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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

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

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Date: 5/2/2019 11:45:44 AM

Subject: Memo - Update on W. Georgia - Complete Street Planning Project

Attachments: ENG - TPL - Memo to Mayor and Council - Project Update on West Georgia S....pdf

Greetings Mayor and Council,

Please see attached above a memo from Jerry Dobrovolny regarding the West Georgia Complete Street Planning Project. Key items outlined in the memo include:

- ☐ The West Georgia Plan will produce a multi-modal transportation strategy and policy directions to respond to significant development in the area, while improving the safety and people moving capacity of the corridor.
- ☐ The plan will address needs identified by local communities while respecting the regional significance of West Georgia Street.
- ☐ Phase 1 (planning principles) of public engagement took place in winter 2017 and staff are preparing to proceed with Phase 2 (emerging directions) in fall 2019.
- ☐ Subsequent to Phase 2 public engagement, staff will bring recommended planning directions to Council for approval.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jerry Dobrovolny at 604.873.7331 or jerry.dobrovolny@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Sadhu

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

MEMORANDUM

May 1, 2019

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
Lon LaClaire, Director, Transportation

FROM: Jerry Dobrovlny, General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Project Update on West Georgia Street - Complete Street Planning

West Georgia Street is an important gateway into Vancouver. Each day it is part of the commute for thousands of people travelling into the city for work, play, and visits to Stanley Park. The corridor is quickly growing in population and West Georgia Street provides a key connection between three neighbourhoods: the West End, Coal Harbour and Downtown.

This memo provides a brief overview of the West Georgia Street Complete Street planning process to date. It outlines the background of the area, an overview of the project and completed public and stakeholder engagement. It also provides an update on the planned second round of public engagement to further refine emerging transportation planning directions.

Background

The core West Georgia Street Complete Street planning area is on West Georgia from Chilco Street to Nicola Street, with consideration of impacts to a larger secondary context area that extends east to Broughton Street, south to Alberni Street, and north to include Hastings Street and Bayshore Drive [Fig. 1]. West Georgia is a key arterial street and a part of the Major Road Network, carrying approximately 57,000 vehicles per day with heavy traffic volumes during peak periods. However, the total number of vehicles crossing the Lions Gate Bridge has remained steady or slightly decreased over the past fifteen years [Fig. 2]. The City manages the center lane on West Georgia, which reverses from the eastbound (inbound) direction in the AM peak period to the westbound (outbound) direction at all other times. Notably, this does not coincide with the reversible lane on the Lion's Gate Bridge and Stanley Park Causeway, managed by MoTI, which outside of peak periods alternates based on traffic demand. East of Denman Street, West Georgia is also a designated truck route into Downtown.

The project area is a very important people-moving corridor into Vancouver and over the last 11 years there has been a 36% increase in weekday transit ridership [Fig. 3] with more than 47,000 riders/weekday on 11 different bus routes. As noted earlier, the total number of vehicles crossing the bridge has slightly decreased over this period leading to transit riders making up 1/3 of all people travelling on the corridor during peak hours. Maintaining the people-moving capacity of this corridor is critical to the growth of Vancouver and the greater metropolitan region. Staff has already begun consulting with the North Shore municipalities and they have expressed strong support of the West Georgia Street Complete Street planning process.

Project Overview

The West Georgia Street Complete Street planning process was developed to produce a vision and set of principles and recommendations for the corridor to address existing and future challenges while improving safety, mobility and efficiency for all users.

Many residents, commuters and tourists use West Georgia each day, and it is critical that the street is safe for all users. People walking have identified long crossings, short crossing times and confusing intersections as the greatest pedestrian challenges in the area. Of particular note is the intersection of West Pender and West Georgia, made challenging due to its long crossings and unpredictable vehicle movements. People cycling have identified issues related to the narrow and unprotected lanes on West Georgia, as well as the “leapfrogging” of buses. Drivers have expressed concerns related to congestion on the corridor, confusion caused by the reversible lane, and the merging associated with high turning volumes. Many intersections within the project area have high pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle collision rates, and the intersection of West Georgia and Denman Street is one of the top 10 high-collision intersections in the city.

