

From: "Johnston, Sadhu" <Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca>

To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"

"LaClaire, Lon" <lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca>

"Bromley, Malcolm" <Malcolm.Bromley@vancouver.ca>

Date: 4/7/2020 5:54:58 PM

Subject: Memo - COVID-19 Response: Re-allocating road space to support physical distancing

Attachments: ENG - Memo to Mayor and Council - COVID-19 Response Re-allocating road s....pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire regarding plans to temporarily re-allocate road space to support physical distancing, improve business access and facilitate the ongoing health and safety of residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- Since the COVID-19 state-of-emergency was put into place, there have been increasing concerns that residents are not able to achieve the provincial guideline of two metres physical distance between people while walking for exercise or accessing essential needs.
- Engineering Services is planning to create more room for people to walk in some key areas across the city by re-allocating road space to allow for distancing while walking and cycling (**Room-to-Move**) and queuing in front of essential business (**Room-to-Queue**). To better serve customers and businesses with high turnover (eg. pick-up only businesses like restaurants) we will also deploy temporary short-term loading zones at key locations.
- Messaging will be aligned with the EOC to ensure the public continues to have clear direction to "Stay Home, Stay Put" and that these initiatives give them more space for physical distancing while exercising and accessing essential needs. These initiatives are not intended to create spaces that draw people out to gather.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lon LaClaire, General Manager, Engineering Services at Lon.LaClaire@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Sadhu

Sadhu Aufochs Johnston | City Manager
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Pronouns: he, him, his



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

MEMORANDUM

April 7, 2020

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Malcolm Bromley, General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Paul Storer, Acting Director of Transportation

FROM: Lon LaClaire
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Response: Re-allocating road space to support physical distancing

This memo outlines plans to temporarily re-allocate road space to support physical distancing, improve business access and facilitate the ongoing health and safety of residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

Since the COVID-19 state-of-emergency was put into place, there have been increasing concerns that residents are not able to achieve the provincial guideline of two metres physical distance between people while walking for exercise or accessing essential needs.

Many outdoor spaces for play (such as tennis courts, basketball courts, and playgrounds) have been closed to prevent people from congregating in groups. Walking, running, rolling, and cycling have become some of the only remaining forms of exercise and outdoor activity for many people. Limited sidewalk and pathway widths in high-density neighbourhoods can make it challenging to walk outdoors while maintaining a safe distance from others.

Additionally, the number of people allowed within many businesses is being limited to maintain physical distancing within the businesses, which can lead to long queues forming outside - often on the sidewalk. Sidewalks are limited in width and it is often difficult or impossible for people walking on these sidewalks to pass queues and maintain two-metre spacing.

The City's Transportation Advisory Council noted these issues as critical challenges and recommended that the City temporarily widen sidewalks. This sentiment has also been echoed by local advocacy groups (Vancouver Public Space Network, HUB), news outlets and social media.

The pandemic has also resulted in both reduced traffic volumes (approximately 50 per cent reduction) and parking demand (80 per cent - 90 per cent reduction in metered parking) on many streets. Several other North American cities (including Calgary, Montreal, Winnipeg, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Denver, Portland, New York and Philadelphia) have responded with various road space re-purposing initiatives. City staff have reviewed initiatives from other jurisdictions and have identified several local opportunities to support physical distancing in Vancouver.

Road Space Re-Allocation Initiatives

To address sidewalk crowding, Engineering Services is planning to create more room for people to walk in some key areas across the city. These efforts fall into the following categories:

1) Re-allocating road space to allow for distancing while walking and cycling (“Room-to-Move”)

As a first action, staff plan to re-purpose parking and travel lanes on Beach Avenue as a way to provide more room for people walking and cycling along the English Bay seawall. This closure is being coordinated with the Park Board’s closure of roads in Stanley Park to motor vehicles.

Starting as soon as Thursday April 9, 2020, Beach Avenue will be closed to eastbound motor vehicles from Park Lane to Hornby Street, along with immediately adjacent portions of Davie Street (west of Denman Street) and Morton Avenue. Staff intend to maintain a single lane westbound, which allows resident access and most permit parking spaces to be retained. Drivers proceeding eastbound would be detoured at Davie Street. There would be no impact to westbound route 23 buses and eastbound buses will likely be detoured via Davie Street, Thurlow Street, and Pacific Street. Staff will monitor and adjust this plan as needed.

These closures are not planned to be event spaces and will not be programmed. They will be open to provide additional room for physical distancing. Public parking lots and metered parking will be closed as they encourage longer-distance visits to these busy areas. We recommend residents shop and exercise in their neighbourhoods, and these measures are about meeting the basic needs of people in their own neighbourhoods.

Staff are reviewing other potential areas for other places where extra space is required for walking, including near other parts of the seawall and city-wide greenways.

2) Re-allocating curb space adjacent to the sidewalk for queuing (“Room-to-Queue”)

To address lack of space for walking past queues for businesses and institutions, staff are scanning commercial areas across the city for queuing issues and sidewalk widths. Staff will begin a program to reallocate curb space to allow more space to walk and queue.

3) Providing short-term loading near businesses with high turnover (example: pick-up only businesses like restaurants)

To ensure that restaurants and other high-turnover businesses are best served during COVID-19, staff will be deploying short-term loading in key areas. These spaces would be directly adjacent high-turnover businesses to better serve customers while minimizing physical interactions. This will be implemented primarily on a request basis.

Communications

In coordination with the EOC, messaging will be aligned to ensure the public continues to have clear direction to “Stay Home, Stay Put” and that these initiatives give them more space for physical distancing while exercising and accessing essential needs. This is not intended to be space that draws people out to gather.

Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any further questions about these initiatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lon LaClaire".

Lon LaClaire, M.Eng., P.Eng.
General Manager, Engineering Services
604.873.7336 | lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca