissions from both the Downtown Residents and Victoria West Community Associations and the Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition were received. The input was very constructive and a number of themes have emerged.

Common themes:

- The area is very much seen as a transportation hub, with a desire for enhancing walk ability and cycling connections and improving overall accessibility
- 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.

Proposed refinements 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 way-finding 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.

Next steps:

The next open house is scheduled for July 7 and is intended to close the loop with the community in terms of what we heard and how it has influenced the project design.

This input and the City's guiding policy documents will guide the development of concept drawings to be developed by the landscape architects.

This will be presented to Council and the community and form the basis of an addendum for the request for proposals regarding the main construction contract. Packages of all the surveys and comments will be provided to Council for their review.