Development activity within the project area has significantly increased following the adoption of the *West End Community Plan* in 2013. Currently, upwards of 10 developments bringing over 4000 new residents to the project area are being considered, with a total of over 6000 new residents expected by 2041. As a result, this project is expected to address the congestion-related challenges due to the rapid increase in population and to deliver local benefits to the community. The recent increase in development applications also provides an opportunity to improve coordination with the new developments as they are designed and constructed in the area.

In early 2017 the General Manager of Engineering Services and the Director of Transportation participated in a walking tour with representatives from the Coal Harbour Residents' Association¹. During this walking tour, the CHRA identified challenges facing the neighborhood that required long-term action, such as an improving the road network, reducing vehicle speeds on local streets, addressing congestion on local streets from vehicles destined for the Lion's Gate Bridge, and improving access to local destinations for neighborhood residents. These issues were embedded in the scope of the West Georgia Street Complete Street Project.

The scope of the project addresses the issues laid out above and brings together policy from the *Downtown Transportation Plan*, *Transportation 2040*, and the *Congestion Management Strategy*. The 2002 *Downtown Transportation Plan* identified the need to reduce the length of the crosswalk and normalize the intersection at West Georgia and Pender Street to improve public space and pedestrian connections. The policies identified in *Transportation 2040* support West Georgia as a priority for improvement for people walking, taking transit, biking, driving and for the movement of goods. The 2018 *Congestion Management Strategy* recognized West Georgia as a focus corridor with a commitment to improving the efficiency and reliability of travel while emphasizing its safety, accessibility and people-moving capacity. In coordination with the West Georgia Street Complete Street Project, the City is exploring enhanced transit priority consistent with the *Congestion*

¹ Coal Harbour Resident's Association (CHRA) is a local non-profit society representing the interests and values of the Coal Harbour Community

Management Strategy. Staff are currently pursuing an extension of bus-only hours along the corridor with an aim for implementation in 2019.

The goal of this project is to develop a holistic vision and a coherent set of transportation policy directions for the West Georgia corridor. This project will provide a multi-modal transportation strategy to address the long term needs of residents in the area, while also aligning with emerging regional policies such as the recommendations from the fall 2018 *Integrated North Shore Transportation Planning Project* (INSTPP) report that called for improved transit priority on West Georgia leading to the Lion's Gate Bridge.

Public Engagement

During the first phase of public and stakeholder engagement in the winter of 2017, staff engaged the public and stakeholders through many different channels in order to reach a diverse group of residents and users of the project area. City staff engaged with over 2300 members of the public through a "walkshop", an open house, multiple street pop-up chats, an online survey, and social media to get feedback on the draft planning principles [Fig. 4], and to learn more about how people experience the street today. This first round of engagement allowed staff to better understand the public's vision for the future of West Georgia, as well as the challenges currently facing the area today. See Appendix A for the Public Engagement Executive Summary and details on the Public Consultation Approach.

Next Steps

Following public engagement in 2017, a consultant was hired to review the feasibility and impacts of a number of transportation planning and network changes to the project area. Staff are currently evaluating the results of this technical analysis, along with feedback from public engagement to develop a set of draft Emerging Guidelines. Staff is planning to bring these Emerging Guidelines back to stakeholders, local residents and businesses in fall 2019 for Phase 2 of engagement to refine and ensure that the planning principles and existing challenges have been substantially and sufficiently addressed. The public engagement will include an open house meeting, pop-up sessions on West Georgia and at community centres in the area, as well as an online survey and a workshop to ensure that we hear diverse perspectives from the broader public. Staff have begun sharing draft planning principles with regional stakeholders to ensure coordination with regional priorities and will continue this stakeholder engagement throughout Phase 2.

