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URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

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**DATE:** June 12, 2002

**TIME:** 4.00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Walter Francl, Chair  
Helen Besharat  
Gerry Eckford  
Richard Henry  
Joseph Hruda (from 4.55 pm)  
Reena Lazar  
Stuart Lyon  
Kim Perry  
Sorin Tatomir  
Ken Terriss

**REGRETS:** Jeffrey Corbett  
Maurice Pez

**ALSO PRESENT:** **Burrard Bridge Workshop**  
Members of the Heritage Commission:  
Brad Alberts  
Megan Balmer  
Scott Barrett  
James Burton  
Cam Cathcart  
Julie MacDonald

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	Burrard Bridge - Joint Workshop with Heritage Commission
2.	2665 West Broadway

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1. JOINT WORKSHOP WITH HERITAGE COMMISSION: Burrard Bridge
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| Consultant Team: | Delcan/Busby+Associates Architects/Robert G. Lemon Architect |
| Owner:           | City of Vancouver  |
| Review:          | First  |
| Delegation:      | David Dove, Ken Curry, Robert Lemon                          |
| Staff:           | Scot Hein, Yardley McNeill, Karis Hiebert, David Rawsthorne  |
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- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, introduced the Workshop. The City is seeking some improvements for pedestrian and cycling traffic crossing the Burrard Bridge. The issue will be the subject of a plebiscite question in the coming Fall election, and a number of options are being explored, with the intent of narrowing the choice to two or three. As well as members of the Heritage Commission, Mr. Hein acknowledged members of the Bicycle Advisory Committee who were also present and invited to take part in the workshop discussions. Representatives of the Special Advisory Committee on Disability Issues and the Planning Commission were also in attendance.

Mr. Hein introduced co-project managers, David Rawsthorne (Transportation Engineering) and Karis Hiebert (Planning), and Yardley McNeill, Heritage Planner. Mr. Rawsthorne briefly reviewed the background of the project which is driven by the need to address the capacity of the bridge for non-motorized users. In March 2002, Council approved a direction to advance design on some of the recommendations arising from the False Creek Pedestrian Crossing Study. This work, which ultimately will improve crossing opportunities for all non-motorized users on the three False Creek bridges, established priority for the Burrard Bridge which currently accommodates most of the pedestrian/cycling traffic crossing False Creek. In these early stages of the design exercise a solution is sought that not only addresses transportation needs but ensures that anything done to the bridge adheres to heritage conservation principles. Ms. McNeill noted the Burrard Bridge is a very significant heritage structure for the city, being "A" listed and designated, and at the end of an important ceremonial Vancouver street. Two views of the bridge are important: from the water and on the road deck itself. A key challenge of this project is the relationship of any interventions with the strong piers and what occurs at both ends of the bridge. The various options deal with the entire spectrum in terms of conservation and impacts on the heritage aspects of the bridge.

David Dove, Busby + Associates Architects, briefly reviewed the seven options that have been developed. The criteria included constructability, usage, desire lines, functionality, aesthetics and planning, the heritage response and cost. A further consideration is the navigational channel which is set currently at 90 ft. clearance. A fundamental decision has been made that the bicycle route must remain on the inside, close to the traffic, and pedestrians on the outside. This avoids cross-over issues at the ends of the bridge.

Option A: the base option which extends the existing decks, extending out where necessary around the piers, with the new pedestrian route on the outside, at the same level as the existing sidewalks.

Option B: a duplex scenario where the pedestrian route is on the second level on a cantilevered structure carried through the existing portals and ramped down at both ends of the bridge.

Option C: takes the pedestrians to pier 1, pinching in at the main piers and taking pedestrians up through the pier in order to maintain the navigational channel, then out and reconnecting at the north end of the bridge.

Option D: a radical ("necklace") option which attempts to address the premise of the vertical piers being fundamental to the design of the existing bridge, creating a route that peels off the bridge and

crosses the mid-span by cantilevering out from the existing bridge and leaving the existing piers and balconies free.

Option E and F: two variations of a route underneath the bridge carriage, carrying both cyclists and pedestrians at the lower level.

Option G: pedestrians taken to one side of the bridge.

All the options meet the criteria of constructability and cost. Option E fails to meet the navigational channel requirement. Both underslung options cause concern about safety where the perception is that it is safer for cyclists and pedestrians at the road deck level. Option B does not meet the usage, desire lines and functionality criteria. All the options could be made to meet the aesthetics criterion, with some reservations about the double-deck option.

