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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 8/30/2023 4:49:24 PM
Subject: Council Memo – Gastown Public Spaces Plan Update – RTS# 15793
Attachments: Council Memo - Gastown Public Spaces Plan Update - RTS 15793.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire that provides an update on the Gastown project, responding to the [Council Motion](#), A People-Focused Gastown: A Bold, Forward-Looking Vision for a Vibrant and Prosperous Neighbourhood. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- Staff have been advancing partnership with the local Nations as part of the project launch.
- A request for proposal to procure a multidisciplinary design consultancy to support the plan's development will be released shortly.
- The project scope and deliverables have been finalized and the preparation for the first phase of public engagement in October 2023 is underway.
- Staff have started initial discussions with Gastown Business Improvement Society (GBIS) about a seasonal pilot for Summer 2024.
- Plans for the near term repair work is underway.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lon LaClaire at 604-873-7336 or lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

August 30, 2023

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Interim Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

FROM: Lon LaClaire
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Gastown Public Spaces Plan Update

RTS #: 15793

This memo provides an update on the *Gastown Public Spaces Plan* and associated work underway in response to the [Council Motion](#), "A People-Focused Gastown: A Bold, Forward-Looking Vision for a Vibrant and Prosperous Neighbourhood" raised by Council on May 10, 2023.

Background

Council directed staff to initiate a planning and design process for wider Gastown streets and public spaces that brings external urban placemaking expertise and provides a bold vision to pedestrianize Water Street either seasonally or year-round. In addition, the motion directed staff to work with the Gastown Business Improvement Society (GBIS) and other community partners on seasonal summer pilots to test a pedestrianized Water Street, while advancing urgently needed repairs in the area.

Sk̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh (Squamish Nation) and səliiwətał (Tseil-Waututh Nation) have expressed interest to be integral partners in this process; x̓w̓məθk̓w̓əy̓əm (Musqueam Indian Band) has requested to be updated as the project advances. Staff are currently in conversation with Squamish Nation and Tseil-Waututh Nation to develop the partnership approach in more detail.

Project scope and timeline

In response to Council's motion, staff have drafted project goal, objectives and deliverables, and a planning process to create an area-wide *Gastown Public Spaces Plan*, which are summarized in the Appendix. We expect the planning and design work to happen in 3 phases between October 2023 and winter 2025. It will build on previous work done by both the City and

community, including but not limited to the *DTES Plan*, *Places for People*, the *Vancouver Plan*, the *Gastown Complete Streets* project, and the GBIS's urban design study.

Consultant Procurement

To support the development of a *Gastown Public Spaces Plan*, the City will engage a multidisciplinary design consultancy. A request for proposals (RFP) will be released soon seeking consultants with expertise in planning and design of complex public realm projects; in particular the RFP will seek experience in public life design, pedestrian and shared streets, and historic areas. The consultant team will also be required to demonstrate experience working with Indigenous communities and have an Indigenous designer on their team with deep ties to the local Nations.

Engagement

The project will launch publicly in October and staff will host a public survey, pop-ups at a storefront on Water Street with information on the project, and meetings with stakeholders and advisory committees throughout the fall. The aim of this phase of engagement is to get feedback on the project goal, objectives and deliverables, and learn more about how people who live, work and visit Gastown use the streets and public spaces in order to inform a range of concept options that will be shared with the public in 2024.

In advance of the project launch, staff have been reaching out to organizations that serve equity-denied communities. To share and promote the project, staff will also attend the "Meet Me in Gastown" event being organized by the GBIS on August 31. Finally, staff are organizing a kick off event for the project launch in Gastown and will provide more detail to Council shortly.

Pilots

Throughout this summer staff are working with the GBIS to permit events within the business district. Concurrently, we have initiated discussions for the larger Water Street pilots in summer 2024, understanding that a successful pedestrian street pilot requires sufficient planning time and the support of community champions. We will continue to collaborate with the GBIS, community organizations, and businesses to develop a vision and strategy for the 2024 summer pilot through the fall.

Near term repairs

In addition, staff have been working with the GBIS to identify priorities for ongoing, immediate repairs in the neighbourhood. Building on the targeted sidewalk repairs done to date, staff have identified priority locations, and this work will continue throughout 2023 and 2024.

Trounce Alley restoration and the interim repairs of the Maple Tree Square roadway are also underway. Staff will provide an update on these when the schedule is confirmed; currently we expect this work to begin in 2024.

Please contact me directly if you have any questions about these initiatives.



Lon LaClaire, M.Eng., P.Eng.
General Manager, Engineering Services

604.873.7336 | lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca

Appendix

The following project goal and objectives will guide the development of the Gastown Public Spaces plan. Public engagement in the first phase of the process will seek feedback on:

Project goal

Enhance the look and feel of Gastown's public spaces and create a bold plan to pedestrianize Water St.

Project Objectives

- Increase the **visibility of the local Nations** on their lands, and support **urban Indigenous communities** who live and work in the area
- Support a **vibrant and inclusive public life** for residents, visitors and businesses
- Provide **convenient access to homes, businesses and destinations**
- **Evolve** and **elevate** the **unique heritage feel** of the area
- Improve **accessibility** and **durability** of the street materials

Based on the above project goal and objectives and after the completion of the 3 phase process, **the Plan is set to deliver:**

- Directions on how to improve and support Gastown's streets, laneways and gathering places
- A plan to pedestrianize Water St, based on lessons learnt from the summer pilots and community feedback. This will include how the street network, including Cordova St, will support access to Water St, as well as walking, cycling, transit and vehicle connections through Gastown.
- Guidance on the look and feel of the streets, including street materials and amenities
- A phased implementation plan