Subsequent to the second round of engagement, staff will confirm and refine the emerging directions based on feedback and then report back to Council seeking approval for the final set of planning directions for West Georgia. Subject to Council approval, the project would then proceed to a design development stage, with additional opportunities for stakeholder and public engagement.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



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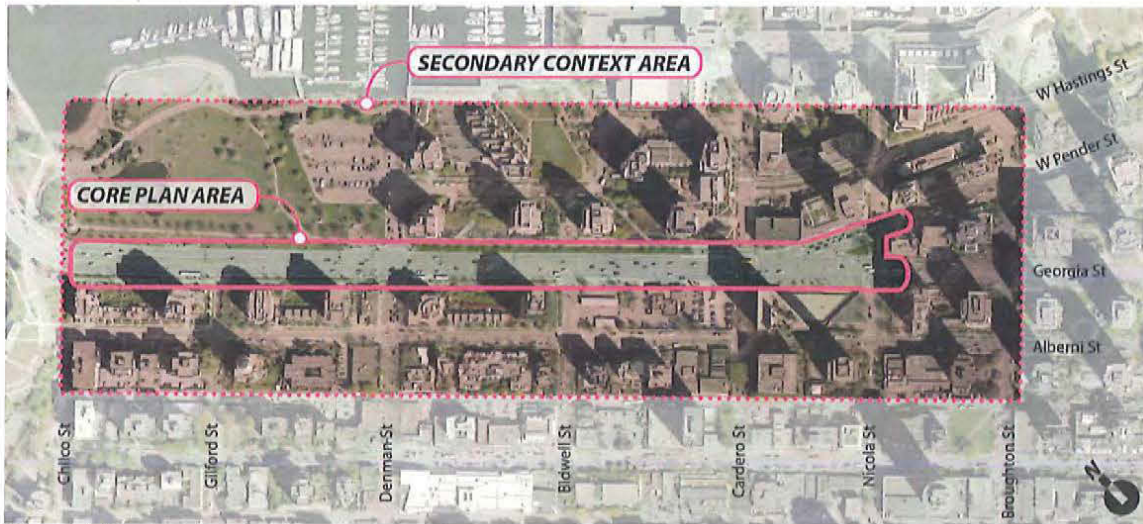