Robert Lemon, Heritage Consultant, explained the options were evaluated in terms of the roadgate parti and the seagate parti. Five qualities were identified in the terms of reference with respect to heritage: the landmark value of the bridge; interventions which reinforce the heritage value; to keep interventions to a minimum; that any alterations/additions should be contemporary in appearance; and that there should be no conjecture or falsification. These criteria are international heritage standards for making decisions about additions and how much they are compatible with or distinguishable from the heritage fabric. Evaluation of the options was also based on the impact on the monumentality and the ceremonial aspects of the bridge, the scale of the bridge elements, the material quality of the bridge, the symbolism of the bridge and its detailing including the design motifs, and the commemorative aspects of the bridge and its linkage to the Bartholomew Plan. The three options which did best were Options A, C and D. The other options did not meet the heritage criteria.

Mr. Dove reviewed the preferred options in greater detail.

- **Panel's Comments:** Following are some of the comments made after a general discussion and question period:
  - one delightful aspect for pedestrians is walking through the portal; it gives the bridge a cadence that does not exist in the other bridges. None of the options maintains this pedestrian route through the portal;
  - the view from the bridge is an important aspect of the pedestrian experience, part of which is being able to lean on the edge of the bridge's concrete rail. Therefore, whatever is added will be critical to the pedestrian experience;
  - this is an exciting project and there are some interesting ideas being presented;
  - particularly like the "necklace" option from a safety perspective; pedestrians do not want to be too far removed from the traffic and it feels safer (especially at night) to be walking beside moving vehicles; with all these options maybe what happens at the end of the bridge can be examined to find a solution; from a cyclist's perspective it would be nice to be on the outside, and it would be good to maintain the ability for pedestrians to be able to lean over the balconies, which would not occur if they are removed to the outside. If the pedestrians are on the outside they should not be much lower, to maintain sight lines;
  - the image that is most evocative is from the water and it should be protected; D and C are the two options that seem to be the most successful; leaning towards C which maintains the integrity of the piers by puncturing through them below, but concerned about putting pedestrians at the lower level

for the central portion from a safety point of view; maybe we should continue to explore the notion of bringing cyclists down through the lower level and allow pedestrians to continue to enjoy the experience of leaning over the railing at bridge level;

- prefer Option C because it preserves the strong vertical piers for views from either side of the bridge; they are one of the most important aspects of the bridge; what needs to be carefully considered is the appearance of the bridge from other parts of the city; cutting holes in the piers for a lower route is more of an intrusion but an acceptable way of safeguarding the verticality of the piers. Concerned about the safety of pedestrians at the lower level. Option D, with the “necklace” going wide of the piers will, from many parts of the city, effectively appear as an outrigger attached to the piers and break up their verticality;
- the experience of going through the portals is important; whichever scheme is selected, something should be done in the space between the two piers so that it becomes more of a destination; favour Option D; acknowledge the concerns about compromising the verticality of the piers but think it could be done successfully;
- we have not seen the baseline scenario modelled; concerned about the verticality of the piers and for this reason prefer the puncturing of them; whoever ends up on the lower deck - pedestrians or cyclists - will feel uncomfortable; in terms of friendliness to the user, the “necklace” option is preferable because it keeps both pedestrians and cyclists at the deck level
- given the large amount of structure involved in the “necklace” option, would it be possible to attach to the baseline option something which is the absolute minimum of structure to the outside of the pier, perhaps celebrating the point of arrival, but then being as minimalist as possible without engaging a lot of supporting structure; that is, the baseline option with a modernist attachment that is clearly distinguished from the existing bridge but as minimal and unobtrusive as possible;
- my apprehension about the “necklace” scheme is that if you impose a substantial intervention against the bridge it does more to harm the integrity of the structure by creating a reverse hierarchy of significance; a modification of Option A which downplays the structure needed for a minor intervention could be a more successful scheme; Options A and D are very similar in their functionality and better in their functionality than the other options, for no other reason than the safety and security of the people who would have to use the underslung structure; by creating a vertical stratification of use it always put one user ahead of another whereas keeping them all at the same level can enhance everyone’s feeling of safety and security; there is a lot to be said for Option A, and the elegance, detailing and sophistication of the components that go into the new system would be the new challenge as opposed to an overly grand gesture;
- anything that takes either pedestrians or cyclists below is not supportable and should not be pursued; it would be unsafe and beyond a perception of safety; the “necklace” option, to enhance the look of the bridge, has some good examples of where it has been done successfully; the rationale for this option is that the existing structure does not function for today’s needs; from an historical point of view, if we acknowledge now that this is needed for the function of the bridge, it then becomes part of the continuum of history; not sure which is the best way to go - either a very simple approach or a very beautiful addition;
- the barrier between the cyclists and the road needs to be explored so that a high railing is not required; this is a factor in deciding whether cyclists or pedestrians are next to the cars;
- in European cities cyclists and pedestrians commonly cross one another and it would not be a major problem at the ends of the bridge;

