



WEST GEORGIA COMPLETE STREET

Phase 1 Consultation Summary Report

2019

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Executive Summary

In 2017, the City of Vancouver began a transportation planning process to improve West Georgia St, from Chilco St. to Nicola St. 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, their concerns 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 walkshop (guided walking tour), 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 general themes of what we heard and specific comments, ideas, and suggestions received between July and November 2017.

Key Findings

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

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 St. as a noisy and unsafe barrier. We heard that:

- For people walking, there are too few crossings on West Georgia St, and the crossings at Pender St, Cardero St, and Denman St feel unsafe.
- 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 St. can spill over to Alberni St. 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, greenery, and other public amenities.

As a travel route

For those who travel regularly along West Georgia St, 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 St. can be confusing to navigate for people who are unfamiliar with the area – this can lead to confusion and potentially unsafe 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 St. 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 St, 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 St, and slightly more than half were younger than 50.

Participation

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

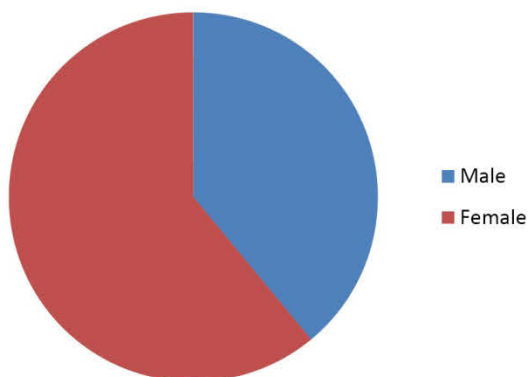
- Local stakeholder meetings (55 people)
 - Coal Harbour Residents Association
 - TransLink
 - Ministry of Transportation
 - West End BIA
 - Regional Transportation Advisory Committees
 - Robson BIA
 - HUB
 - Tour bus operators
 - West End Seniors Network
- City Advisory groups (18 people)
- Pop-up chats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

Who We Heard From

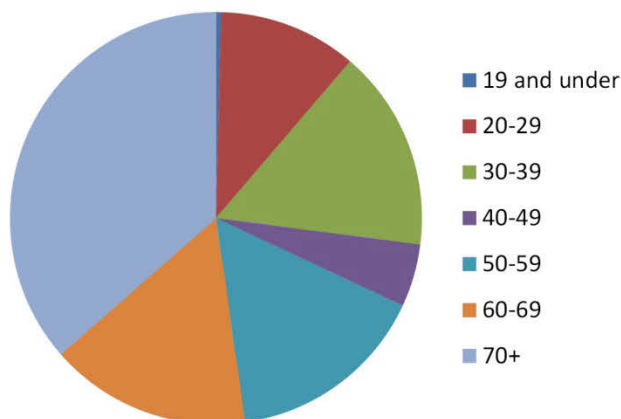
Feedback was primarily collected from two groups of people - those who attended the Public Open House, and those who participated in the TalkVancouver survey. Here is a breakdown of the people we heard from:

Open House Comment Forms (24 received)

Do you identify as...?

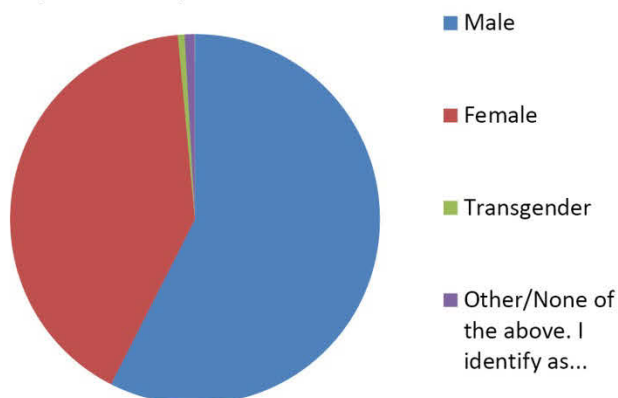


Which age group do you fall into?