Fig. 1 West Georgia Street Complete Street Planning Area

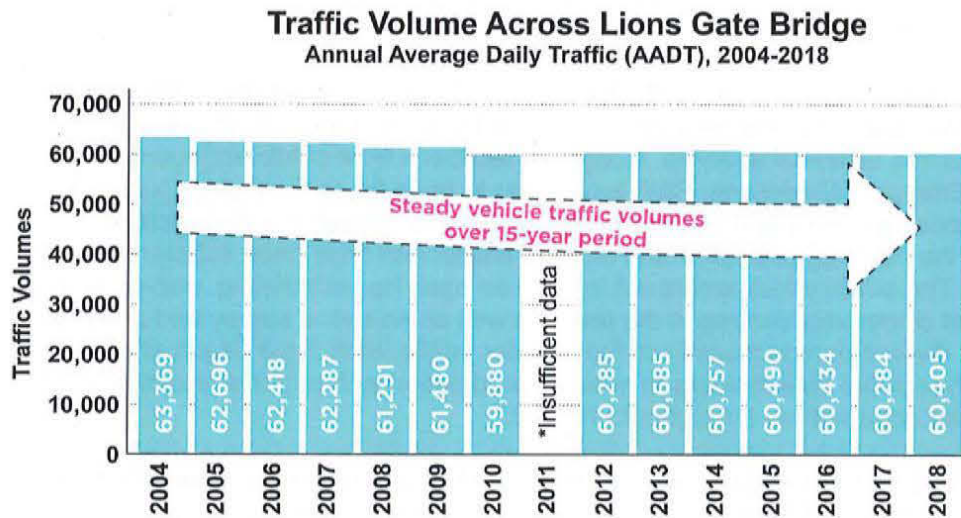


Fig. 2 15-Year traffic volume profile over the Lion's Gate Bridge

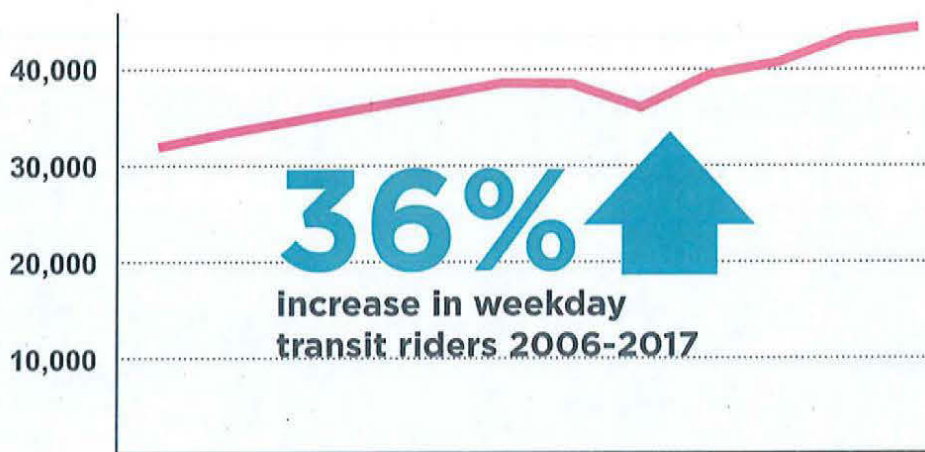


Fig. 3 11-year transit ridership profile on West Georgia Street

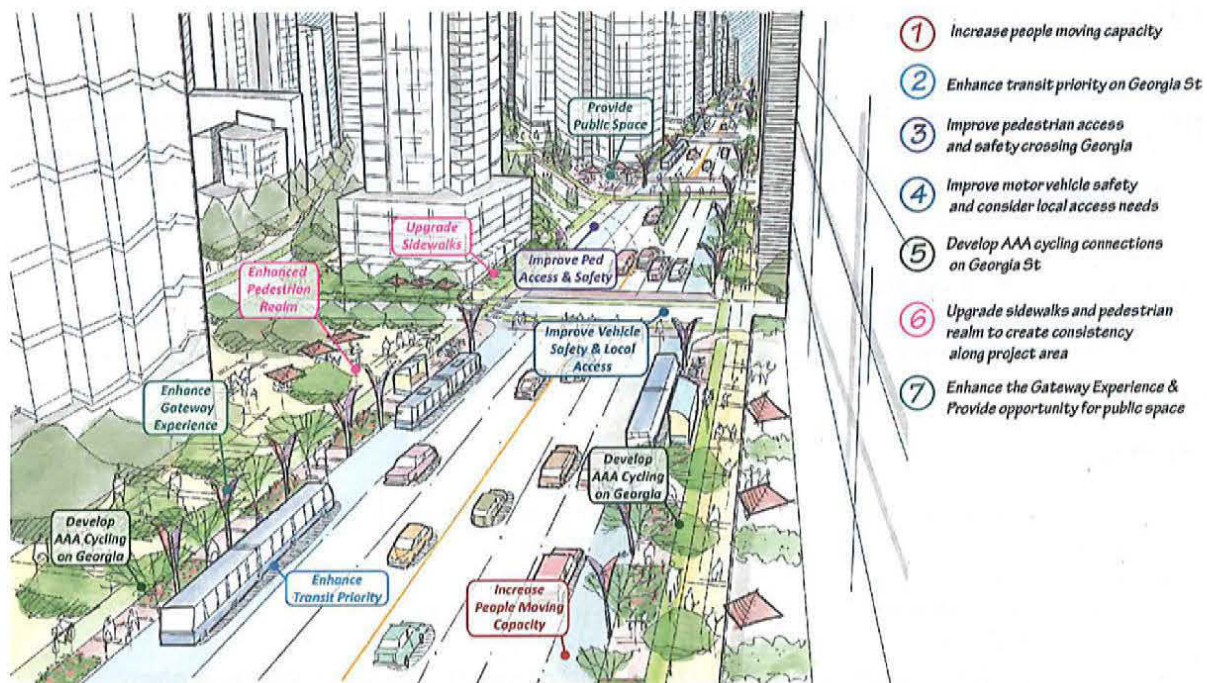


Fig. 4 Planning Principles on West Georgia Street developed as part of Phase 1 Engagement

WEST GEORGIA COMPLETE STREET

Phase 1 Consultation Summary

2018

Executive Summary

In 2017, the City of Vancouver began a transportation planning process to improve West Georgia Street, from Chilco Street to Nicola Street. The goal is to make the street more welcoming and comfortable for people of all ages, abilities and modes of travel while addressing several key priorities in the Transportation 2040 Plan.