- this bridge is a designated “A” structure which means it has the highest level of protection that can be given; it must be given the highest level of respect when it comes to any intervention; the verticality of the piers is a significant factor as well as the experience of going over the structure, and anything that is done is going to affect that; Option D is “scary” because it will have a major impact both visually and as an experience going over the bridge; I would choose between A and C but there still needs to be finetuning, particularly with respect to issues such as the new railing, whether the lamps would be changed and whether the pedestrian portion of the sidewalk would be widened;
- cyclists and pedestrians can and do mix successfully in other parts of the world; the “necklace” option will have a huge impact on every view of the bridge, no matter how elegantly it is drawn;
- option D is the only option that will work; anything that is done to the bridge should reflect the new millennium; anything attached to the piers - even minimalistic - will have a big impact on the appearance of what is the most significant historical aspect of the bridge; option D is the most sensitive option because it creates a necessary gap and leaves the piers completely untouched; the piers should not be touched from the outside; even a minimalistic addition would have a major impact; option D addition must have a very modern vocabulary, completely different from the existing vocabulary of the bridge and be an add-on, but a sensitive one; with the right detailing and vocabulary it can work the best; the portal is also a celebrated area, a place to stop and slow down and perhaps this is the only area where pedestrians and cyclists can be merged; a two level option would not work and it seems very unsafe; the best option is one which best maintains the heritage of the portal and the bridge while identifying a new millennium addition that has a completely different vocabulary and detailing;
- option A which separates cyclists from the traffic makes sense because it connects with the bike lanes identified in the Downtown Transportation Plan; safety is an issue with a lower level route for cyclists; commuter cyclists (faster and destination oriented) would not want to merge with pedestrians at the bridge ends, although recreational cyclists might be willing to do so; the intent of upgrading the bridge is to remove the current conflicts;
- feel strongly about the verticality of the bridge viewed from the water as well as from both sides so I would be sad to see the “necklace” approach; there are other ways to do it without ruining the appearance; we have to respect what was there before and how it was designed originally; A or C would be my preference; appreciate the safety concerns about a lower level;
- why is this being done? is there a need for a bicycle route? anything above, below or on the sides will be a disaster for the bridge; rather than spending money on this project, do a feasibility study to find a traffic solution, perhaps with a fourth lane designated for east- or west-bound bicycle traffic at peak times; otherwise, preferred option is D;
- major concern about the potential of a high barrier between the roadway and the sidewalk;
- re the perceived lack of safety, is there any documentary evidence that a lower level is unsafe?
- is it possible to have the pedestrian route also accommodate bicycles at certain times so that cyclists could choose whether to use the lower route and times of less demand?
- all the options are compromises; there should be some other solutions sought, from traffic management to a new bridge, as has been done in many other cities (eg. Brisbane where a beautiful bridge for cyclists and pedestrians has been constructed);

- would be interested in knowing the projection for automobile traffic in the future compared to current usage; maybe the priority should be to encourage people to get out of their cars and give cyclists priority;
- the main problems are on the four corners of the bridge (entering and exiting), particularly on the Kitsilano side where cyclists are launched right out onto the city street and cars are turning left from Burrard onto Cornwall and then sharp right onto Chestnut - this is where the conflicts exist; while the aesthetics of the bridge is a major issue, the main engineering problem is to solve and make safe the four corners;
- within the scope of Option A, was any consideration given to looking at a scheme that is as detailed as the present bridge? ie., simply widening the sidewalk to serve both pedestrians and cyclists;
- options should exploit the possibility of using the existing stair; an elevator or staircase closer in would be very beneficial for recreational users who just want to cross the water;
- it would be great to bring back the history and tradition of the stair;
- the asymmetrical option is totally out of sync with the symmetry of the bridge;
- if it is decided to go with a “necklace” solution, a half necklace should be looked at where at least one side has the verticality of the piers preserved;
- favour the underslung option because it has the least impact on the heritage fabric of the bridge; any intervention has to be not only minimal but reversible; the problem with Option D is that while it is reversible it is not minimal; Option C is better but punching holes through the piers is not a reversible option;
- there may be more traffic on Burrard Bridge because Granville Bridge is so difficult to cross; if this was addressed some of the impact on Burrard Bridge might be alleviated; it might be more useful to provide an underslung crossing under the Granville Bridge, which is higher.