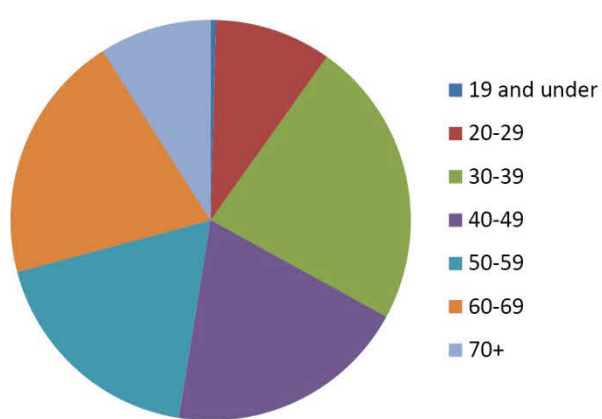


Talk Vancouver Survey (2070 responses)

Do you identify as...?

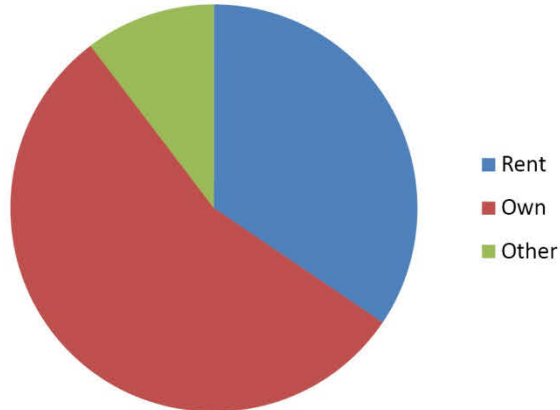


Which age group do you fall into?

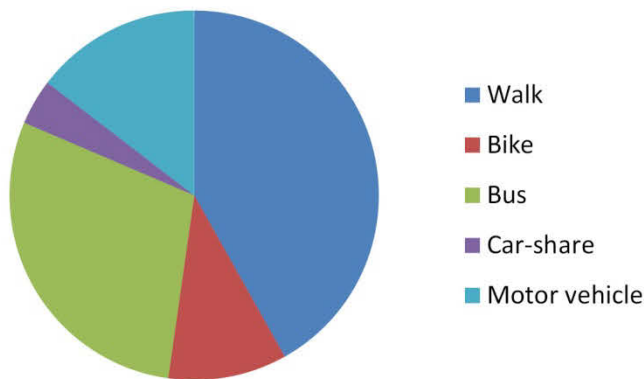


Open House Comment Form (continued)

Do you own or rent your home?

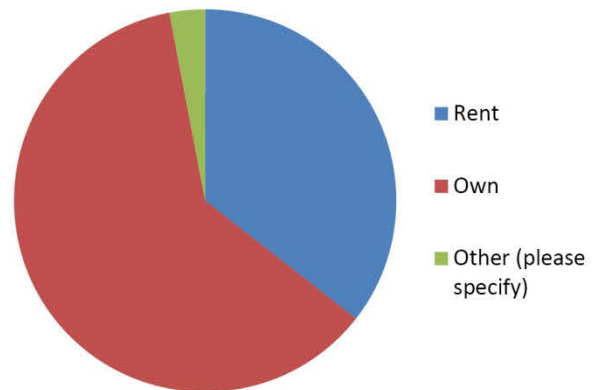


How do you usually travel along Georgia Street?

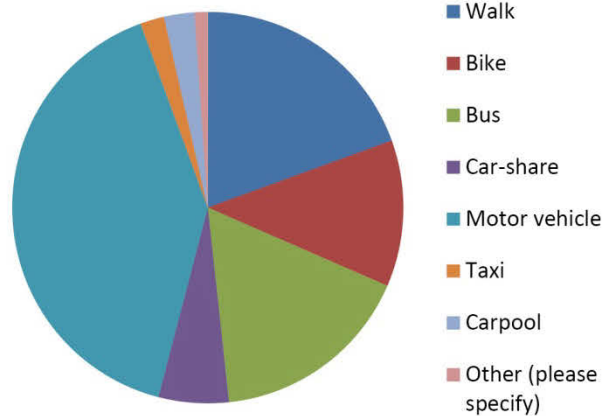


TalkVancouver Survey (continued)

Do you own or rent your home?