To learn more about how people experience the street, what concerns them and how their experience could be improved, staff met with key stakeholders such as businesses and advisory groups. We also engaged with members of the public through street pop-ups, an online survey, social media, and a workshop followed by a public open house on November 18, 2017. In total, we engaged with over 70 stakeholders and over 2300 members of the public.

We received a range of feedback from general comments to specific information and insights about how the street is used. This report presents both the general themes that we heard, as well as the specific comments, ideas, and suggestions we received between July and November 2017.

Key Findings

There are three primary ways that people tend to use and experience West Georgia Street:

1. As a local who lives or works in the neighbourhood
2. As a travel route
3. As a link and destination for local and out-of-town visitors

Below are some key findings of what we heard people consider important, which is often shaped by how they experience the street:

As a local resident

Those who live or work in Coal Harbour, the West End, or downtown often experience West Georgia Street as a noisy and unsafe barrier. We heard that:

- For people walking, there are too few crossings on West Georgia Street, and the crossings at Pender Street, Cardero Street, and Denman Street feel confusing
- The street is noisy because of traffic as well as honking due to the confusion and frustration of people driving

- For nearby residents, congestion on West Georgia Street can spill over to Alberni Street and Coal Harbour, leading to safety concerns and access issues.
- There is interest in making the street more inviting as a unique gateway through lighting, art, fountains and greenery

As a travel route

For those who travel regularly along West Georgia Street, keeping people moving and reducing traffic congestion is a top concern. The following issues were of high importance:

- Keep traffic moving and reduce congestion. Make travel times more reliable.
- Clearer separation, use, and enforcement of travel lanes for each mode (i.e. personal vehicles lanes, Stanley park travel lane, bus lanes, and bike lanes).

As a tourism destination

Although we did not connect with a lot of visitors to the area, we did hear that visitors and tourists are an important group to consider when planning the area. We heard that:

- West Georgia Street can be confusing to navigate for people who are unfamiliar with the area; this can lead to confusion and potentially challenging situations.
- Visitors wanting to walk or cycle to Stanley Park and the Seawall need better access routes, as well as signage in more languages.
- More could be done to welcome visitors to the area, and showcase different attractions in the neighbourhood.

How the input is being used

Project staff considered all feedback received during Phase 1, along with technical information and other research, to develop emerging directions for the next phase of the planning process. The City plans to present these directions for West Georgia Street to the public for further feedback in 2019.

Phase 1 Public Consultation Approach

Engagement Approach and Opportunities

The approach to public engagement for Phase 1 was to listen and learn from people who live, work, and play in the neighbourhood, as well as the broader public across the city who are interested in the project. As such, a variety of outreach methods were used to talk to people in person and online through various platforms, including:

- Group stakeholder meetings – July to October, 2017
- Public open house – November 18, 2017
- Walkshop (guided walking tour) – November 18, 2017
- Pop-up street chats – November 6 & 7, 2017
- Online survey – November to December, 2017
- Comment forms – November to December, 2017
- E-mail - Ongoing

In each of our engagements, we heard from different groups of people. For instance, participants at our public open house tended to live nearby, walk more on West Georgia Street, and the large majority were over the age of 50. In comparison, many participants of the TALK survey live outside the area, drive more on West Georgia Street, and slightly more than half were younger than 50.

Participation

In total, we had engaged with over 2300 people in the following ways:

- Local stakeholder meetings (55 people)
 - Coal Harbour Residents Association
 - TransLink
 - Ministry of Transportation
 - West End BIA
 - Regional Transportation Advisory Committees
 - Robson BIA
 - HUB
 - Tour bus operators
 - West End Seniors Network
- City Advisory groups (18 people)
- Pop-up chats on the street (46 people)
- Walkshop (30 people)
- Public open house (115 people)
- Talk Vancouver survey (2070 people)
- Email/phone comments (18 people)