Ms. Hiebert noted that, as part of the False Creek Pedestrian and Cyclists Crossing Strategy, Council has endorsed a strategy for all the bridges, including design development of a suspended option for Granville Bridge. This work will be completed in the same time frame as the subject proposal. Improvements to the deck level of the Granville Bridge are also being investigated.

A stakeholder workshop will take place on July 25, 2002 as well as a Council workshop on July 29, 2002 where the options will be detailed. In addition, there will be an Open House on June 22, 2002, at the Roundhouse Community Centre.

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| 2. Address:         | 2665 West Broadway                  |
| DA:                 | 406400                              |
| Use:                | Mixed (4 storeys)                   |
| Zoning:             | C-2                                 |
| Application Status: | Complete                            |
| Architect:          | Creekside                           |
| Owner:              | Westhall Properties Ltd.            |
| Review:             | Second                              |
| Delegation:         | Don Andrew, Mark Vance, Julie Hicks |
| Staff:              | Bob Adair                           |
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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-1)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, introduced this application. The Panel did not support the proposal when it was reviewed in March 2002. Concerns included the massing of the rear elevation, location and design of the courtyard and walk-through, overall quality of materials and detailing, and some commercial unit layouts. The Panel was also concerned about the variety of materials and colours, the juxtaposition of curtainwall and brick, the usability of the courtyard and landscape potential. There was also some discussion about the expression of the central portion of the building.

The revised submission has reduced the density somewhat from 2.96 to 2.90 FSR. The walkway through from West Broadway to the rear has been considerably widened and a number of changes have been made to the rear elevation. Changes have been made to the expression of both the front and rear elevations. In general, Planning staff have no major concerns with the urban design aspects of the proposal. The Panel's advice is sought on the detailed design of the courtyard and its landscaping, as well as any comments on issues such as the balance between the brick and the curtainwall expression on the front elevation, and the design of the central portion. The Panel's comments are also sought on the application's request for a relaxation of the height angle on the eastern side of the building. Planning has no major concern given there will be no significant shadow impact.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Don Andrews, Architect, reviewed the revised proposal in greater detail. He noted a difficulty had been dealing with the geometry of the containing angles and they now seek a variance of the 30 ft. containing angle at the rear which has allowed them to achieve a more rational rear elevation. He explained how they have responded to the Panel's earlier concerns. Julie Hicks, Landscape Architect, reviewed the landscape plan.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this revised proposal which it found to be a big improvement over the earlier submission. The Panel was pleased to see the simplification of the colours and materials.

One Panel member thought there was too much variety in the fenestration, suggesting it should be harmonized to further improve the building, e.g. the slot windows in the courtyard seem to be out of character with the rest of the building.

The Panel supported the requested height angle relaxation.

The Panel was very encouraged by the improvements to the lane elevation. There was, however, disappointment expressed by the majority of Panel members that the commercial units had no windows on the lane. It was thought that some fenestration, even glass block, would benefit the

CRUs and people walking in the lane. Overlook to the neighbours across the lane was not thought to be an issue. One Panel member was troubled by the use of imitation windows at the base of the rear elevation.

With respect to the architectural character, some concerns were expressed about the top of the building. It was thought that the curved elements will be difficult to detail and they are somewhat foreign to the rest of the vocabulary of the building. A comment was made that sometimes, the more details there are on a building, the less well resolved they tend to be. Concerns were also expressed about the slavish adherence to the 40 ft. height limit which has resulted in a long, horizontal line that works against the character of the building. It was suggested that the applicant take advantage of the allowance for appurtenances in order to achieve some variation. One Panel member suggested treating the central portion of the building with greater differentiation to help make the building appear even more strongly like two buildings. Another suggestion was, rather than separating them, continue the top roof line across and through the recessed space, noting that at the moment it looks somewhat at odds with the elevations on either side.

The Panel found the quality of the courtyard and the landscaping significantly improved. Widening and opening up the corridor through the middle is a big improvement. One Panel member thought the applicant made a good case locating the parking stair towards the back of the building. Several Panel members questioned the central triangular shaped planter because it may impede the use of the space. Suggestions were made for something more flexible that can be moved around to suit to tenants of the space. There was a recommendation to consider a subtly different treatment for the pathway to the residential entry.

One Panel member found the patterning on the east wall too busy, suggesting something simpler might be more appropriate, possibly a cast-in-place wall with rustication lines.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Andrews acknowledged there are areas they can continue to refine. They will also discuss with staff the specifics of the lane elevation. Some of the conflicting geometries at the top of the building will also be looked at in more detail. Concerns about the planters will be reviewed with the landscape architect.