How do you usually travel along Georgia Street?



Key differences:

Participants at the public open house tended to be older than the TalkVancouver participants, and a larger proportion of them were female. In terms of travel mode, open house participants tended to walk more and drive less than survey participants. This was possibly due to the fact that many live in the immediate neighbourhood, while Talk Vancouver participants may live further afar.

Results

Analysis of Input

Comments and feedback from the public were coded into categories (i.e. safety, transit, cycling, connections and access) as well as by location (i.e. intersection at West Georgia St. and Denman St.). The results presented in this report reflect the general concerns and feedback heard from stakeholders and members of the public during the consultation period.

Stakeholder Meetings

Feedback from this section is primarily from meetings between City staff and various stakeholder groups.

General feedback included:

- Need to reduce rat running and short-cutting without causing access issues to residential developments.
- How can we make West Georgia St. more enjoyable and bring people into the West End.
- Interested in increasing people-moving capacity of West Georgia St. – prioritizing transit with a dedicated lane and minimizing impacts to vehicular congestion.
- Are there opportunities to make West Georgia St. more accessible in design?
- Need to separate travel modes and protect vulnerable users – i.e. protected bike lane for faster cyclists, expanding the Seawall for slower cyclists, right turn signals for tour buses to avoid pedestrians.
- Design for drop-off places for tour buses.
- Need to improve connection to Stanley Park causeway for bikes.
- Should have better wayfinding signage in different languages.

Public Engagement: Open House, Pop-ups, Comment Forms, and Online Survey

Top concerns from public feedback include:

Public Open House	Talk Vancouver Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety was the primary concern – common suggestions included separating travel modes (i.e. dedicated bus lanes, bike lanes, etc.), more crosswalks across Georgia, and more time to cross the street.• Need to reduce noise from traffic and honking.• Driving – need to reduce confusion of reversible lanes and turn restrictions, and shortcutting through neighbourhoods.• Connections & Access – need for better wayfinding, especially to Stanley Park, and ability to get to local destinations without congestion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary concern was to keep traffic moving and reduce congestion: suggestions included not taking away any travel lanes for bikes and keeping Georgia St. as-is.• Make travel times more reliable for drivers.• There were many suggestions of a pedestrian underpass/overpass at Denman St, Cardero St, and Pender St. with a request for developers to pay for it.• Request to remove all parking on Georgia St, from Chilco St. to Thurlow St.• North shore needs a 3rd crossing, whether by tunnel or bridge, or more lanes on bridge.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome people to the city with lighting, art, fountain, greenery at key points between Stanley Park and Georgia/Pender. • Buses – need more reliability and frequency. • Intersections at Georgia St. & Denman St, Georgia St. & Pender St. need serious improvement (safety, clarity, congestion); suggestions of overpass/underpass and scramble crosswalk at Georgia St. & Denman St. • Desire for more public washrooms and need for places to sit and rest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more commercial activity so Georgia St. isn't so boring to walk along. • Transit – need more reliable bus times, priority lanes, and weather protection. • Cycling – should be separated from vehicular traffic; provide well-lit, secure or monitored bike parking at key locations. • Walking – need more greenery & crossings with more time for people to walk across Georgia St.
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Key Areas of Divergence

Although some feedback was put forward multiple times by a number of people, there were some key issues that tended to generate opposing perspectives on what should be done to improve the area, including:

Encourage people to walk on Seawall or Alberni because Georgia St. is unpleasant.	Make Georgia St. more pleasant, less noisy, and interesting for walking.
Make cyclists take an alternate route that's less busy than Georgia St.	Create a dedicated lane for cyclists on the sidewalk on Georgia St.
Improve access by car to neighbourhoods.	Reduce amount of cars driving through neighbourhoods.
Keep traffic moving along Georgia St. to avoid congestion.	Slow down traffic on Georgia St. to make it a safer and more comfortable experience.

Location-Specific Feedback

For feedback about specific locations along Georgia Street, please refer to **Appendix A**.

