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Date: 3/12/2018 3:26:46 PM
Subject: Memo - Robson Square Update - RTS 12427
Attachments: Memo to Mayor & Council - RTS012427 Robson Square.pdf

Greetings Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Jerry Dobrovlny. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- In 2016 Council voted to create a permanent plaza at 800 Robson. In 2017 the roadway was made level prior to construction of the permanent plaza, due to be implemented in 2019 in partnership with the Province of BC.
- A stewardship plan is being developed that will provide a vision and guiding programming principles for Robson Square and will confirm roles and responsibilities for governance, management, programming, operations and maintenance.
- In late 2017, a partnership between the City and VPD addressed illegal cannabis vending on 800 Robson. Ongoing monitoring and enforcement are in place to ensure that this illegal activity does not return.
- The City is working in close partnership with the VPD, the Province and other area stakeholders to ensure the success of this important public space as a family-friendly destination.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Margaret Wittgens, Director of Public Space and Street Use, at 604-673-8227 or margaret.wittgens@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Sadhu

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MEMORANDUM

March 09, 2018

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager
Janice MacKenzie, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Manager, Administration Services, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Director, Communications
Kevin Quinlan, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Naveen Girn, Director of Community Relations, Mayor's Office
Margaret Wittgens, Director, Public Space and Street Use
Karen Hoese, Assistant Director, Downtown Planning Division

FROM: Jerry Dobrovlny, General Manager of Engineering Services

SUBJECT: RTS 012427 Robson Square

In response to the Council request on January 31, 2018, this memo provides an update on the stewardship of Robson Square Plaza including efforts to create a family-friendly plaza.

Background

Robson Square¹ is one of the city's most prominent public spaces and a regional destination; its vibrancy is important to the public, businesses, creative community and area stakeholders. Public space is limited in the downtown yet plays an important role in supporting social, environmental and economic goals within the City's Healthy City Strategy, Greenest City Action Plan, Transportation 2040 and upcoming Places for People and Creative City strategies.

In 2016 Council voted to create a permanent plaza at 800 Robson which would deliver on the original vision commissioned by the Province and developed by Arthur Erickson over forty years ago for a regional family-friendly public square.

¹ Robson Square includes several public spaces (e.g. North Plaza, 800 Robson, ice rink) and is jurisdictionally complex, with multiple landowners (Province of BC and the City) and tenants (e.g. Vancouver Art Gallery, UBC Robson Square).

The street was closed to traffic in summer 2016 creating a temporary plaza while the design of the permanent plaza was developed. In 2017, the roadway on 800 Robson Street was made level with the sidewalk to create a more functional public space in the interim, prior to construction of the permanent plaza. The design of the permanent plaza is now complete and is due to be implemented in 2019 in partnership with the Province of BC.

Stewardship Plan Being Developed

To ensure the area realizes its full potential as a welcoming and celebrated public space, a stewardship plan is being developed. The stewardship plan will provide a vision and guiding programming principles for Robson Square and will confirm roles and responsibilities for governance, management, programming, operations and maintenance.

The stewardship plan is being developed in consultation with an external advisory group including the Province and key area stakeholders (UBC Robson Square, Vancouver Art Gallery and the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association).

Delivering Family-friendly Programming

As part of the Stewardship Plan development, programming is being planned for 2018. The VIVA Vancouver program has been actively programming 800 Robson since 2011, the Province manages the ice-rink activities and the North Plaza has been available to event organizers for larger scale events.

2018 Programming schedule:

- Spring Series - community led events supported by VIVA Vancouver, beginning March 10 and ongoing (e.g. yoga, participatory art, music and games).
- Summer Series - a call to event organizers, community partners and corporate groups for summer programming is imminent, in partnership with the stewardship advisory group.
- Signature events and annual celebrations will continue such as Jazz Fest, Taiwan Fest, and Façade Fest, and public gatherings for annual celebrations such as Vancouver Art Gallery's FUSE and Canada Day.
- Spontaneous events and expression will continue such as busking, protests and vigils.
- People watching - 2700 people per hour pass through 800 Robson in a busy hour. Fixed and moveable seating is available throughout the year at the North Plaza, and moveable furniture will return to 800 Robson in mid-March.
- Food and other vending - 800 Robson is home to a number of permitted vendors offering food and non-food items.
- Skating and dance - the lower-level plaza hosts a variety of events including ice skating and dance competitions
- General events - everyone is eligible to host an event on the North or South side of the Vancouver Art Gallery —by securing a special event permit through the Engineering Services Department's Film and Special Events Office.
- Public engagement - the City will host engagement events linked to public space policy and projects.

Through the *Places for People* Public Life Study and VIVA Vancouver's monitoring program the space will continue to be studied and measured.

Recent Enforcement of Illegal Cannabis Vending

Safety and security of Robson Square is a multi-jurisdictional responsibility between the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), the Province, the City and the Vancouver Art Gallery. Depending on the nature of the activity, investigative work is required to keep the peace while also balancing freedom of expression. From fall 2017 through early 2018, a partnership between the City and VPD addressed illegal cannabis vending on 800 Robson. Ongoing monitoring and enforcement are in place to ensure that this illegal activity does not return.

Conclusion

The City is working in close partnership with the VPD, the Province and other area stakeholders to ensure the success of this important public space as a family-friendly destination.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Margaret Wittgens, Director of Public Space and Street Use, at 604-673-8227 or margaret.wittgens@vancouver.ca.



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