Key Quotes

Safety	<p>"Intersections at Georgia & Denman, Georgia & Pender need serious improvement (safety, clarity, congestion)."</p> <p>"I live in Coal Harbour Housing Coop and I and my children have to cross this intersection going east/ west on Cardero every day. Every time it offers something that scares me... There are no countdown lights in any direction here. Give us creative ramps and playful ways to get across the streets and have zero impact on vehicle road traffic."</p> <p>"Riding a bike down Georgia Street is suicide."</p> <p>"The bike lane is narrow, and cars often drift into it. Perhaps worst is that cars completely ignore the bike lane when turning right onto Denman (going east). It's a very dangerous location. The other issue is that unless you're a very experienced and powerful cyclist (I am—I have to put out maximum watts to get into the traffic), it is very difficult to get across to the Pender turnoff."</p> <p>"I notice most the irresponsible and dangerous driving practices that occur, especially at the Georgia and Denman intersection, predominantly at rush hour. Drivers wait in the intersection, cut corners, speed, turn into the wrong lane, try to merge right at the intersection rather than moving up and merging higher on the street. There is rarely to never any police presence or consequences."</p>
Transit	<p>"I live in the West End and it's too costly and time consuming to take bus to North Shore"</p> <p>"Need a SkyTrain line from downtown to Stanley Park and West Vancouver. Everyone drives because it seems like it's the only way. I don't take the bus because I can't figure out what bus goes where, because TransLink does not have a good website."</p> <p>"Currently having a stop at Denman and another at Cardero makes me have to guess which bus will come first to travel further into downtown. Or have buses stop at both stops."</p> <p>"More frequent buses, more capacity on buses, real-time information."</p> <p>"I take transit fairly often during special events. Once an hour after 6 pm? That stinks."</p> <p>"It's a major transportation route. Buses should get priority!"</p> <p>"I think encouraging people to take the bus over the Lions Gate is a great idea. I think more people would be inclined to do this if there was a transit hub in the West End."</p> <p>"Transit improvements to encourage ridership - perhaps dedicated lane in rush hour should be explored."</p>
Cycling	<p>"It's an arterial road and cyclists should not be on it. And I'm a cyclist. Put bike lane on the north side of sidewalk on northbound lanes of Georgia."</p> <p>"Biking on Georgia is a bit nuts...a better bike connection from downtown to north shore would be good...if you are on the Seawall or Georgia, connecting to the new</p>

	<p>causeway bike lane isn't very obvious."</p> <p>"Too noisy, crowded, stressful."</p> <p>"Install a dedicated lane for cyclists."</p> <p>"Another problem: the hordes of bikes in front of the bike rentals, in good weather. Could there be barriers of some kind, so pedestrian tourists could get by safely? Tell bike rental places to direct renters down Alberni to the park."</p> <p>"There are two distinct types of cyclists, commuters and road bikes, vs. Pleasure seekers, tourists and recreationalists. I think they need different types of infrastructure."</p> <p>"Improve cycling options off the road and improve off-Georgia connections into west end and downtown; facilitate biking along Alberni Street to merge into Causeway at Chilco Loop."</p>
Walking	<p>"Some sort of barrier between traffic and the sidewalk to reduce noise. It's very loud walking down that area of Georgia (it's hard to hear if you're speaking with someone)."</p> <p>"Consider some low hedging or planters on edge of sidewalk closest to street."</p> <p>"Need shops, markets, public spaces, zoning that would permit patios or other outdoor seating. Right now there's no reason to be there except to get somewhere else. It's just kind of long and boring."</p> <p>"More weather protection. Awnings, consider a covered walkway. Covered seating area."</p> <p>"More places to cross the street. Longer traffic lights for pedestrians. The one at Denman and at Nicola is too short for the elderly."</p> <p>"I want a pedestrian/cyclists underpass at Denman leading into Devonian Harbour Park -- it could be made similar to the underpass at Lost Lagoon. Possibly fitted with public bathrooms and other city services. (Like English Bay Beach) The whole area could be dressed up like the plans for the future Georgia Plaza at the other end of the street."</p> <p>"Less traffic sitting there so we're not inhaling exhaust fumes all the time."</p> <p>"More seating for older people who want to walk but need to rest. We also need public washrooms."</p>
Driving	<p>"Improved vehicular access. The population continues to grow and we need to improve infrastructure to allow people the opportunity to work and make a living to live in this city."</p> <p>"Better signage showing how many lanes on the Lions Gate bridge are open at that time. The thing that would most help would be one more lane on the Lions Gate bridge but unfortunately it wasn't done when the refurbishing of the bridge was done a few years ago."</p> <p>"Focus on helping vehicle traffic flow more efficiently."</p>

	<p>"Ensure that 'solutions' do not drive traffic further onto Pender, Hastings, Alberni."</p> <p>"The best way to improve the "car traffic problem" is to have north shore commuters leave their cars at home and take public transit. Single occupancy car trips into Vancouver must be severely restricted."</p> <p>"Please consider West End residents as you make decisions. We need effective in/egress."</p> <p>"I always find turning left from Denman onto Georgia into the correct lane very anxiety-provoking and imagine visitors could be confused about how this works."</p> <p>"I would like a sign telling drivers/transit users which direction the 2 lanes are travelling on the Lions Gate Bridge along with wait/travel times to get across the bridge."</p>
Gateway Features	<p>"Better street signage, including more visible street signs as well as attractive signage indicating upcoming attractions with distances for people who are not already familiar with our routes or have perspective of where and how far things are located."</p> <p>"More interactive public realm and public spaces. Clearer connections to the West End and to the Seawall. Slower traffic."</p> <p>"Maps on lamp posts, road painting, colourful crosswalks."</p> <p>"More public square/open space with permitted live music/busking."</p> <p>"Progressive visual/architectural features that transition from green to hardscape."</p> <p>"Aboriginal history acknowledgment."</p> <p>"Should read like an avenue with large shade trees lining both sides."</p> <p>"Make the lost lagoon fountain work all the time."</p>
Other	<p>"Yes, let's put in Green Infrastructure! I'd like to see a drainage system to channel rainwater into Lost Lagoon."</p>

Next Steps

In Phase 2 of the planning process in 2019, staff will present and collect feedback from the public on key findings from Phase 1 and a high level set of Emerging Directions. The directions take into consideration the feedback received in Phase 1, as well as technical data and research acquired throughout 2018.

Appendix A

The following map illustrates the feedback relevant to specific locations along West Georgia Street collected in November 2017.

GEORGIA GATEWAY WEST

COMPLETE STREET PROJECT - Location-Specific Public Feedback

The feedback below is taken directly from the public, who provided comments in writing on sticky notes and feedback forms at the open house, verbally during the walkshop, and electronically through e-mail and the online survey in November 2017.

Georgia & Denman

- Install signage to stop people from riding bikes on sidewalks and enforce infractions
- Install large, clear, multilingual signage to direct cyclists and tourists along Alberni to Stanley park
- Find ways to reduce driving frustration that leads to honking - noise is very disruptive and the aggression it creates is dangerous
- Provide some seating for people to rest, maybe some quiet space
- Increase pedestrian clearance times (many seniors in the area need more time to cross)
- Use scramble crosswalk/overpass/underpass for pedestrians
- Make the sidewalk and transitions smoother - many seniors with walkers have difficulty
- Give drivers an earlier and clearer indication of the last turnoff (into Stanley Park, before the Lions' Gate Bridge) - especially for those who just turned left from Denman onto Georgia trying to get to the park
- Give drivers WB on Georgia an earlier and clearer indication as they approach Denman that you cannot turn left on Denman
- Need a larger, lit-up 'No Left Turn' sign on Georgia at Denman
- Use median or planters to slow cars down on Georgia
- Too many motorcycles exiting off Georgia Street onto Denman via the 'bicycle only' exit is dangerous
- Turning left from Denman onto WB Georgia is confusing; turning right from Denman onto EB Georgia is difficult due to so many pedestrians crossing
- Synchronize the traffic lights starting at Denman
- Needs better turn signals
- Needs to be a better barrier if people are not allowed to cross Georgia at Denman because people are confused and try to cross anyway
- Fix visual overhead clutter
- Allow cars to access the West End before Denman St, once they get off the Causeway
- Bus stops are too dark and small at this intersection
- Sidewalks need repaving
- Install signs pointing to attractions, restaurants, groceries, aquarium, etc

Should convert this surface parking lot into a more active public amenity space or plaza

- Create a booth or entrance marker at Devonian Park for tourist information and wayfinding, bicycle safety tips, air, water, etc.
- Install prominent Welcome to Vancouver sign (encourage people to take photos with the sign) or nicer sign for Stanley Park like there was in the 50s
- Install public art, flowers, maps, plaza for food carts, markets/arts & crafts
- Move the bike shops here, so tourists don't need to cross Georgia with bikes
- Reinstall the fountain from the art gallery here

Should move this bus stop to the NE corner, so people can actually use the crosswalk to get to the stop directly and no try to jaywalk in a dangerous way

Extend HOV lane past Denman, instead of converting to bus only

Organize bike rental exits, and limit how bikes can be displayed so that bikes and tourists do not impede sidewalks and create a dangerous situation for seniors or people with disabilities

End Alberni at Denman to prevent people from using Alberni to get to the Lions Gate Bridge

Coal Harbour

Vehicles are shortcutting through the neighbourhood, so that they can turn onto WB Georgia from both north and south parts of Cardero and cars are getting backed up in neighbourhood

Coal Harbour Housing Coop - lots of kids live here

PAL (Performing Arts Lodges) Vancouver - lots of seniors live here

Georgia & Bidwell

- Need crosswalks all 4 ways with traffic light (many people currently jaywalk and it's dangerous)
- Create a parklet here
- Need right turn lane going from Bidwell to EB Georgia
- Convert north side into plaza space to rest, maybe even connect through the block toward the water

Georgia & Cardero

- Lots of school kids cross here from housing coop, need more lighting, maybe flashing lights
- Need greater pedestrian clearance times to cross street
- Turning cars conflict with pedestrians - maybe need separate phasing
- Steep downward slope going on NB Cardero is dangerous as it intersects Georgia St - cyclists often go wide when turning right onto EB Georgia into traffic
- Parked cars on Cardero (north of Georgia) block traffic at peak hours as cars try to turn right onto WB Georgia
- Sloping sidewalks at a steep grade on Cardero need to be cleared of leaves and other debris for safety

Georgia & Pender/Nicola

- Weird angles at Pender/Georgia are terrible for walking
- Increase pedestrian clearance times - currently there isn't enough time for even fast moving people to cross
- Need a crosswalk for bikes and pedestrians to cross Pender at Nicola; right now everyone just runs across here because there's a 2-block stretch where there is nowhere to cross the street
- Remove reversible/counterflow lane, it's confusing and dangerous
- Shorten the super long crosswalk
- No one uses the short stretch of Nicola between Georgia & Pender and it's confusing; reroute bikes to Cardero instead
- Normalize this intersection
- From 2pm onwards, cars are backed up all along WB Pender
- Drivers turning right from WB Pender onto WB Georgia don't know which lane to take
- Movie productions hold up traffic
- Bricks on South side of Georgia are a trip/slip hazard.
- Cyclists travelling WB on Georgia often go through yellow light putting themselves in danger of cars turning from or onto Pender

Need pedestrian-controlled crosswalk

Many close calls; need a traffic light

- Flag island is useless
- Flags on Flag Island are ugly; install public art, flowers, welcome sign, decorations, or maps, instead

Install a sign telling drivers/transit users which direction the 2 lanes are travelling on the Lions Gate Bridge along with wait/travel times to get across the bridge

Need better lighting and traffic light

Alberni

- Stop rat-running through Alberni to get to Georgia (maybe disallow people from turning right from Alberni onto Denman); residents aren't able to get into their parkades
- Install large, clear, multilingual signage to direct cyclists and tourists along Alberni to Stanley park and clearly indicate the underpass; right now, people don't know how to get to Stanley Park except to cross Georgia
- Alberni is too narrow with lots of tree roots which are tripping hazard; need level sidewalks with grass on both sides for vision-impaired
- Install a normal traffic light at Denman & Alberni
- Suggest a dedicated bike lane on Alberni that connects to causeway as alternative to Georgia

